

Pa Mushunguti Mid-Term Report – August 2026

Improving access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights services

This report shares the latest developments under Temwa's Pa Mushunguti project in Nkhata Bay North, Malawi. Now in its second year of implementation, the project has continued to make strong progress in improving young people's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services. This has been achieved by strengthening youth and teen clubs, expanding outreach services through schools and health facilities, training community and youth representatives, and reaching thousands of adolescents' learners, and community members through education, awareness and youth-friendly health activities.

Project Overview

Temwa's Pa Mushunguti project is designed to reduce the vulnerability of young people in Nkhata Bay North to sexual and reproductive health risks, such as early marriage, unsafe abortion, teenage pregnancies and STIs. The project is primarily targeting individuals under the age of 35, constituting 80% of the Malawi population, while recognizing the crucial role of the broader community in supporting SRHR services in rural, underserved areas.

Through our community-driven approach, Temwa is supporting youth clubs in schools and communities, empowering young people to challenge harmful cultural norms and taboos, make informed decisions about their SRHR and advocate for access to comprehensive SRHR services and rights. The project is also enhancing the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver youth-friendly SRHR services and facilitating connections between these services, young people and the wider community. In addition, the project is raising awareness of the SRHR challenges young people face and encouraging dialogue between youth and community governance structures.

Key Objectives and Achievements

The Pa Mushunguti project uses a holistic, community-driven approach that combines individual behaviour change with broader system strengthening. Since January, we have seen strong progress in improving adolescents and young people's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services across Bula, Usisya, Khondowe and Ruarwe. Pa Mushunguti has strengthened community ownership, expanded access to youth-friendly health services, supported school and community-based youth structures, and improved coordination between health facilities, schools, in school and out of school youth clubs and local governance structures. Through a mixture of outreach services, peer-led education, psychosocial support, community dialogue and stakeholder capacity strengthening, the project has contributed to increased service uptake, improved adolescent health knowledge, stronger youth participation and measurable reductions in key risk indicators in some target sites.

During the second year of implementation the following activities were conducted:

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder coordination and accountability for adolescent and youth SRHR strengthened during the reporting period. The January Temwa annual programme review brought together project staff, health facility representatives, youth leaders and community stakeholders to review 2025 performance, service uptake and teen club retention, creating a shared basis for improved coordination and planning.

Review and planning meetings with schools and health facilities in Bula, Ruarwe and Usisya strengthened collaboration, referral pathways and shared responsibility for improving adolescent SRHR outcomes. In June, the project strengthened the capacity of community health governance structures to advocate for youth-friendly SRHR services and strengthen collaboration between health centres and youth clubs, contributing to more responsive and accessible services for adolescents and young people.

The June donor learning visit by the Austin Bailey Foundation further supported accountability, with three representatives meeting beneficiaries, schools, health workers, traditional leaders, Health Centre Management Committees, youth club members and local government representatives to see evidence of the project's community-driven model and progress in SRHR knowledge, service uptake and adolescent wellbeing.

Health System Support and Training

The project continued to strengthen the capacity of local health systems to deliver accessible, youth-friendly and integrated SRHR services. In February alone, four health centres were supported to provide integrated Youth Friendly Health Services through outreach in 16 youth clubs, reaching 372 young people with HIV counselling and testing, STI screening and treatment, contraceptive services counselling and referrals, helping to reduce distance, stigma and other access barriers.

A key achievement was the orientation of 22 Expert Clients on updated HIV and ART guidelines, strengthening community-based adherence support, defaulter tracing, and referral systems for people living with HIV. In addition, 30 Health Centre Management Committee members were trained on their roles in supporting youth-friendly SRHR services, improving community oversight, accountability and collaboration between health facilities and youth structures. These investments have strengthened local capacity to support sustainable and adolescent-responsive service delivery.



Figure 1. Young person accessing SRHR counselling during an outreach clinic.

Youth Clubs

Youth Clubs continued to serve as a vital platform for SRHR education, leadership development and community engagement. Mentorship visits demonstrated high functionality across both school-based and community clubs, with increasing participation and growing demand for new clubs in additional communities.

May was an important month for youth-led institutional strengthening. Temwa trained 20 young people from four youth networks as SRHR Ambassadors, equipping them with advocacy, communication and monitoring skills to assess youth-friendly services and engage with service providers and local authorities. During the same period, all 30 supported out-of-school youth clubs completed registration with the District Youth Office and Ministry of Youth, increasing their legitimacy and opportunities to access government youth development initiatives.

During the monitoring visits to all out-of-school and in-school youth clubs, the team recorded 30% increase in youth membership alongside growing demand for new clubs in Kanolo, Usingini, Tanzania and Manyuzo. This trend demonstrates strong community confidence in the youth club model and highlights the need to expand the initiative to meet increasing demand.

Teen Clubs

Teen clubs provided essential psychosocial support for adolescents living with HIV, helping to strengthen treatment adherence, confidence, peer support and retention in care. Across January to June, monthly sessions were supported at Bula and Usisya Health Centres, offering safe spaces for adolescents to discuss ART adherence, stigma, disclosure, emotional wellbeing, peer pressure, relationships and positive living. Health workers and peer mentors facilitated group discussions, counselling and treatment literacy support, strengthening adolescents' understanding of treatment and promoting informed health decisions

The sessions contributed to improved confidence among adolescents, stronger peer cohesion and increased commitment to consistent clinic attendance and ART adherence. Caregiver involvement strengthened family-level understanding of adolescent psychosocial needs and helped improve household support for young people living with HIV.

Awareness Events



Figure 2. In-school SRHR youth club.

Community awareness activities played an important role in challenging stigma, increasing SRHR knowledge and encouraging health-seeking behaviour. In April, Temwa conducted SRHR awareness campaigns using interactive drama performances in Khondowe, Ruarwe, Kabanda, Chiwisi, Usisya, Sanga and Bigha, reaching more than 5,000 community members, of whom 65% were adolescents and young people.

The drama performances created accessible and culturally relevant platforms for discussing sensitive SRHR topics, including myths and misconceptions, parent-adolescent communication, HIV testing, family planning, STI treatment and youth-friendly services. The interactive format

encouraged participation from young people, parents, community leaders, health workers and project staff, helping to normalise dialogue around adolescent sexual and reproductive health and reduce stigma associated with seeking services.

Awareness activities were complemented by school-based comprehensive sexuality education sessions in May, which reached 2,400 learners in 15 schools. These sessions helped learners access accurate information from trained health providers and strengthened the role of schools as platforms for adolescent health education and referral.

Impact

The first six months of the Pa Mushunguti's second year demonstrated encouraging progress in improving access to SRHR information and services for adolescents and young people across Nkhata Bay North. Through strengthened youth-friendly service delivery, active youth clubs, community awareness initiatives, psychosocial support for adolescents living with HIV and strengthened stakeholder engagement, the project has improved access to information, increased service utilisation and contributed to positive changes in adolescent health and wellbeing. Evidence from health facilities, schools and communities indicates progress in reducing teenage pregnancies, STIs, school dropouts and child marriages, while strengthening community support for adolescent health and rights.

Key Impact achievements from this year include:

Direct Beneficiaries

- 1,134 adolescents and young people accessed integrated Youth Friendly Health Services.
- 2,400 learners received comprehensive sexuality education through school-based health sessions.
- More than 5,000 community members, 65% of whom were young people, participated in SRHR awareness events delivered through community drama performances.
- 106 adolescents living with HIV participated in Teen Club psychosocial support sessions between March and May, strengthening adherence and retention in care.
- 20 young people were trained as SRHR Ambassadors, strengthening youth-led advocacy.
- 22 Expert Clients and 30 Health Centre Management Committee members received capacity strengthening to support community-based SRHR and HIV services.
- Health facility data in Bula showed a reduction in STI cases from 27 to 3 and teenage pregnancies from 43 to 6 during the comparable festive period, while uptake of family planning services increased from 271 to 570 young people.
- At Honga Primary School, reported school dropouts decreased from 20 to 6, while teenage pregnancies and child marriages reduced from 9 to 0 and 6 to 0 respectively during the comparable reporting period.

Indirect beneficiaries

- Families and caregivers benefited from increased SRHR knowledge and stronger support systems for adolescents, including adolescents living with HIV.
- Schools and health facilities benefited from stronger referral pathways, improved coordination and increased utilisation of youth-friendly services.
- Communities benefited from greater awareness of adolescent SRHR challenges and increased engagement in protecting young people from harmful practices such as child marriage and early pregnancy.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite strong progress during the reporting period, implementation was affected by heavy rainfall, poor road conditions in lakeshore communities, and youth club constraints such as limited access to start-up capital, farming inputs and sports equipment, which delayed some outreach activities and limited opportunities to expand successful interventions. These challenges reaffirmed the importance of community-led and youth-centred approaches, with strong collaboration between schools, health facilities, community leaders and youth structures proving critical to increasing service uptake, strengthening referral systems and creating supportive environments for adolescents and young people. They also demonstrated that bringing services closer through outreach clinics and school-based interventions significantly improves access to and uptake of youth-friendly health services in underserved communities.

Community Success Stories

Transforming Young Lives in Bula



Figure 3. Bula Health Centre stakeholder meeting.

When Temwa began supporting Bula Health Centre to deliver youth-friendly SRHR outreach services in Peter Chavula, Wakhalika, Kasasile, Nyapwele and Lukhanda, many young people were hesitant to take part. Topics such as contraception, HIV testing and STIs were often seen as uncomfortable to discuss, and many adolescents did not know where they could access confidential support. For one 17-year-old from Kasasile, Thandiwe, the first outreach session marked a turning point.

“I wanted to know more, but I was afraid people would think I was doing something wrong just by asking questions about SRHR.”

Through youth-friendly outreach clinics, peer education and community engagement, she gradually gained the confidence to ask questions, seek advice and access SRHR services. Her own experience inspired her to become a peer educator, helping other young people understand their rights and the services available to

them. The change has been felt across communities. More young people are now accessing health information and services, adolescent girls are demonstrating stronger knowledge of contraception options, and referral links between the Bula Youth Network and local health facilities have improved. For Thandiwe, the transformation is about more than numbers.

“Now we know our rights, we know where to go for help, and we are teaching others.”

Looking Forward

Temwa will continue to build on this momentum by strengthening Youth Clubs, mentoring peer educators to lead impactful SRHR dialogues, and expanding community sensitisation to sustain demand for youth-friendly services.

We are grateful for the generous support that has made this work possible so far. Thanks to our partners and donors, Temwa has been able to reach thousands of young people and community members with vital SRHR information and services. As we look ahead, focus will be on expanding community SRHR awareness and youth-friendly services through outreach events, media campaigns, training, club support, and programme monitoring



For further information about this project or our future plans, please contact:

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