Intergenerational Mentoring Guide: How to Mentor Youth to Advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

FP/RH               family planning/reproductive health
HP+                 Health Policy Plus
SRHR                sexual and reproductive health and rights
Introduction

Over the past decade, as meaningful adolescent and youth engagement practices trended in development, unprecedented mobilization of young people took hold in many nations. Today, all over the world youth advocates are actively working toward bringing about transformational change, and are becoming increasingly influential in local, national, and global health policy spaces. Young leaders can be a powerful force for change and they can be even more effective when they have access to adult allies that can guide and support them to navigate local power structures and systems.

Connecting emerging young leaders with more experienced mentors in a structured mentoring program provides a unique opportunity to support young people to affect the institutions with which they work, and influence the policies and programs that affect their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). In line with positive youth development methodologies, the purpose of such a mentoring program is to (1) provide one-on-one support to build the agency of young people to participate in SRHR decision-making processes and (2) cultivate their knowledge, leadership skills, and abilities to meaningfully participate and advocate for their SRHR priorities. Mentors and mentees can benefit from each other’s experience and perspectives, creating mutually beneficial outcomes while increasing their influence at the local, regional, and national level.

The Health Policy Plus (HP+) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, launched an intergenerational mentoring activity in Malawi to support emerging young leaders to engage village, district, and national stakeholders to deliver on the SRHR promises laid out in national policies. The guide provides best practices in mentoring learned from the experience in Malawi. Box 1 explains how “intergenerational mentoring” was defined in this context.

Box 1. Definition of Intergenerational Mentorship

Intergenerational mentoring is defined as pairing a person from one generation with a person from a different generation in order to foster mutual learning and growth. For the Malawi program, HP+ determined that a minimum of 15 years between the age ranges of the mentors and the mentees was needed for the program to be considered intergenerational. The program was deliberately designed to stimulate change and growth by capitalizing on the differing life perspectives brought by mentors and mentees from across the age spectrum.

Background: The Malawi Pilot

HP+ works to strengthen and advance health policy priorities at the global, national, and subnational levels. The project aims to improve the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems through policy design, implementation, and financing. HP+ believes that the engagement and leadership of young women and men in family planning and reproductive health policy change is critical to ensure the continuation and expansion of essential services and to keep young people’s priority needs
in the minds of policymakers and citizens alike. The project’s intergenerational mentoring activity in Malawi was developed both to build the confidence of young people to participate in the policy advocacy process and to help identify and expand the knowledge, leadership skills, and abilities that they feel they need in order to meaningfully participate and advocate for their SRHR priorities.

The activity was designed as a 12-month program that begins with three interrelated workshops delivered over a two-week time period: a mentor workshop, a mentee workshop, and a joint mentor-mentee workshop. The activity drew on existing resources and curricula including HP+’s *Fostering Joint Accountability Within Health Systems: Training Curriculum* (Vazzano et al., 2018), the Centre for Development and Population Activities’ *Advocacy: Building Skills for NGO Leaders* (CEDPA, 1999), the World Health Organization’s *Advocating for Change for Adolescents!* (WHO, 2018), and the Policy, Advocacy, Communication, Enhanced (PACE) project’s *Policy Communication Toolkit—Module 9: Youth Leaders*, as well as various mentoring curricula. Workshops focused heavily on establishing and launching the mentoring relationship and narrowing priority areas for youth-led SRHR advocacy efforts.

Senior-level SRHR policy advocates from HP+ and its predecessor projects, were selected to serve as mentors due to their extensive expertise in leadership, advocacy, accountability, and networking to advocate for Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) goals. The mentors had specific experience identifying gaps in accountability linkages in the health system and strategizing with policymakers to address the gaps. The mentors hailed from diverse professional backgrounds with representation in the public sector, community-based organizations, parliament, research organizations, and the media.

To complete the cohort, HP+ invited emerging youth advocates from around the country to partner with mentors and enhance their abilities to effectively advocate for youth-friendly SRHR policies and responsive youth-friendly health systems, and identify and address gender barriers in SRHR programming. Young male advocates were intentionally engaged as part of this cohort to increase allyship for young women and ensure the joint responsibility of improving SRHR policies and services for young people.

Immediately after the three launch workshops, mentors and mentees began meeting on a monthly basis, in-person and remotely, to further develop their advocacy action plans and engage with local, district, and national level SRHR networks. Over the course of 12 months, mentors worked closely with mentees to analyze SRHR policies, strategies, and implementation plans impacting young people to identify gaps and entry points for youth-led advocacy. Mentors helped mentees map and engage with local stakeholders, gather data, align their advocacy efforts to local initiatives, and bring youth voices into SRHR networks traditionally dominated by adults. Box 2 showcases how one mentor supported her mentee to analyze a university policy and find entry points for influencing the dean of students to improve access to SRHR information, services, and referrals. Box 3 explains how the activity continued amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
Box 2. Intergenerational Mentoring for Improved SRHR Access

In Malawi, it’s common for higher education institutions to have a youth-friendly health services corner where students can access SRHR information, services, and referrals. When Godfrey and Samuel joined the HP+ intergenerational mentoring activity they immediately pointed out that their Christian-affiliated university lacked this resource. Further, the university’s synod policy stated that the institution need only offer an information center that serves students who are legally married, leaving a critical gap in SRHR information and services for unmarried youth attending the school. Godfrey and Samuel saw this as the perfect opportunity to advocate for policy change. The two mentees worked closely with their mentor, Margaret, to analyze the synod policy and find entry points for policy change negotiations with the dean of students. With support from their mentor, Godfrey and Samuel approached the dean with a proposal to start an SRHR network comprised of students offering their peers accurate SRHR information, provided by the district health officer, on where and how to access youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. The youth network was approved and established; Godfrey and Samuel are now advocating for a formal youth-friendly health services corner to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of all students at the university.

“My mentor is actually the one who helped us come up with the youth network referral system idea. She helped us analyze the synod policy and recommended our policy change efforts start with a student network. We couldn’t have put this proposal before the dean without her guidance and support.” – Godfrey

Box 3. Adjustments Due to COVID-19

Halfway through the activity, a global pandemic struck. As a result, HP+ pivoted to address SRHR needs of young people during the pandemic and continued to work together and with stakeholders virtually. Mentors and mentees organized into regional groups and worked to engage with regional pandemic response clusters focused on SRHR and child protection to ensure the SRHR needs of young people, particularly girls, were prioritized in pandemic response efforts. During this time, one mentor supported her mentee to successfully advocate and secure funding for the Salima District Youth Network’s youth-led COVID-19 SRHR response efforts.

Despite the limitations posed by COVID-19, mentees worked diligently to continue their advocacy efforts. Mentees reported that with the targeted support of their mentors, they were able to build new relationships and collaborate with a number of youth organizations and other stakeholders to continue advancing their advocacy action plans.
About the Guide

HP+ developed this mentorship guide based on its experience implementing the pilot program in Malawi. The guide is intended to serve practitioners seeking to establish, implement, and monitor their own intergenerational mentorship programs. It provides best practices in mentoring to help program implementers navigate the building blocks of creating a strong, informed mentoring program that is mutually beneficial for mentors and mentees who are brought together from across the age spectrum. It includes key concepts, important points to consider, sample activities, templates, and probing questions to help implementers think through the critical components needed to carry out a program in which mentors support young leaders to become agents of change for the advancement of youth-friendly and responsive SRHR policies.

This guide includes four key sections:

1. Designing the mentorship program
2. Selecting participants
3. Training mentors
4. Launching and rolling out the mentorship relationship

Designing the Mentorship Program

This section outlines key considerations in designing an effective intergenerational program for mentoring youth.

Developing Program Goals and Objectives

Strong and focused program goals and objectives are the critical first piece to designing the mentorship program (and associated structure) to clearly articulate the desired long-term results and impact of the program.

Typically, SRHR advocacy mentorship programs aim to build a network of youth advocates and integrate them into SRHR groups, networks, and organizations to advance policy agendas. Yet the specific goal and objectives will depend on the country context, the SRHR policy landscape, and the target youth population. Engaging mentors and young people in developing goals and objectives will help ground truth the approach and assumptions, and ensure the program is truly responding to young people’s needs. Box 4 provides an example goal and related objectives under the HP+ pilot program in Malawi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4. HP+ Mentoring Goal and Objectives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal:</strong> Build a cadre of SRHR youth advocates to influence and advance the SRHR agenda for young people using mentoring as a key tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mobilize existing SRHR policy advocates to mentor young people to become SRHR policy advocacy champions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase youth engagement of youth advocates in SRHR groups, networks, and organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advance SRHR policy agendas at national, district, and community levels with a new cohort of trained youth champions.</td>
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</tbody>
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Cultivating Mentor and Mentee Networks

When designed with intention, one of the most valuable aspects of the mentorship program can be the support network mentors and mentees develop amongst themselves and between groups. Creating time and space for mentors to get to know each other and build a community as a cohort can lead to stronger collaboration and engagement throughout the life of the project. Mentors may be loosely connected to each other through existing affiliations to SRHR networks and can team up to draw mentees in and engage them in policy advocacy opportunities.

Similarly, the program’s mentee network can be an effective source of support where mentees can learn from each other, share successes and challenges, and collaborate to increase their impact in advancing policy advocacy. Setting up platforms for ongoing communication within and between groups is a great way to keep the participants connected, motivated, and engaged with each other.

Supporting mentees to engage their existing external SRHR networks should be another area of focus. Policy change does not result from the efforts of one person or one organization. Young people should be encouraged and supported to engage their existing networks to help them advance their policy advocacy plans (see example in Box 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 5. Engaging Mentees in SRHR Networks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In an effort to engage mentees in SRHR networks that would build their capacity and elevate youth voices, two mentors in Malawi, Tawonga and Jenipher, nominated three mentees to participate in a multi-day workshop focused on feminist movement building. The workshop was hosted by a prominent national SRHR organization and was designed to create safe spaces for young women to organize against patriarchal structures and to increase the inclusion of voices of young women that are excluded and marginalized. The mentees felt the most useful aspect was better understanding how young people are collecting valid data to support their advocacy efforts. They were also able to connect with over 15 new partners and identified opportunities to collaborate on local advocacy initiatives through network mapping exercises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advancing SRHR Policies at National, Subnational, and Community Levels

Positive advocacy and accountability efforts are needed at the global, national, and subnational level to bring about positive policy-specific changes to improve the health and wellbeing of young people. As emerging young leaders identify their advocacy issue, they will need to determine where, or at what level, their advocacy will have the most impact. Allowing flexibility for mentees to choose whether to focus their efforts at the national, subnational, or community level will provide a broader set of opportunities to create change, and allow mentees to navigate the policy advocacy space in a way that leverages their skills and connections.

Mentors often have deeper knowledge of the policy landscape at national, subnational, and community levels and can play a critical role in helping mentees determine where to focus their efforts. Mentors can recommend possible entry points that will help mentees initiate and advance their advocacy action plans, connect mentees with relevant organizations, institutions, and individuals within their chosen level of the policy landscape, and use their spheres of
influence to garner support for the young person’s advocacy and accountability efforts (see example in Box 6).

Box 6. Mentoring Youth Advocates through Village-Level Policy Change

After the initial mentoring training in Malawi, a mentee began volunteering with her district’s Social Welfare Office where she was trained to handle social welfare cases at the community level. She was dealing with child marriage cases and was inspired to introduce village-level bylaws that aligned with the national child marriage policy. In her volunteer role she gained first-hand experience with local structures and engaged with community leaders that could help her advance her advocacy efforts. Her mentor, Agnes, helped her refine her advocacy action plan to layer activities and engage with local organizations that would better position her to approach traditional authorities with a request to establish bylaws.

Key Considerations for Program Design

Incorporating Principles of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Youth-led policy advocacy efforts often confront discrimination that young people experience in society based on age and unequal power relations. However, discrimination may include other forms related to sex, location, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and ethnicity.

When designing the mentorship program, identify the gaps and unequal power relations in the rights and conditions that young people in all their diversity experience, as well as specific barriers that girls and young women face in exercising their rights. Understanding existing inequalities will help to identify societal gender norms that negatively impact young people’s lives and exclude vulnerable groups, and support the development of a gender-sensitive response that targets different actors that influence SRHR norms and policies. Box 7 provides key considerations to ensure the program addresses the root causes of gender inequalities and promotes social inclusion.

Box 7. Four Key Areas to Consider When Integrating Gender and Social Inclusion Into a Mentoring Program

1. Work to strengthen girls’ and young women's agency by building their knowledge, confidence, and skills.
2. Work with and support boys and young men to embrace positive masculinities and to promote gender equality, while also achieving meaningful results for them.
3. Consider the different types of discrimination girls, boys, young women, and young men in all their diversity face when influencing/advocating and engage mentors to address those specific barriers/
4. Utilize mentors and their networks to foster an enabling environment where stakeholders work together to support young people in their influencing work.

Source: Plan International, 2018
Safeguarding Young People

Youth-led advocacy involves changing the practices and perceptions of people with power and, while it can be incredibly effective, it also involves risk. An important element of any program that involves young people is ongoing risk assessment and management as well as a gender-responsive safeguarding approach. Safeguarding young people is particularly important in a mentorship program in which adults are working one-on-one with young people. Box 8 outlines safeguarding measures that can be integrated into design, planning, and implementation of a mentorship program to ensure mentors and young people can engage in safe and productive ways.

Box 8. Example Safeguarding Measures

- Ensure all participants read and sign the host organization's safeguarding policy prior to participating in the activity and understand how to apply it in the context of the program.

- Present the safeguarding policy and expectations at the launch training. Set clear parameters for communication and in-person meetings between mentors and mentees. For example, in-person meetings should always take place in public spaces not in private homes.

- Ensure there is a clear and easy way for participants to report safeguarding concerns to staff at the host organization.

- Ensure there is a process in place to act on safeguarding concerns in a timely and appropriate manner that is centered around the young person and takes into account their gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.

- Provide a digital safety training for mentors and mentees if they will be using social media platforms and digital applications.

- Pay attention to civic space trends in the geographic area and engage mentors in discussions around the openness of changing civic space. Discuss risks associated with policy advocacy activities and establish a mitigation plan.

- Discuss specific risks that girls and young women face and establish gender-responsive mitigation strategies.

Source: Plan International USA, 2021

Geographic Reach and Method of Engagement

Geographic reach is a key consideration in program design and should align with goals and objectives, preferred methods of engagement, and program budget to determine if the program will focus at the local, regional, or national level. A geographically widespread program can have larger impact, but will involve more complex logistics and a larger budget than regional or local programs. Geographic reach, travel, connectivity, and cultural norms are all factors that should be considered when selecting the method of engagement. In some contexts, in-person engagement may be the norm and participants may not engage effectively virtually (see Box 9). Or if working in remote areas, even if devices and airtime are provided, internet connectivity
may be limited preventing mentors and mentees from establishing robust communication. Engaging participants to analyze the pros and cons of geographic reach and methods of engagement will ensure a more successful program and more effective mentoring.

Box 9. Tips from the HP+ Program

In the intergenerational Malawi mentoring activity, both mentors and mentees reported that in-person meetings and group convenings were preferred over virtual engagements and in-person convenings produced more effective engagement.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both in-person and virtual engagement and both approaches require nuanced logistics and budget allocations. Table 1 presents some considerations in selecting the most appropriate approach for the context the program will be implemented in.

Table 1. In-Person Versus Virtual Program Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person</td>
<td>• Builds stronger relationships between mentors/mentees and across youth advocates&lt;br&gt;• Increases sharing and learning among participants&lt;br&gt;• Provides opportunities to engage in policy advocacy actions together&lt;br&gt;• Improves motivation&lt;br&gt;• Improves accountability among participants</td>
<td>• Increased cost for travel and logistics&lt;br&gt;• May restrict geographic reach&lt;br&gt;• Potential risk to young people taking public transportation or requiring overnight accommodation&lt;br&gt;• May take important time away from participants’ schooling or work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>• Easier for participants and mentors to connect around busy schedules&lt;br&gt;• Increases geographic reach&lt;br&gt;• May increase potential pool of available mentors&lt;br&gt;• Reduces travel costs and logistics&lt;br&gt;• Allows for program continuation during adverse events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td>• More difficult to promote sharing and learning across participants&lt;br&gt;• Requires strong internet connection, smart devices, and airtime&lt;br&gt;• Exclusionary for people lacking digital skills or connectivity&lt;br&gt;• Easier for participants to disengage over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Setting a Timeframe**

It is important to recognize that it takes time for mentors to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and confidence of mentees to effectively advocate for policy change. If the mentees are less knowledgeable of the SRHR policy landscape or advocacy process, more time may need to be invested toward training and mentorship to fully support the mentees to better understand key concepts and improve their skills. Having set criteria for baseline knowledge and skill as part of the mentee selection process will help to set an appropriate mentorship program timeline. No matter what the knowledge and skill level of mentees is, policy advocacy work is time-intensive and it often takes years to see policy change. If the program aims to support mentees to implement an advocacy action plan, the formal mentorship period should be 12 months at a minimum, with realistic outcomes. If mentees are current students, the academic calendar needs to be taken into consideration to ensure programming does not conflict with exam periods or school breaks when young people may be transient. An illustrative timeline can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Example Mentoring Timeline](image-url)
**Budget**

When developing the budget, consider how much training is needed for mentors and mentees to successfully engage in the program. Investing in training at the start of the program will set both mentors and mentees up for success, and spending time together working one-on-one will help them develop a strong relationship. Depending on how the training is designed—including the number of facilitators, the length of time, and the geographic spread of participants, there can be significant costs to bring participants together for multiple days of training.

Mentors and mentees from remote areas or marginalized groups may need additional financial support in order to participate. This can include budgeting for transportation, meals, and overnight accommodation. In addition, when working with young women who are out of school or young mothers, additional training, safe spaces, or support services that allow for their participation may be required.

Apart from workshop costs, it is important to budget adequately to ensure mentors and mentees can sustain and deepen their relationship throughout the life of the project. Digital tools can enhance communication between mentors and mentees; however, participants may not have funds for regular phone calls or access to a reliable internet connection. It’s advised to budget for airtime stipends and travel stipends, where possible, to ensure mentors and mentees have the resources required to connect remotely and/or in-person, as these supporting measures will garner better results. Table 2 provides guiding questions that can inform anticipated program costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
<th>Key Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **What type of training do the mentors and mentees need? Will training be conducted in-person, virtually, or a combination?** | • Training costs will vary dramatically based on whether they are in person or virtual. **In-person** trainings are typically more expensive requiring adequate funds to support travel, the venue, daily subsistence allowance, accommodation, and in-person facilitation.  
• If training **virtually** consider whether the participants have access to the materials and platforms necessary (i.e., a computer and/or smart phone with camera access, internet connectivity/airtime, and access to platforms such as YouTube Live, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.). Supplying participants with equipment has significant cost implications that should be considered. |
| **Does the training require participants to travel? If so, what are the associated costs for the desired number of days?** | • Travel costs may vary significantly by geography and preferred/available and safe modes of transportation.  
• If mentors and mentees come together for **in-person** mentoring sessions or group convenings, then the frequency, length, and location of convenings will have cost implications for the program. |
| **Will you engage external experts in the training? What are the associated costs?** | • Inclusion of external experts can significantly increase training costs for **in-person** trainings. It is important to understand if they require a facilitation fee, travel costs, daily subsistence allowance, and/or accommodation.  
• Inclusion of external experts in **virtual** trainings may require a facilitation fee and airtime stipends. |
### Guiding Questions

**What type of supporting services do your mentors and mentees need in order to effectively engage in the program?**

- Mentors and mentees may need financial support for monthly in-person or virtual engagement.
- Providing mentors with a monthly honorarium for their service may add additional costs to the program, but can improve motivation and continued support for the mentees.
- Younger and less experienced advocates will need more in-depth training around policy advocacy than experienced youth. The more training days the higher the cost.

**Do mentees need additional financial support to facilitate their advocacy actions?**

- Youth advocates may need financial support to effectively engage with stakeholders and decisionmakers in their advocacy efforts. Costs can include airtime to make calls to decisionmakers, travel stipends for in-person advocacy efforts, or funding to provide snacks or drinks when convening decisionmakers.

**Will there be a closing ceremony at the end of the program? What are the associated costs?**

- Similar to trainings, there will be expenses associated with an in-person closing event to support travel, the venue, daily subsistence allowance, accommodation, a photographer, and printing costs. A virtual event may be less expensive but offers less of an opportunity to network and bond that an in-person closing ceremony brings.

### Establishing Monitoring Milestones and Indicators

Selecting key indicators to measure success and establishing consistent monitoring checkpoints with mentors from the outset is critical to keeping the program on track and allows for real-time adjustments to improve the quality of the program. Pre-and post-training surveys can be an effective tool for measuring knowledge, skills, and beliefs at the outset of the program, and help identify areas where additional capacity strengthening is needed. Effective monitoring tools for a mentoring program include surveys for both mentors and mentees, monthly reports, and individual check-ins. Table 3 provides examples of illustrative indicators, results, and data sources.

Monthly check-ins between the host organization and mentors are an effective way to gather real-time feedback on how the mentoring relationship is going and how successful mentees are in advancing advocacy action plans. Similarly, conducting quarterly self-assessments with mentees can help the host organization evaluate the relationships and progress from the mentees’ perspective and allow for a more holistic view of how relationships and activities are advancing. See Tool 1 for a sample monthly mentor reporting template and Tool 2 for a mentee quarterly reporting template.

A midterm review is recommended to help assess how effective mentors feel they are in supporting mentees to advance their advocacy action plans and how effective mentees feel their mentor has been in providing support. It will allow for any necessary course corrections as the midterm review can provide in-depth information to better understand how effective the program has been thus far, identify hidden issues that are limiting program success, and provide the opportunity to make improvements for the duration of the program.
A midterm review can incorporate multiple methods for data collection and feedback and may include:

- Conducting an identifiable questionnaire to capture mentees’ advocacy successes and challenges, mentorship successes and challenges, and areas where mentors and mentees need additional support.
- Conducting an anonymous questionnaire with mentors and mentees to capture in-depth information around challenges within the mentorship program or the mentorship relationship that participants may not feel comfortable sharing in an identifiable questionnaire.
- Personal check-ins with mentors or mentees to discuss questionnaire responses and find possible solutions to improve programming. Discussions may be group or individual depending on the specific issue discussed.

**Table 3. Example Results and Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Results</th>
<th>Progress Indicators</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Individual capacity to effectively advocate for health policies is strengthened | Instances of new or strengthened partnerships and improved collaboration for the purpose of achieving policy action | • Mentors’ reports  
• SRHR network meeting minutes  
• Self-assessments from mentees related to leadership and SRHR technical knowledge and skills  
• Qualitative accounts of impact of mentoring on youth advocates’ leadership and technical capacities |
| Young people are empowered and engaged in participatory processes for policy advocacy, implementation, monitoring, reform and fiduciary transparency | Instances of impacted populations engaged in policy development, implementation, monitoring, and/or evaluation, with a particular focus on poor and other vulnerable populations including women and youth | • Pre- and post-self-assessments from mentees related to (1) confidence and personal leadership, (2) knowledge and skills in SRHR, and (3) knowledge and skills in advocacy and accountability  
• Documented participation by mentees in advocacy/policy events  
• SRHR network meeting registration forms (greater and meaningful representation of youth advocates)  
• Documented accounts of mentees actively engaged in SRHR advocacy networks |
## Tool 1. Sample Mentor Monthly Reporting Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mentor’s Response</th>
<th>Action Items or Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is your mentee doing with advancing their advocacy action plan this month? Who are they collaborating with to support them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is your mentee able to find credible evidence to support their advocacy issue? If not, how can you help them source credible data related to their issue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your mentee finalized their goal and objectives? If not, how can you help them refine their goal and objectives?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your mentee identified the existing SRHR and youth policies or strategies that connect to their issue? Does your mentee need help accessing or analyzing a policy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is your mentee’s target audience? Do they need support or suggestions on who to target?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is your mentee engaging with other mentees and youth organizations for support? Who do you know personally and professionally that you can connect with to help build their base of support?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you identified meetings or technical networks that you can engage your mentee and other mentees in?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where will you focus your mentoring over the next month?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What support do you need from the program implementer?</td>
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Tool 2. Sample Mentee Quarterly Reporting Template

Name:  
Date of Completion:

**Participation in Advocacy Initiatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What progress have you made on achieving your advocacy goals this quarter that you’ve laid out in your advocacy action plan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you developed any partnerships with civil society organizations, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and/or university partners? If yes, tell me about your experience developing those partnerships. How are you planning on working with these partners to achieve your advocacy goals? If no, why not? What, if any, barriers did you face to developing these partnerships?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you engaged in any advocacy or policy events or initiatives this quarter? If yes, what types of events or initiatives have you engaged in (e.g., awareness campaigns, community engagement events, protests, and stakeholder or network meetings)? If no, why not? What, if any, barriers did you face to participating in initiatives?</td>
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**Mentee/Mentor Relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since we spoke, how often have you communicated with your mentor?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please tell me about your experience working with your mentor. How did your mentor help you review, adjust, or update your advocacy plan throughout the mentorship experience?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How did your mentor help you connect with stakeholders or develop partnerships with organizations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was your mentor able to help you solve a problem or overcome a challenge?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How did your mentor help keep you on track with your advocacy plan?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# How to Mentor Youth to Advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, do you feel that your mentor was effective in helping you implement your advocacy plan?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, what do you think your mentor did well to help you implement your advocacy plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If no, what do you think your mentor could have done differently to help you to implement your advocacy plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>In your opinion, what additional support would you have liked your mentor to provide in order to help you achieve your advocacy goal?</td>
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## Organizational Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that the support provided by the project over the last quarter was useful in helping you achieve your advocacy goals? What has been most useful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What, if any, additional support would you have liked to have received from the project?</td>
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</table>
Participant Selection

Mentor Selection

Mentors that are recruited or apply for the program can have a variety of different backgrounds and experiences, but should all have strong knowledge of and recent engagement with the SRHR and policy advocacy landscape in the defined geographical area. They should also have existing connections to SRHR networks that they can draw mentees into. Mentors do not necessarily need to have experience mentoring others, but they do need to have a desire to participate, the time to make the full commitment, experience working with young people, and knowledge of effective advocacy strategies in the local context (see Box 10).

Because the pool of potential mentors is typically smaller than the potential pool of emerging youth advocates, it is recommended to select the mentors first. Table 4 provides example criteria for mentor selection.

Box 10. Mentor Experience with SRHR Policy and Networks

The mentors in the Malawi activity were selected from a pool of female leaders that participated in HP+ projects that strengthened their leadership, advocacy, and networking skills to advocate for FP2020 goals. Mentors included women from the public sector, international nongovernmental organizations, research organizations, and the media who had extensive experience with national-level SRHR advocacy and robust connections to SRHR networks.

Table 4. Mentor Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge/Skills</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding of country-specific policy advocacy and accountability processes</td>
<td>• 5+ years as an SRHR advocate</td>
<td>• Geographic location within the defined program design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Background in SRHR policies and policy implementation in their country</td>
<td>• Previous experience working with young people</td>
<td>• Ability to connect via phone, WhatsApp, or over internet platforms, such as Zoom, with mentees and program staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Background in youth policies and policy implementation in their country</td>
<td>• Experience and affiliations with SRHR-related technical working groups (at sub-national, national, or international levels)</td>
<td>• Ability and willingness to travel for mentorship activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic understanding of the principles of mentorship</td>
<td>• Prior experience as a mentor or mentee (beneficial but not required)</td>
<td>• Ability to commit 2 hours each week to mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strong networking skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Desire to engage young people in SRHR policy advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Minimum of 15 years between the age ranges of the mentors and the mentees (for program to be considered intergenerational)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Defining a Scope of Work for Mentors

In addition to the mentor selection criteria, the selection of the mentors should be guided by a clear scope of work that outlines the responsibilities, commitments, expectations, and timeline. Defining a clear scope of work before beginning the selection process is critical so that mentors understand both their specific role and the program’s approach to mentorship. This information can help potential mentors gage and confirm whether they have the time and capacity to commit to a long-term activity. Tool 3 provides a sample scope of work for mentors.

The scope of work should also clearly articulate whether mentors will receive an honorarium for their participation in the program (beyond airtime and travel support). Mentors should sign a formal pledge to commit to the scope of work throughout the full length of the mentorship program. A mentor that is committed and willing to learn is going to be far more effective than a highly experienced mentor that doesn’t have the time to engage their mentee.

When recruiting and selecting mentors, start by looking at professional networks. Potential mentors can be recruited from nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, government, universities, media organizations, or SRHR advocacy networks in the project’s geographic area. See Tool 4 for a sample survey for mentor recruitment.

Participant’s from the Malawi intergenerational mentoring activity.
Tool 3. Sample Scope of Work of Mentors

By enrolling in this program, mentors agree to commit to the following:

1. **Knowledge and skill building of the mentees.** Mentors will:
   - Work with mentees to identify policy advocacy issues
   - Support mentees to develop an advocacy action plan
   - Build mentees’ skills to effectively communicate and engage decisionmakers in the advocacy topic
   - Support mentees to identify evidence and ensure that arguments are grounded using data and facts that are tailored to different target audiences and presented in simple and effective ways

2. **Support the advocacy actions and networking of mentees.** Mentors will:
   - Support the mentees to engage in at least one group or individual advocacy action that involves stakeholders or policymakers
   - Engage mentees in at least one advocacy event, technical meeting, or networking opportunity they have not previously participated in
   - Support mentees to engage in a technical working group to enhance youth voices and perspectives on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues

3. **Commit to meeting program requirements.** Mentors will:
   - Meet at the agreed upon frequency for mentoring sessions to advance advocacy action plans
   - Engage with mentees consistently using digital platforms in between mentoring sessions
   - Report regularly via “check-ins” to host organization implementers to report on progress and identify needs
   - Engage in all required convenings with fellow mentors to share best practices, learnings, successes, and challenges in a group setting

Mentors will receive an honorarium of 30 Malawian kwacha per month for their participation.
## Tool 4. Sample Survey for Mentor Recruitment

*Complete the survey below to help us better understand your skills, experience, capacity, and ability to commit to the mentoring program.*

**Name:**

**What city/town are you currently based in?**

**Are there areas of the country you travel to frequently for personal or professional affairs?**

**Who is your current employer and what is your current position?**

Indicate your professional skills/expertise as it relates to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Check all that apply.

- [ ] Technical
- [ ] Advocacy
- [ ] Policy
- [ ] Accountability
- [ ] Other

Explain your SRHR expertise in more detail. Include whether there are any SRHR issues that are a particular focus for you.

**What SRHR networks or groups are you affiliated with? Are these networks/groups at the local, district, or national level?**

**What SRHR policy advocacy are you currently working on or have worked on in the past? At what level was this policy work focused (local, district, or national level)?**

**Do you have any experience working with young people ages 18–24?**

**What is the status of your mentoring experience? (check all that apply)**

- [ ] I have served as a formal mentor at work or through a program
- [ ] I have served as an informal mentor
- [ ] I have never mentored anyone
- [ ] I have been a mentee

If you have mentoring experience, briefly explain the type of mentoring you provided.

**Can you commit to engage as an active mentor for a minimum of one year, the duration of the program?**

**Can you commit to attend the launch workshops in their entirety?**
Mentee Selection

Similar to mentor selection, when selecting the mentee cohort consider the requisite knowledge, skills, experience, and networks participants must have in order to be successful in the program (see Box 11). Mentees need to have some experience with influencing and existing connections to networks to initiate their advocacy action plans, even though they will be guided and supported by their mentors. If mentees have limited knowledge of national policies impacting SRHR, and/or are new to implementing advocacy action plans then trainings should focus on strengthening capacity in these areas.

Similar to the process for identifying and selecting mentors, developing selection criteria and a clear scope of activities that outlines mentees’ commitments, expectations, and program timeline will help mentees understand both their specific role and the program’s approach from the very beginning. This activity scope can be included in an application for mentees, which can be distributed virtually through youth-focused civil society organizations, youth-led organizations, and youth networks in the country or region of focus. The application should be both youth-friendly and easy to complete. If possible, it should also be mobile-friendly as many young participants may apply via mobile phone. Finally, the application should clearly state whether young people will receive any compensation for their participation (beyond airtime and travel support).

Box 11. Tips for Mentee Selection

- Mentees should be selected based on their prior experiences working on advocacy issues that are pertinent to SRHR for youth
- Mentees should have demonstrated leadership experiences that they will likely continue upon completion of the mentorship program
- Mentees should represent a diverse range of community stakeholders and understand that the mentorship program is meant to help supplement their current and future efforts
Training Workshop(s)

The delivery of a comprehensive training workshop for all participants is a critical step in setting up a successful intergenerational mentorship program and will support participants to thrive in their role as a mentor or mentee. Tailoring trainings to the specific needs of the selected mentors and mentees will ensure participants are equipped with the competencies and tools needed to successfully carry out their role. Table 5 illustrates critical learning areas for mentors and mentees identified under the Malawi program. The following sections highlight a few of the training sessions that were found to be especially useful in Malawi’s intergenerational mentoring workshops.

Table 5. Critical Areas of Learning by Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Mentees</th>
<th>Mentors and Mentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theory and key concepts of mentoring</td>
<td>• Theory and key concepts of advocacy</td>
<td>• Program commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Core mentoring skills</td>
<td>• Introduction to policy</td>
<td>• Relationship development and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Youth development</td>
<td>• Introduction to accountability</td>
<td>• Self-care and setting healthy boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing a mentoring plan</td>
<td>• Core skills for policy advocacy</td>
<td>• Intergenerational dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics and confidentiality</td>
<td>• Effective leadership and communication skills</td>
<td>• Understanding the current SRHR policy landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resource mapping</td>
<td>• Network mapping</td>
<td>• Advocacy action planning</td>
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</tbody>
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Training: All Participants

**Program commitments:** All participants—mentors and mentees alike—need to be clear about program goals, guidelines, and parameters as well as the roles they are expected to undertake. Program implementors have an important role in ensuring that participants have information about those with whom they will work, as well as appropriate expectations regarding the types of activities and relationships in which they will be engaged. They also need to accurately convey the level and types of support that participants can expect from support staff. Participants from the Malawi pilot found that sharing this information at the beginning of the training was critical to help them think about and develop their individual and joint goals at the start of the mentorship program.

**SRHR and youth policy landscape:** Ensuring that all participants have a strong understanding of the current SRHR and youth policy landscape is essential for mentees to excel in their advocacy efforts and to equip mentors to provide additional support. Training can include sessions that focus on the current policy context, including an overview of the international commitments and policy frameworks the country has signed on to, as well as the relevant laws and national policies that impact SRHR and young people. Given that mentors should have strong knowledge of the SRHR and youth policy advocacy landscape as part of their selection criteria, the depth and focus of the policy landscape sessions may differ for mentors and mentees. However, both mentors and mentees found policy sessions to be critical to their
success in the mentorship program. Table 6 provides illustrative examples of the types of policies reviewed with both mentors and mentees in the Malawi activity.

Table 6. Example of the SRHR and Youth Policy Landscape for Malawi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Commitments and Policy Frameworks Ratified by Malawi</th>
<th>Laws Related to Youth</th>
<th>National Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>• Penal Code</td>
<td>• 2020 Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>• Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, 2010</td>
<td>• Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African Youth Charter</td>
<td>• Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2006</td>
<td>• National Youth Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African Youth Decade 2009–2018 Plan of Action</td>
<td>• Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, 2015</td>
<td>• National Health Policy (2012) and National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2011–2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• African Union Agenda 2063—The Africa We Want</td>
<td>• Education Bill, 2013</td>
<td>• HIV and AIDS Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>• Employment Act, No. 6, 2000</td>
<td>• Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy (revised 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agenda 2063</td>
<td>• The Vocational, Entrepreneurial and Technical Training Act, 1999</td>
<td>• National Youth Friendly Health Services Strategy (2015–2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gender Equality Act, 2013</td>
<td>• Malawi Child Protection Strategy (2012–2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adolescent Girls and Young Women Strategy (2017–2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Costed Implemented Plan for Family Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentors in the Malawi activity particularly appreciated sessions that highlighted new policy achievements, initiatives, or challenges affecting young people at the national, regional, and local levels. Incorporating a policy panel with SRHR policy experts from national and subnational ministries (ministries of health, gender, or youth) and relevant civil society or youth-led organizations, and including well-known policy advocates who are at the forefront of the SRHR policy advocacy space, can be a great way to strengthen participants’ knowledge of the current policy landscape. This type of session will not only connect mentors and mentees to new stakeholders but can help mentors better support mentees when working to identify SRHR policy issues affecting young people in the local context. Tool 5 provides an example of a policy panel session held for mentors as part of the Malawi training workshops.
Tool 5. Sample Expert Policy Panel

Session audience: Mentors

Session objectives:
- Ensure mentors have up-to-date knowledge on the policy environment including recent policy-level wins.
- Highlight continued policy- and implementation-level challenges that affect young peoples’ access and utilization of SRHR services.
- Understand current government, donor, and implementer priorities focused on SRHR for young people.
- Unpack the need for meaningful youth engagement for SRHR.

Session overview: This session is proposed as a moderated panel discussion among key stakeholders working in the SRHR policy space. The goal is to engage mentors in a lively discussion focused on current developments, successes, and challenges in the policy environment affecting young peoples’ SRHR. The panel will focus on ministry priorities and policy-level efforts, donor priorities, current programs focusing on SRHR for young people, key advocacy efforts, and major challenges stakeholders face. Panelists will identify and share areas of opportunity for meaningful youth participation within their work. The panel discussion will be followed by a networking break to allow mentors the opportunity to meet with the participating stakeholders.

Sample questions for panelists:
- What do you consider to be the most important policy “wins” or policy changes to increase young peoples’ access and utilization of SRHR services (national versus subnational level)?
- Based on your work, especially with young people at the community level, what are the challenges or gaps you see following these policy wins?
- In the current SRHR-related political environment, where would you like to see more meaningful engagement of youth advocates? How can we better get youth involved in these areas?
- What do you see as the most critical skills and knowledge that young people need to better participate in meaningful engagement with high-level policyholders around SRHR? How do you think the mentors here can be most effective in supporting emerging young leaders to gain these skills and engage these stakeholders?
- In your opinion, what is young peoples’ role in monitoring policy implementation and holding decisionmakers accountable for the commitments described in policies and strategies? What opportunities do you see for young people to get involved in this space?
- Given that policy implementation requires significant donor support, can you tell us about your funding priorities and how they align with the challenges that you're hearing today? How are you adapting your funding opportunities and programming to meet the decentralized policy environment to ensure that national policies are implemented or enforced at the district and local level?
**Policy advocacy process:** Sessions focused on a common approach to policy advocacy will prepare mentees with the foundational understanding and skills needed to begin designing and implementing an advocacy action plan and support mentors to feel confident in providing strong support as mentees continue along this process. The advocacy action plans aim to help the mentees define their goals, advocacy objectives, and concrete steps to take to achieve those objectives. Developing an advocacy action plan allows the young advocates to try out policy advocacy concepts themselves and apply the new knowledge and skills they learn through the launch workshop and mentoring sessions. The advocacy action plan will provide the foundation for the mentoring relationship, helping to define where and how the mentor can support the mentee to improve their advocacy efforts.

Policy advocacy sessions may include focus areas such as identifying and selecting policy issues, setting SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-sensitive) goals and objectives, defining the target audience, developing messages, and creating an advocacy action plan. If the mentees will be developing their action plan in a specific template, both the mentee and mentor trainings should include an in-depth discussion on how to use the template. The mentor training should also include practical sessions on how to support mentees through each advocacy step. This will give mentors experience with the tool and strengthen their capacity to guide mentees through the advocacy action planning process. It will also help mentors support mentees in keeping their advocacy action plan feasible and focused. See Box 12 for highlights from action planning in Malawi. Mentees in particular found advocacy skill-based sessions in line with the advocacy action plan template to be essential for building their confidence to advocate effectively.

**Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries:** In order to foster healthy and acceptable relationships, specific boundaries must be in place, including those consistent with the safeguarding measures previously discussed. Both mentors and mentees need to build the skills and confidence needed to identify and express their own boundaries, while also listening to and respecting the boundaries set by others. For participants in the Malawi intergenerational mentorship, setting boundaries was a new concept that both mentors and mentees highly appreciated.

Setting clear parameters between mentors and mentees will help them determine what is acceptable engagement and establish a healthy relationship where they feel respected and valued. Mentors and mentees should have an honest conversation about how they like to
communicate, what hours of the day are appropriate, where they feel comfortable meeting, and if they have the capacity and interest to do more than what is required by the program. In many contexts there can be cultural traditions or societal expectations that are deeply rooted in respecting adults and therefore deferring to them at all times. It’s important for mentors to think about their own expectations and understand that mentees will have their own as well. It is critical for both mentors and mentees to feel confident speaking up if they feel those boundaries are not being respected. This is particularly important for female participants. If open dialogue and a safe space is established from the very beginning it can help mentors and mentees address issues down the road, and help participants feel confident when providing constructive criticism or recommendations on how to improve the relationship. Relationships are complex and change over time so revisiting ways of working as the relationship grows is advised.

**Mentor Training**

Mentor training should be mandatory and provide mentors with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to be an effective mentor, strengthening their capacity to support mentees as they execute their policy advocacy action plans. Sessions may introduce key mentoring concepts, core mentoring skills, and strategies for relationship development, mapping resources, and ethics and confidentiality. The training sessions can be structured in a way that provides mentors with hands-on practice to utilize the acquired knowledge and skills in a safe setting with peers before working directly with mentees. The practical experience will help improve mentorship capacity and build confidence in the cohort.

Box 13 provides links to sample mentoring curriculums for ideas on sessions and activities. Mentors in the Malawi intergenerational mentorship program found the following sessions to be particularly important:

1. **Understanding the characteristics of a good mentor:** It is particularly important for mentors to understand that a mentor’s role is not to tell a mentee what to do but instead to support their growth and help guide them in the right direction. Box 14 lays out some characteristics of a good mentor.

2. **Practicing intergenerational dialogue:** Effective communication is critical for a mentor to be successful in building the knowledge and skills of younger mentees. Mentors need to be able to discuss information and breakdown difficult concepts in a youth-friendly manner.
3. **Respecting youth perspectives:** Mentors and mentees may have differing perspectives simply due to their age difference. Adults do not always treat young people with respect and there can be an underlying belief that adults know what is best. Sometimes (consciously or unconsciously) adults use words or take actions that disempower youth. In order to have an open, respectful dialog, mentors need to treat young people as they would another adult.

4. **Practicing active listening skills:** Active listening is a critical component of any mentorship relationship. It is even more critical for intergenerational mentoring as adults often forget to utilize this skill when working with younger individuals. It’s critical for mentors to listen, not interrupt, be open to learning from their mentees, and not assume they as mentors have all the answers.

Finally, the mentors in Malawi found that incorporating team building activities into their training helped the mentor cohort bond as a group. Throughout the program many mentors will experience similar challenges with their mentees and can support each other over the course of the program. When designing the mentor training it is recommended to include activities that build personal relationships and comradery between mentors.
Mentee Training

Much like the mentors, youth participants should take part in a comprehensive training to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to be an effective SRHR policy advocate. Training sessions will depend on the level of policy, advocacy, and SRHR experience that your selected youth have prior to joining the program. However, sessions should include a variety of subjects such as (1) introducing the policy environment for SRHR and young people in the context in which you are working, (2) introducing policy advocacy and the steps to developing an advocacy strategy, as discussed previously, (3) how to build a network, and (4) how to hold policymakers and leaders accountable. Box 15 provides sample curriculums for ideas on other sessions and activities. Once participants have this foundational understanding, they can begin to learn the steps to develop their own advocacy strategy as a part of this mentorship program.

In addition, ensure that the training provides space for young people to think about and prepare for their mentorship relationship. When the mentees meet their mentors, they need to be ready to discuss their hopes, expectations, commitments, and boundaries for their mentorship relationship. The training should, therefore, provide them the time and tools needed to think through each of these dimensions and determine what they feel is required to have a successful relationship and mentoring experience. In addition to the core advocacy and policy sessions, mentees in the Malawi program found sessions on the following topics to be particularly important:

1. **Effective leadership and communication skills**: Effective communication is critical for mentees to be successful in building a strong relationship with their mentor and engaging a diverse set of stakeholders. Mentees need to be able to feel comfortable speaking up as a leader, effectively asking important questions, and sharing their perspectives as a young advocate while being respectful of and appreciating the older and more experienced individuals with which they are working.

2. **Network mapping**: To be successful as an advocate, mentees need a strong understanding of the diverse network of stakeholders that influence their policy issue. Supporting mentees to develop a stakeholder map that helps to breakdown stakeholder
involvement and decision-making power is an effective way to help them identify target decisionmakers, determine who and where to gather information from, and establish connections with influential advocates with similar advocacy initiatives.

3. **Message development and delivery:** Practicing message development and delivery will prepare mentees as they embark on their advocacy journey. The mentees from the Malawi pilot found that participating in role plays with different stakeholders who pushed back against their advocacy ask helped them build stronger messages backed with clear and concise evidence that was tailored toward their specific audience.

4. **Building mentee-to-mentee relationships:** Incorporating team building activities into the mentee training helped the mentee cohort bond as a group. Throughout the program many mentees experienced similar challenges with their advocacy plans and supported each other over the course of the program. When designing the mentee training, HP+ recommends including activities that build personal relationships and comradery between mentees.

**Mentee self-assessment:** HP+ recommends mentees complete a self-assessment of their skills and knowledge before and after the mentee training. The self-assessment will help implementers understand what the mentees have learned throughout the workshop and identify areas that may not be fully understood. Implementers can then use this knowledge to provide further support to both mentees and mentors in these areas. It will also help the mentees determine which areas and skills they feel confident in and identify areas that may need to be developed further. Completing this self-assessment prior to working with their mentor will support mentees to start to think about their mentorship goals and identify areas that they want to prioritize in their mentorship sessions. Tool 6 illustrates a self-assessment form from the Malawi program.
Tool 6. Mentee Self-Assessment Tool

Answer each question to:

- Rate your proficiency on scale of 1 to 5 (1 = needs improvement, 5 = highly proficient)
- Answer if you would commit time to develop this skill (check yes or no)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring and Relationship Skills</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to maintain a mentoring relationship</td>
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<td>Setting and achieving goals and timelines set</td>
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<td>Ability to accept and respect boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<th>Knowledge and Skills</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
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<td>Setting advocacy objectives</td>
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<td>Communicating clearly in writing</td>
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<td>Networking skills</td>
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<td>Communication skills</td>
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<td>Journaling</td>
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<td>Developing messages</td>
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In which areas do you feel you need the most improvement?

Are there areas you would like to prioritize to work on with your mentor?
Launching and Rolling out the Mentorship Relationship

Pairing Mentors and Mentees

There is no right way to match mentors and mentees. Key factors to consider when matching is skill level, issue interest, age difference, and geography (see Box 16 for an example from Malawi). Matching more experienced mentors with mentees who need more guidance and support can prove effective in helping the mentee build their skills and keep pace with their peers. Other considerations include matching based on issue interest so mentors can provide more targeted support in a topic area they have expertise in. Geography is another major factor in creating matches. In-person mentoring has great benefits; however, young people are more likely to be transient at this stage in their life and may move to different parts of the country for school, work, or to support family members. Anticipating migration and building in the flexibility to switch mentor/mentee pairs or conduct virtual mentorship is recommended when working with this demographic.

Box 16. Example from the Malawi Mentoring Activity: Mentorship Pairs

In the Malawi activity, program staff worked together with mentors to pair them with mentees. Mentors were provided information on the mentees, including their issues of interest, self-identified advocacy experience level, and geography. Mentors were then able to discuss which mentees they were best able to support. The mentors worked together to ensure each mentor had three mentees. Since the program included in-person components, the mentors placed emphasis on being in the same or nearby geographic location. The mentors also ensured that the mentees’ areas of interest aligned with their experience and expertise. Finally, because all the mentors in the program were female and felt less comfortable mentoring young men, the mentors took gender into account when creating matches. The mentors decided that each mentor would be paired with one male mentee and two female mentees.

Mentees were notified with information about their mentor including their background and experience, as well as the reasoning for pairing them together, prior to their first meeting at the launch training.

Launching the Mentoring Relationship

A key aspect of mentoring is building a foundation for a strong relationship between mentors and mentees. Training sessions during the launch workshop should allow structured time for mentors and mentees to build a relationship and get to know each other personally. Mentors and mentees need to understand each other’s background, advocacy work, existing networks, and what drives them to affect change in their community. A strong bond that is established from the outset will result in more effective mentoring throughout the program and can ensure greater accountability between mentors and mentees.

Tools 7, 8, and 9 are sample mentoring session worksheets to guide mentorship sessions during the relationship launch.
### Tool 7. Mentoring Session 1—Setting Norms

**Session goal:** Establish ways of working between mentors and mentees by referencing program commitments completed by mentor and mentee. Establish expectations and ways of working.

**Mentee name:**

**Getting to know each other:**

| Introduce yourself and share some personal and professional things about yourself. |
| What motivated you to join this activity? |

**Relationship expectations/setting boundaries:**

| What do you hope to get out of this relationship? |
| How will you build and maintain this relationship? |
| Do either of you have any relationship boundaries that you want to set now? *(These may be adapted as you continue your relationship.)* |

**Establishing meetings and communicating:**

| Where are each of you located? Are you able to meet in-person or will your meetings take place virtually? What concerns do you have about this? |
| What are your preferred methods of communication (phone, WhatsApp, etc.)? |
| How often will we connect? When and for how long (weekends, evenings)? |
| Are there any boundaries to set with regard to communication (e.g., don’t call after 9 p.m.)? |
| Are there any challenges with communication (e.g., young person doesn’t have a phone)? |
### Tool 8. Mentoring Session 2—Personal Mentorship Goals

**Session goal:** Setting personal mentorship goals is extremely important in a mentoring relationship to identify the skills, experiences, and knowledge mentees would like to gain through the experience to become stronger advocates. Mentees have completed a self-assessment to evaluate their knowledge and skills in SRHR and policy advocacy. Discuss with your mentee areas where they feel they need more knowledge or capacity building. This can also be based on what they learned at the training, not just the assessment.

**Mentee name:**

**Understanding mentees’ knowledge and capacity:** Together with your mentee review their self-assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In which areas did your mentee give themselves a high score in the self-assessment? Why did the mentee choose this score?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In which areas did the mentee give themselves a low score in their self-assessment? Why did they give these scores?</td>
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<tr>
<td>In which areas does your mentee feel they need/want support to build knowledge or skills? Are there any areas they would want to prioritize first?</td>
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**Mentorship goals:**

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<th>Three personal goals your mentee will work on through the mentorship program</th>
<th>How will success be measured?</th>
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How will your mentee’s personal mentorship goals (above) help improve their skills as an advocate?

What can you do as a mentor to support your mentee to achieve these goals?
Tool 9. Mentoring Session 3—SRHR Advocacy Interests

**Session goal:** Identifying specific areas for SRHR policy advocacy can be challenging. It is important to understand your mentees’ interests, knowledge, and skills in order to support them in their process to identify and define SRHR advocacy interests. Mentees have completed a self-assessment to evaluate their knowledge and skills in SRHR and policy advocacy. Discuss with them areas where they feel they need more knowledge or capacity building. This can also be based on what they learned at the training, not just the assessment.

**Mentee name:**

**SRHR issues of interest:**

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<th>What SRHR issues interest you the most?</th>
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<td>Do you have an idea for what issue you will select for your advocacy work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you feel there is a policy advocacy opportunity related to this issue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you feel you need support in building your technical knowledge about this issue? In what areas?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know how to find evidence related to this issue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How can I best support you in selecting your issue?</td>
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How to Mentor Youth to Advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Maintaining the Mentoring Relationship

**Establish consistent meeting times:** Once it is determined how often the mentors and mentees will meet, each pair should set a specific time each month for connecting. Work, school, and personal commitments will impact schedules so the meeting time may need to be changed periodically. Having a set time on the calendar will help maintain consistency and hold both mentors and mentees accountable to each other. If mentors and mentees can’t meet in-person, encourage them to connect virtually.

**Communicate using relevant platforms:** Mentors and mentees should communicate via platforms they are already using—it can be difficult to engage participants on a new platform that they’re not using daily. Applications with SMS, phone, and video functionality that require limited data that are commonly used in the geographic context are the most useful tools to utilize (see Box 17). Applications with chat features will allow mentors to support mentees outside of their formal monthly check-ins and allow the project implementer to stay in regular communication with mentors to capture and share successes and troubleshoot challenges. The host organization’s youth safeguarding policy should be considered when selecting and using virtual platforms to ensure communication is properly monitored and to mitigate risk for the mentees.

**Box 17. Staying Connected Using Digital Platforms**

In the Malawi mentoring activity, mentors and mentees stayed connected using a moderated WhatsApp group. Engaging in this way proved to be highly effective for staying connected, sharing opportunities, successes, and challenges, and motivating each other. Both mentors and mentees regularly shared SRHR capacity building opportunities and events to engage in SRHR influencing. Furthermore, it provided a safe space for mentees to find encouragement and support from their peer network.

**Support the implementation of advocacy action plans:** It’s important to recognize that the amount of time spent at various steps in the advocacy process will vary depending on each mentee, mentor, and action plan. Some pairs will spend a lot of time doing research and building their evidence base, while others will focus their energy on connecting with groups and networks working on the same issue. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to policy advocacy and the mentors will need to be flexible with how much time they spend with the mentee at each stage of the advocacy process. It’s also important to prepare for roadblocks that mentees will inevitably come up against. These are the perfect opportunities for mentors to add real value. For example, if a mentee is trying to gather public data from a health facility and is asked for payment, the mentor can help the mentee access the data using professional channels they may have access to. Some mentees may also get stuck at various stages of the advocacy process and mentors may need to spend additional time at that stage strengthening their capacity.

**Build mentee agency:** Throughout the life of the program, the mentors should be focused on building the agency of the mentees. It can be hard to execute an advocacy action plan for the first time and mentees will need support developing and refining their approach at each stage of the process. Mentors should help build agency, confidence, and capacity by guiding mentees,
offering support (see Box 18), and helping to map out next steps in the process in a way that gives mentees space to make their own decisions. Mentors should not be prescriptive or rigid when guiding mentees—the goal is to provide targeted support while allowing mentees to lead and execute their advocacy action plans.

**Box 18. Supportive Mentoring Opportunities**

1. When mentees are preparing to meet with a stakeholder, such as a district health officer, mentors can help them with their talking points. This could include practicing their elevator pitch, preparing a synopsis of their data to support their argument, making the ask, or proposing actions and next steps. Mentors and mentees can role play prior to the meeting to build the mentee’s confidence.

2. When mentees are gathering data, it may feel daunting to approach a health facility or community leader to ask for data and reports. If a mentor/mentee pair is in the same geographic area they can plan to approach the person or institution together. Mentees can lead the conversation and make the ask, with mentors present to provide support should it be needed. This approach can help mentees feel supported and strengthen their capacity to approach institutions and stakeholders with confidence. Mentees should represent a diverse range of community stakeholders and understand that the mentorship program is meant to help supplement their current and future efforts.

**Host Organization Support to Mentors**

The program team must provide consistent support to mentors as they work to strengthen the capacity of mentees, engage them in new networks, and support the implementation of policy advocacy actions. Host organization staff overseeing the project should check-in personally with mentors at least monthly to provide targeted, individual support, as mentors will need structured touch points in order to stay on track. Suggested questions to guide these conversations are included in Box 19. Real-time feedback from mentors will allow the program to adapt and respond to the specific needs and specific contexts of mentors and mentees and ensure the success of the program.

In addition, the program team should build in structured opportunities for the mentors to share and learn from each other as well as celebrate successes together. The host organization may consider bringing mentors together for quarterly meetings to provide space to connect in-person and continue to cultivate the mentor peer network. Encourage mentors to connect with each other through a virtual community of practice outside of formal check-ins and meetings as an additional layer of support. These opportunities for sharing experiences, challenges, and best practices among the cohort will help all mentors learn and grow in their role.
Closing Out the Mentoring Relationship

As the program approaches the end it is important to establish clear guidelines for closing out or transitioning the mentoring relationship. Just because the program is ending doesn’t mean the mentoring relationships have to dissolve. Some relationships will disband naturally when the advocacy work is finished, but some mentors and mentees may want to maintain their relationship for months or even years after the formal program ends. In preparation for closeout, set clear deadlines and expectations for when the advocacy action plans should be complete. Not everyone will be on the same timeline and those who have not met their advocacy goal should be encouraged to continue, if possible. During the final month, mentors and mentees should develop a plan to close out, report on the work, and discuss if and how the relationship will continue. A graduation or celebration to recognize the efforts, policy changes, and strengthened capacity of mentors and mentees should be planned. Certificates that signify the completion of the program are often expected and it’s recommended that certificates and other tokens of appreciation are given out if budget allows. Tool 10 is a sample worksheet to support mentors as they close out their formal mentoring relationship; Tool 11 provides a sample closing meeting agenda.

Box 19. Suggested Questions for Check-ins between Host Organization and Mentor

- How is the mentee relationship going this month? Is the mentee communicating on a regular basis?
- How is the mentee doing with advancing the advocacy action plan?
- Are there any notable advancements or successes with the mentee’s advocacy action plan this month?
- In which areas does the mentee need more targeted capacity strengthening?
- How can the next mentoring session be focused to develop their capacity in these areas?
- Are there challenges that the mentee is experiencing? What strategies can be recommended to overcome these challenges?
- Are there challenges with your relationship with the mentee? How do you plan to address these challenges?
- Are there any areas you feel you need capacity strengthening support as a mentor?
- Are there networks, organizations, or stakeholders you can connect your mentee to in order to advance their advocacy action plan?
- What’s one thing you’re proud of in your role as a mentor this month?
- Is there any other feedback you want to share about the mentoring relationship?
Tool 10. Close Out Guidance for Mentors

Scheduling a final meeting between the mentor and mentee is useful to reflect on the mentorship and think through next steps. Prior to your last meeting, review the goals set for the mentorship and the mentees’ advocacy goals. Think about what goals have been completed and which ones the mentee can continue working on after the mentorship concludes.

1. **Be straightforward and clear when you communicate** about the end of your commitment as a mentor. While you may regret ending the mentorship and have the urge to offer to continue informally, be honest about what you can realistically provide. For example, rather than saying, “Call me anytime,” you might say, “I wish you well. Please keep me posted about your progress with an occasional email.” If you both opt to continue the relationship as an informal mentor, it’s important to communicate expectations going forward. For instance:
   - How frequently do you want to communicate?
   - What are your preferred communication channels?
   - What kind of ongoing support is the mentee looking for? What kind of ongoing support is the mentor able to provide?

2. **As you conclude your support as a mentor, your mentee will appreciate if you reflect back on progress and changes since the beginning of the relationship.** By noticing and drawing attention to the mentee’s progress, you will provide encouragement that is likely to motivate more growth and action on the part of the mentee. Acknowledge challenges and obstacles that the mentee faced during your time together. Your recognition of the mentee’s efforts will help the mentee see their efficacy and capability in a new light. It will also demonstrate for you both the value that came from the relationship.
   - What have you and your mentee learned from your mentorship experience?
   - What successes/progress has your mentee had over the last year?
     - Where are they currently in their advocacy plan? What goals have they achieved over the last year?
   - What challenges have they faced over the last year?
     - What goals have they not yet achieved? What has limited their ability to achieve these goals?
   - Is there anything that could have improved your mentorship experience?
   - Do you have any advice for your mentee?

3. Many people find it helpful to end a mentoring relationship with a sense of purpose and direction for the future. This may also help your mentee move forward as you are concluding. Use the last session to **focus on future goals and the support systems that the mentee will put in place** to support continued development.
   - What advocacy goals would your mentee like to achieve in the next six months?
   - What can they continue to do over the next six months to achieve these goals without help from a formal mentor?
   - What do they need (e.g., resources, support, time) to achieve these goals?
   - What challenges do you expect they may face in the next six months? How might they prepare to meet these challenges?
### Tool 11. Sample 60-Minute Mentoring Closeout Meeting Agenda

- **10 minutes:** Reflect on the mentorship—What have you both learned?
- **40 minutes:** Talk about the future—What will the mentee’s next steps be?
  - Support mentees in developing goals for the future.
  - As a mentor, do you have any parting advice for the mentee?
- **5 minutes:** Have an open conversation around informal mentoring. Is this something you both are interested in?
- **5 minutes:** Thank each other and acknowledge each other’s contributions.
References

