



# MY STORY MY VOICE

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS!!!





## Save Generations Organization

Save Generations Organization (SGO), is a Rwandan development Non-Government Organization (NGO) dedicated to promote and advocate for children and women's rights in order to prepare, empower and equip the future generations.

This magazine was written and published by Save Generations Organization funded by Kvinna Till Kvinna in cooperation with Swedish Embassy.



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# *I*ntroduction

## *Greetings!*

Save Generations Organization (SGO) is pleased to present to you the magazine “Tuganire ku buzima bw’imyorokere” translated as “**Let’s talk about sexual reproductive health and rights**”, “*MY STORY, MY VOICE*”, which aims to encourage the culture of story sharing about SRHR among adolescents and youth and voicing out the issues that affect them on that matter. This gives to adolescents and youth the opportunity to share with their peers their stories of change in terms of knowledge, attitude and practices on SRHR, self-confidence, and positive masculinity for boys; and to advocate for their persisting issues that still limit them to exercise their SRH rights.

Information is power. Therefore, adolescents and youth being equipped with the right information on SRHR and being able to share those right information to their peers, enable the adolescents and youth make informed choices and decisions over their bodies, and increase them power to claim their SRH rights.

In this magazine you will find different stories of adolescents and youth, aimed at educating their peers and advocating for the issues that limit them to exercise their SRH Rights. This magazine contains different interesting topics on SRHR and it ends with educative message called “**HAHA UBWENGE**”

## *Smart knowledge*

How can you contribute to sharing this knowledge with your peers? Give them a magazine to read, also share with us your story by writing to us what helped you and put it in SRHR suggestion boxes hanged in your school. Remember to put your, school, your level of education, and your age, your sex, and next time if you want you can give us your story and share it with others.

**Don't miss it!!!!**

**Thank you!!!!**



## Is it necessary to talk about sexual reproductive health and rights?

**A**dolescents face many challenges Based on sexual reproductive health and rights including pregnancies, sexual transmitted diseases, dropping out of school, and so on, because many of them do not have accurate and reliable information for sexual reproductive health and rights due to different reasons, based on the culture, beliefs and even taboos. However, the lack of dialogue on these issues leads to the spread of rumors which is one of the reasons why adolescents do not know their right to access accurate information on sexual

Reproductive health and rights. But, knowing this makes them more knowledgeable about sexual reproductive health and rights, as well as making better choices and decision-making based on knowledge. Awareness of sexual reproductive health and rights has led adolescents to be informed and to make informed decisions about their bodies and their health in general. Some adolescents we met commented:

## Having information about sexual reproductive health and rights is my right



**M**y name is UWASE Adeline, I'm 19 years old, I'm a girl, I'm in senior 5 class, Department of Mathematics, Economics and Technology, at GS Ndera in Gasabo District.

From the lessons given by Save Generations Organization, I understood that having information on sexual reproductive health and rights is my right. I grew up thinking that talking about sexual reproductive health and rights is shameful. I couldn't have heard it or asked anything about any change on my body, yet I was very curious but embarrassed to ask because I didn't see it being discussed, it embarrassed me because it was considered as

a shame and a waste of culture, which made me think it was only for adults. Yet, it was not right but we should understand that having information on sexual reproductive health and rights is our right. Now I am not surprised by the changes on my body because I have enough information, I know how to make the right decision in my life, and no one can't take me where he wants. I know how to say Yes when it is necessary and No when it is not necessary. Sexual reproductive health and rights is not a taboo, as some believe, but it is our right as adolescents to know about it. For adolescents we still have difficulty obtaining information about sexual reproductive health and rights and that is our right, because sometimes culture and beliefs do not allow people to talk about sexual reproductive health and rights in public. Therefore, it is important that efforts be made in advocacy and education so that adolescents are able to cope with the challenges faced in sexual reproductive health and rights and its impact.

*UWASE Adeline*



My name is ISHIMWE Aimé, I am 15 years old, I am a boy, and I am a senior 1 year student at GS Ngamba in Kamonyi District. Before, I used to think that a boy with acne or having pimples on his body would be treated by unprotected sex with a girl who has not it. I was seeing changes on my body, I was curious to know why but I was afraid to ask my parents because I felt ashamed and it was not something to talk about.

After being taught by Save Generations Organization about sexual reproductive health and rights, I have learned that having unprotected sex with a girl does not cure acne or pimples as I suspected, but it is one of the possible changes in adolescence due to sexual hormones, so if you have unprotected sex, you can be at the risk of sexually transmitted infections or causing unwanted pregnancy. Now, I have the courage, because I have a clear understanding of the changes that take place in the body during adolescence and how to behave when I see those changes. Currently I can talk to my parents about sexual reproductive health and rights. But we still face the challenge of not getting enough and accurate information on sexual reproductive health and rights, thus making us rumored.

***Knowing information about sexual reproductive health and rights, especially for adolescents, is important and our right, it makes us more aware of making the right decisions for our bodies and preparing for a better future.***

***ISHIMWE Aimé***



## During adolescence there are physical changes in the body as the child grows older; for example, breast growth for girls and others, how do you react to these changes?



**M**y name is AGASARO Canthea, I am 12 years old, I am a girl, I am in Primary 5 at GS Ndera in Gasabo district. When I grew breasts, I was embarrassed and started walking with my shoulders bent to hide it, I was ashamed that people would see me that I have grown breasts and make fun of me.

I didn't know a time reaches and menstrual cycle comes, and the explanation of those changes, and how I would behave because no one has discussed it with me. After being taught by Save Generations Organization on sexual reproductive health and rights, I realized that there were physical changes during adolescence, which increased my knowledge and made me understand how to behave.

I would advise my adolescent friends that when you get any changes on your body, you can talk to your parents or guardians, or a teacher because they can advise you. I also urge parents or guardians to educate us about sexual reproductive health and rights because it is our right, which help us as adolescents to understand how we behave when we experience changes in our bodies.

**GASARO Canthea**

Adolescents, strive to have reliable information on sexual reproductive health and rights, because it is our right. It is important to be aware of the changes in our body as adolescents as they help us deal with sexual reproductive health and rights problems and their consequences.

## Self-confidence is very important!!!



**S**elf-confidence is very important for any person and to a girl child in particular, because it helps her to choose her own life and own decisions on her body. As soon as they understood self-confidence, some of the girls we spoke to explained to us that they had been able to discover their abilities and strengths, pointing out that there was a lot of evidence to show that a girl is able to set her own goals.

Having information on sexual reproductive health and rights is a right for all of us!!! Everyone has the right to make decisions about his sexual reproductive health and rights.



**M**y name is BENIMANA Odette, I'm 13 years old, I am a girl, I am in primary 6 at GS Ngamba in Kamonyi district.

Personally, I felt that I had no ability to achieve my desires; I did know that I could make proper decisions, especially on my body. After being taught by Save Generations Organization, I realized that I have the potential, that it is my right to make the right choices, such as saying yes or no when appropriate. I felt that I could not achieve my goals, I was desirous for better grades in school, but I did not have the ability to succeed in some of the major courses, now I can achieve my goals including success at school.

What I would say to my fellow adolescents is that we should be confident because we have the same strength and ability as our brothers, we should know our right to make our own choices, not others to make choices for us.

**BENIMANA Odette**

“I realized my right to make decisions and make my own choices”.

**M**y name is UMUTONI Vanessa, I am 19 years old, I am a girl, I am in senior 6 in the Department of Mathematics, Science and Economics at GS Kabuga catholic in Gasabo district.

I am proud that I am a girl who can stand to the right decisions I make on my body, which help me to fight for my dreams. Before I used to feel that it was difficult to make decisions, but now I know my right to make decisions and make my own choices based on what I want.



I had the courage to make right decisions for my body. Having the right to my choices helps me fight for my dreams.

My advice to my fellow girls, our life is in our hands, we have to think twice about everything we want to do, because we have the strength and ability to make the right choices for our lives, “today’s choices are our future lives”.

*UMUTONI Vanessa*



I used to feel that a girl was weak and incompetent, that she should listen to everything a boy told her, now I understood that I was capable, and I saw it in a way that I could make decisions for myself.

**M**y name is IRADUKUNDA Esperance, I am 18 years old, I am a girl, I am in senior 5 in the Department of Mathematics, Economics and Technology at GS Ndera in Gasabo District. As we were all born girls in our family, there is a way I grew up considering a boy as a super person. As girls, we were told that we would achieve nothing and we could do nothing, I grew up with that fear and I despised myself. I felt that in culture, the fact that the family gave birth to only girls is considered as a disgrace. Currently, understanding myself as a girl has rebuilt my confidence, giving me the force to make decisions and make the right choices, which will help me achieve my goals.



My fellow girlfriend, it is you to give direction to your life, and when you have a goal in life it makes you have a better tomorrow.

*IRADUKUNDA Esperance*

**S**ometimes adolescents are pushed back by one of the stereotypes that undermine the rights of adolescent girls based on culture, beliefs and taboos, where they grow up being educated that there are things they are not allowed to do, being told words that discourage them, thus reducing their ability to make decisions and make their own choices. It is necessary to continue to build the capacity of adolescents and understand their right to make good choices, to strive for them and thus to have the capacity to achieve their development. Everyone should be made to understand that respect for the rights of the adolescent girl is not compassion, it is what she deserves.



Of course, our role as boys is to protect our sisters from harm to their sexual reproductive health and rights.

**M**y name is NSABIMANA Innocent and I am a boy, I am in senior 6 MCE at GS Kabuga in Gasabo District. I used to think that sexual reproductive health and rights was only for girls, I didn't care about the role of boys in girls' problems. I thought that the consequences of being pregnant at a young age, dropping out of school, etc. were their fault because they were weak and unable to make decisions.

Often and often we boys ignored it, we are in different and in fact we contribute to the problems that girls face. The lessons we received from Save Generations Organization included "the role of boys in advancing the principle of gender equality in sexual reproductive health and rights". For me what has mostly benefited me, I understood that a boy has

No control over a girl's decisions about her body, "if she tells me no, I have to respect her and I will take her no". I am currently trying to educate my fellow boys, showing them that girls have the right to privacy in making decisions about what is going on their bodies, and sharing the truth about sexual reproductive health and rights.

**NSABIMANA Innocent**

**LET'S PROTECT OUR SISTERS FROM PREMATURE PREGNANCIES**

I want to ask my fellow boys that, we should change the perception that boys have more power than girls, and that we should also go and share the truth about sexual reproductive health and rights with our sisters without telling them rumors .

**NSHIMYIMANA Pacifique,**  
a boy studying in senior 6, mathematics, economics and Geography, in the school at Gs Bugoba in Kamonyi district.

# Haha ubwenge!!!

Smart knowledge!!!!

In Rwanda, it seems that adolescents and young people still face the challenge of getting unreliable information on the changes they face in the age group of 10-19 years. Adolescents are exposed to variety of wrong information from their friends and social media sites that are aimed at attracting business viewers. Parents and caregivers also do not have the culture of dialogue with children in the family in order to prepare them to deal with the challenges they face during adolescence to help them maintain and sustain their lives.

In particular, a teenager who is in the age of 10-19 meet many problems because the men and boys are also interested in order to have fun with her and end up destroying her life after getting her pregnant at a young age, contaminated by sexually transmitted diseases, engaging in unconscionable and prostitution, school dropout, drunkenness and addiction. It is therefore important that adolescents receive early sexual reproductive health and related rights. To be explained early on the changes they experience in their body, and to be urged to avoid sexual violence. Parents need to make sure that in the family is the first place the child should get reliable information about the changes that are taking place because today's parents have gone through this stage of adolescence in the past years, so they should share with their children as much as they can at that age and advise them.



A girl needs to know how to value herself among her friends, be purposeful in everything she does, and strive to achieve her goals and be able to thrive.

She must know that the gifts they deceive her with have no value except to mislead her and harm her. Men and boys also should play an important role in protecting adolescents and women from any form of violence and are characterized by helping them in everything, in domestic work and at school. In order for adolescents to be able to live a long life, they need to know how to say NO in front of deceivers, they need to be confident and prepare themselves for a better future. Whenever someone promises them a project, a job or a gift scammer, they should dare to tell it to their parents and caregivers, for advice.

Dr Anicet NZABONIMPA  
SRHR Expert



MY STORY,  
MY VOICE

# MAGAZINE