Connecting young women in Malawi to ICTs

Strengthening SRH information as a pathway to empowerment?

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are becoming increasingly influential in social, economic and political spheres and have also been recognised for their potential within health promotion, especially when targeting youth and adolescents. Despite the potential of these new technologies, there is a growing understanding of how prevailing inequalities between men and women and socio-cultural norms create barriers for women in accessing ICTs and forms a "gender digital divide". This qualitative case study used individual interviews and focus group discussion to investigate how projects use ICTs to address youth sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in Malawi. Bourdieu's theory of practice and Kabeer's concept of empowerment were applied to understand how socio-cultural norms influence young women's access to and use of ICTs and to explore how young women reflect upon their own empowerment in relation to ICT interventions for SRH promotion. The findings showed that socio-cultural norms underpin gendered inequalities in Malawi and translate into structures that impede women's use of ICTs to gain information about SRH. It further indicated that using ICTs to access SRH information can further their empowerment, both because of the increased knowledge and because of the skills and capabilities acquired when operating the devices.

Key words: Information and Communication Technologies, Sexual and Reproductive Health, socio-cultural norms, empowerment, gender inequalities

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AYPRA	Adolescent and Youth Power in Responding to Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS through ICT
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
SMS	Short Message Service
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TV	Television
UNFPA	United Nation Population Fund
YONECO	Youth Net and Counselling

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1 Introduction

Internet, computers, mobile phones and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become an important part of many people's daily lives and changed the way people worldwide interact and communicate with each other (Bindé, 2005). The rapid development of these devices and applications offers new opportunities to spread information and increase possibilities to use, produce and share knowledge. ICTs play a fundamental role within the globalisation process and many developing countries have put great emphasis on becoming part of this digitalised revolution (Weigel &Waldburger, 2004:18-20). ICTs are also prominent tools within health promotion since the use of these technologies offers a cost-effective way of conveying tailored health information to individuals and the possibility to connect patients and health care providers (Waldman & Stevens, 2015). Edouard and Edouard (2012) argue that ICTs play a prominent role in health promotion among youth because of young people's adaptability, familiarity with and high usage of these emerging technologies. Other advantages of ICTs such as low cost of delivery, flexibility, and anonymity also make ICT-based interventions highly suitable to address youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) (Djossa et al. 2011).

Young people's sexual and reproductive health is a major concern in Malawi and ICT-based initiatives to spread information and knowledge about SRH constitute an opportunity to address some of the challenges (UNFPA 2014). Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) is one of the most influential youth-focused local non-governmental organizations in Malawi and is working to empower youth, women and children and address SRH challenges through the use of different ICT-based tools (YONECO, 2016). Based on the premise of ICTs as instruments to potentially facilitate human development and enhance young people's empowerment, by studying participants as well as non-participants in YONECO's projects this study will contribute to the perspective that the use of ICTs should be seen and understood as a social practice. This thesis adopts a gender perspective to provide an understanding of the social contexts in which ICT use takes place and how young

women in Malawi use ICTs to access SRH information and reflect upon their own empowerment.

1.1 Research objective

The primary aim of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are used to meet SRH challenges among young women in Malawi, as well as how cultural and social norms effect their access to and use of these technologies. By studying projects that use ICTs to address adolescent and youth SRH issues in different ways, this case study is based on a qualitative research design and seeks to contribute to the current debate on the potential of ICTs in health promotion, and especially in the promotion of youth SRH. ICT-based SRH interventions represent a relatively new phenomenon and provide an interesting and timely opportunity to study a trend within international development through a specific case.

This thesis strives to explore how young women perceive ICT interventions for SHR promotion and their experiences of ICTs' ability to strengthen communication and information acquisition to meet the right of individuals to make informed decisions concerning their SRH. Employing the theoretical concept of women's empowerment and norm theory will bring greater insight to whether the use of ICTs strengthens the impact of these interventions, or whether the use of these tools and applications creates barriers that makes them less effective and limit women's potential benefits of these interventions. In order to meet the research objective, the following research questions will be employed.

- *How do social and cultural norms influence young women's access to and use of ICTs to seek SRH information?*
- *How do women perceive that ICT interventions for SRH promotion have affected their empowerment, in terms of capabilities and choices?*

1.2 Thesis Outline

The first chapter introduced to the case and presented the research objective and the research questions. The second chapter contextualizes the role of ICTs within SRH promotion, which includes a literature review of "the Gender Digital Divide", an overview of youth SRH in Malawi, and a more specific description of ICTs and SRH and the "Gender Digital Divide" in Malawi. This chapter also includes a presentation of the organisation in focus of this study and the different projects working with ICTs to promote SRH. Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework of Bourdieu's and Kabeer's concept and theories. Chapter four, the methodological section, describes the design of the study, the research strategies used and limitations and ethical considerations of the research. This is followed by an analysis of the empirical findings in chapter five, which are based on the theoretical framework to answer the research questions. Lastly, chapter six concludes the study by summarizing the findings and provide recommendations for future research.

2 Contextualizing

2.1 ICTs for sexual and reproductive health promotion

The term "Information and Communication Technologies" (ICTs) refers to a wide range of different technologies designed to access, process and transmit information. According to this definition, ICTs encompass traditional devices such as radios, telephones or TV as well as modern tools such as mobile phones, computers and the Internet (Weigel & Waldburger, 2004:19). ICTs offer a cost-effective way of conveying tailored and appropriate health information to a broad audience, as well as supporting clinical service delivery, providing new forms of data gathering for research and disease surveillance, as well as increasing access to different services by connecting providers and patients (Waldman & Stevens, 2015). The use of ICTs to promote SRH has increased in recent years due to improved access to these

technologies and applications in hard-to-reach places and among remote populations. Health promotion activities through ICTs for youths are often seen as promising and effective communication channels as youth easily adapt to new technologies and familiarize themselves with new devices and applications (Edouard & Edouard, 2012:197). There are also studies showing that young people favour technology-based HIV/AIDS prevention interventions (Djossa et al. 2011).

2.2 Gender digital divide

Despite the recognition of ICTs as powerful tools for socio-economic development and within health promotion, the potential of ICTs to reach certain groups are sometimes hindered by persistent socio-economic inequalities and unequal power relations (Geldof, 2011:69-70). Huyer and Sikoska (2003:2) argue that access to and distribution of ICTs are unevenly distributed both between and within countries. The differences between countries usually reflect an imbalance between developing and developed countries due to different levels of telecommunication infrastructure and knowledge base. The benefits of ICTs are also spread unevenly within countries because of differences in terms of access and other factors such as literacy levels, income, class, ethnicity, age and gender (*ibid.*). The great disparities in access to and use of ICTs between men and women are often referred to as "the gender digital divide" (Geldof, 2011:69-70).

The concept of "gender digital divide" describes differences in terms of access to and use of ICTs between men and women, and highlights the fact that ICTs effect men and women differently. It also points to the fact that women usually have less representation in decision-making processes related to ICTs (Hafkin & Taggart, 2001). The concept acknowledges that ICTs are not gender-neutral and that the use of ICTs reflects the wider socio-economic and cultural context underpinning women and men's roles within society (Huyer & Sikoska, 2003:16). As Fonseca (2010:26) points out, people's access to and use of ICTs is much more than just a question of connectivity since different skills and competencies are required to understand, learn, share and produce using these technologies. It is therefore important to understand the social context in which these technologies are being used in order to understand the

gendered differences in women and men's access to and use of them (Huyer & Sikoska, 2003:12).

Kwapong (2009:81) stresses that the constraints faced by African women are often reinforced by poverty, low levels of education and high levels of illiteracy, and that the most frequent users of ICTs consist of a small, educated urban elite. Hafkin and Taggart (2001:7) share this understanding and argue that "Women within developing countries are in the deepest part of the [digital] divide, further removed from the information age than are the men whose poverty they share" and that emphasis the need to understand the gendered constraints that women in developing countries are facing.

2.3 Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health in Malawi

Poor SRH of young people and adolescents in Malawi remains a major developmental challenge in the country. Many young people, especially girls, do not have adequate knowledge about SRH or access to health services. Furthermore, they are vulnerable to coercion into unwanted sex or marriage, thus putting them at risk of unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, dangerous childbirth and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV (UNFPA 2014). Poor sexual and reproductive health negatively affects not only the development of young people, but also the broader socio-economic development of the country and the region.

Many countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have made progress in trying to address this issue and improve access to SRH information and services for young people, but the progress has been limited and too many young people and adolescents still face barriers to reproductive health information and care (AFIDEP, 2015).

According to Wamoyi et al. (2014), one of the reasons for the limited success of these programs is the focus on individual risk behavior, instead of looking at the structural drivers and underlying factors that determine young people's sexual and reproductive health in Sub-Saharan Africa. Improving youths and adolescents' SRH means addressing some of the challenges young people face on a daily basis and empowering young people with knowledge and skills that enable them to exercise

their rights (UNFPA, 2014). Because of the limited effectiveness of previous interventions promoting SRH to adolescent and youths in Malawi, innovative intervention to optimize both the coverage and impact of SHR programs are being developed.

2.4 ICT usage and the Gender Digital Divide in Malawi

As one of the world's least developed countries with half of the population living below the poverty line, Malawi face many challenges regarding the implementation of ICTs (Worldbank, 2010). Despite the Government's efforts to improve the country's ICT infrastructure as part of their development agenda, connectivity remains a great issue for the diffusion of ICTs in Malawi, as Internet penetration in Malawi is only 6.1% of the total population whereas the average in Africa is 28.6% (Malawi.gov, 2013: IWS, 2015). A survey conducted in 2014 indicates that the households' access to ICTs in Malawi are still very limited and there are great disparities between urban and rural, as well as between men and women (NSO, 2014). Table 1 and 2 describes households' and individuals access to ICT equipment and services.

Table 1. Households' access to ICT equipment and services in percentage (2014)

	Mobile phone	Fixed phone	Radio	Television	Desktop computer	Laptop	Internet
Urban	85.1	4.2	61.7	46.3	17.8	16.1	29.4
Rural	40.2	0.5	42.2	6.2	0.5	0.8	3.4
Malawi	**45.5**	**1.0**	**44.5**	**10.9**	**1.4**	**2.6**	**6.5**

Source: NSO, 2014

Table 2. Individuals' access to ICT equipment and services in percentage (2014)

	Mobile phone	Owns radio	Watches TV	Use computers	Internet
Male	33.7	52.9	18.3	4.5	6.0
Female	34.2	23.6	17.3	3.9	5.2
Malawi	**34.0**	**44.4**	**17.7**	**4.1**	**5.6**

Source: NSO, 2014

Olatokun (2008) posits that even if many African countries acknowledges the potential of ICTs for foster social, economic and political development, ICTs have also widened the digital gap between men and women in some countries. Women in Malawi play an important role in the socio-economic growth of the country; however, they do not have the same opportunities as men when it comes to education, employment, healthcare and other services, which also affect their access to ICTs (Makoza & Chigona, 2013). Huyer and Sikoska (2003) argues that literacy rates can be understood as a precondition for ICT use and although Malawi in recent years has made progress in reducing the literacy gap between men and women, there is still a big difference. Estimates shows that 73% of men over 15 are literate, in comparison to 58.6% of the women in the same age group (UIS, 2015). Because of these disparities and disadvantages affecting women's access to ICTs, gender analysis are critical when implementing ICTs initiatives to realise the true potential of ICTs for women (Weigel & Waldburger, 2004).

2.5 YONECO's projects

Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) was established in September 1997 and is a local NGO with projects in 19 of the Malawi's 28 districts. The organization was founded to respond to the needs and challenges affecting children and youth, with the vision for "a self-reliant HIV and AIDS free society that respects democratic values and principles" (YONECO, 2016).

YONECO has several different projects aiming to improve youth and adolescents' access to SRH information and services. The project this study mainly focuses on is called Adolescent and Youth Power in Responding to Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS through ICT (AYPRA). Within this project, YONECO has distributed computers and Internet facilities at their drop-in centres to enable young people to access SRH through the use of these computers. The drop-in centres have three computers each with Internet connection (YONECO, 2015). The organisation does not only provide the technological devices needed to access the Internet, but also organises sessions to teach youth how to access the information they

need and to encourage their critical thinking skills in order to better be able to evaluate the information they find online.

The key-informants explained during my visits that YONECO also has different projects using other forms of ICTs to disseminate information about SRH, which also have been of interest in this study. Among the most popular is a radio station, which mixes music and talk shows with specific youth sessions, aimed at youth SRH-related issues. There is also a helpline based on a toll-free phone number and a Whatsapp line that young people can use to ask questions or to receive support and guidance in relation to their SRH. YONECO also uses a SMS system to reach young people and raise awareness about SRH issues. The participants in this study are both young women that have used the computers and Internet at the drop in centres, and young women who have used their mobile phones to access information through the helpline and Whatsapp line, and thus participated in YONECO's projects in different ways (Personal Communication, Ajasi Hussein, Programme Manager at YONECO Zomba, and Sewenthe Chipofya, District Manager at YONECO Ntcheu).

3 Theoretical framework

Naila Kabeer's (1999, 2001, 2005, 2012) understanding of empowerment and Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 2001) theory of practice constitutes the theoretical framework of this study. Bourdieu's theory will contribute to understanding the role of socio-cultural norms and processes through which norms are either entrenched or changed, whereas Kabeer's writing on empowerment will be used to understand the empowerment process based on individual and structural changes. These two strains of theory are built on a similar understanding of the structure-agency dialectics and will be combined to provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issues analysed. In the following section, I will discuss key insights from Kabeer's and Bourdieu's theories and how I will combine them in this thesis.

3.1 SRH and empowerment

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are critical for both men and women to lead healthy lives and be able to freely participate in social, economic and political activities. Too often, women and girls do not have the right to control and freely decide over matters related to their sexuality and reproduction. Because of the broad implications of SRH on women's private and public life, SRH is often described as a prerequisite for women's empowerment (IPPF, 2015). Although the concept of empowerment is a debated term with a variety of different definitions, many scholars seem to agree that being able to act upon one's own personal will and values is an important component of empowerment (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007:383). According to Kabeer (2005:16), the process of women's empowerment lies in agency: to exercise choices of one's own will and challenge current power relations. The ability to make free choices is therefore central to the analysis of women's empowerment. Kabeer (1999:437) makes a distinction between first- and second- order choices, arguing that the first-order choices are "strategic life choice which are critical for people to live the life they want". As an example of strategic life choices, Kabeer (1999) cites the choice of whether to marry, and if so to whom, as well as the choice to have children, which implies a direct link between women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health. Hence, women's empowerment is perceived as the expansion of their ability to make strategic life choices, and that is also how the concept of empowerment should be understood in this thesis.

3.2 The concept of women's empowerment

The main reason for the multiple definitions and current lack of clarity concerning the meaning of 'empowerment' is a result of different interpretations of the notion of power. According to Ibrahim and Alkire (2007:384), many scholars understand empowerment as "an increase in power, understood as control or real ability to effect change". Coming back to Kabeer's (1999:435) writings, empowerment is defined as "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability", which emphasizes the process of change from being

disempowered to empowered. Central to this understanding of empowerment is the expansion of agency, which refers to individuals' ability to actively exercise choices of their own and challenges current power relations (Kabeer, 2001:19). Empowerment seen from an agency perspective can also be related to Sen's (1985a) definition of agency as the freedom of choice based on a person's individual goals and values (in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007:384). Sen (1999:192) focuses on women's agency and stresses that equal access to information, education, and employment will strengthen women's agency and initiate empowerment. At the individual level, empowerment may therefore be seen as the development of personal self-esteem and the expansions of people's capabilities (Sen, 1999).

3.2.1 Agency

The term 'agency' is used, according to Kabeer, to define the process through which individual choices are made. Kabeer (1999:438) defines 'agency' as the "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them". The ability to make meaningful and active choices therefore requires possible alternatives as well as resources for individuals to be able to choose between the different options, pointing out what Kabeer (2001:19) describes as a logical association between poverty and disempowerment. However, 'agency' encompasses more than just the action of exercising choice and also refers to individuals' sense of agency, describing the motivation and meaning behind the choices. The 'sense of agency' is important to describe both the observable action, and what makes individuals feel like they are able to carry out those choices. In the upcoming section, we will see how this dimension of agency corresponds to Bourdieu's (1977) idea of internalized habitus, which determines whether people consider certain alternatives to be possible.

3.2.2 Resource

Kabeer's (1999, 2001) definition of resources includes material, social and human resources, which correspond to a large extent to Bourdieu's (1986) description of different capital forms. This definition encompasses more than just conventional

economic resources and focus instead on the different types of resources that are needed to enhance individuals' ability to exercise choices. The distribution of and access to these various resources are determined by different norms, rules and practices which prevail within the different institutional domains. Within those institutions, some actors are given authority over others because of the different norms, rules and practices. Kabeer (2001:20) argues that the processes in which individuals' gain access to resources are important from an empowerment perspective: "Empowerment entails a change in the terms on which resources are acquired as much as an increase in access to resources".

3.2.3 Achievements

Achievements are described by Kabeer (2001:19) as the expansion of personal capabilities and the enhancement of choices. Thus, achievements can be understood as the outcome of choices and result of enhanced resources and agency (Kabeer, 2001: 19). An expansion of agency and increased resources can also be referred to what Sen (1985b) describes as 'capabilities': " […] the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of 'being and doing" (in Kabeer, 1999: 438). The ability to realise these achievements reflects a certain dimension of power, whereas a failure to achieve them because of an asymmetric distribution of the underlying capabilities reflects a disempowered situation (Kabeer, 2001:22). The notion of 'capabilities', described by Amartya Sen (1999), can therefore be seen as the skills and knowledge people need to develop opportunities and freedoms to exercise choices of their own.

3.3 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (1977)[1] can be understood both as a critique of the methods used within social science and as a general sociological account of how

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[1] Original titel *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle,* (1972)

society, institutions, and social structures are shaped by human action (Bourdieu, 1977). Krais (2006:129) argues that the core of Bourdieu's theory of practice consists not of structures but of agents and that his work offers an explanation of how interactions between agents should be understood. Although Bourdieu (1977) acknowledges how structures influence and govern individuals' behaviour, he does not adhere to the pure structuralist perspective, implying that people act strictly in accordance with structured patterns. Bourdieu's position within the structure-agency debate can instead been seen as an attempt to overcome these dualities through the interplay of his main concepts, namely habitus, fields, and capital, of which habitus will be the central tenet in this study (Hays, 1994).

3.3.1 Habitus

'Habitus' is a central concept in Bourdieu's work and describes how individuals' embodied way of being is formed through interaction with 'social fields' (McLeod, 2005:13). Bourdieu (1977:76) describes the concept of 'habitus' as "[…] a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures, and the socially structured situation in which the agents' interests are defined, and with them the objective functions and subjective motivations of their practices". 'Habitus' can thus be seen as a system of deeply inscribed dispositions which defines individuals' way of "being, seeing, acting and thinking" (McLeod, 2005:13). Social practices such as perceptions, values and actions are thus pre-reflexive routinized habits that have been shaped in relation to actors' habitus (Sakdapolrak, 2014:22). Therefore, it is also important to acknowledge the role of socialization and different social positions in relation to the concept of 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1999 in Sakdapolrak, 2014:22) argues that 'habitus' both structures and shapes social practices and that social positions and inequalities between different groups influence this structuring. This is also described by Bourdieu's (1977) idea of 'doxa', which can be understood as a set traditional and culturally embedded social rules and norms that have become taken for granted and widely accepted within a certain social setting (Kabeer, 1999:40). Rudnick (2009:40) describes 'doxa' as " […] practices and traditions that can favour some groups over others, as is the case in certain gendered practices and rules". Thus, the domineering and dominated groups define social rules depending on their interest, and there is a

constant competition between their competing ways of being and doing. Bourdieu (1977:168) argues that it is only when 'doxa' is challenged that it is really visible to the members of the community.

3.3.2 Fields

Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'fields' refers to the various social and institutional settings where integration and interaction between social actors occurs. The interaction within these fields is guided by predetermined field-specific conventions and rules, although actors can chose to both obey and contest these rules (Sakdapolrak, 2014:23). 'Habitus' and 'fields' are closely interlinked, as fields constitute the structured contexts where processes and practices that form different systems of dispositions and thus actors' 'habitus' are shaped (McLeod, 2005:13-14). The fields also constitute an area for individuals to express and reproduce their dispositions and struggle to maximize various types of capital and thus advance their relative positions within the field.

3.3.3 Capital

Similar to Kabeer's (2005) use of the term 'resources' to describe structurally defined capacities of an individual, Bourdieu uses the concept of 'capital' to describe how different resources are valued within various fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). According to Bourdieu (1986) there are four different types of capital - *cultural*, *social*, *economic* and *symbolic capital* - which define power structures and status order within specific fields and determine actors' right to entry and transfer within the fields.

3.4 Bourdieu's theory and gender relations

There has been a revival of interest in the work of Bourdieu (1977) and his concept of 'habitus', 'fields' and 'capital' in relation to gender identity and gender relations

among feminist scholars (McLeod, 2005:11). According to Krais and William (2000:53), Bourdieu's discussions around gender mainly deal with the relationship between the sexes and attempts to explain the effects of structured sexual division of labor and living conditions between men and women. Skeggs (2004:19) argues that although there is a lack of attention to feminist theory in Bourdieu's texts, his work reflects how gendered structures within society define norms for men and women's respective behaviour and institutionalize subordinating practices.

Bourdieu's understanding of gender relations is outlined in Masculine Domination from 2001 ("La domination masculine")[2]. This work combines the theory of practice with a description of gender as a constant dimension of social action that continually influences people's relations and everyday life and provides an explanation of how male domination occurs and reproduces itself over and over again (Bourdieu, 2001). Krais and William (2000:58) interprets Bourdieu's work and argues that "A gendered view of the world is stored in our habitus: the habitus is profoundly and inescapably shaped by a pattern of classification that constructs male and female as polar opposites". These gendered habitus shape men and women's different decisions, behaviours and opportunities (Ashall, 2004:26). Gender can thus be seen as a social phenomenon, which according to Bourdieu (1977), is constructed in a complex interplay between collective and individual agency. Thus, changing socially constructed roles and behaviour requires a change of both the practice that reproduces these norms, and the internalised norms and culture that shapes the mind of the individuals and makes them act to reproduce these certain behaviors (as described by Bourdieu 1977). The main arguments when looking at Bourdieu's theory from a gender perspective is that inequalities are inscribed in the habitus and people act and interact because of the 'doxa'. The 'doxa' can therefore be seen as a naturalized set of rules, norms and practices which they do not reflect upon, nor question and which guides their actions and choices (Ashall, 2004; Krais, 2006). This understanding of gender orders and social change will be used in order to see how Bourdieu's theory can add understanding to the issues explored in this study.

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[2] This essay was first published in the *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (1990), then revised and published in book form in 1998 (trans. 2001)

3.5 Operationalization of theories

This study's theoretical framework builds on an understanding of empowerment as an expansion of capabilities and ability to exercise choices of one's own will. I will focus on the different concepts of empowerment as described by Kabeer (1999, 2001, 2005, 2012) to better understand how these components effect women's ability to exercise choices. To better understand how certain norms might affect the process of empowerment, I will use Bourdieu's (1977, 1986, 2001) theory of practice, and specifically his concept of 'habitus' and 'doxa' to explain the socialisation into gender norms and gendered practices and how conforming to these norms might impede young women's empowerment.

4 Methodological framework

This chapter will present the data collection, and data analysis and methodological choices in relation to the research, as well as their limitations. This chapter will also include a discussion of the ontological and epistemological standpoints, as well as ethical considerations of the study.

4.1 Research strategy

A qualitative research strategy was used for this study as it facilitates an interpretive approach and enables analysis of people's understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2013:164). As Creswell (2007:37) points out, qualitative research seeks to present a complex description and interpretation of the problem and often includes the voices of the participants, which corresponds to the aim of this study. I am inspired by a feminist methodology as I want to capture the experiences of women and use an approach to knowledge production that addresses power imbalances and acknowledges the role of the researcher (Bryman, 2012:40).

Qualitative research is often seen as more compatible with feminist research as it allows an exchange between the researcher and the participants and reduces the risk of exploitation (Bryman, 2012:411). The unpredictable nature of qualitative research corresponds well to the feminist research quest for reflexivity and situational ethics. I made a conscious decision to try and stay open to unexpected encounters and questions, hence avoiding previous experiences and preconceived notions from steering the research process in certain ways (Tracy, 2010:847). A flexible approach to the research structure was also taken to ensure flexibility during the research and the possibility to adapt the research design to the local context. Although desk research to inform the data collection process was undertaken prior to arrival in the field, the research design allowed new concepts to emerge out of the data, which reflects an inductive research approach (Bryman, 2012:12). According to Ritchie et al (2014:24), qualitative research is often guided by encounters and observations from the field, thus adhering to inductive approaches, but both induction and deduction are usually involved in the qualitative research process at different stages. The flexibility of qualitative research and the predominantly inductive research approach allowed me to add and revise concepts used within the theoretical framework, which hopefully will make the analysis more coherent with the respondents' understanding of their experiences and reality (Ragin & Amoroso. 2010:56).

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

The point of departure for this study is a constructivist understanding of social phenomena as constructions produced and shaped by social interactions between people (Bryman, 2012:33-34). This understanding of the nature of social entities rejects the idea of a pre-given reality which is observable, measurable and possible to analyse (ibid.). The research topics of interest for constructivists are instead "products of our own making" and people often perceive and understand these experiences differently due to personal characteristics (Moses and Knutsen 2012:10). According to a constructivist ontological approach, individuals construct their understanding of their world through social entities and fluxing norms and discourses, attributing various subjective and continually negotiated meanings to social phenomena. Hence,

putting forward the views of the participants and their interpretations of their reality follows a constructivist approach by allowing exposure to the ways in which peoples' beliefs are constructed, as well as disclosing the formation of individuals' subjective meanings (Creswell, 2007:20-21).

A feminist interpretivist epistemological approach is consistent with the ontological position described above and seeks to build knowledge through the individuals and their views, perspectives and behaviour. Interpretivist epistemology sees institutions, culture and identities as created, shaped and reproduced by people and the social context where they act and interact (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). Thus, knowledge is constructed and shaped to a certain situation or location, described by Haraway (1988) as 'situated knowledge'. According to this notion, peoples' understanding of the world is subjective and formed by social interactions with the social environment in which they occur. Highlighting women's situational perspective and experiences is therefore important according to feminist interpretivist approach as gender relations effect how knowledge is generated and reproduced. The research design of this study seeks to account for different perspectives and experiences whilst recognizing the significance of the context. Thus, this can been seen as an attempt to reduce the risk of my misinterpretation of the participants' reality and understand individuals within their subjective meaning.

4.3 Research Design

The rationale for this study is to deepen the understanding of a complex issue through a detailed analysis of a specific case within the particular context of Malawi. Creswell (2007:73) describes a case study as a qualitative research approach that allows the researcher to explore a case through detailed, in-depth data collection. Case studies offer the ability to produce in-depth and context-specific knowledge whilst simultaneously generating a more holistic understanding of social phenomena (Yin, 2014:4). Flyvbjerg (2006:223, 226-227) also argues that case studies gives the researcher a closeness to real-life situations and contributes to a nuanced and complex understanding of reality that has the ability to add or detract from theory. As such, this

thesis follows a case-study design, studying SRH promotion projects that use different forms of ICTs. Qualitative data collection methods were used to construct a nuanced understanding of the case and to capture people's experiences and perceptions (Bryman, 2008:26).

4.4 Data collection

The data for this thesis was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, seeking to include both individual accounts and group experiences. This method corresponds well with the objective of feminist research, since semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions put forward the perspectives of the women being interviewed and often contributes to a more non-hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees (Bryman, 2012:491-492).

4.4.1 Sampling Strategy

The identification of participants was through purposive snowball sampling with the projects' staff as the primary gatekeepers (Ritchie et al. 2014). The key-informant interviews were carried out in Zomba, Ntcheu and Blantyre, interviewing representatives from YONECO and Pakachere, an NGO working with social and behaviour change communication to promote health (pakachere.org, 2013). The key-informants are presented with their full name and title in the analysis. The individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted at YONECO's drop-in centre in Ntcheu and at YONECO's headquarters and resource centre in Zomba, as well as in the nearby communities in both Zomba and Ntcheu. Originally three of YONECO's districts were selected as sites for the research, but due to an incident that temporarily interrupted the drop-in centre's operations in one of the districts I had to limit the number of districts to two. The sites for data collection were chosen based on the different projects' activities and their use of computers and Internet to promote SRH. Zomba is located in the southern region whereas Ntcheu is located in the central region and they also had some different characteristics representing both urban and semi-urban areas (NSO, 2008).

Figure 1: Map over Malawi
(Source: CIA World Fact book, 2016 – edited by author)

A total of eight individual interviews, six key-informant interviews and three focus group discussions were carried out during a period of three weeks. Two focus groups discussions were carried out in Zomba and one in Ntcheu. Of the eight individual interviews with young women, four were conducted in each location. For the key-informant interviews, two interviews were carried out in Zomba, Ntcheu and Blantyre each.

The focus groups consisted of between three and four participants and lasted for about one hour. The length of key informant interviews and the individual interviews

varied, mainly because some of the respondents were more talkative and more willing to share their experiences and perspectives than others (See appendix 1). The key informants were both men and women working at YONECO and Pakachere that were involved in the different projects using ICTs. The individual interviews with beneficiaries from the YONECO projects and the non-beneficiaries from the communities were all carried out with young women, between 15 to 25 years old.

The respondents were stratified into three main categories: (1) Key-informants who are centrally involved in SRH initiatives that use ICTs, (2) Female beneficiaries of YONECO's projects that have used ICTs to access information about SRH, (3) Young women that have not been part of the projects and that have not accessed SRH information through the use of ICTs. Table 3 describes the different groups in the sample.

	Type of interview	Number of interviews/ focus group discussions	Number of participants
1.	Key-informant interviews	6	6
2.	Interviews with participants	4	4
	Focus group discussions with participants	2	7
3.	Interviews with non-participants / community members	4	4
	Focus group discussions with non-participants / community members	1	4
	TOTAL	**17**	**25**

Table 3. Description of data

The sampling method can be considered as mainly purposive, as most of the participants were selected on the basis of their involvement in the projects and their experiences of using ICTs to gain information about sexual and reproductive health. To get a better understanding of the barriers affecting young women's access to ICTs for SRH information, I also interviewed young women that have not been part of the

projects and did not have experience of using ICTs to access information about SRH. My translator acted as gatekeeper to establish contact with these respondents and they were selected based on their proximity to the drop-in centres and lack of experience with ICTs for SRH promotion. They also met the age and gender criteria.

4.4.2 Interviews and focus group discussions

Interviews were chosen as the primary source of data collection. According to Ragin and Amoroso (2010:111, 117), qualitative research aims at understanding social phenomena through detailed examination of specific cases and can through this in-depth knowledge help advance theoretical ideas. Yin (2014:110) maintains that interviews have the ability to increase the researcher's insights and comprehension of complex social phenomena and therefore is a suitable method when conducting case studies.

During the interviews, the aim was to create a relaxed atmosphere where the participants felt comfortable and could speak freely, whilst at the same time making sure that the conversation was steered to cover the topic of interest. An interview guide was developed to ensure that the overall research questions were addressed, but the semi-structured character of the interviews and focus group discussion allowed unexpected questions and discussions to arise, and permitted the participants to form the conversation. The interpretivist approach of semi-structured interviews corresponds to feminist methodology as it allows the participants to form the research based on their knowledge and experiences of the topic, thus making the researcher dependent on the subjects to receive information and putting the participants in more power (Avishai et al, 2013: Bryman, 2012:247).

The interviews were complemented with focus group discussions, as I believed that the interaction between the participants would offer new insights into the topic of discussion (Belzile & Öberg, 2012). Bryman (2012:504) stresses that focus group discussion corresponds well to aim of feminist research as it reduces the risk of exploitation and helps to deconstruct power asymmetrical relationship between the researcher and the respondents, as the groups are in charge and leads the conversation. I do feel that my role as the researcher became less apparent which to some extent

shifted the power from me to the participants, but it allowed other power dynamics to arise. One or two persons, often the oldest persons in the group, often dominated the focus group discussions and I therefore made a conscious effort to try and encourage the younger participants to contribute to the discussion. I experienced that the smallest group, consisting of three participants were more dynamic and the participants challenged each other's different views and opinions to a greater extent.

As some of the young women spoke little or no English, a translator was engaged to translate three of the interviews and one of the focus group discussions. These interviews and focus group discussion were carried out in Ntcheu. The translator was a nurse by profession and thus had interest in and knowledge in SRH in Malawi and was used to working under professional confidentiality. It was considered important to find a translator who the young women felt they could trust and who understood the sensitivity of some of the issues that were to be discussed. The use of a translator helped me gain access to respondents that I would not have been able to interview otherwise. However, the translator also created a distance between the respondents and myself and the conversations were not as spontaneous as the interviews held in English. To try and reduce these effects, I made sure to follow up on the respondents' answers and to try and rephrase my questions when needed.

4.5 Data analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and complemented with my field notes, including accounts of the participants' body language and descriptions of the setting in which the interviews were conducted. I wrote the field notes directly after each interview to start interpreting and reflecting over the data I have been collecting, as well as to increase the trustworthiness of my data throughout the research process (Silverman and Marvisti, 2008:193, 219).

The participants' experiences were analysed and categorised using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo. Based on the theoretical framework and my analytical model, the interviews were coded in themes and categories relevant to my study and the research questions. Because of this coding process, the data used in this thesis should be seen as interpretations of the participants' experiences based on my

personal point of view and the theoretical framework. The observations from the field were used to help to contextualise these interpretations within their specific context and setting (Haraway, 1988). Using an analytical model when coding the data facilitated a comparison across categories and sub-categories, and thus enabled me to identify similarities, differences and patterns across the data (Creswell 2013:183-185).

4.6 Limitations and potential biases

This study has several limitations that need to be considered and discussed. As mentioned earlier, the scope of this study is limited to my interpretations of the subjects' narratives of their experiences and perceptions. Although this interpretation only represents a partial and situated description of the participants' reality, my aim has been to remain objective and true to the meanings of the women's perspectives and the knowledge that was produced through this research (Sultana, 2007:378).

Another limitation of this study corresponds to the difficulties Scheyvens and Leslie (2000) describe when conducting research with women from developing countries. I found it difficult to gain access to women who were able to participate in the study, mainly because their time was very restricted and many of them were bound by obligations both at school, at work or at home. To facilitate the interview process, I tried to stay as flexible as possible so that I could meet with the women at a time and place where they felt comfortable. I found that the women in my sample were very well educated, compared to Malawian average, which may contribute to their relatively good ICT knowledge. Limiting the data collection to urban and semi-urban areas might therefore be seen as a potential bias since data from more rural areas possibly could have given more varied sample and a more nuanced understanding of ICT-use in Malawi.

I also found that the participants in my study sometimes changed their answers and contradicted themselves which made me suspect that some of them were answering what they thought I wanted to hear. As Scheyvens and Leslie (2000) explain, women in many developing countries have been consulted very little in the past and might be reluctant to or uncertain of how to express themselves due to low self-esteem or

because they feel a sense of inadequacy. Even though I emphasized that there are no right and wrong answers and tried to rephrase some questions, I believe that this to some extent influenced what the participants told me about themselves and their experiences.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are stressed as important criteria in social research to ensure a certain level of accuracy and representativeness as well as to assure that the results are consistent based on the chosen method (Bryman, 2012:46-47). Critique has often been directed towards case studies as a research design, claiming that the findings are too dependent of its specific context and therefore difficult to generalize (Bryman, 2012:406). Flyvbjerg (2006) addresses this critique and argues that generalization from in-depth research indeed is possible, as it has the ability to add or detract from theory. Yin (2003) also argues that generalizations can be made from the theoretical relationships derived from case studies, and that case studies therefore can achieve external validity.

A number of different measures have been taken to ensure that this study attains the quality standards of reliability and validity, mainly based on Yin's (2003:83, 97-106) recommendations for case studies. In accordance with the principle of using multiple sources of data, the interviews and focus group discussions complemented each other and enabled a cross-checking of evidence sources to increase validity and the reliability of the data. I have also followed Yin's (2003) recommendation of a case study database and all transcripts were coded to organize the data in themes derived from the theory. The coded transcripts were then cross-checked to ensure consistency.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Deconstructing unequal power relations between the researcher and the participants is one of the central objectives of feminist methodology. Through highlighting inequalities, giving voice to women's experiences and strive for ethical standards

within the research process, feminist research seeks to shift the balance of power from the researcher to those that are being researched (England, 1994). To acknowledge this power asymmetry, I believe it is important to discuss my own positionality as a researcher and the ethics of research in a developing country.

4.8.1 Positionality and reflexivity

The ethical challenges of conducting research in a developing country such as Malawi are very different from those faced by researchers in developed countries. Furthermore, England (1994:85-87) stresses the importance of acknowledging underlying power relations and how these dynamics affects the research. Because of the power asymmetry between researchers from developed countries and participants from developing countries, reflexivity and awareness of my own positionality in relation to the people I have been interviewing have been important to consider throughout the data collection process (Scheyvens and Leslie, 2000:126; Tracy, 2010).

I do acknowledge that the fact that I am a young woman from a developed western country influenced the data collection process and the respondents' expectations towards me and my research. I also believe that some of the respondents, especially the key-informants whose organisations receive funding from western development aid agencies, were easier to access because of my background, and I consciously made efforts to manage their expectations and hopes. Based on Sultana's (2007) and England's (1994:85) recommendations, I continuously reflected upon my own identity and position in terms of gender, age and background in relation to the participants and the context of my field research to try and recognise how our differences would influence the respondents' answers.

The need for self-reflexivity and awareness of positionality is also stressed in feminist research, which aims to adjust the power dynamics between the researcher and the participants. According to Avishai et al. (2013:395), feminist research can be seen as a methodological commitment to highlight and prioritize the subjects' voices. My objective has been to highlight the different views of the participants and to try and find patterns among their accounts, but I have also been conscious to acknowledge

their individual opinions and experiences that sometimes challenge preconceived notions. I have been careful not to assume the situation of the participants and to acknowledge that I have benefitted from the participants' openness and willingness to participate and thus also recognizing the limits and difficulties in trying conducting research that seeks to represent others' experiences.

4.8.2 Informed consent and confidentiality

When conducting research it is important to acknowledge the risk of deception, and I believe that honesty and transparency are key to managing that risk and to receive an informed consent from the participants. In accordance with the aim of feminist research, I have strived for the research process to be beneficial for both parts. I was committed to stay open and honest about my research, my own role as a researcher and the interviewees' participation and I made sure to set aside sufficient time to explain the research process. Informed oral consent and permission to audiotape was given from all participants before I commenced the interviews, as recommended by Bryman (2008:121-123). The anonymity of the participants has been preserved throughout the research process and their names have been changed to pseudonyms to further protect the identity of the participants.

5 Results and analysis

In this section, the empirical data from the field is analysed and discussed through the theoretical framework presented in chapter three. After a description of the young women's ICT usage, the analysis is based on an identification of different socio-cultural norms. The analysis explores these socio-cultural norms and the processes through which they influence young women's access to and use of ICTs to access information about SRH, as well as the young women's perceptions of themselves in relation to the use of these tools. Young women's behaviour and reflections upon their own choices, capabilities and skills both in relation to the use of ICTs generally

and ICTs for SRH promotion will then be analysed by employing an empowerment perspective to the analysis.

5.1 Outline of the young women's ICT usage

To better understand and represent the young women's realities and perceptions, this section will briefly describe the respondents and their experiences of using ICTs. The data refers to the data collected in the individual interviews as well as the focus group discussion to represent all the young women's lived experiences in a equal way.

The age of the young respondents in this study ranged from 15 to 25 years old and a great majority of them lived with their parents, although one non-participant stayed with her grandfather and one participant stayed with some friends. Of the participants in the projects, six lived in Zomba and five in Ntcheu, and among the non-participants, five stayed in Zomba and three in Ntcheu. None of the young women participating in this study were married, but one of non-participants had a two month-old son that she raised on her own. More than half of the young women were in secondary school and two participants and one non-participant were studying at tertiary level. Out of the seven young women that were not studying, four were non-participants, two of them had completed their secondary education and two of them had dropped-out of school because of financial constraints. Of the three participants that were not in school, two had completed their secondary and one had completed tertiary level of education. This shows that the young women in this study, both participants and non-participants, were very well educated compared to the Malawian average.

Of all the young women represented in this study, 11 were participants in YONECO's projects and had used ICTs in different ways to access SRH information. Many of participants also had their own mobile phone or smartphone and four of them could access the Internet on their phones. They had all used and accessed the Internet with the computers YONECO had provided, and three of them also had access to computers at home or through school. Although their experiences of using ICTs to

some extent varied, all of the respondents who participated in the projects were very positive to the possibility of accessing SRH information through the use of ICTs and one of the participants in the projects described it as an easy way to get information:

> "Like every time I'm confused about something to do with sexual and reproductive health I would just search on the Internet, and there is just a lot of information. It just a click away." (Teleza, Participant, Zomba)

Eight of the interviewed young women were not participants in any of YONECO's projects and their experiences of ICTs varied; the majority owned their own mobile phone and half of the young women with mobile phones could also access Internet on their phones. One of the women owned a tablet, and three of the young women had previously used computers, although they could not access the Internet on those computers. Only two of the respondents did not have any previous experience of ICTs. Even though this indicates a relatively high ICT knowledge, none of the non-participants answered yes to the question of whether they have ever used any form of ICTs to access information about SRH. The explanations they gave indicated a positive attitude towards the possibility of accessing SRH information through the use of ICTs, but also pointed to a wide range of different challenges. Some of the obstacles these young women face are due to the socio-cultural context and will be discussed further.

5.2 Socio-cultural norms, gender and women's access to ICTs

The use of ICTs can be seen as a social practice that is influenced by the social context in which it occurs. The broader sociocultural and economic context therefore impacts the use of ICTs and effects both women and men's access to these technologies. This understanding has led to the notion that ICTs are not gender-neutral and rather reflect gendered structures within society. Geldof (2011:69) argues that persistent gender inequalities and asymmetrical power relations between men and women have led to great disparities between men and women's access to and use of ICTs, especially in African countries. People in developing countries often face challenges to access ICTs due to high costs and infrastructural limitations, but studies

also show that the barriers women in these countries face are aggravated due to socio-cultural factors (Hossain and Beresford, 2012:456). These socio-cultural factors are usually human-made constructs based on social norms, cultural values and normative expectations, and vary depending on the different contexts (Savolainen, 2016:54). Giddens (2006:1027) defines norms as rules of behaviour which reflect or embody a culture's values, sometimes prescribing a certain type of behaviour and sometimes prohibiting it. Norms do not need to be expressed as explicit rules as social actors recognise patterns and signs of approval and disapproval, which guarantees that people comply with these norms (Bourdieu, 1977: Giddens, 2006).

5.2.1 Gendered understandings of men and women's roles

The images of women and men in Malawi are shaped by a socio-cultural context that values men over women and ultimately disempowers women. This devaluing is demonstrated through women's descriptions of themselves as less useful and not as capable as men to make important decisions, and these depictions can thus be understood as inscribed in their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977). Women are seen as subordinate to men and their role is often portrayed as wives, mothers and daughters whereas men are seen as the head of the households and providers of the family (Lindgren et al, 2005).

The young women's accounts reflected experiences of being valued less or feeling less important then the men. This was expressed by both participants and non-participants through personal accounts of their own experiences of inequalities and when discussing the general conditions for women in Malawi. Many of the young female respondents discussed different expectations for men and women and a few also described men and women's different capabilities. One of the non-participants exemplified what she meant by describing men as more 'advanced' and more intelligent than women (Chotsani, Non-participant, Ntcheu). Thus, the general understanding of women's position in society and the households as well as gender roles and inequalities in society were described in both abstract and concrete terms with examples from their own personal lives.

The gender structures also translate into entrenched gendered barriers regarding the use of ICTs. A majority of the young women and all of the key informants argued that there are still differences and inequalities between men and women's access to and use of ICTs, mostly because of cultural values, taboos and stereotyped understandings of men's, respectively women's, appropriate behaviour and capabilities. One key informant explained that in the Malawian culture, men are the decision-makers of the households and it is therefore important that they are updated in terms of information (Personal Communication, Basimenye Nhlema, Project Senior Manager at Pakachere, 22 January 2016). Thus, the men have ownership of ICTs and control of usage. During the focus group discussion in Zomba, the young women who have not participated in the projects also discussed men and women's unequal access to ICTs; one young woman explained that:

"The man is the head of the family; he has to have something more special and sometimes the woman is not employed, she's just at home waiting for the man to bring everything. So to get a smart phone and the husband tells you it's expensive, like I can't afford that. So if there's one smart phone in the family it's the husband's" (Asmaa, Non-participant, Zomba).

As Hossain and Beresford (2012: 463) argue, gender inequalities are "critically related to the allocation, sharing and control of resources within a household". Thus, not having access to ICTs shows to some extent how gender roles can affect women's power and autonomy within the households.

Some of the respondents also pointed out that parents and other adults are hesitant to give young women access to ICTs because of what they can do with the devices or because of the information they might find. Especially with regards to information about SRH, the participants in the projects affirmed reluctance among the parents and the community to 'protect' their daughters. One of the participants (narrated by the translator) described the reason for this reluctance as:

"She says there's a difference the way they [other people in the community] look at them. For example she said when a girl is browsing she's learning bad things from that page but when a boy is there he's supposed to be there /…/ so if it's a boy who's browsing immoral things it's normal, but if it's a girl who does those things it's not good" (Faye, Participant, Ntcheu)

These accounts show a difference between young women's and young men's access to ICTs for SRH health information because of the gender norms in Malawian society. As Lindgren et al (2005: 77, 81) also describes, the messages girls and boys receive about sexuality is very different, as boys in Malawi are generally fairly free to seek sexual information and experiences, whilst girls are told to abstain from sexual relationships, which might make it more difficult for them to access this type of information.

The gender inequalities between men and women were also exemplified by many of the young female respondents who emphasised that families often prioritise giving the boys in the families different technological devices first. As an explanation, the respondents stressed that women are less capable of handling technological devices such as mobile phones and computers and many of the respondents described girls and women as "less advanced" than men and boys. One of the non-participants described the difference between young men and women's ICT knowledge like this:

> "Most women have a knowledge deficit but when they [young men] touch your phone, they do know how to operate it" (Saliza, Non-participant, Ntcheu)

MacIntyre et al (2013:112) argue that that belief of women's inferiority has been internalised by both men and women in Malawi and affects the way women act and perceive themselves. There was a difference between the respondents who stated that women are less capable than men, and those who stressed that women are often perceived as less capable and knowledgeable than men. A person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem reflects differences within their 'habitus', which is also influenced by everyday experiences and structures of domination, discrimination and inequalities (Moi, 1991:1028-1029). Actor's 'habitus' thus reflects the relationship between personal perspectives and structures within society.

The gender norms that permeate Malawian society can therefore be seen as barriers to women's access to and use of ICTs for SRH information in various ways. Firstly, these norms determine what is considered as acceptable behaviour and affect how resources and decision-making power are distributed within households. Secondly, they affect women's perceptions of themselves and undermine young women's self-

esteem and self-worth, which often makes them doubt their own knowledge and capabilities.

According to Kabeer (2005), decision-making is an essential dimension of empowerment. Having power to define and act upon one's own decision is necessary to achieve active agency, and it allows individuals to define practices and norms that that affect his or her life, which according to Bourdieu (1977) is described as defining 'doxa'. Both the staff working at YONECO and the young women who visited the centers and participated in the projects related experiences that demonstrated how they needed to negotiate their participation with their parents, and that using ICTs to access information about SRH challenged some of the views held within the community. As one of the key-informants at the drop-in center at Ntcheu explained: "As YONECO we are also doing the parenting programs /…/ the whole idea is to make sure that parents are able to support adolescents girls and boys to access to SRH services and information" (Personal communication, Sewenthe Chipofya, District Manager at YONECO Ntcheu, 25 January 2016). Although the organization is working to sensitize parents and other community members, one of the young participants in a focus group discussion in Ntcheu also described what some parents thought about their daughters visits to the center (narrated by the translator):

> "Some parents, they think that girls cannot do anything on the Internet, they think that it's only boys who can operate on the Internet. Some parents think that when these young girls are coming here they're coming to search for boys so they can start relationships". (Tafadzwa, Participant, Ntcheu)

Because of the resistance among parents and the communities to let the young women participate in the projects, the participants in the projects are to some extent acting contrary to the social expectations and norms, and can therefore be seen as challenging the 'doxa'.

5.2.2 Domestic responsibilities and limited mobility

The staff working at YONECO stressed that not as many young women as young men turned up to the drop-in centre or used the services provided to gain information about

SRH through different forms of ICTs. According to the drop-in centre's statistics of the last quarter of 2015; out of 805 youths and adolescent coming to access SRH information on the centre's computers, only 240 of them were female. The staff acknowledged this problem and established special days for the girls to make sure that they felt comfortable and could access the computers even if they turned up later then the boys (Personal communication, McCarthy Samalani, Project Officer at YONECO Ntcheu, 25 January 2016).

When describing differences in access to ICTs and projects that seek to promote sexual health through the use of these technologies, many of the young female respondents, both participants and non-participants, explained that women and men have different responsibilities at home and that young women are required to do more household chores, which gives them less free time to engage with ICTs. One of the non-participants explained why she found it difficult to participate in projects such as YONECO's, described by the translator as:

> "Boys they have much more time to learn from others while girls have limited time /…/ According to our culture girls are doing much more work than boys. Boys can just wake up and do nothing while the girls are cleaning the house, cooking for them, fetching water for them. A boy can stay the whole day without doing any work at home" (Chotsani, Non-participant, Ntcheu)

Women and men in developing countries usually have very different domestic responsibilities and women are often much more time constrained, which affects their participation in, for example, different projects. The households dynamics and the division of labour are gendered and young women's exposure to ICTs are often very restricted by the time constraints these dynamics creates (Geldof, 2011).

Another challenge identified by the staff at the ICT centers is that young women are more restricted on leaving their homes or travelling too far away from the community alone, which sometimes makes it more difficult for girls and young women to access the projects. One of the participants argued that:

"Men are better off because men are not limited in the way they travel, like let's say, there's an internet connection they'll search for it while women will just stay waiting for the internet to come back" (Patience, Participant, Zomba).

The younger participants in the projects in Ntcheu also recognized limitations in their mobility as a difficulty and some of them confirmed that they were only allowed to move in groups or accompanied by older people. The reasons for these restrictions and limitations in their mobility were described as to both protect them from assaults and because it is not considered socially acceptable for young women to move around on their own.

Women's limited mobility reflects what feminist theory describes as a division between the public and private sphere or between different social fields (McLeod, 2005:22; Bourdieu, 2001). Bourdieu (2001) maintains that women's limited access to the public sphere and their confinement to the private sphere reflects their subordination within society. Projects that use ICTs have the possibility to overcome the gendered binaries of public and private since these tools can be used as an alternative to physical mobility in the acquisition of information and knowledge. One participant also explained that the use of these technologies made it easier to access information, irrespective of where you live (Chiwa, Participant, Zomba). However, to participate in YONECO's projects that are located at the drop-in centers, the women are moving outside the households and what is frequently regarded as "women's domain" to a public setting. This shows how the young women are moving across different social fields (McLeod, 2005:22). Crossing different social fields may demonstrate instability of gender norms and the possibility of transformation of gender relations, but other scholars also argues that it might only reflect a certain reflexivity in society that can exist side by side with deeply entrenched gender norms (Adkins, 2002).

5.2.3 Language, literacy and education

There is a broad understanding that low levels of literacy or lack of education affect women's access to ICTs and contributes to the gender digital divide (Geldof, 2011:74). Literacy and education affect both men and women's behaviour and shape

how individuals construct their lives within the communities and society. Language knowledge and literacy can therefore be understood as a processes shaped by different social and cultural norms (He et al. 2015).

Because of gendered inequalities within the society, women in Malawi tend to be less educated with a lower level of English proficiency, which contributes to difficulties when trying to access and use ICTs ultimately underpinning the gender digital divide (Geldof, 2011:74-75). Many of the respondents acknowledged that language constitutes a barrier when it comes to accessing information about SRH through the use of ICTs; one of the key informants described one of the challenges related to literacy levels in the following way:

> "/…/ Especially when it comes to phones, the more the applications there is, there is also the issue of literacy levels, which could also speak to why maybe men are able to use the phone for more functions, as compared to women." (Personal communication, Grace Kumwenda, Programme Manager at Pakachere, 22 January 2016).

One of the young women that had not participated in the projects nor used ICTs explained that she only considers ICTs to access information about SRH to work for those who have gone to school and know English (Saliza, Non-participant, Ntcheu). This reflects a perception of ICTs as tools for the educated and English-speaking part of the society.

The key informants also identified illiteracy and insufficient levels of English as one challenge. At YONECO centres they have tried to solve this by engaging a facilitator who can help explain the unfamiliar words or terms that the participants find difficult to understand. This shows that the barriers women face when trying to engage with ICTs do not only relate to the access but also to the capacity to use these technologies. One of the key informants at the drop-in centre in Ntcheu explained that without education or sufficient language knowledge, the women are very limited in terms of what they can do with their devices, even if they have access to them (Personal Communication, Basimenye Nhlema, Project Senior Manager at Pakachere, 22 January 2016). Thus, the use of ICTs is also very gendered and it seems to be more difficult for young women to use different functionalities and process the information

they are accessing, compared to young men who generally do not face the same barriers.

The broader social and cultural norms in a society are reflected and reproduced through the education system, which in itself reproduces a system of inequalities and social stratification between different groups (Sullivan, 2002). Norms are also important in relation to education and literacy since they govern social behaviour and regulate customs without any apparent exercise of agency (Kabeer, 2001: 21). Two of the women with the highest level of education described 'the educated' as more "knowledgeable and informed" and based on their descriptions. It is thus fair to say that young women who are literate and educated also hold a certain status in society that increases their self-confidence. Many of the younger participants in the projects described a feeling of shyness in the beginning due to inadequate ICT knowledge and skills to operate these tools. Thus, acquiring new skills and having certain proficiencies made them more confident and gave them a sense of agency.

However, to understand why these gendered inequalities in education and literacy persist, it is important to appreciate how social structures determine and form individuals' thoughts and actions (Walther, 2014:7). According to Bourdieu's (1986) explanation, inequalities and different disadvantages are caused by cultural reproduction within social institutions, such as the educational system. Education and language can thus reproduce and uphold the patriarchal structures that can be found in the broader society.

5.2.4 Lack of economic capital

Women in Malawi are also more likely to face economic barriers in accessing ICTs for SRH information due to their disadvantaged position in society. Economic resources are not distributed equally within the country and women often face greater economic constraints as a result of lower participation in income-generating activities and culturally embedded household dynamics (Lindgren et al. 2005). Because of the gendered dynamics perpetuating individuals' economic status, economic limitations can be seen as a factor influenced and formed partly by different socio-cultural norms

(Savolainen, 2016:54). Thus, as a result of socio-cultural norms and the gendered division of labour and income, women in Malawi face great economic challenges to access and use of ICTs and a number of the respondents also identified economic limitations as one of the greatest barriers. As one young woman explained:

"As you know, Internet is expensive here, so some people cannot have it, because it is difficult and expensive for them to use ICTs" (Chimwala, Participant, Zomba)

The economic barriers women face limits their access to these technologies and their potential benefit. The general perception during the interviews reflected a lack of economic resources and decision-making power in relation to the households expenditure, as illustrated by one of the key-informants: "A woman does not have the economic power to buy it [ICTs] on their own." (Personal communication, Grace Kumwenda, Programme Manager at Pakachere, 22 January 2016). For young women who have not yet finished school or are staying with their parents or other relatives, these economic barriers appear even more restrictive, as many of them are dependent on their parents to provide for them. One young woman exemplified this by saying:

"Because most of them [young women and girls] they are just in school and they don't have any source of money to buy things on their own" (Chotsani, Non-participant, Ntcheu)

Some of the informants also identified that young men have more free time than the young women and are not as restricted in their mobility. They can therefore raise the income to buy their own ICTs devices without having to depend on the parents.

Because of the gender structures in Malawi, having access to economic capital does not ensure that women have the decision-making power over expenditures. The respondents also narrated different expectations of what men and women are expected to do with their money. Women were first of all seen as mothers who should prioritize their family and children and buy necessities such as food and clothes. Young women who are not mothers are also expected to contribute to the family's household, whereas men (both young and old) are seen as the head of the households and are consequently freer to decide how to spend the money.

For Kabeer (2012), economic empowerment does not only entail having access to economic resources, her definition also puts an emphasis on the need for transformative agency and an ability to formulate and act upon economic decision. Transformative agency refers to the ability to make choices that have the potential to change important aspect of a person's life. As access to capital and resources are very gendered in Malawi, empowerment is not only linked to women's sense of agency, but also to their actual transformative agency. Although Bourdieu (1977) argues that the gendered inequalities to economic resources, or 'economic capital', are caused by the durability of norms that reproduce inequalities and social determinism that enables continuity, Kabeer (2002) also argues that women's access to and control over resources sometimes works as factors that facilitates an empowerment process.

Thus, gaining control over some of the resources and being able to access ICTs indicates a change at the individual level and effects young women's capacity to act. However, a change at individual level does not necessarily reflect a change of the discriminatory and unequal structures that permeate Malawian society and women can therefore receive more resources without actually being empowered because of the structural barriers. The young women that are accessing ICTs for SRH information enjoy more control over some resources, but to achieve a meaningful process of empowerment it also requires structural changes to reshape the distribution of resources and power between men and women (Kabeer, 2001:27).

5.3 ICTs to access SRH information and women's empowerment

The first part of the analysis focused on how different social and cultural norms affect young women's access to and use of ICTs. This second part will explore how young women that have been part of YONECO's projects and used ICTs to access SRH information perceive their own empowerment in terms of capabilities and ability to make their own choices. The aim is to show a link between the gendered socio-cultural norms and practices that the young women experience, their perception of the same norms in relation to ICT interventions to disseminate SRH information and their

ability to exercise agency and ultimately being empowered.

5.3.1 Young women's empowerment through ICTs

The previous section focused on different socio-cultural norms that underpin inequalities and influence young women's access to and use of ICTs to access information about SRH. YONECO uses ICTs to facilitate a dissemination of SRH information, awareness-rising and to increase young women's knowledge about these issues. Based on this approach, ICTs are mainly seen as tools to improve women's access to SRH information and their ability to make strategic life choices related to their sexuality and reproduction, and based on these capabilities and knowledge creating a pathway of empowerment. From this perspective, ICTs serve as tools, that have the potential to empower women based on the transmission of information and knowledge related to SRH. However, in recent years there has also been a broader discussion about the empowering effects of the use of ICTs in general, and especially for women in developing countries (Huyer & Sikoska, 2003).

According to this debate, ICTs are understood as effective tools for the empowerment of women as the use of these technologies facilitates women's participation in social, economic and political development and has the potential to increase women's representation and participation in decision-making processes. Participating in these various processes also provides women with an opportunity to develop their personalities and capacities (Elnaggar, 2008:280). Discussing young women's perception of themselves, their capabilities and empowerment in relation to the use of ICTs also showed that the knowledge and skills they are gaining from YONECO's projects can be, and to some extent already are, transferred to other areas that affect their quality of life.

The respondents, both participants and non-participants who have accessed and used ICTs, were positive towards these different tools and the opportunities they create. It was also noted that the participants in the projects often described a feeling of increased self-confidence in relation to their ICT-usage. They realized that they could accomplish many things on their own and that they did not have to rely on other people to provide them with information or knowledge. In a focus group discussion at

the drop-in center in Ntcheu, participants from one of YONECO's projects discussed how ICTs have affected their results in school. According to the respondents, being able to acquire information independently and having the skills to critically analyze and evaluate this information also had a positive influence on their performances in school. As another young woman in Zomba explained during a focus group discussion: "I didn't know a lot of things before but I'm learning on the Internet /…/ so I can say, comparing to the way I was before I started, I now think I have a lot of skills" (Leoni, Participant, Zomba). This showed that the use of ICTs to some extent affected the participants' perception of their capabilities and skills in other areas that were not directly related to SRH.

Among the participants in the focus group discussion in Ntcheu, the young women were all using computers for the first time and they believed that knowing how to operate these devices would help them in their future. A young woman in Zomba also pointed out that participating in the projects inspired her to start studying computer science in school, and she was convinced that her ICT skills would be critical in finding a job after graduation (Chimwala, Participant, Zomba). During these discussions, it became clear that these young women also applied the skills they have developed in YONECO's projects to improve their conditions in life outside the SRH field. The non-participants that had some previous knowledge of ICTs also saw great potential of ICTs although they sometimes described their expectations on a more abstract level, as narrated by the translator:

> "Through these technologies she's able to learn from others and she believes that she can do something e.g. businesses. Through the ICTs she believes that she can do anything" (Grace, Non-participant, Ntcheu)

This respondent had a relatively good experience of different forms of ICTs, and even though she was not used to accessing the Internet, she recognized some of the benefits of using ICTs. Both participants and non-participants acknowledged the potential of ICTs to create new opportunities and they especially emphasized the possibility of new employment opportunities and economic empowerment. Perceiving themselves as capable of initiating this change and acquiring the skills needed to change their life paths indicates a certain level of self-confidence in line with the empowerment theory (Kabeer, 1999).

This demonstrates that ICTs should not only be seen as tools to transfer and disseminate a specific type of information, but also as instruments for capacity-building and participation, which in different ways can empower women. This is important to keep in mind when discussing women's empowerment in relation to projects that use ICTs to promote SRH health among youths and adolescents. Because of the difficulties in accessing and using ICTs, these technologies can to some extent make it more difficult for young women to benefit from the potential of these initiatives, but using ICTs can also to some extent be empowering in itself and provide women with skills, knowledge and proficiencies that makes them believe in themselves and their capabilities.

5.3.1 Empowerment in terms of capabilities and choices

Increasing youth's knowledge about SRH is seen as a prerequisite to address some of the challenges that young women in Malawi are facing. Gaining information about SRH increases young women's ability to exercise their rights and change risky sexual behaviors based on informed decisions. The ability for young women to exercise agency is an important element of empowerment. To measure women's agency, Kabeer (2001:32-33) focuses on the decision-making processes and looks into how women reflect about their role in decision-making. However, different decisions have diverse consequences and significance for women's lives, and it is therefore necessary to make a distinction between strategic life choices and the less consequential ones. Kabeer (1999:437) argues that the notion of empowerment refers to an expansion of the ability to make strategic choices, which were previously unavailable.

Despite the many challenges and difficulties young women face when trying to access and use ICTs to get information about SRH, a majority of the young women interviewed for this study were positive towards the projects' approach and similar interventions using ICTs. The women describe how using ICTs have enabled them to search for information on their own and increased their ability to make informed decisions. Having the knowledge and skills to acquire information about SRH through the use of ICTs made them conscious about the consequences of their decisions and

made them less vulnerable. One of the participants from YONECO's projects explained that she now makes decisions based on the knowledge that she has, which reduces the risk of making bad choices:

> "[…] with the knowledge that I have, it's different from when I didn't have knowledge about it so I would just make poor choices, because I didn't know, because now I have the information, I can make a decision like "I know this and I know this", so I know which way I should go for" (Teleza, Participant, Zomba).

A majority of the respondents who have participated in the projects also emphasised that being able to access information and acquire knowledge on their own has improved their ability to discuss and exchange opinions about SRH issues with their friends. Because of the sensitivity of the topic and the difficulties for women in Malawi to talk about and find information about SRH from older people, many of the participants in the projects also expressed their appreciation towards the anonymity of these services. Some pointed out that misinformation is a problem when discussing SRH because there are a lot of false stories, advice and misconceptions that spread because of the lack of correct information to counterbalance it. One of the key informants also pointed out the importance for young women to be able to analyse and process the information they are gaining at their own pace, allowing them to read up on the issues and reflect upon the knowledge they are acquiring (Personal Communication, Ajasi Hussein, Programme Manager at YONECO, 15 January 2016).

Using ICTs to access information about SRH also provided the participants in the projects with knowledge and skills that are applicable to other areas. For example, being able to operate various forms of ICTs, knowing how to find information and determine whether the information is correct or not can also help the young girls when they are searching for other types of information. One respondent explained that being able to use ICTs and operate these devices made her realise that she can do anything, both because of the information she can find but also because technology opens up a new world and new opportunities (Patience, Participant, Zomba).

Building on the increased level of knowledge and their ability to make informed decisions, using ICTs to access information about SRH seemed to increase the young women's confidence and their decision-making capacity. This may also increase their

sense of agency and redefine the young women's perceptions of their choices. A stronger agency contributes to empowerment since it changes people's ability to make important changes in life and makes them believe that such changes are possible (Kabeer, 1999:438).

The importance of the information the young women are acquiring through the use of ICTs was described by one of the key informants as:

> "The information can really help them in the future, because the information which they are getting through ICTs as I said, it is helping them to define their behaviour and define their goals" (Personal Communication, McCarthy Samalani, Project Officer at YONECO, 25 January 2016).

This quote suggests behavioural change motivated by information and knowledge the young women have acquired. Some of the youngest participants also explained that by participating in the projects, they learned how to protect themselves from pregnancies and STIs and they no longer felt at risk of teenage pregnancies, which they felt would allow them to continue with their education. This indicates that these young women are aware of their rights and the possibility of achieving change through their own behaviour, and that they can actively apply measures for this change to happen. Based on Bourdieu's (1977:77,97) ideas, such an awareness and confidence in the possibility of change contributes to a process where structures become visible and subsequently changeable. This process can also be understood as a termination in the reproduction of 'doxa' and the structures that are formed through habitus.

6 Concluding discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a better understanding of the cultural and social norms that affect young women's access to and use of ICTs in communicating information about SRH in Malawi. It further sought to explore how young women reflect upon their own choices and capabilities in order to see whether ICT

interventions for SHR promotion empowers young women. In this concluding discussion, I will return to the research questions and present a summary of the main findings that have been discussed in this case study.

6.1 Summary and conclusion

This case study focused on YONECO's different projects using ICTs to disseminate information and promote SRH among youths and adolescents in Malawi. I have attempted to explore which socio-cultural norms that are embedded in the local context and how they influence practices, perceptions and values that ultimately affect young women's access to and use of ICTs to receive information and knowledge about SRH. Furthermore, this study also aimed to explore women's experiences of the empowerment process resulting from participating in the projects and using ICTs to gain information about SRH.

Socio-cultural norms effect many different aspects of women's lives in Malawi and govern both individuals and groups' behaviour, ideas and values. The identification of different norms and in which way they effect young women's access to and use of ICTs to acquire information about SRH showed that gendered perceptions of men and women's roles, obligations and responsibilities are deeply embedded in society and manifest themselves both in what are considered acceptable and unacceptable ways of acting and through women's perceptions of their capabilities. The socio-cultural norms underpinning gendered inequalities in Malawi also translate into structures that create barriers to women's use of ICTs to gain information about SRH, both within the specific projects and on a more general note. Women's accounts demonstrated that they have less access to capital, often lack decision-making power, facing language difficulties, experiencing restrictions in their mobility and that the norms contributing to an idea of women's lesser value diminish their capabilities and opportunities, ultimately devaluing their roles within the households. The gendered practices and perceptions deriving from restrictive socio-cultural norms also reflect a gendered nature of 'doxa', which to a certain extent limits them from exercising their agency. However, through participation in the projects, the young women also challenge some important aspects of 'doxa' and the underlying norms.

This study also aimed at exploring how young women in Malawi that have participated in YONECO's projects perceive that these interventions have affected their capabilities, choices and ultimately their empowerment. Young women's experiences of the empowerment process were explored by employing Kabeer's (1999, 2001) understanding of agency, capabilities and choices. Based on this conceptualisation of empowerment, the study showed that participation in the projects affected women's self-perceptions of their capabilities and options in a positive way, which also affected their ability to make informed choices. Women's accounts reflected how the knowledge and skills that they have gained through the projects have improved their self-confidence and decisiveness which contribute to a perception of themselves as capable of making important choices. Gaining information about SRH through the use of ICTs improved their decision-making ability which is a crucial aspect of the empowerment process. Linking back to Bourdieu's (1977, 2001) writings, participation in the projects increased the young women's self-confidence and ability to exercise agency and seem to have a potential to change the habitus. Changes in habitus thus improved the young women's ability to challenge the norms of 'doxa' in new and informed ways, which also implies that they experience an increased sense of agency. However, it is difficult to determine to what extent the women's perception of their capabilities and choices relates specifically to the use of ICTs for accessing SRH information, or whether it relates to the broader potential of ICTs to empower women, as the use of these technologies provides them with knowledge and skills that have the potential to change their life situations in more aspect than their SRH. It is also important to make a distinction between the young women's sense of agency and their actual ability to make choices and act upon their decisions. To be able to carry out transformative agency in all aspect of the young women's lives, structural changes are needed that allow women to make positive choices based on their capabilities and thus further their empowerment.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

This study has aimed to highlight the importance of understanding the socio-cultural context in which ICT-usage takes place and shapes ideas regarding women's SRH to understand how norms and practices affect women's participation in those projects.

While exploring the norms that governs women's access to and involvement in these initiatives, it is also important to recognize gendered structures in society that creates and upholds inequalities and thus reinforce some of the barriers to both ICTs and SRH information. Research focusing on the "gender digital divide" is to some extent addressing this gap, but because of the rapid increase of ICTs in developing countries, and especially within health promotion, it is important that more research focusing on similar initiatives is undertaken to inform policies and decision-making.

There are many interesting paths for future research to explore how ICTs affect women and how to overcome gendered barriers to their access. Future research could be complimented with quantitative research to not only present women's perceptions but also quantitative changes in access to and use of these technologies.

The projects in focus of this thesis were targeting both young men and young women and additional research can also be undertaken to compare the findings of this thesis by exploring the perception of men and their understanding of socio-cultural norms, ICT-usage and SRH promotion. Further research that includes men's accounts and experiences would provide a deeper, and more nuanced, understanding of socio-cultural norms importance within Malawian society and the persistence of gender inequalities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Table of participants

KEY INFORMANTS

Name	Date	Place	Title	Organisation	Sex	Age group	Methodological tool (individual interviews / FGD)	Number of participants	Length of interview	Observations	Experience of ICTs (Basic/Intermediate/Advanced)
Ajasi Hussein	2016-01-15	YONECO Headquarters, Zomba	Programme Manager	YONECO	Male	30-35	Interview	1	45 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Basimenye Nhlema	2016-01-22	Pakachere, Blantyre	Project Senior Manager	Pakachere	Female	30-35	Interview	1	44 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Grace Kumwenda	2016-01-22	Pakachere, Blantyre	Programme Manager	Pakachere	Female	30-35	Interview	1	30 min	Interview held in English. Had to finish the interview in advance.	Advanced
Sewenthe Chipofya	2016-01-25	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	District Manager	YONECO	Female	35-40	Interview	1	42 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
McCarthy Samalani	2016-01-25	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Project Officer	YONECO	Male	30-35	Interview	1	28 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Modesta Kampeni Mkombezi	2016-01-28	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Field Officer	YONECO	Female	30-35	Interview	1	21 min	Interview held in English	Advanced

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECTS

Pseudonym in text	Date	Place	Title	Organisation	Sex	Age group	Methodological tool (individual interviews / FGD)	Number of participants	Length of interview	Observations	Experience of ICTs (Basic/Intermediate/Advanced)
Teleza	2016-01-15	YONECO Headquarters, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	20-25	Interview	1	29 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Chimwala	2016-01-21	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	Interview	1	28 min	Interview held in English	Intermediate
Chiwa	2016-01-29	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	Interview	1	35 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Faye	2016-01-27	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	20-25	Interview	1	51 min	Interview in Chichewa with translator	Intermediate
Memory	2016-01-26	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 11 min	FGD held in Chichewa with translator	Basic
Tiwonge	2016-01-26	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 11 min	FGD held in Chichewa with translator	Basic
Tafadzwa	2016-01-26	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 11 min	FGD held in Chichewa with translator	Basic
Wema	2016-01-26	YONECO Drop-in Centre, Ntcheu	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 11 min	FGD held in Chichewa with translator	Basic
Patience	2016-01-28	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	20-25	FGD	3	59 min	FGD held in English	Intermediate
Leoni	2016-01-28	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	20-25	FGD	3	59 min	FGD held in English	Intermediate
Akosua	2016-01-28	YONECO Resource Centre, Zomba	Beneficiary	YONECO	Female	15-20	FGD	3	59 min	FGD held in English	Intermediate

NON-PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECTS

Pseudonym in text	Date	Place	Title	Organisation	Sex	Age group	Methodological tool (individual interviews / FGD)	Number of participants	Length of interview	Observations	Experience of ICTs (Basic/Intermediate/Advanced)
Tidyanawo	2016-01-21	Zomba	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	20-25	Interview	1	50 min	Interview held in English	Basic
Chotsani	2016-01-27	Ntcheu	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	20-25	Interview	1	53 min	Interview in Chichewa with translator	Basic
Grace	2016-01-27	Ntcheu	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	20-25	Interview	1	38 min	Interview in Chichewa with translator	Intermediate
Saliza	2016-01-27	Ntcheu	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	15-19	Interview	1	33 min	Interview held in English	Advanced
Kwasausya	2016-01-29	Zomba	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 3 min	FGD held in English	Basic
Asmaa	2016-01-29	Zomba	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	15-20	FGD	4	1 hr 3 min	FGD held in English	Advanced
Kantayeni	2016-01-29	Zomba	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	20-25	FGD	4	1 hr 3 min	FGD held in English	No experience of ICTs
Tidyanawo	2016-01-29	Zomba	Not participant, community member	N/A	Female	20-25	FGD	4	1 hr 3 min	FGD held in English	No experience of ICTs