



# Youth Participation in Development

Summary Guidelines  
for Development Partners



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## ACRONYMS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| AYON       | Association of Youth Organisations Nepal                  |
| DFID UK    | Department for International Development                  |
| GTZ        | German Technical Co-operation                             |
| GOYS       | Government Department for Youth and Sport, Bahrain        |
| MDGs       | Millennium Development Goals                              |
| M&E        | Monitoring and Evaluation                                 |
| NDP        | National Development Plan                                 |
| NORAD      | Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation             |
| NGO        | Non-governmental Organisation                             |
| PRSP       | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper                          |
| SRHR       | Sexual and reproductive health and rights                 |
| UK         | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland      |
| UN         | United Nations  |
| UNAIDS     | The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS            |
| UNDP       | United Nations Development Programme                      |
| UNESCO     | United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organisation |
| UNFPA      | United Nations Populations Fund                           |
| UN-HABITAT | United Nations Human Settlement Programme                 |
| UNICEF     | United Nations Children's Fund                            |
| USAID      | United States Agency for International Development        |
| WHO        | World Health Organization                                 |
| WPAY       | World Programme of Action for Youth                       |
| WRC        | Women's Refugee Commission                                |
| YEAH       | Young, Empowered and Healthy                              |
| YGP        | Youth Guidance Project                                    |

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

### The purpose of this document is to:

- Increase understanding of the growing importance of, and greater potential for, youth participation in development practice specifically for donor agencies and policy makers.
- Provide some initial practical guidance to assist donor agencies and policy makers to work more effectively with and for young people.

### **This document is a summary of the 2010 publication 'Youth Participation in Development – A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers.'**

The original publication was developed by the DFID-CSO Youth Working Group coordinated by Restless Development, working in partnership with DFID, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA and other donor agencies, with contributions from a wide range of civil society partners, all listed in the full publication.

This summary document was produced by Restless Development and the United Nations (UN) Programme on Youth. Readers interested to know more about the issues, case studies and tools referenced in this summary document should read the full Guide, available from Restless Development, the UN Programme on Youth, or by download at [www.ygproject.org](http://www.ygproject.org).

**“We must fulfil our obligations to youth. The World Programme of Action for Youth asks Governments to consider the contributions of young persons on all policies affecting them. Governments must honour this commitment. They must also increase the financial, education and technical support made available to young people...It is high time that we stopped viewing our young people as part of the problem and started cultivating their promise and potential.”**

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, International Youth Day 2007

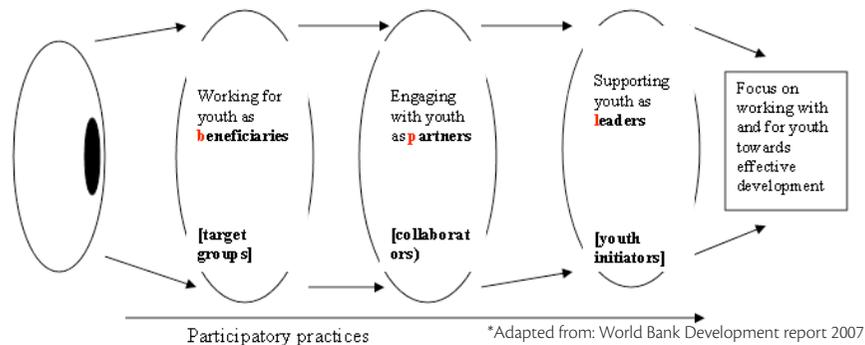
# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

The guide has been developed to assist development partners working with and for youth – including Governments, donor agencies, policy makers, NGOs and civil society <sup>[1]</sup> – and to increase understanding of the growing importance of, and greater potential for, youth participation in development. The Guide goes beyond the rhetoric of many policy advocacy papers by exploring key issues and approaches and providing practical information on how to work with youth at the operation level in respect of policy and programming. It does this through the provision of promising practice case studies that will help organisations to get started. Please note that the full guide ([www.ygproject.org](http://www.ygproject.org)) also sets out a number of quality standards to use as reference.

## The three-lens approach to youth participation

Development assistance should work for the benefit of youth (as target beneficiaries), with youth as partners, and be shaped by youth as leaders <sup>[2]</sup> (Figure 1). This is an assets approach to youth participation in development which appreciates and mobilizes individual or group talents and strengths, rather than focusing only on deficits (needs), problems or threats and is referred to as the three-lens approach to youth participation.



It is important for institutions and practitioners to consider all three lenses; they are not mutually exclusive. Youth participation in development is often a combination of all three. The different lenses may be used with different groups of young people during an intervention/initiative, i.e., young leaders may be reaching out to new groups of young people as targets. The ultimate aim is to develop youth as partners and leaders in development. This is based on youth having agency: their capacity to act, their skills and capabilities and their ability to change their own lives and is the central tenet of the asset based approach to youth participation.



<sup>1</sup> Throughout the document the term development partners is used and includes policy makers and government partners. The term 'youth' is used interchangeably with 'young people'

<sup>2</sup> DFID/Maguire, S. (2007) 'Youth Mapping Study' – DFID's Approach to Young People'

## WHY WORK WITH YOUTH?

### **Why work with youth? The demographic imperative: The youth bulge**

Nearly 50% of the developing world population is youth and children<sup>3</sup>. There are 1.2 billion 15 to 24 year olds in the world and one billion live in developing countries<sup>4</sup>. This is often referred to as the 'youth bulge'<sup>5</sup>, as young people constitute a high and peaking proportion of many populations.

The youth bulge represents both a challenge and an opportunity for development. For example, in Uganda it is estimated that the country needs to create over 600,000 new jobs per year for the next 12 years – equivalent to the total size of the formal employment sector at present. If this is not achieved, it will be impossible to reach the Millennium Development Goals targets, particularly on extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1), child mortality (MDG 4), and environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

### **These large numbers of young people are an opportunity; an investment. Youth participation in development:**

- Strengthens young people's abilities to meet their own subsistence needs;
- Prevents and reduces vulnerabilities to economic, political and socially unstable environments;
- Promotes ownership and sustainability of interventions;
- Helps gain entry into target communities and builds up trust and social capital.

### **Defining youth**

For statistical purposes, the UN defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. Youth do not constitute a homogeneous group; their socio-economic, demographic and geographical situations vary widely both within and between regions. Notwithstanding these differences, regional-level analysis provides a general understanding of their development profile. Some 87 per cent live in developing countries and face challenges deriving from limited access to resources, education, training, employment, and broader economic development opportunities<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank 2010

<sup>4</sup> 2005 figures, UN Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2008 Revision

<sup>5</sup> Research undertaken by Henrick Urdal at the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Uppsala University, 2007: high youth bulges indicate countries 'at risk' when combined with economic stresses, but they are not necessarily a predictor of conflict



**“By the year 2015,  
there will be three  
billion people under  
the age of 25. They are  
the future .. they are  
also the now”**

James D. Wolfensohn,  
Former President of the World Bank (2003)

However, it is necessary to move beyond the age dimension, and additionally focus on the transitional experiences of being young<sup>7</sup>. This means acknowledging localised cultural understandings of childhood and adulthood. On the one hand, these may construct youth as something which lasts well into one's 20s - particularly if economic realities exclude young adults from work, home ownership or marriage. On the other hand, in many poverty situations, “adult” care/working responsibilities begin before the age of 15<sup>8</sup>.

### **Why work with youth? Aid effectiveness**

Enabling young people to engage with democracy, development and peace building:

- Enables the exercise of citizenship: making claims and holding governments and donor agencies to account (Paris principle: “mutual accountability.”) Exercise of citizenship rights and duties in youth are durable and often determine political participation later in adulthood<sup>10</sup>. Participation promotes learning, empowerment and greater control over lives, which enables a wide range of voices to be heard.
- Makes policies and services appropriate for youth: building young people's commitment to the solutions (Paris principle: “ownership”).
- Makes the MDGs a reality: the World Bank, UNFPA and the Commonwealth Secretariat have identified youth as critical to reaching the MDGs (Paris principle: “managing for results”).

#### **Box 1: Youth engagement: success stories**

- Young people and adults share joint responsibility on the advisory board to The UN-HABITAT Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development, targeting youth-led initiatives in slums and squatter settlements that are in urgent need of financial support (p14).
- The Municipality of Rosario in Argentina undertakes a participatory youth budget which engages 1,000 youth annually from across its six districts to select representatives and decide upon budget allocations for youth services (p22).
- In Bahrain, around 16,000 young people aged 15 to 30 (8.9% of the youth population) were engaged directly (through focus group discussions and surveys) or indirectly as part of formulating national youth policy (p16).

<sup>7</sup> DFID 2007, 2009, World Bank 2007

<sup>8</sup> World Bank 2007, UN 2007

<sup>9</sup> The Paris Principles (adopted by the UN in 1992) relate to the status and functioning of national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights

<sup>10</sup> World Bank 2007

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION: AN OVERVIEW

## Defining participation

Participation is a commonly used approach and concept within development. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities. The UN has long recognized that young people are a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic growth and technological innovation.

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995 and expanded upon in 2007, provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. The WPAY identifies the following fifteen priority areas together with specific objectives and actions:

- Education
- Employment
- Hunger and poverty
- Health
- Environment
- Drug abuse
- Juvenile delinquency
- Leisure-time activities
- Girls and young women
- Participation
- Globalization
- Information and communication technologies
- HIV/AIDS
- Youth and conflict
- Intergenerational relations

The General Assembly has reaffirmed its commitment to youth participation since the adoption of the WPAY. Most recently, in 2009, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/130, calling upon Member States to:

- Recognize young women and men as important actors in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict processes;
- Strengthen the participation of young people, as important actors in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment as envisioned in Agenda 21;
- Take measures, including the involvement of boys and young men, to promote gender equality in all aspects of society and to eliminate violence against girls and young women;

- Engage young people in the AIDS response, ensure education and employment opportunities to reduce vulnerability to HIV, provide youth-friendly health services
- Ensure the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making processes by:
  - (a) Creating effective channels of cooperation and information exchange among young people, their national Governments and other decision makers
  - (b) Encouraging and promoting youth-led organizations and the important role they play in supporting young people's civic engagement, capacity-building and providing non-formal education through financial and technical support and promotion of their activities;
  - (c) Supporting, including through State and local governments, the establishment of independent national youth councils or equivalent bodies;
  - (d) Strengthening the participation and inclusion of young persons with disabilities in decision-making processes on an equal basis with others;
  - (e) Providing young people who are disconnected or socially and economically excluded with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes to ensure their full involvement in society.
- Consider including youth representatives in their delegations at all relevant discussions in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions and relevant United Nations conferences.

There is increasing interest in youth participation, driven to some extent by the discourse on children's rights <sup>[11]</sup>. However, this has been limited, and is often only at a superficial level, in the sense that young people are often included in one-off discussions, where their contributions of 'voice' do not actually affect core structural policy decisions.

There needs to be a shift in working with young people. Valuing youth as assets: colleagues and stakeholders and having an active approach to participation is crucial if development policies are to be truly representative and effective. The active, informed and voluntary involvement of young people in decision-making both locally and globally is vital if valuing youth as assets is to be achieved.

<sup>11</sup> See also Roger Hart's ladder model of participation. The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care', Earthscan 1997 and Phil Treseder's adaptation of it in 'Empowering children and young people', Save the Children 1997

### Key national policies

- Youth policy
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers/ National Development Plans
- Education strategy
- Adolescent/Sexual and reproductive health strategy
- Employment strategy - in particular national action plans for youth employment
- Rights framework (such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Gender policy
- National HIV/AIDS Response Plans

## POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUTH

### Key international policies

There has been a growth in policies from bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies, specifically discussing youth in developing countries. They offer a rich source of information on the situation facing youth and how the issue of youth can be strategically managed. These policies have been used as a basis for the literature review of the guide. One of the core policies is, 'The World Programme of Action for Youth WPAY (2007)', it provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. Implementation of WPAY requires the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also requires that Governments take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms and promote non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of their young people, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all young women and men.

### Other key policies include;

- NORAD (2005). 'Three billion reasons – Norway's development strategy for children and young people in the south'.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Youth Policy (2007).
- UNFPA (2010). 'The case for investing in young people as part of a national poverty reduction strategy'.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (2007). 'The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015'.
- Danida (2007). 'Children and Young People in Danish Development Co-operation'.
- UNFPA (2007) 'Framework for action on adolescents and youth: opening doors with young people: 4 keys'.
- World Bank (2007). 'World Development Report 2007 – Development and the next generation'.
- Africa Commission (2009). 'Realising the potential of Africa's youth – report of the Africa Commission'.

An overview of these policies is provided in the full Guide.

## CASE STUDIES

### Introduction

This selection of case studies highlights practical action in respect to youth participation. The guide uses case studies to explore, via the three-lens approach, the different roles that young people can adopt. They are 'how-to' models, selected to help donor agencies investigate and learn from the experiences of others.

Importantly, these models are presented both as a learning process and also for replication. Note that they are not meant to be taken as standard because of the need for flexibility in implementation – they will require adaptation in different social, economic, political and cultural contexts.



## Case study development

Most case studies in the guide focus on Africa and Asia, mainly sourced from partners and contacts within the Youth Working Group network via desk-based research in the UK. Case studies represent promising practice and have all been reviewed by the project committee and members of the wider network to ensure an informed level of quality. They do not represent a complete set of examples for youth participation but they are a solid foundation to begin with, and improve work with and for youth. The expectation is that this guide will promote youth participation, which will in turn provide more case studies in the future.

## Case studies are categorised into four areas:

**Organisational Development** - refers to improving an organisation's structures, systems, and processes; in particular how they work with young people. This is achieved through processes of negotiation, reflection and learning. This section of the guide presents case studies about preparing for working with young people and making the first steps. In order to support participation externally, organisations need to practice it internally, demonstrating accountability to young citizens. That means bringing younger people into the organisation and its core networks and collaborating with them to make subtle adjustments to working culture where necessary. Young people can bring new, creative and dynamic suggestions to the table, which can help catalyse improved organisational values and systems. This can be achieved by involving young people as volunteers, interns and staff, and ensuring their representation on boards, committees and task teams (with guidance and training as necessary).

**Policy and Planning** - refers to the national and regional level development planning processes (e.g., supporting and formulating national development plans and poverty reduction strategies) that donor agencies and advisors have a key role to play in managing. In most developing countries young people make up the majority of the population and development issues disproportionately affect this group. Therefore, they are important stakeholders in planning processes and should be included in every stage. This section explains how donor

agencies can ensure young people are included as leaders, partners and beneficiaries in local, regional and national decision-making structures.

**Implementation** - refers to the delivery of development interventions through government, civil society or other partners. Young people have an important role to play in the implementation of development programmes and initiatives. The roles young people can play include: acting as peer educators in areas such as sexual & reproductive and health and rights (SRHR), citizenship and democracy, and designing programmes. Taking up these roles can also dramatically improve their own lives, for example through developing skills to increase employability.

**Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)** - are integral and distinct parts of strategy and implementation. They are critical tools for forward-looking strategic positioning, organisational learning and for sound management. Young people can be engaged in a variety of ways including designing indicators and methodology, data gathering, report writing and participating in review processes.

In this summary paper, a selection of case studies have been extracted from the full guide and been shortened for the purpose of this document. In the full Guide more case studies can be found and a set of 'quality standards for youth participation' is put forward for each of the four key areas described here.

**Genuine participation gives... "young people the power to shape both the process and the outcome"**

UNICEF/Lansdown, 2004

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY: ADVISOR FIELD VISITS (DFID TANZANIA)

Field visits enable a diverse range of community members, including community leaders, youth club members and young women to express their viewpoints to decision-makers. In 2007 DFID Tanzania's key advisors were brought into direct contact with target beneficiaries. The two-day 'reality check' consultations and visits were an important part of assessing local government accountability mechanisms, building on the aims of the DFID Tanzania Country Assistance Plan 2006-10.

### Objectives

- To gain direct connection between decision-makers and poor/excluded groups;
- To gain understanding of the success and challenges of implementing policies on the ground, particularly for policy development and implementation;
- To learn of implementing partner and local government practices in order to assess the reforms needed.

### Process

1. Reality checks are planned and organised with the theme agreed in advance. For this example, government accountability mechanisms was the requested thematic area to be checked. The implementing partner, Restless Development, then began the process of engaging local government authorities, local NGOs and service providers, local councillors, and citizen groups.
2. A draft timetable was designed and fed back to the relevant DFID representative, discussed and agreed, after which Restless Development led the process of consulting and sensitising participating government personnel. The reality check itinerary included meetings with the above groups, project site visits, and focus group discussions with citizens:
  - Meeting with village executive officer, ward executive officer and village chairperson;
  - School visit and interaction with community action group member;
  - Interaction with young people (volunteer peer educators);
  - Community festival and youth centre visits.

### Results

- DFID advisors were better able to understand local government operations, which enabled a more effective government accountability strategy to be developed.
- Increased personal motivation and commitment to development for the poorest.
- Clear communication of the co-operative intentions of large institutions regarding the role of poor people in development processes.
- Increased accountability for effective utilisation of resources and implementation of high-level policies and strategies.

### Related resources:

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/advisor-field-visits>



## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY: YOUNG CONSULTANTS (SAVE THE CHILDREN/MINISTRY OF YOUTH, NEPAL)

**“Young people are often more provocative and can bring fresh new research methodologies or steer an unforeseen but highly informative avenue of a research project”** - Rebecca Calder, Social Development Advisor, DFID Nepal

Involving young people in research can allow a greater depth of information to be gathered, and builds their skills. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, Save the Children, the Association of Youth Organisations Nepal (AYON) and Nepal Planning Commission carried out a situation analysis of young people by young people in the newly emerging post-conflict country. Young professionals can act as role models for other youth, and participants of the study aspire to be like the researchers.

### Objectives

- To gather information that reflects the situation on the ground;
- To recruit, train and support young people to be effective researchers.

### Process

1. Calls for applications via ten partners and youth networks;
2. Competitive selection, requirement of previous field experience of working with young people. Gender balance was also considered, as well as ensuring there was representation of the different caste and ethnic groups;
3. Group discussion involving 15 candidates, enabling young people to demonstrate their skills through a series of tasks including design of research methodology;
4. Technical/pastoral support from representatives of the partners, an independent research consultant and two academic advisors;
5. Young researchers broke down areas of inquiry and developed guidelines for

focus group discussions, key-informant interviews, questionnaires and dialogue workshops;

6. Tools were piloted and reviewed;
7. Young people carried out research and compiled brief district reports;
8. The report was finalised by the research consultant.

### Results

- An effective way to bring youth participation into professional roles in the organisation;
- Young people were able to establish strong bonds with local NGOs;
- Beneficiaries were able to express themselves more openly to their peers and to a gender-balanced team.

### Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/young-consultants>

**“The young researchers are more flexible, more inquisitive and full of zeal; hence they are easy to work with.”**

Robin Sitaula, executive director, Samriddhi Foundation/research consultant, Status of Youth in Nepal

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY: ALLOCATING URBAN YOUTH FUNDS (UN-HABITAT)

Donor agencies can play a lead role in demonstrating young people's capabilities in allocating resources, enhancing the capacity and interest of local and national governments to address youth issues. Young people and adults share joint responsibility on the advisory board to The UN-HABITAT (United Nations Human Settlement Programme) Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development.

### Objectives

The special fund supports youth-led initiatives within the following areas:

- Mobilising young people to help strengthen youth-related policy formulation;
- Building the capacities of governments, non-governmental and civil society and private-sector organisations to ensure a better response to the needs and issues of young people;
- Supporting the development of interest-based information and communication-oriented networks;
- Piloting/demonstration of new/innovative approaches to employment, good governance, adequate shelter and secure tenure;
- Sharing and exchange of information on best practices;
- Facilitating vocational training and credit mechanisms to promote entrepreneurship and employment for young women and men, in collaboration with the private sector and in co-operation with other UN bodies and stakeholders,
- Promoting gender mainstreaming in all activities of urban youth.



## Process

1. The operational guidelines, structures and application guidelines for the Opportunities Fund were set up through the following processes:
  - Consultation with global youth networks, and collaboration with the UN-HABITAT Youth Advisory Board;
  - A review of the Opportunities Fund during the 2009 Dialogue on Investing in Youth-Led Development. This brought together more than 60 grant makers, researchers, practitioners and youth to discuss how to best support the initiative.
2. A first call for applications (youth networks and media) was launched in March 2009. By June 2009 1,116 applications had been received from youth-led organisations in 86 countries.
  - Eligibility checks isolated 315 eligible projects. A majority of applications failed due to not being youth-led, operating in rural areas, or not being related to the objectives of the fund. Quality assessment was conducted and applications were scored on ten criteria. Many applications scored weakly on the quality of project design and sustainability.
3. More than 30% of short listed projects were from developing countries. An effort was made to include a balance of applications from different sub-regions, different size of grants and different categories of projects.
4. The Youth Advisory Board is overseeing the fund. It comprises of 12 advisors, two per UN-HABITAT region, and includes one youth observer (representing young people with disabilities). In addition, there are two observer members: one youth representative from informal settlements; and one external advisor, appointed by UN-HABITAT. Advisory board members are elected at the World Urban Youth Assembly to serve for a two-year period.

## Results

- The overwhelming response to the Youth Opportunities Fund (over 13,000 application form and information downloads) is a strong demonstration of the scale of need among youth in the developing world for the resources to realise their potential.
- Processing applications thoroughly is time consuming. In the period from 1 June to 1 September 2009 the secretariat of the fund spent a total of 330 work-

days on different tasks related to processing the applications. Consultants, interns and volunteers were successfully recruited to support this.

- It is crucial to conduct periodic reviews of youth boards (and the initiatives they oversee), such as in May 2009 which was conducted by a delegation including the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and United States Agency for International Development.
- Particular costs to consider: travel to the field to support the projects; training and capacity building; running a help desk for application processes.

## Related resources:

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/allocating-funds>



**“Young people want to build stable democracies, sustainable economies and societies based on equity.”**

Inter American Development Bank 2009

## POLICY & PLANNING CASE STUDY:

# BAHRAIN'S NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY (UNDP)

To involve youth in policy formulation increases the chances of its success and uptake. Cross-sectoral youth policies are more effective: by engaging different ministries in the process, such as education and health, enables the youth ministry to be mainstreamed. The consultative process develops young people's skills so they are able to contribute more effectively to future policy initiatives. The Government Department of Youth and Sport (GOYS) in Bahrain, supported and funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook a comprehensive 18-month nationwide process to assess the situation, needs and aspirations of Bahraini youth in order to inform the country's first National Youth Policy (created in 2004).

### Objectives

- To build on the imagination, energy, opinions and talents of all young Bahraini women and men through their active participation in all phases of formulation of the strategy;
- To develop a co-ordinated and holistic national youth strategy leading to an action plan for 2005 to 2009;
- To build the capacity of young people, youth practitioners and others formulating the strategy.

### Process

Research took place over a nine-month period in 2004 to 2005 across nine thematic areas: education; health; employment; culture; information and communication technology; social security; environment; sports and leisure and civil and human rights. The process was divided into five sequential stages:

1. Creating thematic working groups and conducting youth trainings;
2. Information gathering through face-to-face surveys and focus groups;

3. Outreach via community talk radio, website;
4. Review and finalisation; involving UNDP technical staff, GOYS and youth working groups;
5. Approval and promotion.

### Results

An implementation action plan, comprising five major strategy programmes, was drafted incorporating 96 of the 136 recommendations made in the strategy document. These included the formulation of: a national youth parliament; a national youth commission; a national youth development fund; and an inter-ministerial committee for youth affairs.

"I don't know of any other exercise in the world that engaged youth at such a massive scale ...It's certainly something other countries can learn from." - Peter Kenyon, Project Manager

### Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/national-youth-policy>

**"The participation of youth, in large numbers and from diverse backgrounds, was the number one achievement of the process."**

Amal Al-Dossary,  
GOYS project focal point

## POLICY & PLANNING CASE STUDY:

# POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY (GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM)

Poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs<sup>12</sup>) provide opportunities for government officials to learn how to work with and for young people. The Vietnamese government, in developing their poverty reduction strategy, commissioned an NGO (Save the Children) to conduct three consultations with children and young people in particularly poor urban areas over the course of five years. The purpose of the consultations was to feed into the formulation of the strategy, and to provide opportunities for young people and children to review the implementation of the strategy. The first assessment in 1999, before PRSPs existed, was to inform national development planning and the World Bank's Vietnam Development Report on poverty. The second consultation in 2001 sourced feedback on the interim PRSP and policy for the PRSP. The third consultation in 2003 was part of a review of progress on the implementation of the country's first PRSP.

### Objectives:

- To provide data and evidence to feed into the development of a poverty reduction strategy;
- To consult children and young people (ages 5 to 18) in urban areas on their experience of poverty;
- To track progress of the poverty reduction strategy through gaining feedback from children and young people.

### Process

1. A mixture of discussion groups, interviews and participatory workshops.
2. The first consultation acted as a baseline assessment of poverty in the area.
3. The two subsequent consultations incorporated an element of monitoring against past objectives and tracking the progress of government efforts in the area.

4. Some participants were also invited to form part of the facilitation team during the third consultation, introducing an element of peer education to the process and building the capacity of those individuals.
5. The children and young people's input ran alongside consultations with a wide range of adult community members, but the children and young people's process was conducted separately to ensure children and young people felt comfortable expressing themselves and their views were heard independently of adults.
6. Consultations took place in areas where Save the Children does significant work; staff could feel confident they were not engaging young people in consultations that would lead nowhere.

### Results

- The PRSP has greater reference to young people. The government is thinking about the impact of poverty on children and young people, and declarations in the PRSP make it easier for communities to hold the government to account for its action on such issues.
- The research was used by Save the Children as part of expansion of their activities.
- By the third consultation in-depth analysis was developed on causes and consequences of poverty; the level of depth would not have been possible with a one-off consultation.
- Local officials were able to learn from the process of children and young people's participation and were able to directly apply that learning in their wider work.
- Participants highlighted the plight of the growing number of migrant families in the capital who are not registered by the authorities and who have major problems accessing healthcare, education and social welfare services. Their information helped change procedures to allow unregistered migrants access to services more quickly. This was a major step forward in a city where up to a third of the population of some wards are 'hidden' unregistered migrants.

### Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/poverty-reduction-strategy>

## POLICY & PLANNING CASE STUDY:

# UGANDA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DFID)

“By involving a large number of national youth in NDP processes, we are creating a large base of the public that will be able to support, engage with and promote national development.” – Restless Development

The social development advisor at DFID Uganda was acutely aware of the growing youth bulge in the country, and the need to engage more actively with young people in order to minimise the risk of youth apathy or violence. DFID Uganda commissioned a civil society organisation, Restless Development Uganda, to lead and organise a two-day national youth consultation at the request of the National Planning Authority in June 2009. Young people's recommendations were listened to and clearly documented as part of the formulation of the National Development Plan (NDP).

### Objectives

- To ensure young people across Uganda have the opportunity to learn about and feed into the NDP process;
- To engage youth creativity and expertise to identify policies and programmes required to achieve NDP objectives;
- To provide an opportunity for face-to-face discussion between young people and decision-makers, so decision-makers can better understand the barriers to employment and prosperity facing young people across Uganda;
- To ensure effective dissemination of consultation findings.

**“Once a national focus on youth begins to show results - in poverty reduction and in other areas - a “virtuous circle” is created whereby other countries will begin investing in youth, as well; not because international bodies argue for it, but because countries see it is in their own self-interest. It is in this way that a focus on youth can become truly self-sustaining.”**

Mari Simonen, Director, Technical Division, UNFPA 2005

## Process

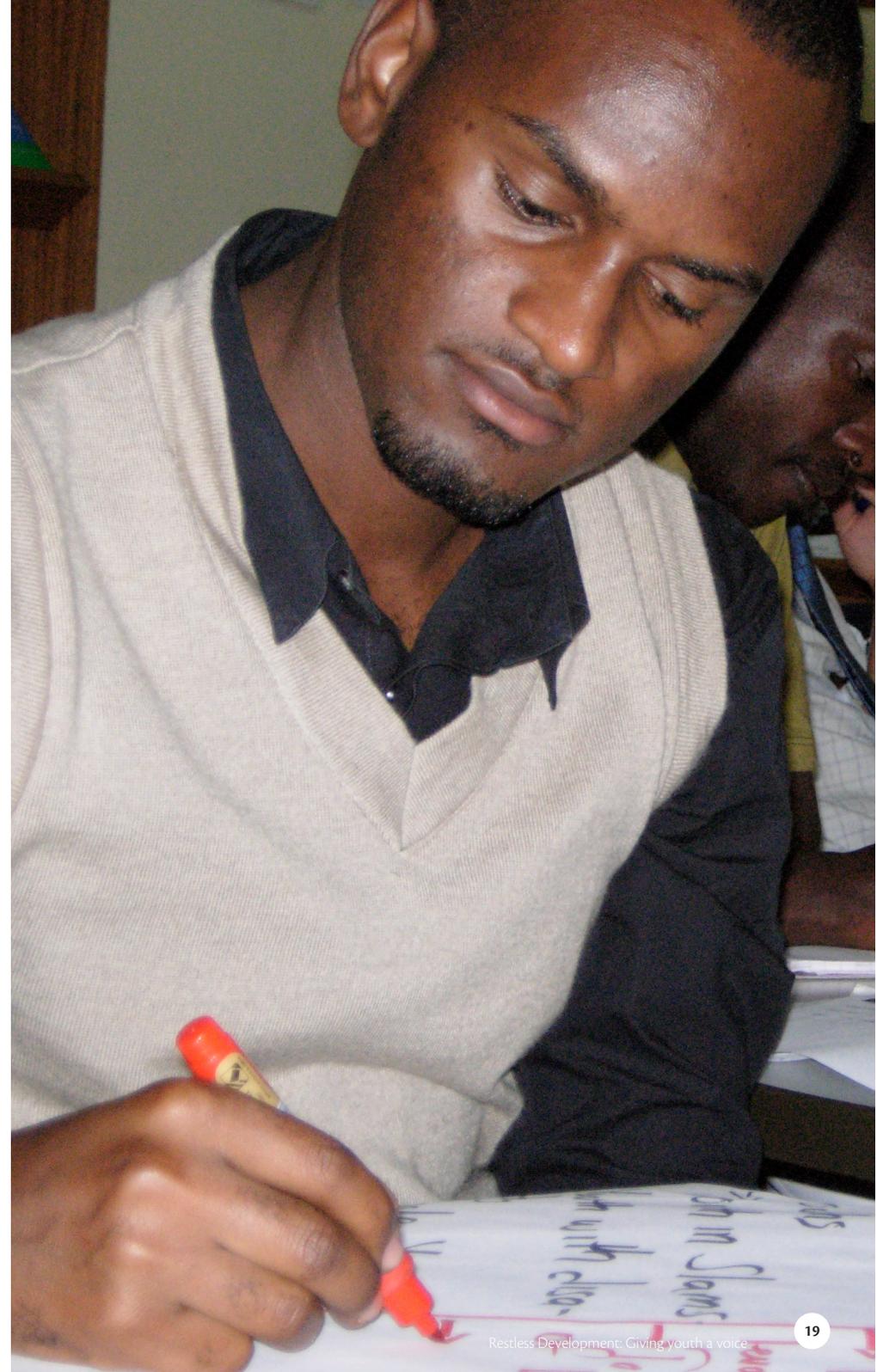
1. National newspaper advertisement inviting contributions via SMS/text messages;
2. Participants representing official youth structures, NGOs, persons with disabilities and student groups
3. Introduction to Restless Development and the NDP;
4. Training for participants on strategy analysis;
5. Tools included a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and spider diagram/mind mapping;
6. Four groups created strategies in the key areas of education, employment, health and population, and gender and social development;
7. Twelve key strategic recommendations were agreed;
8. Two young people presented the recommendations to the National Planning Authority and Ministry of Children and Youth;
9. Consultation outcomes disseminated across all key ministries and decision-makers in Uganda.

## Results

- Draft NDP mentions youth entrepreneurship (USD\$5m earmarked for start-ups); vocational skills for out-of-school youth with attention to quality and moral aspects and youth-friendly SRHR. There is an emphasis on vulnerable youth in the sections on gender and social protection.
- Government considering follow-up regional consultations, and youth participation in M&E of the plan.
- World Bank Uganda seeking young people to participate in Country Assistance Strategy (2010).

## Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/national-development-plan>



## IMPLEMENTATION CASE STUDY:

# MAINSTREAMING SRHR IN EDUCATION (USAID, SENEGAL)

**“HIV and AIDS mainstreaming should result in the epidemic becoming part and parcel of the routine functions and functioning of a sector...as an integral part of the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring activities.”** - UNAIDS (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS)

Multi-sectoral approaches that engage government agencies, communities, and youth are vital for sustainable change. The Population Council and Frontiers together have worked across different policy areas, utilising a strong research base and government partnerships to catalyse change in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) policy and practice. Regional research pilots informed the creation of a nationwide programme between 1999 and 2007. This was mainly funded by USAID.

### Objectives

- To institutionalise youth reproductive health at a local level;
- To create a favourable policy and funding environment for adolescent reproductive health (ARH) at the national level;
- To scale up the intervention in Senegal and in neighboring states.

### Process

1. Frontiers undertook a comprehensive ‘operations research study’ from 1999 to 2003 assessing different approaches to adolescent reproductive health in three districts of Senegal.
2. Outreach and advocacy involved community institutions and resources (including religious organisations, women’s groups, public events, dramas, and community meetings, among others).
3. Staff of government ministries participated in all phases of the design and implementation; youth, community, and religious leaders were key actors in

**“They are tomorrow’s  
leaders, parents, pro-  
fessionals and work-  
ers and today’s assets”**

DfID/Maguire 2007

providing information and discussing sensitive issues.

4. Based on the outcomes and cultural situation of Senegalese youth, a programme of work was formulated incorporating formal and informal educational approaches and a core curriculum.
5. Training of professionals in education and health, as well as for 70 peer educators was conducted, who then delivered the curriculum initially in the three pilot districts.
6. The peer education methodology was particularly used to target out-of-school and other excluded youth.
7. The Ministry of Health was influenced by the findings of the study, and partnered with Frontiers. In 2004 they created a 13-partner steering committee for inter-ministerial co-ordination and technical assistance was offered to the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Sports, youth-serving organisations and development partners.
8. Government ministries were offered support to develop adolescent SRHR action plans which were submitted to development partners for funding for scaling up.
9. Following this the initiative was scaled up in all nine regions of the country.

### Results

- Findings from the initial studies showed that the interventions addressed a recognised need of incorporating SRHR into broader education strategies.
- Community response was overwhelmingly positive. Local civic and religious leaders, critical gatekeepers for social change, strongly supported the adolescent SRHR initiatives and played major roles in the intervention activities.
- Uptake of materials by UN bodies and Save the Children (in 18 countries).
- Endorsement of the approach by WHO (World Health Organisation); replication efforts in other Francophone African countries.

### Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study>



## IMPLEMENTATION CASE STUDY:

# PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (GTZ, ARGENTINA)

“Where local young people are involved in budgetary decisions there is the potential to develop creative solutions to issues that can result in cost savings and better value for money. Local young people are often very conscious of spending/allocating public money and can therefore be very careful about how they spend it.” – Government official, Municipality of Rosario

Participatory youth governance can give youth a greater sense of civic pride and responsibility. The Municipality of Rosario undertakes an annual participatory youth budget, engaging youth from across its six districts in democratic processes to select representatives and decide upon budget allocations for youth services. An initial pilot in 2004 was funded by German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and the necessary funds are now drawn from the municipal budget. Young people are able to have a say in the design of youth services in their city and in the allocation of resources to support their execution over the course of a six-month annual cycle.

### Objectives

- To engage youth as protagonists in the design and implementation of local youth services;
- To educate young people in citizenship by active learning.

### Process

1. Initial steps include setting up neighborhood assemblies in each city district.
2. Young people then identify neighborhood priorities and elect delegates to each district's youth participatory council.
3. This is followed by a full day orientation meeting where budget delegates can meet each other and learn about the process.

4. Subsequently, youth participatory councils meet regularly for several months to develop project proposals based on the neighborhood priorities.
5. The Councils then present the proposals in a round of district assemblies, where local youth vote on which to implement.
6. Participants are encouraged to participate in other non-youth specific participatory budgeting processes.

### Results

- Three thousand five hundred young people were involved by 2008.
- Gaps in provision were identified and addressed. Funding was allocated to new music and dance workshops, recreational sites and a community library.
- Inspired new youth projects in adult participatory budgeting process.
- Development of new democratic skills, knowledge and attitudes. The elected representatives within the process are also considered ambassadors with a responsibility to involve others.
- Linking of youth groups from different areas.
- The programme is undergoing a steady scale-up process utilising the raised profile and extra capacity brought by projects funded from the youth budget for outreach purposes.

**“To be a budget delegate means to make decisions responsibly and skilfully, to debate and respect the opinions of others, to orient and guide people who need help, and to propose coherent projects that will be useful in the future.”** - Youth participant, Rosario

### Related resources

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/participatory-budgeting>

**“Participation of young people in evaluations may lead to issues being identified which might otherwise be overlooked. For example, in the evaluation of the Families Orphans and Children Under Stress (FOCUS) programme in Zimbabwe, children and young people identified stigma and sexual abuse as major issues.”**

Family Health International

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION CASE STUDY: MEASURING ADOLESCENT EMPOWERMENT (UNESCO, NEPAL)

In accordance with UNESCO's strategy of action with and for youth, which strives to involve young people as equal partners in all aspects of project planning, implementation and evaluation, the Section for Youth collaborated with Youth Initiative to monitor and evaluate a pilot on 'Breaking the poverty cycle of women' in two districts of Nepal. Peer-group monitoring and evaluation was expected to generate a better reflective mechanism to evaluate progress from the recipients' viewpoint and to contribute to the capacity-building of youth organisations active in social development. Youth Initiative was responsible for carrying out the M&E which was simultaneously conducted in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

### Objectives

- To contribute to the capacity-building of youth organisations active in social development, including community learning centres;
- To involve young people as equal partners in all aspects of project planning, implementation and evaluation;
- To contribute to mid-term evaluation of adolescents empowerment project.

### Process

1. Youth Initiative selected to carry out M&E at an early stage of the whole project.
2. Orientation of young evaluators, including lessons learned from previous cycle.
3. M&E training and discussion.
4. Eighteen village development committees were visited for M&E activities, whereby focus group discussions (using random sample techniques), individual interviews (with adolescents, parents and others) and observations (on hygiene, transport, energy use, health, use of public space etc.) were conducted.
5. Comparisons were made between adolescents within and outside the project.



**“Before we never heard about outcome and impact level (results). Now we would like to focus on outcome and impact level.”**

Young evaluator

### **Results**

- Skills and knowledge of young evaluators.
- General M&E findings, e.g.:
  - The project was found to have an impact on discussion, decision-making and volunteering on HIV/AIDS and public health issues (fire risks, sanitation, nutrition). However, broader sexual and reproductive health and rights knowledge was lacking.
  - Legal literacy (rights) classes were popular with adolescent girls, but few were aware of legal advice services.
  - Findings supported recommendations to target illiterate out-of-school youth, and produce more practically oriented and attractive materials.
  - Overall quality of the programme depended on facilitators' levels of motivation, especially given their inadequate salary.

### **Related resources**

<http://ygproject.org/case-study/measuring-empowerment>

## CONCLUSION

**The foundation for the Guide is viewing youth as assets, as partners and leaders in development and challenging negative judgements and values regarding young people. An asset based approach is twofold:**

- Recognising that young people have assets i.e., not simply viewing them as lacking capabilities or being deprived by circumstances.
- Recognising that young people collectively can be an asset to development at local, national, regional and international levels. Central to this approach is a belief in core principles.
- Recognising young people's agency and dynamism and advocating for it.
- Building youth-adult partnerships and understanding local attitudes towards youth.
- Prioritising excluded youth.

These core principles are crucial at all levels of political strategy (building state capacity, partnering with other agencies etc) and sound management and governance (mainstreaming) and programme and project level (standards, good practice). Here, youth mainstreaming is understood as working with and for youth in the four key areas of Organisational Development, Policy and Planning, Implementation and M&E as described at the start of the case study section (p11).

It is also vital to acknowledge that every age cohort, social group and individual young person is unique and ever-changing. Flexibility and creativity are prerequisites for working with young people. Therefore whatever the thematic focus or operational area the key is always understanding local context.

**The strategies, approaches and frameworks listed are therefore a place to start rather than blue-prints. Youth are:**

- Diverse in age, gender, aspirations and levels of physical, emotional and cognitive maturity;

- Socioeconomically diverse, ranging from influential elites to the poor, exploited and excluded.

Despite all the promising practice documented in the Guide, few partnerships are systematically involving young people at all these stages. A commitment to tackling the injustice of ignoring young people will yield results. Young people are the foundations for effective development, and if engaged they will improve many of the structural development challenges that we face today, including: enhancing the cohesion of families and communities, reducing health risks and advancing livelihood opportunities. They are the bridge between effective policy and valuable practical action on the ground.



**Genuine participation gives ... “young people the power to shape both the process and the outcome”**

UNICEF/Lansdown, 2004

### **For further reading:**

UN (1995) 'World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond'; New York: UN.

UN (2007) 'World Youth Report 2007 - Young People's Transition to Adulthood: Progress and Challenges'; New York: UN.

UN (2010) 'World Youth Report - Youth and Climate Change'; New York, UN

Africa Commission (2009) 'Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth'; Copenhagen: Africa Commission

Commonwealth Secretariat (2007) 'Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015'; London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

DFID/Maguire, S. (2007) 'Youth Mapping Study - DFID's Approach to Young People'.

World Bank (2007) 'World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation'; Washington: World Bank.

For a copy of the full Youth Participation in Development Guide see <http://www.ygproject.org/>. For more information on the Summary Guidelines including how to make use of it, please contact:

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