

Democracy watchdogs

Youth-driven participatory monitoring and accountability in the
Post-2015 development agenda



Contents

Acronyms	ii
Foreword	1
Objectives	1
Summary	1
Definitions and scope	3
Advocating for youth targets and participatory decision-making: supporting the UN Global Call on Youth	4
The context: youth frustration at lack of targeted services, freedom of expression and fulfilment of rights	5
Rationale: why is participatory monitoring and accountability with youth important for ActionAid?	6
Mainstreaming youth: placing young rights holders at the local level first	7
Social audit monitoring tools	8
Community score cards	9
Citizens' oversight mechanisms and agencies	9
Participatory planning and budgeting	10
Youth governance and the Post-2015 accountability project	12
Common concerns on youth-driven accountability	13
ActionAid policy demands	14
What civil society can do	15
What governments in the South should do	15
What governments in the North should do	16
Acknowledgements	17
Annex: Additional case studies	18
1: Community score cards	18
2: Citizens' oversight mechanisms and agencies	19
3: Participatory planning and budgeting	20
References	21
Websites	22

Acronyms

CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
CSO	civil society organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDI	Global Development Incubator
HRBA	human rights based approach
ICT	information communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYF	International Youth Fund
LRP	Local Rights Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGCY	Major Groups Children and Youth
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OWG	Open Working Group
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PRRP	Participatory Reflection and Review Process
RA	Reflection Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Secretary General
SMS	short message service
ToC	theory of change
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WABEAN	Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network
WPAY	World Plan of Action on Youth
YDI	Youth Development Index
YWI	Youth Wellbeing Index

Foreword

This background paper *Democracy watchdogs: youth-driven participatory monitoring and accountability in the Post-2015 development agenda* compliments ActionAid's internal position on youth and the Post-2015 development agenda. It provides case studies that showcase the approaches and roles young men and women can take in implementing and reporting on the targets and indicators of the Post-2015 development goals.

Objectives

This paper aims to strengthen the argument for why young people should be engaged in holding their governments to account on the delivery of the Post-2015 development agenda. It does this by providing ideas and approaches on how youth-driven participatory monitoring and tracking at community level can ensure the Post-2015 agenda is rooted in processes that actually empower communities.

Summary

“ The need to ensure youth issues are duly reflected in the new development agenda has been recognized by the endorsement of over 1,250 youth organizations from over 140 countries, major international youth organizations, UN agencies, Regional Intergovernmental bodies and the “Global Youth Call; Prioritizing Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, which reflects an unprecedented emerging consensus on concrete proposals and target areas on youth in the Post-2015 development agenda. ”

UN SPECIAL ENVOY'S OFFICE ON YOUTH, JULY 2014

Almost two billion young people – commonly defined as between the ages of 15 and 30¹ – constitute a huge proportion of the world's population. Yet many are prevented from achieving their potential because they lack access to quality education, health services, decent work and opportunities to participate fully in society. This is a violation of their rights.

¹ When we use the term “youth” we refer to a diverse category. Our definition of youth focuses first on the socio-political identity of young people who are seeking the rights and independence that adulthood should bring. It is by its very nature therefore contested, and hence age definitions vary across the world. We use 15-30 as a guide only.

The success of the Post-2015 development agenda – the process creating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – will not only depend on whether work to reach the new targets is properly funded; it will also depend on whether diverse youth are included in participatory monitoring and social accountability processes at a national and local level.² This will require specific investments and targets to be made explicitly for youth (including those from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds). Without this collaborative partnership with youth groups and networks, ActionAid believes that social injustices and systemic poverty will become further entrenched, and exacerbate inequalities.



YOUNG PEOPLE IN MYANMAR REVIEWING AND STRATEGISING (2014). PHOTO: ACTIONAID MYANMAR

Young women and men have a crucial and dynamic role to play in national participatory monitoring and accountability of the Post-2015 development agenda.³ Working with them in this way is a tangible acknowledgment of the value of their contribution to development as global citizens. It shares the knowledge and power that is bestowed upon the people and organisations that do the monitoring. Participatory monitoring is a political act, and one that we already do with young people across ActionAid via Participatory Reflection and Review Processes (PRRP) (e.g. in Bangladesh), and in our programmes, such as youth social audits (e.g. in Kenya).

The following three areas will guide ActionAid and partners in terms of appropriate ways to collaborate with youth in participatory monitoring and social accountability processes.

² Especially targets directly affecting them; as of Open Working Group 13, these are: 4.4, 4.6, 8.5, 8.6, 8.10b, 10.2, 13b and 16.7.

³ ActionAid views accountability as that which enhances our efforts to build democracy, advance justice and fight poverty. In particular, development and humanitarian organisations which are firmly grounded in the human rights based approach (HRBA) are interested in how civil society actors can use the notion of accountability to strengthen their own advocacy and development work (ActionAid Denmark, 2006). It is important to understand the transition from accountability as an obligation to serve youth to accountability as a culture of working for youth with youth (as a direct factor of increased youth demand for the same). It is a process and an end in itself whereby increasingly empowered people seek feedback on plans, and resources invested.

These are:

- local planning and budget allocation and usage;
- disaggregated data collection and reporting;
- social audit monitoring tools (i.e. community/school score cards, citizens' oversight mechanisms, etc.).

Definitions and scope

ActionAid recognises that there are many national and international-level processes focusing on the implementation of the Post-2015 development goals that this paper may not cover – it is an extensive process to capture.

As such, the scope of this paper focuses on two areas:

- The importance of including youth-specific targets within the Post-2015 development goals.
- Youth-led/youth inclusive participatory monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

ActionAid **defines youth engagement** as both civic and political engagement.⁴ The organisation's theory of change (ToC) is based on recognising unjust distributions of power and the structures that emerge from this inequity – an oppression of the excluded. Our work on accountability is often a form of political engagement; in that it is aware of and explicit about power, and young people's relationship to government and the state. This is often done by young men and women playing the role of democracy watchdogs – through lobbying, campaigning and collaborative partnerships.

ActionAid views **accountability** as that which enhances our efforts to build democracy, advance justice and fight poverty. Most particularly, development and humanitarian organisations that are firmly grounded in the human rights based approach (HRBA) want to explore how civil society actors can use the notion of accountability to strengthen their own advocacy and development work (ActionAid Denmark, 2006). It is important to understand the transition from accountability as an obligation to serve youth to accountability as a culture of working with youth. It is a process and an end in itself; whereby increasingly empowered people seek feedback on plans and resources invested.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines participatory monitoring as the systematic recording and periodic analysis of information that has been chosen and recorded by insiders with the help of outsiders to measure progress. ActionAid defines it more simply as **collection**

⁴ Civic engagement is defined in the ActionAid Youth Engagement plan as “young people's individual and collective actions to identify and address issues of public concern and to get involved in non-partisan decision-making. Political engagement is about discussion and action that is aware and explicit about the power dimension – be that in voting or other party political activity, lobbying, or demonstrations against abuses”.

and analysis of information on service performance via a participatory approach (ActionAid International, 2011).

Participatory monitoring can take various forms. At its core, it is about **inclusive and transparent practices** used to monitor the effectiveness and usefulness of local, regional, national and/or international policies, thus providing the evidence to improve these policies. It is also about people working together in an organised way; identifying and tracking the priority issues that affect their own communities so that barriers to progress can be addressed and solved, with support from duty bearers (governments, international organisations, etc.).

Advocating for youth targets and participatory decision-making: supporting the UN Global Call on Youth

ActionAid endorses the UN Global Call On Youth (June 2014)⁵ and in particular advocates that the following areas from the final Open Working Group (OWG)⁶ session are incorporated into the final Post-2015 development goals. There must be goals/targets on:

- **Increasing life expectancy (Goal 3)** and access to affordable, acceptable and quality-assured services and sexual reproductive health advice for all – especially adolescents and youth (young girls).
- **Decent work targets (Goal 8)** that aim for full, productive and fairly paid employment and decent work for all, and reduction in the number of young people not in employment, education or training – based on national benchmarks.
- **Promoting life-long learning and providing employable skills (Goal 4)** especially to young women and men. This involves increasing adult/youth literacy and basic numeracy, and ensuring that all youth, both young men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.
- **Promoting social and economic inclusion (Goal 10)** regardless of ethnicity, race, age or economic status. This should be a vital component of the final goals.
- **Ensuring inclusive participatory and representative decision-making (Goal 16)** at all levels,

5 http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The-Global-Call-on-Youth_3-June-2014.pdf

6 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1561>

with an emphasis on including young people. Building on the governance targets in the UN Global Call on Youth, ActionAid believes change can take place if we:

- ensure the right to information, association, and freedom of speech and opinion for all, including marginalised youth;
- strengthen youth-led movements, networks and organisations, and improve their access to institutions that affect the lives of young people;
- ensure that youth are meaningfully involved in global and national monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability for commitments made in the Post-2015 development agenda;
- strengthen inclusive participation of young people, (especially young women) in governance and decision-making processes at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- develop, implement and adequately fund cross-sectoral youth policies that are evidence-based and include participatory monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis in accordance with the World Programme for Action on Youth (WPAY);
- encourage and support youth civic engagement and volunteerism for development, including by ensuring education on and awareness of human rights and development;
- strengthen effective, transparent and accountable institutions at all levels;
- support and promote increased and equitable access to open, timely, reliable, and accessible and quality information, including through information communication technology (ICT) to enable stronger accountability mechanisms and greater youth participation in decision-making.

The context: youth frustration at lack of targeted services, freedom of expression and fulfilment of rights

With the rise of the Arab Spring in 2011 and other youth-led protests across the world – such as in Brazil in 2013 – the frustration at lack of services, freedoms and rights among diverse youth groups is becoming ever more apparent. Youth movements, networks and civil society are connecting, and a more coherent youth agenda is emerging across countries in the developing and developed world.⁷ The MDGs did not directly refer to youth nor address young people’s concerns. However, the Post-2015 development agenda offers a platform to address this through goals on governance, education and employment.

⁷ One manifestation of this was coined ‘Youth 21’ by the UN in 2012.

There is momentum among many civil society actors, UN bodies (UNICEF, UN Women), and some governments (notably Canada, South Korea and Peru) to define the monitoring, evaluation and accountability development agendas for the new goals, targets and indicators. A dominant discourse is grounded in a human rights based approach that focuses on ‘a life of dignity for all’.⁸

Rationale: why is participatory monitoring and accountability with youth important for ActionAid?

ActionAid not only has a mandate to act on its strategy *People’s Action to End Poverty*, and with the young people we work with, but we are also well placed given our experience of accountability and youth engagement to support and deliver on youth-led accountability in the Post-2015 processes.

ActionAid places emphasis on its work with rights holders: to ensure they are able to claim and exercise their rights, to enable them to move out of poverty. The world’s 1.8 billion youth are an excluded demographic in development, caught between childhood/adolescence and adulthood. Nearly ninety percent live in developing countries, exacerbating the impact of lack of investment, targeted policies, monitoring and voice in programmes and policies.⁹ At the heart of ActionAid’s theory of change on youth engagement is a focus on working with the most excluded and vulnerable youth living in poverty, and on connecting them in solidarity with youth from other diverse backgrounds.¹⁰ When equipped with knowledge, critical awareness and the space to participate, young people are able to hold duty bearers accountable. For example, a recent case study from Bangladesh highlights rural youth taking action to stop land and loan-scheme rights violations against the most excluded in their community; by lobbying duty bearers to take action against those who committed the violations.¹¹

Young people in ActionAid’s Local Rights Programmes (LRPs)¹² have been active participants in ActionAid’s annual planning and budgeting process in several countries (including Bangladesh, Myanmar and Uganda) over the past few years. Since 2012, youth in LRPs in Bangladesh have been

8 UNGA 2013, *Life of Dignity for All* HLP Report.

9 www.unfpa.org/public/adolescents

10 Part of the intermediate outcome of the Theory of Change for KCP6 is to ensure “young people have a critical analysis and increased awareness of injustice and poverty”. The final impact will be that “young women and men specifically will enjoy quality public services, enhanced livelihoods, greater food security and resilience, quality public education, emergency assistance, and in the case of young women specifically, greater control over their bodies.”

11 ActionAid Bangladesh (2014) *Standing up for the Rights of the Marginalised*.

12 ActionAid engages in partnerships with community-based organisations, local non-governmental organisations through a long-term partnership that supports institutional strengthening and capacity development.



RURAL YOUTH TAKING ACTION TO STOP LAND AND LOAN-SCHEME RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST THE MOST EXCLUDED IN THEIR COMMUNITY (2014). PHOTO: ACTIONAID BANGLADESH

engaged in the Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP), using community consultations to direct the planning and implementation of programmes in their communities. In Myanmar, young people have been engaged in participatory monitoring of LRPs since 2006 (but in a more focused manner since 2012), and have successfully developed a mechanism to address challenges faced in their communities through joint collaboration.¹³ This work has resulted in more targeted and transparent programmes.

Mainstreaming youth: placing young rights holders at the local level first

As the Post-2015 development targets and indicators are finalised, several bodies including governments, CSOs and young people themselves have highlighted the need for youth-specific development indicators. The UN Secretary General's WPAY, the Youth Development Index (YDI) of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Youth Wellbeing Index (YWI) of the International Youth Foundation

¹³ This mechanism includes the Village Book on Facebook – youth-led community monitoring through social media; Youth-led LRP Appraisals and PRRP; citizen journalism and how change comes about through media; and the Fellows – community-based groups organising bottom-up training for regional government.

(IYF) and Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) have all initiated discussions regarding youth development indicators.

ActionAid acknowledges that specific indicators will facilitate measurement of progress related to youth development within the Post-2015 development agenda, and supports youth policy formulation and monitoring at the national level. Several bodies, such as the Commonwealth, are calling for a separate, standalone youth goal.¹⁴ ActionAid endorses this call; however, at this stage in the process, mainstreaming seems much more feasible. We therefore take a pragmatic approach: supporting both, but channelling efforts on ensuring youth is mainstreamed across the next development priorities.

The World We Want¹⁵ has been holding stakeholder consultations on the Post-2015 development goals since 2013. A notable working group and thematic consultation is that on participatory monitoring and accountability.¹⁶ In addition, The OWG on the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷ has called for ensuring the availability of disaggregated data (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and for the development of broader national accountability mechanisms.

Social audit monitoring tools

As a citizen, the first point of contact with government is at the local level. It is, therefore, important that government and civil society work together to design, implement and monitor programmes that target the most vulnerable and excluded young people in society and include them in local government processes.¹⁸

Over the past few years there have been various social audit tools used around the world to engage young people in reporting on issues that affect them – from young journalists in Bangladesh publishing an online newspaper, to young people in Uganda using mobile phones to SMS others about key events, issues and concerns in their community.¹⁹ What is certain is that the power of young people has led to policy-makers, donors and others taking notice.

14 Commonwealth CYC Position – youth in the Post-2015 Agenda (July 2014).

15 “The World We Want 2015” is an online consultation aimed at finding out young peoples’ views on sustainable development and hearing their proposed solutions to youth issues in development. Feeding into the Post-2015 discussions, the “World We Want” consultation steers discussions on the Post-2015 agenda and enhances CSO participation to make sure that young peoples’ voices are taken into consideration when setting the new development agenda. For more information, please visit: www.worldwewant2015.org.

16 <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/accountability2015>.

17 Open Working Group – Post-2015 (June, 2014).

18 <http://webtv.un.org/watch/participatory-monitoring-and-accountability-critical-components-for-the-Post-2015-development-agenda-2nd-meeting-of-the-high-level-political-forum-on-sustainable-development-side-event/3664935224001//and> Care International (2007) ‘Shifting Ground: Implications of International Cooperation for civil society organizations in Latin America, 2000-2007 with specific reference to the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID)’. London – UK. <http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/shifting-ground-report-CARE-2007.pdf>.

19 See <http://ureport.ug/>.

With increased access and use of mobile phone technology and the Internet, youth are using these media to communicate the issues facing them and get their concerns heard. These promising examples provide the opportunity for scaling up adolescent/youth friendly initiatives and ensure they are part of the processes – contributing directly to holding duty bearers accountable at local and national levels.

UNICEF case study: U-Report (Uganda)

In 2011, UNICEF and its partners launched “U-Report”, a free, SMS-based platform enabling young people to voice issues of concern in their respective communities in Uganda. Over the last three years, U-Report also galvanised support from duty bearers who signed up to receive the alerts. Based on the reports, some duty bearers have taken immediate action on local concerns related to public service delivery in their constituencies. The popularity of the U-Report has grown to reach policy-makers.

This tool has now been launched in several other countries with young populations (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Mexico) where young people have not only been given the space to voice their key concerns but also to have duty bearers be accountable to them. Youth engagement not only focused on participatory monitoring and evaluation of overall programmes but also led to changes and improvements in service delivery.

Community score cards

In different regions of the world, CSOs have acted as facilitators for sharing and disseminating information between communities, donors and other stakeholders. CSOs’ grassroots work has resulted in successful models that have been replicated in other places. Within ActionAid, several countries have experience of integrating youth in their work on community score cards. Kenya, Malawi and Sierra Leone are among the countries engaging young women and men as partners in the design, implementation, compilation and analysis of community score cards.

Citizens’ oversight mechanisms and agencies

Most countries have a form of a village committee or mechanism that facilitates dialogue and analysis of local issues. Community-based organisations are often at the forefront of taking action on these concerns, and also leverage their partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure collective action,

ActionAid case study: Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network, Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, ActionAid collaborates with the Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network (WABEAN) – an initiative of 28 CSOs to monitor local councils. Young ActionAid partners have been engaged in administering the community score card developed by WABEAN which focuses on transparency, service quality and efficiency, inclusion of community structures in planning and implementation as it pertains to public service delivery.

Following the compilation of the community score card results, service providers are invited to a meeting to review and comment on the draft report. The finalised community score card is presented to the elected representatives of the House of Parliament and Council, as well as at inter-sectoral meetings. The engagement of young women and men in monitoring and evaluation facilitates their direct engagement at local and national levels with government and non-governmental organisations.

advocacy and lobbying at different levels. ActionAid promotes community-led citizens agencies through its Reflection Action (RA) processes.

Participatory planning and budgeting

Citizens, especially young women and young men, have a vital role to play in budgeting and planning processes at local level. In many countries, local government conducts annual participatory budgeting processes that inform national budgetary allocations. This provides civil society with the opportunity to influence resource allocation for vital public services. For example, since 2005 ActionAid Bangladesh has engaged young people in community audit groups to monitor the Ministry of Education's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP).

ActionAid case study: Young urban women – life choices and livelihoods project

A three-year project which began in 2013 aims to reach 5,800 young urban women between the ages of 15-24 years across seven cities spanning three countries – India, Ghana and South Africa. In India, ActionAid and its partners engage with young women to create safe community spaces through increasing their knowledge and understanding of governmental services and entitlements in relation to their reproductive health and unpaid care work. Over the past year, 400 women lobbied the relevant government department to establish four new integrated child development service centres. This helped the most vulnerable and marginalised women seek paid employment while their childcare was facilitated through increased governmental services. They further collaborated to revitalise the Public Distribution System (PDS), enabling the consumer store to function at its full capacity and supply good quality food grains and fuel.

ActionAid case study: Planning and budgeting (Bangladesh)

In 2005, young women and men across seven districts of Bangladesh joined community audit groups that included teachers, parents and local journalists to collect information on education service delivery plans and implementation of the budgets at district level. The community audit groups monitored the Ministry of Education's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) plans and budgets to verify whether funds were made available at school level. Although local government authorities were initially hesitant to share information, the persistence of community audit groups together with the realisation that their work would improve school management meant that district officials became more willing to cooperate and share information. The results of education budget monitoring were also linked to national-level advocacy by the country's first parliamentary caucus on education. The caucus has since lobbied the government for education to be recognised as a basic right, and for increased resource allocation in the sector.

Youth governance and the Post-2015 accountability project

ActionAid will work in a coalition of youth-focused organisations, networks and movements to advocate for youth engagement in accountability mechanisms in the Post-2015 development agenda. The coalition includes Plan UK, Restless Development, the British Youth Council and an international youth task team. However it is by no means a closed group, so please contact us if this is of interest to you. The first stage of this advocacy project was to present a report written by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) entitled *Youth governance and accountability in the Post-2015 agenda*²⁰ to the UN General Assembly in September 2014. This report features case studies from ActionAid Vietnam and ActionAid Uganda.

In 2015, ActionAid country programmes will take collective action, including generating good examples of how young women and men can be involved in the implementation, monitoring and accountability of the Post-2015 development goals. We will focus specifically on:

1. providing capacity building via our Global Platforms²¹ and www.globalchangelab.org;²²
2. ensuring that the most marginalised young men and women in the communities where we work are given a voice and a platform to help co-create and shape the agenda on youth-driven local and national accountability processes;
3. contributing to the project's global network building and advocacy agenda.

It is worth noting however that if ActionAid believes the final Post-2015 goals to be inadequate, we will seek youth-partnered/led monitoring and accountability around a higher standard (such as national standards, or standards set by international human rights agreements). It is vital that young men and women are not viewed through a narrative of deprivation or as needy recipients of aid when it comes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but as active citizens who contribute to the world around them.

20 <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/partners-for-change-light-pdf>.

21 Global Platforms is a worldwide network of training hubs for empowerment and activism. We provide innovative trainings and capacity building for organisations and young individuals who wish to take positive action in society.

22 This is an online training hub for young social activists. Online courses will include: human rights advocacy; how to be an accountability watchdog (score cards etc.); being a youth rights activist; using voice; power analysis; being a democracy initiator; global advocacy; and budget tracking.

Common concerns on youth-driven accountability

The main questions and contentious issues around youth-driven accountability are outlined below, with an indicative response.

Question: Why should we work with young men and women as partners and leaders on our accountability programmes and policies?

Response:

- a. Because of ActionAid's theory of change: we work with all people to fight poverty and social injustice. Youth are an excluded demographic in development, caught between childhood/ adolescence and adulthood. This means that they often lack investment, targeted policies and monitoring, and a voice in programmes and policies.
- b. Demographics: 1.8 billion young people constitute a large proportion of world's population. Close to 90% of them live in developing countries.
- c. They can improve, strengthen and increase effectiveness of programmes and policies, especially if they are on subjects/areas that affect them directly.

Question: How can we work on youth in participatory monitoring and accountability when governance could be an area side-lined in the Post-2015 development goals, as many states are reluctant to be monitored and/or do not support a HRBA?

Response:

- a. There is still support for this agenda, as the My World side event (8 July 2014) on accountability testifies. Governments in Canada and Norway would sympathise with ActionAid's theory of change.
- b. There are examples where civil society and governments already work together, e.g. community score cards in Malawi, the Africa Youth Trust, and the Commonwealth YDI in Nigeria.
- c. The Global Development Incubator (GDI), led by Paul Zeitz since 2013, has convened strategy sessions and multi-stakeholder dialogues calling for mutual accountability, transparency and impact mechanisms (MATI) for the SDGs.²³ It has also called for local youth and citizen-driven monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure improved budget transparency and service delivery outcomes.

²³ <http://www.globaldevincubator.org/initiative-incubator/current-initiatives/global-sdgs/>.

ActionAid policy demands

ActionAid's key demands of the Post-2015 development agenda are that:

- national governments, the United Nations (especially the Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Youth), and other multilateral/bilateral donors review their policies and financial resource allocations, ensuring there is increased investment in:
 - formal second-chance education, including youth literacy (related to the Outcome Document of the Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs);
 - alternative livelihood opportunities and collective social enterprises (related to the Outcome Document of the OWG on the SDGs);
 - greater access to decision-making structures – but specifically for youth social accountability mechanisms.

They should ensure that the greatest investments are for youth living in poverty and discriminated against – including by age, gender, religion or ethnicity.

- programmes developed to implement the Post-2015 goals should engage young women and men (from diverse backgrounds), especially, with regard to programme accountability planning, design, implementation and review and reflection.



A YOUNG UGANDAN SPEAKS AT A COMMUNITY AUDIT OF PUBLIC SERVICES. PHOTO: ACTIONAID UGANDA

What civil society can do

People are at the centre of the Post-2015 development goals, and by extension are at the centre of their implementation. In considering the concerns of the most vulnerable in society, civil society organisations – both at national²⁴ and local levels²⁵ – should be engaged in, and budget for:

- revitalising/rejuvenating existing community-led mechanisms that enable young women and men to participate in monitoring for the youth-friendly delivery of basic services, which are then disseminated widely (to governments, donors, etc.). These can include National Youth Councils elected from grassroots level with local level representation and structures, students' councils, youth community support groups and Reflection-Action circles;²⁶
- connecting and facilitating dialogue between young people and local and national duty bearers. In addition informing young people of their socio-economic, political and religious rights, as well as on the Post-2015 agenda and targets set to enable them to address violations and claim their rights, and consider how to monitor targets at all levels.

What governments in the South should do

For the Post-2015 development goals to reach their full potential, as per ActionAid's vision, and for youth to be engaged in participatory monitoring and accountability, governments in the South must:

- galvanise the political will and financial resources to ensure youth civil society engagement (especially the inclusion of the excluded and vulnerable at local level);
- ensure government ministries and departments working on youth-focused areas (i.e. skills development, employment, local governance, etc.) work with young people to ensure that programmes are meeting their demands;
- ensure that all policy-makers include components related to young people's social, economic, political and religious rights;
- engage with (or revitalise) existing student and youth councils and parliaments, and/or local level committees and forums where youth concerns feed into local and national-level programme planning, budgeting and implementation of programmes. This will create space for interaction with policy-makers;
- ensure that local government committees provide the opportunity for youth representation and participation, leading to inclusion of youth issues in participatory budgeting and planning processes;

24 E.g. Ministries of Finance, Planning, Education, Women and Children, Youth, Skills Development.

25 E.g. personnel representing the ministries mentioned above, standing committees, participatory plans and budgets committees, etc.

26 ActionAid's participatory group methodology based on the process of building empowering spaces to reflect on key community issues and identify collective actions to resolve them.

- establish and strengthen autonomous local and national-level youth councils or committees, supported by youth-adult partnerships. The aim of these groups would be to plan and monitor programmes.

What governments in the North should do

- promote and support the use of ICT-based social monitoring tools that can engage youth as community-level monitors reporting on key concerns locally. This information should then be disseminated widely, including to other governments, donors and other relevant stakeholders.
- fund and promote scaled-up versions of good practices where, through self-organised groups, citizens play a role in decision-making and get buy-in from decision-makers and policy-makers to ensure information is used to improve programmes.
- increase targeted capacity development and financial resources for local government in the South in order to achieve greater engagement with constituents, especially youth. This would include training and funds specifically to develop data collection processes inclusive of youth for various government departments.
- increase financial support for youth development and Post-2015 participatory monitoring and accountability processes in particular.²⁷

²⁷ See UNFPA, <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/news/pid/17736>.

Acknowledgements

We thank all listed below for their time, technical inputs and guidance for the development of this document through comments, reviews and case studies.

Baishali Chatterjee | Young Urban Women's Project | [ActionAid International](#)

Desmond Kanneh | Programme Officer | [ActionAid Sierra Leone](#)

Kate Carroll | Research & Policy Coordinator | [ActionAid International](#)

Julie Juma | Regional & Thematic Manager | [ActionAid Malawi](#)

Samiuddin Ahmed | Programme Officer – Research & Development | [ActionAid Bangladesh](#)

Sarah Huxley | International Youth Policy Advisor | [ActionAid International](#)

Sesheeni Joud Selvaratnam | Youth Advisor | [ActionAid Bangladesh](#)

Stella Agara | Youth Advisor | [ActionAid Malawi](#)

Annex: Additional case studies

1: Community score cards

Case study: Youth engagement with local government (Malawi)

In Malawi, community score cards were used across eight districts to provide a structured way for communities to assess services being provided by government in terms of their quality, efficiency and transparency. The capacity of community-based organisations was developed so they could facilitate the community score card process, which involved tracking inputs/expenditure related to delivery of government services across sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and water and sanitation. The focus was on monitoring at the local level, e.g. community clinic or schools, and included an interface meeting between community and service providers that allowed for immediate feedback, and action planning to improve services. Young people were involved in the score card process as separate discussion groups and presented their score card results to the whole community and service providers at the interface meetings. This ensured the voices of young people were heard and they could influence the decision-making process. Information from the score cards, focus group discussions and interface meetings were compiled and presented to Members of Parliament as concrete data to influence allocation of finances to key sectors such as primary schools. It was also given to the Treasury as 'civil society and community contributions' to development of the National Budget for 2010-2011. This process was facilitated by a consortium of NGOs including Plan and ActionAid.

Care International case study: Youth integrated approach (Malawi, Tanzania, and Rwanda)

Care International has designed and implemented a mechanism for improving participatory monitoring and accountability in Africa since 2002. At its inception, the aim was to link service providers and end users (community members) through a scoring of indicators based on performance outlined in the Community Score Card. Following initial awareness and alliance development, both users and service providers were asked to score services and were later given a forum from which to collaborate and coordinate efforts with each other and also with authorities. The result that was that both service providers and users were able to jointly find solutions and develop time-bound action plans that focused on service delivery. This enabled communities to monitor their services while also having the space for dialogue, which led to greater accountability.

2: Citizens' oversight mechanisms and agencies

Care International case study: Citizens oversight mechanisms (Peru)

Care International in Peru facilitated a Citizens' Oversight Mechanism among indigenous communities, especially women. This involved participatory monitoring by indigenous women who were trained by a local partner and who regularly visited the community health centre. They monitored services at the health centre, and based on observations were able to engage in a dialogue with the service provider. Based on observations it was noted that service delivery changed as both the users (community) and service providers (government) were able to use the data collected to increase accountability to users.

Map Kibera case study: Mathare slum digital mapping (Nairobi, Kenya)

In 2009 community members, including youth, living in the second largest slum in Nairobi (Kenya) with a population of 700,000 people came together to address growing concerns over people's security – especially at night. Following a community mapping of streets that were unsafe, they were able to lobby local authorities to install street lights. This has led to increased freedom for people to travel after dark, and has also given rise to small enterprises. Young men and women led this initiative, and were engaged not only in the initial data collection but also in identifying areas that posed challenges, and then successfully lobbying for improvements in public services.

ActionAid case study: Social audit (Kenya)

The Government of Kenya's Vision 2030 seeks to ensure a harmonised, participatory, transparent and accountable local governance structure. However, due to low levels of participation and engagement over preceding years, ActionAid worked with communities and especially young people to train them in the use of social audit tools and to lead in the monitoring, evaluating and tracking of resources and their use in their respective communities. Young people using social audit tools have increased their engagement in public spaces, leading to greater accountability and effectiveness of local development funds. These youth are social auditors for strong networks in Kenya and function as a 'watch dog mechanism' for ensuring continued accountability and transparency by the state. They are also connected to the National Social and Public Accountability Network.

3: Participatory planning and budgeting

Case study: Participatory budgeting processes with local government (Argentina)

The Municipality of Rosario (Argentina) engaged with young people in designing and implementing youth-focused programming. This pilot, initially funded by German Technical Cooperation in 2004 and now funded the municipal budget, engaged young people in structures that reflected municipal structures, and encouraged them to attend participatory budgeting processes. This process has been successful because of duty bearers' willingness to engage and make resources available.

There are a growing number of examples of participatory budgeting, especially in South and Central America, see Bara Mansa, Brazil for further information: http://ww2.unhabitat.org/cdrom/transparency/html/2d_7.html

References

ActionAid Bangladesh (2011): *Learning Development Series: 9/10*

ActionAid Denmark (2006): *Peoples Action for Just & Democratic Governance: Using Evidence to Establish Accountability*

ActionAid International (2011): *Accountability: Quality and Equity in Public Service Provision*

ActionAid International (2011): *People's Action to End Poverty: ActionAid's Strategy 2012-2017*

ActionAid International (2012) *People's Action in Practice: ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach*

ActionAid International (2014): *The Youth Engagement Plan*

Care International (2007): *Shifting Ground: Implications of International Cooperation for civil society organizations in Latin America, 2000-2007 with specific reference to the UK's Department for International Development (DFID)*

Center for Strategic and International Studies, International Youth Foundation (2014): *The Global Youth Wellbeing Index*

Colombo Declaration on Youth (2014): *Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*

Commonwealth CYC Position (July 2014): *Youth and the Post-2015 Agenda*

Commonwealth Education Fund (2006): *Making the Budget work for Education*

Commonwealth Secretariat (2013): *Youth Development Index*

Commonwealth Youth Programme (2006): *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*

Economic and Social Council (2014): *Global Youth Call*

International Institute for Environment and Development (2011): *Young Citizens: Youth and Participatory Governance in Africa*

Office of the UN Envoy for Youth (2014): *Youth in the Sustainable Development Goals*

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014): *Zero Draft*

Overseas Development Institute (2014): *Youth Governance and Accountability Research: Interim Report*

Overseas Development Institute (2012): *Project Briefing No. 69 More than just 'demand': Malawi's*

public-service community scorecard

The United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (2013): *Uniting 4 Development*

United Nations (2010): *World Programme of Action for Youth*

United Nations Development Programme (2014): *Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future*

United Nations General Assembly (2013): *A Life of Dignity for All*

Websites

- <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/unicef-uganda-ureport-young-people>
- <http://live.worldbank.org/google-hangout-series-youth-open-government>
- http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The-Global-Call-on-Youth_3-June-2014.pdf
- <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1561>
- <http://www.youthpolicy.org/participation/2012/youth-21-pushing-for-change-thats-not-going-to-help/>
- <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/A%20Life%20of%20Dignity%20for%20All.pdf>
- <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/peoples-action-practice>
- <http://childreyouth.org/>
- <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/>
- <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/accountability2015>
- <http://webtv.un.org/watch/participatory-monitoring-and-accountability-critical-components-for-the-Post-2015-development-agenda-2nd-meeting-of-the-high-level-political-forum-on-sustainable-development-side-event/3664935224001//>
- <http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/shifting-ground-report-CARE-2007.pdf>
- <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/partners-for-change-light-pdf>
- <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5307e/x5307e05.html>
- <http://social.un.org/youthyear/news.html>
- <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/news/pid/17736>