NURTURING YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

A Mapping of Strategies, Approaches, Challenges and Opportunities
## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>ALA</td>
<td>African Leadership Academy</td>
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<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
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<td>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation</td>
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<td>NYSC</td>
<td>Nigerian National Youth Service Corps</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>SAF</td>
<td>MTV Staying Alive Foundation</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollars</td>
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<td>WLDP</td>
<td>World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Leadership Development Programme</td>
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

"Youth are a transformative force; they are creative, resourceful and enthusiastic agents of change, be it in public squares or cyberspace."

*United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, International Youth Day 2012*

Today’s youth generation is the largest ever, with over 50% of the world under 25 years of age. The vast majority of young people live in developing countries, and close to half live on less than $2 a day.\(^1\) After 2015, the ‘youth bulge’\(^2\) in developing countries is likely to start levelling off.\(^3\) This means that there is a limited window of time in which to reap the so-called ‘demographic dividend’\(^4\) presented by this large, youthful population. For this to happen young people around the world must grow up to be healthy, educated, employed and empowered citizens who have financial security, a meaningful stake in governance and whose rights are respected and upheld.

As the global youth population has expanded, so too has an awareness of the need to address the diverse needs of young people. Alongside this is an increasing recognition of the importance of engaging young people constructively in economic and social development. Recent events in North Africa, the Middle East, Brazil, Turkey and elsewhere have served as potent reminders of the power of young people to demand and bring about dramatic change when their needs are not being met. Increasingly donors, NGOs and governments are turning their attention to how young people’s energy and skills can be channelled constructively to further development goals.

Youth leadership development has much to offer this debate. Investing in youth leadership has the potential to benefit not only the exceptional young people who will go on to become the political, business and civil society leaders of the future, but also and more significantly the much larger population of those who have been marginalised and disadvantaged by society. Youth leadership not only benefits young people themselves; it has a positive impact on their communities and wider society.

This mapping provides an analysis of the contribution that youth leadership can and is making to youth development across the Global South.

The mapping reveals that youth leadership has its greatest potential when tied into youth (specifically youth-led) development. Youth-led development – in contrast with individual youth leadership – gives all young people a stake in deciding how resources are allocated and allows them to play a role in implementing, managing and overseeing development in their communities and wider society. Youth-led development capitalises on the immense energy, creativity and ideas of young people while also giving them a rightful place, as a third of the global population, at the decision-making table. Such a vision has been articulated in many international declarations, but governments and other actors around the world have struggled to make it happen.

The mapping begins in Chapter 1 with the **theory of youth leadership**, setting out the definitions, the benefits and the ingredients of a successful youth leadership programme. It ends with a discussion of the purpose of youth leadership development and suggests that this can be framed in a number of ways. It argues that youth leadership is divided into two distinct areas: on the one hand a focus on developing individual political, cultural, civil society and business leaders, and on the other hand a

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\(^1\) Overseas Development Institute (2013)

\(^2\) High fertility rates and decreasing mortality rates have produced an unprecedented rise in the youth population in many developing countries leading to the so-called ‘youth bulge’ evident in Phases 2 and 3 of the Demographic Transition model.

\(^3\) Overseas Development Institute (2013)

\(^4\) The ‘Demographic Dividend’ is the societal benefit of a low dependency ratio (i.e. a large number of productive working age people compared to those who are outside working age).
focus on giving a broad base of young people including the most marginalised the opportunity to build essential life skills, promoting a broader youth-led development ideal. It asserts that youth leadership is most effective when blending both approaches, with clear developmental goals as its basis.

Chapter 2 turns to a mapping of perceptions and policies around youth leadership among the key actors in the Global South: governments, donors, NGOs and the private sector. It notes that while there is a growing consensus around the importance of prioritising youth development, many actors continue to view young people through the lens of ‘beneficiaries’ rather than as ‘partners’ or active ‘leaders’ of change. Only a relatively small number of actors – mostly led by the non-governmental sector - focus explicitly on cultivating youth leadership with even fewer promoting youth-led development in its fullest form. Nonetheless, their successes are beginning to draw the attention of others in the youth sector as they seek to learn more about what can be achieved and how to do so.

Chapter 3 maps practice in youth leadership development across the Global South. Current approaches are grouped under five headings according to their primary focus: formal leadership development, youth partnerships, youth-driven action, youth voice, and youth governance. Overall, it is difficult to make a systematic comparative assessment of the different approaches because of the lack of measurement data. Whilst each approach has its merits in practice, fewer implementers are tackling the more difficult and underfunded areas: promoting youth voice and youth governance and supporting youth-driven action. This chapter argues that real value could be added to overall youth leadership efforts by investing in these key, underfunded areas.

The final chapter reflects on what these findings imply for governments, donors and civil society actors wishing to promote youth leadership development.

It argues that youth leadership programming should be developed with reference to the following parameters:

- **Linking youth leadership to youth-led development** – by looking not only at the development of youth leaders but how those leaders can have access to decision-makers and how policy and practice spaces can be widened to accommodate youth leadership.
- **Rooted in the local context** – by drawing on knowledge of specific localised cultural and structural barriers and how to address them.
- **Ambitious beyond local impact** – by seizing the opportunity to set out a broader, transformative vision to which programmes and organisations should be able to contribute
- **Modelling values** – by investing in organisations that embody the values of youth leadership development as reflected, for example, in their governance structures and human resource management.

It suggests that there are currently a number of key opportunities that youth leadership development programming should seek to take advantage of:

- The opportunity to develop the presence and leadership of young people in the seminal global policy debates and decisions of our time.
- The opportunity to choose a development focus reflective of young people’s priorities as expressed in consistent themes over recent consultations.
- The opportunity to address the current lack of measuring tools by developing and piloting a youth leadership measurement framework through the five years of the programme.
- The opportunity to build on the minimal evidence base on best practice in youth leadership.
- The opportunity to adapt and replicate youth leadership models for future scale up.
- The opportunity to invest in the neglected area of strengthening the voice and action of national youth sectors.
- The opportunity to invest in the vital but underfunded areas of youth voice and youth governance.
Chapter 1: What do we know about youth leadership?

This chapter maps current youth leadership theory including how it is defined, what benefits it brings and what is needed to nurture leadership skills amongst young people. It then turns to the key question of the purpose of youth leadership development and considers the different ways in which its purpose can be framed.

Until recently, the wealth of predominantly Western literature examining the qualities and requirements of leadership paid very little attention to the area of youth leadership. What literature did exist tended to focus on the need to prepare young people for taking on future leadership roles as adults, rather than empowering them to be leaders as youth today. These viewpoints tallied with the dominant youth development discourse of the time that favoured a ‘deficit’ model under which young people were considered as a set of problems to be addressed rather than a resource to be harnessed.

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing trend - not only in the West but globally - towards an ‘asset’ model of youth development which considers young people as change agents, problem solvers and valuable resources for development. This trend has spawned a fresh interest in youth leadership and how it can be nurtured and harnessed for the good not only of young people themselves but of wider society too. While much of the theory and practice around youth leadership has been developed in Western countries, more recently a number of organisations and academics have started to look at youth leadership development in the ‘Global South’. The summary below draws on the existing literature both from developing countries and from the ‘Global North’.

Who are youth?

The definitions of youth vary across states, cultures and among international organisations. For example the United Nations defines youth as 18-24 year olds while the Government of Sierra Leone defines youth as young people between 15 and 35 years. In some cultures, particular life transitions such as parenthood or setting up a household are more important than age as markers of the end of youth. Youth can also be seen as a key time for the formation of attitudes, behaviours and values; the influences and experiences young people have during this period are essential in shaping their outlook as adults. So while age-based definitions are practical, it is also valuable to keep in mind a more fluid perception of youth as a formative transition period between childhood and adulthood marked by increasing independence and transition in work, education and social relationships.

What is youth leadership?

Youth leadership can be defined as ‘young people empowered to inspire and mobilise themselves and others towards a common purpose, in response to personal and/or social issues and challenges, to effect positive change.’ Youth leaders are individuals who ‘think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others and help others understand and act on their own beliefs.’ Investing in youth leadership therefore means giving young people the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, qualities, values and experience that will enable them to effect positive change whether it is at the level of their family, among their peers, in their community or wider society.

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5 Macneil, C (2006)
6 Ibid.
7 Macneil, C (2006)
8 Overseas Development Institute, (2013)
9 Kahn L, et al. (2009)
10 Conner and Stroble (2007)
The qualities and skills required by youth leaders include determination, organisation aptitude, focus, tolerance, decisiveness, self-discipline, charisma, time management, self-confidence, social competence, communicating a vision and sensitivity to the needs of others. CARE has simplified these qualities into a competency-based definition of youth leadership that focuses on voice, decision-making, confidence, organisation (to see an activity through to the end), vision/values and ability to motivate others.

What is the relationship between youth leadership, youth participation, youth empowerment, youth development and youth-led development?

A great deal of terminology is used in the youth field, and sometimes definitions are blurred or used interchangeably. This mapping considers youth participation to be a process through which young people influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. Participation depends both on young people acquiring the skills to participate and on society making the spaces for them to participate. It considers youth empowerment to be an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own and the lives of others. Youth empowerment can therefore be seen as the process that brings about youth leadership but that has wider goals including social and economic wellbeing, while youth participation (in both sense of spaces being made and skills being built) is essential for both empowerment and leadership. Youth development is the overarching goal of all work with young people which is to support them to overcome obstacles and live fulfilled, healthy and safe lives. Participation, empowerment and leadership are all necessary for successful youth development.

Youth-led development is the vision that young people help to implement, manage and oversee development in their communities and wider society and play a major role in deciding how resources are allocated. It is rooted in the belief that young people are valuable assets and resources and that their energies and talents should and can be brought to the table. Youth-led development obviously depends on strong youth leadership, both individual and collective, but as outlined at the end of this chapter, it also requires significant changes to structures and attitudes to make the space for youth involvement.

What are the benefits of youth leadership?

Youth leadership has been shown to bring benefits to the young people themselves, to their communities and to wider society. The competencies that make a good leader are the same qualities needed for a young person’s successful transition to adulthood. Strong leadership skills help young people to make positive decisions in their own lives, to resist negative peer pressure and to avoid risky behaviours. Leadership skills bring a strengthened sense of self and build confidence. At the community level, young leaders are more able to act as effective role models to their peers and influence them positively. Young leaders bring fresh ideas and energy to long-standing problems and are often more willing to embrace innovation and technology. Young leaders have particular strengths in encouraging intergenerational understanding and community cohesion. These benefits can be multiplied at the societal level if young people are given the freedom to exercise their leadership and to contribute meaningfully to decision-making, management and implementation. As a collective

11 Hart et al. (2003)
12 CARE (2009)
13 http://web.worldbank.org
15 Kress (2006)
16 Kahn L, et al. (2009)
17 CARE (2009)
18 Department of Children, Schools and Families (2008)
group, young people can bring dynamism and creativity as well as wealth of experience, ideas and unique perspectives to development issues and activities.

What is needed to nurture youth leadership?

The literature around the requirements for successful youth leadership programming uses different terms and approaches but converges around the following core principles:

- **Real life / authentic experiences** – Leadership skills cannot be taught but must be developed through experience. It is important to give young people the opportunities to exercise leadership in real life scenarios where they can hone and develop skills, values and competencies.
- **Relevancy and tailoring to needs and specific contexts** – Young people around the world are hugely varied in their needs, education and experience and will therefore respond to leadership development in different ways. Successful leadership programming is rooted in a strong understanding of the needs of the young people it is targeting and provides leadership experiences that are relevant to their lives.
- **The right level of challenge and risk** – Introducing risk and exposing young people to challenging situations can help accelerate their leadership growth, but it is important that this is done in a supportive environment. Young people should not be given responsibility or status without authority as this can have a damaging effect on their leadership development and their overall morale and personal development.
- **Safe spaces, mentoring and support** – In some contexts particularly in developing countries, there may be strong social and cultural barriers to youth leadership. It is important therefore that youth are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills in safe spaces with the support of mentors who are equipped to nurture their leadership development.
- **Role models** – Role models are particularly important for youth development and much literature emphasises how exposure to different real life success stories from peers can accelerate leadership development.
- **Reflection** – An important aspect of developing leadership potential is having the space to reflect on achievements, failures and lessons learned, ideally facilitated by mentors or other more experienced individuals.

What is the purpose of youth leadership development?

The theory of youth leadership development as outlined above raises a key question: what is the purpose of youth leadership development and how does the perceived purpose impact on the design of a youth leadership programme?

Many youth leadership development programmes that currently exist around the world see the purpose of youth leadership development as identifying and nurturing the next generation of leaders, individuals who will drive national development through enterprise, government and civil society. As such, they often tend to focus on identifying and nurturing young people who have already demonstrated strong leadership potential. Cultivating future leaders is an important aim that has the potential to benefit many people at different levels of society.

A second way that youth leadership development is understood is that youth leadership development nurtures important skills and experience in target groups of young people that are essential for the growth and development of themselves and those around them. It is aimed at young people overcoming obstacles, taking control of their own lives and becoming more active and engaged participants in their communities. Seen in this way, youth leadership development brings wider benefits than the cultivation of leaders to young people themselves and society more generally, and is most valuable for those who are excluded and marginalised and who would otherwise not be given access to such opportunities. Such an approach accepts that not all young
people who are exposed to youth leadership development will go on to become leaders in their communities or wider society, but rather it champions the benefits of youth leadership development for individual growth and its knock on benefits for society.

An extension – and by all accounts the culmination – of this second approach is when the purpose of youth leadership development focuses on the benefits of collective youth leadership and its contribution to the wider goal of youth-led development: a belief that **young people have the right to play a significant role in making decisions and overseeing the development of their communities and countries**.

Making youth-led development, rather than individual youth leadership, the goal of a programme results in a broader picture view of how leadership potential can be nurtured on a wider scale, how spaces for leadership can be opened and how societal, structural and cultural obstacles to youth leadership can be overcome.

As is demonstrated in the following chapters, very little current youth leadership programming focuses on wider global development goals and the role of youth-led development and the transformative benefits it can bring. There is often a disjuncture between youth leadership development focused on the individual and the broader aim of turning youth-led development in to a reality with implementers usually failing to link one to the other. This lack of broader vision is an important gap in current programming that, this report argues, ultimately undermines the effectiveness of youth leadership approaches.
Chapter 2: Who is promoting youth leadership in the Global South and how?

This chapter maps perceptions and approaches to youth leadership within international frameworks and among the strategies and policies of donors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), national governments and the private sector. It finds that while there is a growing consensus around the importance of prioritising youth development, many actors continue to view young people through the lens of ‘beneficiaries’ rather than as ‘partners’ or active ‘leaders’ of change. Only a relatively small number of actors – led by the non-governmental sector - focus explicitly on cultivating youth leadership and even fewer on promoting youth-led development in its fullest form. However their successes are beginning to draw the attention of others in the youth sector.

Overview

The global youth population has expanded on an unprecedented scale in the last twenty years. This has catalysed a growing recognition both of the need to address the diverse needs of young people - particularly those disadvantaged by issues such as gender, disability or conflict - and the importance of engaging young people constructively in economic and social development. This in turn has led to a marked increase in youth-focused programming among donors and civil society actors and an increasing interest in how young people’s energy and skills can be harnessed for the good of wider society.

Since the early 1990s, a series of international declarations, charters and other agreements have set out global commitments to investing in youth. Many of these recognise and promote young people’s agency and their potential to play a major role in furthering development goals, often using the language of empowerment, voice, participation and leadership. However the extent to which major donors agencies, non-governmental organisations and national governments have embraced these principles in their own strategies, policies and approaches varies considerably.

For many actors working with youth there is an ongoing tension between the traditional model of young people as passive target beneficiaries and a progressive view of young people as assets whose energies and talents can and should be harnessed for positive developmental change either as partners or as leaders (see information box for more).

Even where commitments to engaging with youth as partners or promoting youth leadership are articulated in policy, barriers including capacity and resource constraints - underscored in many cases by a lack of real will - have meant most actors have not translated policy into practice. In general, the ‘beneficiary’ lens continues to dominate the practice of donors, national governments and the majority of NGOs.

The Three Lens Approach

The ‘three lens approach’ proposes that young people can either be considered as beneficiaries where they are seen as target groups who are informed but not consulted; partners where they are seen as collaborators who are informed, consulted and have co-responsibility for implementation; or they can be seen as leaders where interventions are initiated and directed by young people.


These different approaches are not mutually exclusive, and participation may in practice involve elements of all three at once or at different times. However promoting youth leadership involves seeing young people as partners and leaders.
It is within the NGO sector that the greatest efforts to apply a partnership and leadership lens to programming can be seen, championed in practice by a relatively small number of organisations. Among these, the majority are engaging in different forms of youth leadership programming while only a handful are promoting and modelling youth-led development in its fullest form.

However, the successes and impact of this relatively small group of primarily non-governmental actors is having an influence on others in the youth sector by helping to bring about a better understanding of what youth leadership and youth-led development means and of the benefits they can bring. These organisations are being increasingly called upon to share their models and distil their best practice so that others can learn from and potentially replicate their approaches. The rest of this chapter considers the major actors in terms of how they frame and approach youth leadership.

**International frameworks, charters and declarations and intergovernmental agencies**

It is within the plethora of international frameworks, declarations and strategies that have emerged over the last two decades that some of the most powerful articulations of young people’s agency and leadership potential can be found. One of the first international declarations of the value of young people’s ability to contribute to development can be found in Agenda 21, the declaration which followed the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 which reads:

> It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

*Agenda 21 (1992), chapter 25 paragraph 2*

Following the Rio Summit, the value of active youth participation in development was debated in a number of international forums and summits. Out of these, a series of strategies, action plans and charters were created, many of which highlighted the importance of youth empowerment and engagement in development.¹⁹ The 2006 African Youth Charter captures the spirit of many of these:

> Africa’s greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation, Africans can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead… [Stakeholders must] empower youth by building their capacity, leadership, responsibilities and provide access to information such that they can take up their rightful place as active agents in decision-making and governance. *African Youth Charter (2006)*

A number of intergovernmental agencies have also played an important role in promoting an active role for youth in development. The Global South has been championing youth issues for several decades and was one of the first agencies to endorse an empowerment approach. As early as 1997 the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment recognised that:

> Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf and on their own terms rather than at the direction of others. *Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (1997)*

The United Nations has also focused on youth for many years, adopting in 1996 the ‘World Programme of action for Youth to Year 2000 and Beyond.’ In the last two years the United Nations has consolidated its strategy for youth development through a System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Youth and in early 2013 appointed a Special Envoy on Youth. The SWAP commits to:

> Ensure that youth participate in all activities carried out to implement the Youth-SWAP… since youth are the ultimate beneficiaries of the Youth-SWAP, the UN will engage them as partners in the monitoring and evaluation of the Youth-SWAP. *Briefing for Member States and Permanent Observers on the Secretary-General’s Five-year Action Agenda related to youth (2013)*

¹⁹ See Open Society Institute (2009) p138-149 for a comprehensive list
While these international and intergovernmental commitments are intended as a framework to guide the policy of other actors, in practice few national governments, donors, civil society and others have fully embraced their spirit.

**National governments**

National governments are significant stakeholders in determining and guaranteeing the rights and wellbeing of young people living in their countries. Across the Global South, governments have been responding to the demographic and economic challenges facing young people in different ways and with differing degrees of commitment and success.

At the policy level, commitments to the youth population are often most clearly spelled out in a National Youth Policy or similar document. Some national youth policies highlight a commitment to engaging youth meaningfully in decision-making in alignment with the international frameworks outlined above. However, translating the spirit of a national youth policy into concrete programme implementation requires significant resources, capacity, political will, and often pressure from a strong and active civil society, some or all of which is often lacking in many countries of the Global South.

Some government policies promote the idea of youth mainstreaming or introducing youth as a cross-cutting theme across all policy areas. Again, in practice efforts at realising such approaches may be hampered by lack of will or capacity, resulting in at best inconsistency in how youth issues are conceived and addressed across policy, and at worst the side-lining or even exclusion of youth issues from key legislation and policy. For example, in a UNFPA study of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) - the document setting out a country’s strategy to promote growth and reduce poverty – it was found that only 17% of PRSPs identified youth as a cross-cutting area and 30% did not identify youth as a group in poverty at all. Not surprisingly perhaps, only 33% had consulted young people during the drafting of the PRSP.

In terms of policy implementation, most countries in the Global South have dedicated youth ministries, often combining youth affairs with sports, culture or employment functions. However in many countries the effectiveness of these bodies is challenged by a lack of resources and capacity, and may also be hampered by partisan politics. Often youth-related programming tends to focus on addressing pressing youth issues such as unemployment, education, health particularly sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS in a shallow or short-term way. Particularly where resources are scarce, governments often focus on vote-winning activities such as public works schemes, national youth services, youth agricultural services and youth enterprise funds. Such schemes – particularly those focused on short-term employment – are popular with the public but have been criticised for ‘keeping young people busy’ without addressing the underlying structural issues that prevent sustainable improvements for young people livelihoods, health and wellbeing.

The following case studies representing two different countries in the Global South serve to highlight some of the strengths and challenges of national government approaches to youth.

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21 UNFPA (2010)

22 Ibid.
Mauritius: A model of active youth engagement with emphasis on participation

What are the key challenges for youth in this country?

Mauritius is a small island nation situated in the Indian Ocean, ranked 80 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index, considerably higher than the regional average. It has a relatively low youth population for the region with 25% of people aged 15-29. The main challenges faced by youth in Mauritius are high levels of youth unemployment with 21.7% of youth aged between 15 to 24 unemployed in 2011. There is also significant gender disparity between young men and women with 17.3% of young men unemployed compared to of young women 34.3% in 2011. Education is the weakest area of Mauritius’ Human Development Index compared to health and income with an index value of 0.659. In comparison to other Sub-Saharan African countries Mauritius has a very low rate of HIV prevalence.

Government structures and approaches

Mauritius has a long history of investing in and prioritising its youth population and encouraging their active and meaningful participation. There are a number of government-sponsored schemes aimed at empowering young people to be active citizens and leaders. The vision of the Ministry of Youth & Sports is to be responsive to the aspirations and needs of youth, empowering them for a better future and fostering a culture of sports among the citizens.

National Youth Policy 2010-2014 – Youth on the Move

The Mauritian National Youth Policy focuses on ‘tapping the energy and creative drive of the youth for the development of our country’ recognising, ‘our youth are our future and they are active contributors to the making of a dynamic and compassionate society.’ Education, training and youth participation in decision making are identified as a priority for government action.

National Youth Achievement Award

This award is based on the former Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme that used to run when Mauritius was still a British Colony. The award challenges young people aged between 14-25 to undertake tasks, volunteering in their communities and challenges to encourage personal discovery and growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility to themselves and service to their community.

Youth Leadership training

The Ministry of Youth & Sports offers free youth development and youth leadership training for youth leaders from youth organisations such as scouts and youth centres.

National Youth Council Mauritius

Established in 1998 to serve as a bridge between the Mauritius government and youth, the main objectives of the National Youth Council are to:

- Establish and maintain effective communication between government and youth organisations.
- Ensure coordination of activities of youth organisations.
- Assist in the implementation and evaluation of government policies in relation to youth needs.
- Initiate youth development projects and activities with the aim of encouraging the active participation of young people in the process of their own empowerment.

Service to Mauritius

The Service to Mauritius programme was set up with the objective of making it possible for young graduates and post graduates to obtain jobs in the public sector and to equip themselves with useful skills and knowledge during an internship period ranging from 1-2 years. The programme is now in the process of being phased out and replaced by the Youth Employment Programme.

Youth Employment Programme

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has recently launched the Youth Employment Programme to assist Mauritian youth obtain employment. It is open to youth between the ages of 16 and 30 years who are currently unemployed. The programme enables unemployed youths to obtain a paid internship for the initial period of a year and encourages employers to use the scheme by offering a subsidy to those who take on youths through the programme.

Success and impact

Mauritius is in many ways a model of active engagement and effective service to its youth population. It has had good success in meeting its Millennium Development Goals around youth with all its goals being on track to meet targets except those around environmental sustainability.

Jamaica: Mixed results in a challenging youth environment

The situation of youth in Jamaica:

Young people in Jamaica make between the ages of 15-24 make up 21.7% of the population. Jamaica’s Human Development Index (HDI) is ranked 85th out of 187 and in comparison to its neighbours in Latin America and the Caribbean, Jamaica’s HDI is below the regional average.

Crime and youth crime are a major concern for young people with many young people getting caught up in criminal gang activity and Jamaica having the sixth highest murder rate in the world. Unemployment is also a pressing concern with the current level of youth unemployment at 37%. Jamaica’s adolescent pregnancy rate is among the highest in the Caribbean, and Jamaica’s infection rate for HIV/AIDS is highest among youth ages 15-24. In 2004, AIDS was the second leading cause of death for both young men and young women ages 15-24. In relation to gender, boys form the majority of drop outs in primary and secondary schools and continue to be under-represented at a tertiary level by a ratio of 2:1. Jamaica’s 56% female participation in the labour market compares to 71% for men.

Government structures and approaches:

The National Centre for Youth Development
The youth division in the Ministry of Youth & Culture was established in the year 2000 as the Government department with responsibility for young people aged 15 – 24 years throughout the island. The National Centre for Youth Development undertakes a range of programmes focused on employment, education and health. It has a number of funding partners including USAID, UNFPA and UNICEF.

National Youth Policy
Jamaica’s National Youth Policy was adopted in 2003. It has as its vision Jamaican youth realising their full potential, through access to opportunities, to develop, participate and contribute as responsible citizens, to a peaceful prosperous and caring society. The government is current reviewing its youth policy to with a focus on entrepreneurship, skills training and preparing young people for the world of work in the global village.

National Youth Service
Established in 1973 and re-launched in 1995, the National Youth Service has the objectives to train youths 17 - 24 years of age in practical services to serve as entry level staff in public and private sector organisations, to give youth participants leadership and employability skills as well as access to summer employment opportunities and to develop public and private sector partnerships in order to expand the reach of the National Youth Service. The National Youth Service also runs a corps programme that combines training in specific career skills, re-socialization and work experience to develop positive attitudes and values among participants in the areas of self, work place, community and nation, as well as provide opportunities and orientation for their entrance into the labour force.

Success and impact:

Jamaica has benefitted from considerable donor investment in its youth programmes but has had mixed success in regards to its Millennium Goal Development targets around youth. The percentage of 15-49 year olds living with HIV has been stabilised. Universal access to reproductive health is on target. Child mortality has only been reduced by 14%, and maternal mortality rate has actually increased to 110 deaths per 100,000 in 2012. Despite investing heavily into police and crime prevention, youth crime is not being effectively addressed, and Jamaica has the highest number of youth convicted of crime in the Caribbean region.

Confidence from youth in the government to find solutions to their problems is relatively low shown by the National Youth Survey conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Culture in 2010 that indicated that 60% of Jamaica’s young people viewed migration as the answer to their desire to access opportunities for education and employment.


http://opm.gov.jm/ministries/youth-culture/
Bilateral and multilateral donors

Bilateral and multilateral donors are significant actors in youth programming across the Global South, investing hundreds of millions of dollars each year\(^\text{23}\). Most donors have incorporated youth issues into their programming in some way for decades. However, more recently, donors have started to pay increasing attention to the specific needs of youth as a group in its own right; this has led to a number of trends which are summarised in the box below.

At the policy level, several bilateral and multilateral donors use the language of youth partnership and even leadership. For example, USAID’s 2012 ‘Youth In Development: Realising the Demographic Opportunity’ outlines the concrete goals for creating ‘channels for dialogue and participation that enable youth to contribute to their own and their communities’ development’ and ‘build[ing] youth competencies and skills to become informed, healthy and productive citizens.’ The Norwegian government’s ‘Three Billion Reasons’ states as its second priority ‘strengthening the participation of

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\(^{23}\) International Rescue Committee (2012)
children and young people through mobilisation, leadership training and organisational
development.\textsuperscript{24}

In contrast, while the Canadian government’s pioneering youth strategy - one of the first to be
developed by a bilateral donor - acknowledges that ‘today’s population of children and youth in
developing countries…is a great resource, offering opportunities to establish a solid foundation for
development if it gets the head start needed in life,’\textsuperscript{25} the methods and objectives it outlines do not
explicitly include youth empowerment, participation or leadership. Similarly the German government’s
2011 youth position paper acknowledges young people’s ‘right to social and political participation and
to have a say in matters that affect them,’\textsuperscript{26} but does not explicitly cite capitalising on and enhancing
young people’s agency as part of its proposed methodology.

So there is considerable variation as to how far young people are conceived as leaders and agents of
change in donor policy. Even among the agencies that do articulate a role for youth in delivering
change in their policies, most are struggling to make this a reality in their programming. Among other
challenges are sector concentration and organisational rationalisation that has meant that in some
cases youth strategies have been superseded by other policies.\textsuperscript{27} Decision-making is often
decimalised to country level, and without clear guidance on what mainstreaming means for the
agency and how in practice to integrate youth issues in programmes, implementation tends to be ad
hoc.\textsuperscript{28} Few agencies have dedicated units or
advisors, and responsibility for youth programming
tends to be spread across departments again
leading to inconsistent implementation.\textsuperscript{29}

Faced with these challenges, there is increasing
interest among the donor community to understand
and learn from the NGO sector about successful
youth-led development models and approaches, as
the next section discusses.

\textbf{International non-governmental organisations (NGOs)}

Mirroring the trends in the donor sector, the last
decade has seen NGOs pay increasing attention to
youth in their programming, including many
agencies who have not traditionally had a youth
focus. Save the Children, for example, whose
primary target group is children under 18, have
recently increased their work with young people
(18-25) through their livelihoods activities.

Alongside this trend, there is also increasing
interest in questions around measurement and
building the evidence base, and NGOs, like donors,
have also begun to look at ways of introducing
youth markers and indicators in to their monitoring
and evaluation systems. A number of organisations

\begin{quote}
\textbf{What is youth mainstreaming?}

“The integration of young people’s needs and
contributions in all stages of planning,
implementation and evaluation of […]
programmes and activities.”
\textit{United Nations Economic & Social Council (2006)}

\textbf{In practice mainstreaming activities could include:}

- Allocating a proportion of all relevant
  budgets to youth development
- Introducing a youth assets perspective
to the work of all relevant bodies
- Setting up appropriate mechanisms for
  youth participation in policy making
- Systematically monitoring and
  reporting progress made in youth
development; and
- Building the body of knowledge on
  youth affairs

\textit{From DFID (2010) Youth Participation in Development: A guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005)
\textsuperscript{25} Canadian International Development Agency (2011)
\textsuperscript{26} BMZ (2011)
\textsuperscript{27} International Rescue Committee (2012)
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
have looked at developing universal indicators for youth such as the Center for Strategic International Studies and International Youth Foundation project currently underway which seeks to develop a youth wellbeing index. As with the donor community, there is also a growing interest in youth mainstreaming, and some agencies have taken efforts to mainstream youth issues alongside others such as gender. For example, the International Federation of the Red Cross in 2011 developed a Youth Policy which sets out a plan for strengthening the role of young people in its activities.30

Overall the trend in the international NGO sector in the last decade has been a growing emphasis on participatory approaches and making space for all target groups including youth to be involved in governance and planning of programmes. In practice, however, resources and time pressures often mean these activities are overlooked. Nevertheless it is within the international NGO sector that the most active efforts to apply a ‘partner’ and ‘leadership’ lens to youth programming can be seen.

There are two principal ways in which NGOs can promote youth leadership in their work. Firstly, this comes through the programmes they run, which is analysed in more detail in the following chapter. Secondly, youth leadership is reflected in the structure and governance of the organisation itself. Within the NGO sector – both international and national – there are two prevailing models reflecting these approaches to youth leadership: Youth-serving organisations serve the needs of young people either exclusively or as part of a wider remit, but are not necessarily constitutionally governed or led by youth themselves; Youth-led organisations are essentially led and often founded by young people, and promote youth governance and leadership in all aspects of their work.

In practice, the number of NGOs undertaking youth leadership programming in the Global South is relatively small. The number of organisations promoting youth-led development and/or modelling youth-led development through their own structures and governance is even smaller. Despite their small number, these organisations have drawn considerable attention from others in the sector in recent years, who are interested to learn more about how to turn their commitments to youth leadership, participation and empowerment into reality. Restless Development has experienced this shift in interest: the DFID-commissioned ‘Youth Participation in Development Guide’,31 which Restless Development co-authored and which has been cited as best practice by several multilateral and bilateral donors, typifies the interest the donor community has in capturing and learning from NGO experience of youth-led development; similarly, the USAID consultation around the development of their 2012 policy drew heavily on the experiences of youth-led agencies including Restless Development; at a country level, Restless Development like other youth-led organisations, has been called upon by national governments in the drafting of youth policies, constitution reviews, planning national youth services and other activities. This shift in discourse is well represented in direction of travel this has taken Restless Development in the diagram opposite.

[Diagram of Restless Development’s youth-led approach]

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30 International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (2011)
31 DFID (2010)
Private sector

A mapping of youth leadership in Global South countries would not be complete without a consideration of the significant and growing role played by the private sector. ‘Developing countries’ are now the focus of ‘growth markets’ for many corporations, and the rise of corporate social responsibility sees the private sector increasingly concerned with social and environmental as well as business/profit motives. Private sector organisations around the world have been responding to the youth ‘bulge’ by engaging with young people in ways that enhance their triple bottom line. Lessons around leadership development can be drawn from these initiatives, some of which are breaking new ground. Illustrative examples of how private sector strategies are contributing to youth leadership include:

*Recruitment and employment strategies*– Often companies that cannot find the relevant skills within their country of operation recruit from other countries, which is both expensive and less sustainable. To overcome this problem, some private sector companies operating in less developed countries have been looking at ways to bridge the education and skills gaps of the national youth workforce through internships, apprenticeships and trainee programmes. Some companies have also been working with training institutions and universities to develop courses tailored to their workforce needs.

*Supply chain decisions* – Increasingly private companies are looking at how they can introduce corporate social responsibility to their supply chains, and some are applying a youth-focused lens, for example, by favouring youth agricultural cooperatives or youth-led small and medium enterprises.

*Encouraging youth innovation* – The private sector has always been interested in investing in innovation, and some companies have been applying that principle to cultivating youth innovation. One of many such examples is the Microsoft-sponsored “Youth Solutions” project in South Asia described under the youth-driven action approach in Chapter 3.

*Market expansion* – Many companies have recognised that young people can help them access new markets at low cost. Many telecommunications companies in developing countries use young people as sales and marketing representatives reaching out to rural areas, effectively on a micro-franchise model. Other more innovative approaches combine marketing with education of new consumers. For example Zanaco Bank in Zambia has worked with Restless Development to train young people as peer financial literacy trainers. Coming at a time of rapid expansion in the availability of financial services, the project targeted over 10,000 young people with basic financial knowledge so that they were better able to navigate the range of services being offered.

The private sector, as a major source of economic growth, employment and investment is an important player in Global South countries, is already demonstrating its potential to be a significant actor in enhancing youth development and nurturing youth leadership.
Chapter 3: Youth leadership in practice – approaches and models

This chapter turns to the different approaches to youth leadership development being practised across the Global South. The approaches are grouped under five headings according to their primary focus, and case studies are given to illustrate the breadth of possible programme types under each approach. The special role of information and communication technology in leadership programming is given separate consideration. The last part of the chapter highlights some of the challenges common to all youth leadership programming.

Overview

In its exploration of youth leadership practice around the Global South, this mapping has identified a range of programmatic approaches that have been grouped below under five headings according to their primary focus. The programme examples illustrated under each heading share similar characteristics in terms of the leadership competencies they nurture, the principles they adhere to and whether they focus primarily on building individual leadership skills or on nurturing collective leadership. However, they also differ in many others ways and together serve to demonstrate the wide range of youth leadership programme models currently being practised.

The five approaches identified are:

- **Formal leadership development** – Supporting the development of young people’s skills and experience through training, coaching and mentoring
- **Youth partnerships** – Engaging young people as implementing partners of initiatives both within the youth sector and beyond
- **Youth-driven action** - Supporting youth-led civil society and advocacy
- **Youth voice** - Creating spaces for youth voices to be heard by decision-makers
- **Youth governance** - Enabling youth oversight of development initiatives

The process of mapping these approaches revealed that some are more commonly practised than others. Formal leadership development and youth partnerships approaches are relatively widespread, while programmes focused on youth-driven action, youth voice and youth governance are far less common. Youth governance in particular, as defined by this mapping, is a more challenging but potentially more rewarding area to work in, because of the cultural and structural barriers and few programmes exist in practice. As discussed further in Chapter 4, these neglected areas are where additional investment and new programming might add real value to overall youth leadership efforts.

Assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches is challenged by the fact that – as with other areas of youth development – there is very little measurement data available, and to date, no agreed measurement frameworks have been developed. Where possible, the outline below highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each approach and challenges common to all youth leadership programmes are highlighted at the end of the chapter.

**Formal leadership development**

Formal leadership development approaches place the emphasis on teaching and providing guidance and mentoring to nurture leadership values and skills in individuals within a structured programme. The leadership coaching may be introduced as part of a formal learning structure (e.g. within a school or other learning institution) or within a structured programme (e.g. Girl Guides or Scouts). Usually teaching and mentoring is combined with some or all of the following:
- Structured opportunities to gain practical experience of leadership in a safe and supported environment. Rather than ‘authentic experiences’ these are often simulated, hypothetical and usually not initiated by the leadership trainees.
- Motivational talks from inspiring role models.
- Exchange visits between mentors/teachers and/or between students/young leaders.
- Opportunities to network and share experience with other young leaders often from a different culture/background
- On-going support and mentoring and linking young people to different networking or career opportunities once the programme has ended.

Many structured youth leadership programmes (such as the African Leadership Academy example below) focus on ‘hot housing’ young people who have already demonstrated clear leadership potential. Other programmes (such as the CARE girls’ leadership programme) focus on more marginalised young people who would otherwise be excluded from such opportunities.

These programmes make use of many of the principles outlined in chapter 1, especially safe spaces, role models, mentoring and support and reflection. However, they tend not to focus so much on exposing young people to authentic experiences for leadership, but rather providing ‘simulated’ experiences within a safe and controlled environment.

**Focus competencies:** Confidence and vision/values (often with opportunities for voice, decision-making, organisation and ability to motivate others).

**Focus principles:** Safe spaces, mentoring and support, the right level of challenge and risk, role models to learn from, reflection.

**Leadership focus:** Individual leadership.

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**World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Leadership Development Programme (WLDP)**

http://www.wagggs.org/en/about/relevance/leadership/wldp

**Goal:** World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has developed a specific leadership programme aimed at developing existing Girl Guides and Girl Scouts leaders’ international leadership skills and experiences as well as actively developing potential leaders for future and current roles within the organisation.

**Approach:** The programme consists of eight modules, each covering a topic area that enhances leadership skills and personal growth and which supports national Girl Guide/Girl Scout associations in their growth and continued development. The WLDP is implemented in a number of seminars and events, run by WLDP facilitators who are also continuously developing their skills to meet the needs of the participants and their national organisations. The WDLP events are conducted in a gender specific, volunteer-based setting and are based on a combination of: Non-formal education; Intercultural experience and exchange; Inter-generational sharing; Values based learning.

**Impact:** The WLDP programme has had 742 participants since 2008 attended seminars across various regions of the world. During 2013 a review of the WLDP is taking place with the intention of making it more accessible at Member Organisation level to ensure that more women can benefit
African Leadership Academy  www.africanleadershipacademy.org

**Goal:** The African Leadership Academy was founded in 2008 by Fred Swaniker a young entrepreneur from Ghana. It seeks to transform Africa by identifying, developing, and connecting the next generation of African leaders.

**Approach:** Young leaders (aged 15-19) who have already demonstrated strong leadership potential are identified through a rigorous selection process (typically they receive 2,500 applications from 44 African countries for 100 places). The two year entrepreneurial leadership curricula focuses on team-based design challenges, guest speakers, mini-lectures, simulations and games, case studies and experiential learning. In the second year, students have the opportunity to manage and lead three to seven person teams to execute a project that has direct impact on the ALA community or a neighbouring one. Once they have graduated, graduates participate in regional reunions and informal networking throughout the year. The Academy also links them to career opportunities including internships across the continent, speaking engagements at conferences around the world, and mentoring relationships in support of their further studies and endeavours.

**Impact:** Graduates of ALA have gone on to take up places at prestigious universities around the world and have earned over $35M in scholarship awards. ALA’s young leaders have launched 38 non-profit and for-profit enterprises since inception. The World Economic Forum recognised five ALA young entrepreneurs for the innovative organisations they have launched in their home countries. Two teams of ALA graduates from the inaugural class won the $10,000 Kathryn Davis Prize for Peace for their projects in Kenya and Morocco.

Global Changemakers  www.global-changemakers.net

**Goal:** Global Changemakers is a global youth network of social entrepreneurs, community activists and advocates between the ages of 16 and 25. Its mission is to empower youth to catalyse positive social change by providing them with skills, contacts, opportunities and a community of like-minded people pursuing the same goals.

**Approach:** The approach focuses on the three areas of learning and teaching, doing and advocacy. On joining the network, all Changemakers must show a track record of community work, and they are expected to work together to scale up their projects. Changemakers meet at regional and global summits to learn from facilitators, experts and each other, exchanging ideas and sharing best practices. In addition, Changemakers are trained to pass on their skills to their communities. Global Changemakers supports a select number of projects each year with seed funding.

**Impact:** The Changemaker projects supported affect the lives of hundreds of thousands all over the world. Together with its partners, the Global Changemakers programme gives its members access to world leaders and policy platforms. Changemakers are regularly invited to speak on various issues at high-level events, bringing their own experience and a grassroots perspective to the table. By representing the concerns of youth at such events, the Changemakers are ideally placed to share effective practices and innovations with influential policy and decision makers.
Youth partnerships

Youth partnerships engage young people as collaborators and co-implementers in development projects which may be both focused either within or outside the youth sector. They embody the ‘partners’ lens to youth programming and, in doing so, provide young people with important leadership development opportunities. These approaches capitalise on young people’s energy and skills and in particular their ability to be positive role models to other youth as well as strong and effective influencers on the community as a whole. The exposure and responsibility young people experience through participation in these programmes, as well as the training and support they receive, allow them to develop leadership skills in real-life, relevant but safe and appropriate settings.

The strength of these programmes is that they trust young people with the responsibility to play a significant role in delivering a programme which will have impact on others. As such they help young people to develop their leadership skills with the right level of challenge and risk and within a safe space that is relevant to need and genuinely have an impact on people’s lives. Frequently these programmes rely on volunteerism so in addition to developing skills and experience, they also promote the development of values and community spiritedness.

Focus competencies: Confidence, organisation, vision/values, ability to motivate others (often with opportunities for voice and decision-making).

Focus principles: Real life experiences, relevancy/tailoring to need, right level of challenge and risk, safe spaces/mentoring/support, role models to learn from, reflection.

Leadership focus: Individual leadership.


Goal: This programme approach focuses on giving disadvantaged adolescent girls in some of the poorest countries the support and resources to challenge and overcome many of the limitations that are imposed upon them.

Approach: CARE’s girls leadership programmes builds on on-going CARE education programs that offer innovative teacher training, create gender transformative learning models, promote child-centred teaching methods, make schools safer for girls, make school management more responsive, and develop innovative ways to serve girls who never enrolled, started late, or dropped out of school. Girls in CARE projects acquire and practice five essential leadership competencies—voice to express their own opinions, decision-making, self-confidence, organisation and vision—via a slate of extracurricular activities that they help design. These typically include sports, arts and drama, life skills training, technology clubs, school governments and youth councils, civic and environmental clubs, debate and academic teams, music, field trips and scouting.

Impact: Evaluations conducted of completed initiatives found robust evidence of the potential to impact girls’ leadership development and to influence shifts in community attitudes. Girls showed particular development in individual agency and changes in relations with peers and supportive adults. Additionally, women and men reported changing attitudes concerning girls’ rights to education and participation.

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**Goal:** Many Global South countries have National Youth Services along different models with different goals and involving different target groups. The Nigerian National Youth Service Corps established in 1973 is often held up as an example of a popular and successful model. Its goal is to produce a ‘positive national ethos of leadership that is vibrant, proud and committed to the unity and even development of the Nigeria State.’

**Methodology:** Unlike many other youth services, the NYSC focuses on graduates of universities and polytechnics. Volunteers spend a one-year period away from their home states usually in rural communities. There they undertake assignments in agriculture, health, education and infrastructure. They are expected to identify the needs of their host communities and mobilise members of their host communities to embark on the projects. Projects undertaken by Corps members include constructing bridges, health care centres, classroom blocks, market stalls. They have also carried out projects like HIV sensitisation, adult literacy campaign, extra-mural classes for students and road safety campaigns.

**Impact:** The programme is popular among both volunteers and communities and has considerable prestige. It has had particularly beneficial effects on volunteers’ subsequent careers with proportionally more graduates securing entry-level jobs soon after they complete their service.

Young Ambassadors for Positive Living (YAPL) [http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/177370/177497/yapl/](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/177370/177497/yapl/)

**Goal:** The objective of this Commonwealth Youth Programme project is to enable young women and men living with the virus to share personal experiences with their peers and create awareness about the HIV and AIDS pandemic through the promotion of dialogue between young people living with the virus, local communities, NGOs and governments.

**Approach:** The programme advocates for positive behavioural changes among youth who are infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, or involved in substance abuse, and does so through an approach called Positive Living. This approach requires an individual to be cognisant of his/her sexual and behavioural practices which can put him/her at risk of HIV infection, and through the exercise of self-discipline, adopt healthier and safer sexual and behavioural practices and continue adherence to those positive behaviours.

**Impact:** The YAPL have been instrumental in facilitating and advocating for the formation of national and regional networks of persons living with HIV/AIDS across a number of countries. They have been key proponents for increased resource mobilisation and resource allocation to youth-related HIV/AIDS programmes. They have continued to advocate for the elimination of stigma and discrimination. They recognise that the failure to disclose one’s status and live positively is a major factor in the perpetuation of stigma and discrimination. They continue to promote Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre services and other outreach activities such as targeted Behaviour Change Communication.
Youth-driven action

These approaches build youth leadership by nurturing and guiding youth-initiated actions, projects and organisations. Youth-founded organisations or initiatives have a lot of energy, vision and ideas, but often lack capacity, resources or technical know-how, and these approaches build the capacity of youth organisations, movements and other forms of association through training, mentoring, coaching, networking, grants or a combination of these. Support may be given in areas such as resource mobilisation, project planning, strategy development, financial management, evidence-based advocacy and campaigning and accessing decision-makers and other like-minded youth leaders. Some projects attempt to stimulate innovation through the use of competitive grant funding.

While some of the activity may focus on developing individuals' leadership skills, the primary focus is on strengthening the leadership of organisations and the effectiveness of projects and initiatives. Some approaches may take a more sector-wide approach supporting the strengthening of the wider youth sector through networking, collaboration, pooling resources and information-sharing.

These approaches promote a youth-led vision of development at the same time as supporting individual youth to hone their leadership skills. They identify and nurture existing leadership potential while helping to strengthen the scope and scale as well as the visibility of collective youth leadership, thereby helping to build the case for youth-led development.

Focus competencies: Voice, decision-making, confidence, organisation, vision/values, ability to motivate others

Focus principles: Real life experiences, relevancy/tailoring to need, reflection.

Leadership focus: Individual leadership and collective leadership.
MTV Staying Alive Foundation (SAF) [http://stayingalivefoundation.org](http://stayingalivefoundation.org)

**Goal:** SAF works towards achieving the vision of an HIV-free generation. SAF’s grant-giving programme invests in ambitious youth-led organisations across the globe delivering innovative HIV prevention programmes at the grassroots. Since 2009, SAF has deepened their commitment to their grantees through the development of a training and capacity development programme.

**Approach:** Key components of the package of non-financial support include a residential 9-day training workshop and 6-month mentorship support provided by Restless Development, ‘Staying Connected’ – an innovative online platform that enables grantees to share and learn from one another and to access resources that will help them in their work – in addition to local mentors and online e-courses. Over the last three years, SAF has continued to refine its comprehensive training curriculum and methodology covering four fundamental pillars of NGO operations, which aim to enable grantee organisations to better plan, deliver, monitor and communicate their work. Support in critical areas for organisational management include project management, resource mobilisation, finance and advocacy.

**Impact:** The workshops have received consistently positive participant feedback – with 89% to 96% of participants reporting that their expectations had been met – and have succeeded in increasing participant skill and knowledge levels in all training areas. In 2010, participants reported an average 24% increase in skill development in these key areas after one year. Participant feedback has confirmed the training to be well-structured, delivered to a high standard, and relevant and useful to their organisations: “[This workshop was] an interactive crash course to equip you with the tools needed to discern where your organisation needs to go… and how you’re going to get there!”.


**Goal:** To support youth-led organisations to develop innovative ICT projects to address the challenges facing youth including skills development and unemployment.

**Approach:** Jointly implemented by the World Bank and Microsoft, this regional competition sought ideas from youth in Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka on how to use innovative and creative methods to promote IT skills amongst youth helping them to secure gainful employment. Youth-led NGOs were invited to submit project ideas which used ICT, employed 3 or more people, would last 12 months and be participatory. Successful projects would be awarded a grant of up to $20,000.

**Impact:** The winning projects covered a diverse range of themes from using ICT for film-making on social issues to empowering Youth with Disabilities through market driven ICT skills.
Youth voice

These approaches focus on creating spaces and opportunities for young people to exercise leadership through sharing their viewpoints and contributing their ideas. Recognising that in many contexts safe and appropriate spaces do not exist, these approaches focus on a combination of:

- Creating new spaces for young people to share their voices freely (e.g. establishing [online] youth network or forums or youth councils and/or parliaments)
- Making existing spaces open and accessible to young people (e.g. youth consultations on government policy, youth-friendly spaces within local/national government bodies).
- Creating mechanisms and tools for youth voices to be gathered, collated and shared
- Using other creative ways to link young people to decision-makers (e.g. through the radio, internet etc.).

These initiatives support individuals to develop and hone leadership skills but also create spaces and opportunities for collective youth voice, and hence collective youth leadership. While many of the opportunities do also provide access to decision-makers, these approaches are considered as separate from approaches that focus primarily on youth governance because they are more concerned with youth voice than giving young people a role in decision-making. Youth voice approaches are sometimes at risk of tokenism if not linked to concrete actions and these issues are explored in more detail at the end of the chapter.

Focus competencies: Voice, confidence (and may also contribute to decision-making, organisation, vision/values, ability to mobilise others)

Focus principles: Safe spaces, real life experiences, relevancy/tailoring, the right level of challenge and risk, role models to learn from, reflection.

Target focus: Individual leadership and collective leadership.


Goal: Founded in 1999, the Guyana National Youth Parliament aims to bring together young people from across to Guyana to express their views, ideas and opinions in an unrestricted and constructive manner on issues of national importance and those affecting their growth and development.

Approach: At an annual Youth Parliament event participants are given the opportunity to learn about the structures and processes of the full National Parliament before being then divided into Proposition and Opposition parties and invited to put, debate and vote on policy motions. Over time the number of participants has risen as has their diversity, representing different parts communities across the nation, and the initiative is noted as promoting an inclusive, non-confrontational political model and encouraging dialogue, tolerance and critical thinking amongst youth. At first the process was restricted to one National Event a year, but from 2007 more funding was allocated to holding smaller regional events in the interim between each annual ‘sitting’. Young Parliamentarians are recruited on a competitive basis where political essays are solicited in response to national adverts.

Impact: The Youth Parliament attracts a great deal of formal recognition from politicians. Presidential Advisor on Governance, and Government’s Chief Whip, Gail Teixeira highlighted the benefits of the youth parliament during an address in 2012 in which she said “The life skills you gain by participating in the youth parliament will remain important to you, whether or not you become a member of parliament or a politician. The skills you learn will ensure that whenever you get involved in an activity, you go prepared and you know what you are talking about and you are able to deliver it in a confident manner.”
Youth governance

These approaches focus on creating and promoting opportunities for young people to play an active and meaningful role in governance, whether it is at the project level, local community level or higher levels of decision-making up to the national level. The approaches go beyond youth voice by giving young people genuine authority and opportunity to decide how a project is run or how resources are allocated. These approaches are an embodiment of the ‘leaders’ lens and are most clearly aligned with the goal of youth-led development. However, they are also the approaches that are the most challenging to implement, and as a result it is difficult to find many existing examples.

The most simple youth governance projects involve youth in governance at the project level, ideally bringing them in at all stages of the project cycle (planning, implementing, managing, monitoring and evaluating). These projects allow young people a safe space in which to exercise their leadership and governance skills. Many of the projects included above may well include an element of youth governance. Such experiences of project governance are valuable because evidence shows that experience of genuine decision-making at a low level can make people more inclined and interested to participate in governance at higher levels (e.g. village development committee, local council, national level).

Projects which look at enhancing youth governance within community or national structures are clearly harder to implement because they require the space to be made within those structures for youth governance to be exercised. Rather than trying to make space within existing fora, many projects focus on creating parallel safe spaces where young people can be brought in to contact with decision-makers and their contribution and inputs heard (see Ghana and Sierra Leone case studies below). These often take the form of providing feedback on service provision or budget expenditure. While these are important and valuable activities for young people to be involved in, they do not equate to full youth governance because young people are not actually involved in making decisions.

Focus competencies: Voice, confidence, decision-making, organisation, vision/values, ability to mobilise others

Restless Development's 12 Country Consultation on post MDG framework

Goal: Restless Development has played a leading role in helping to coordinate the global consultation with youth for the post 2015 global agenda that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With support from the DFID-CSO working group and the European Commission’s ‘Youth in Action’ programme, Restless Development organised a 12-country consultation to gather the views of young people on what should be included in the post-2015 agenda.

Methodology: From October 2012 to January 2013 consultations were undertaken in 12 countries in which 346 young people were given the space to discuss the local and global issues of importance to them, and articulate their visions and solutions for a world beyond 2015. The consultations were delivered through a global network of 14 youth-led and youth-focused partners, and engaged diverse groups of young people rarely present in global or national policy-making processes.

Impact: The resulting document ‘Youth Voices on a post 2015 World’ was launched ahead of the High Level Panel meeting in Bali in March 2013 where Restless Development helped to chair a youth roundtable event to feed in to the post-2015 discussions. The results were both young people proving that they are credible and energetic partners in the international process and impact on the defining of the new global development agenda.
Focus principles: Safe spaces, real life experiences, relevancy/tailoring, the right level of challenge and risk, role models to learn from, reflection

Target focus: Individual leadership and collective leadership.

Youth budget advocacy in Ghana

Goal: The Youth Budget Advocacy Group of Upper Manya is a Plan-supported programme that has pushing officials to make sure that promises to install development projects, as outlined in the 2010 budget, have been upheld.

Approach: With support from Plan, youth are able to organise to effectively monitor and analyse budgets. Young people are selected from Rights of the Child clubs upon completing a questionnaire that tests their prior knowledge on budget and finance issues. Plan then helps to build on their knowledge with its zonal development coordinators and training sessions. Their findings have been presented at meetings with District Assembly officials and traditional leaders.

Impact: Budget advocacy training helped to build youth’s intellectual capacities and also increased their confidence levels; however, the project found on-going challenges with regards to the willingness of the District Assembly to engage with the youth citing anomalies in the data.

Enhancing the participation of youth in community governance - GoBiFo project, Sierra Leone
http://www.poverty-action.org/node/4920

Goal: This project, managed by the Decentralisation Secretariat, aimed at strengthening the relationship between villages, wards and district councils in Bombali and Bonthe districts by giving a role to youth and other excluded groups in community-level governance.

Approach: The focus was on strengthening Village Development Committees to engage in participatory, inclusive planning for their village, while building community capacity to manage block grants and community driven initiatives. Emphasis was placed on ensuring excluded groups such as women, the aged, youth and persons living with disability were fully involved in planning and managing community activities.

Impact: Some of the results of the project included: an increase in trust and accountability as a result of high levels of transparency and accountability at the village and ward levels; a new emphasis on collective decision-making which includes marginalised and disadvantaged groups; and empowerment of communities to direct their own development process in an inclusive and cost effective way, strengthening the linkages between communities and local government.
Tanzania constitution consultation, Restless Development, Oxfam, Legal and Human Rights Centre and Voluntary Service Overseas

**Goal:** In 2012 the Government of Tanzania initiated a review of the country’s constitution. The ‘Fahamu, Ongea, Sikilizwa’ Project, a consortium-led programme, facilitated youth and community engagement in the constitutional review process.

**Approach:** Through consultation and training, 7050 in and out of school young people aged 15-29 in eight regions (Iringa, Mbeya, Ruvuma, Dar es Salaam, Kagera, Dodoma, Lindi, Mtwara) were enabled to understand what the constitution is, what role it plays in Tanzania’s policy-making, and how to participate in its review. A further 800 young people were empowered to articulate their views on the constitution which were then formally fed back to the constitution review committee.

**Impact:** The project helped to provide a citizen-led insight into the constitution review process and supported young people to engage with the Government of Tanzania, a necessity for the constitution to facilitate a secure future for the next generation who will lead economic growth.

The Commonwealth Secretariat: Strengthening Youth Leadership through Governance
http://secretariat.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/152816/152828/what_is_cyp/

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), implemented by the Commonwealth Secretariat, is rooted in the conviction that ‘young people throughout the Commonwealth have an enormous contribution to make in their countries.’ Its work is ‘based on the views, experiences and urgent needs’ of young people and focuses on enabling them to ‘become active citizens who understand that they have rights as well as responsibilities.’ A section of the programme is dedicated to building youth leadership through involvement in governance and includes the following initiatives:

**Involvement of young people in Commonwealth Ministers Meetings**

The CYP has facilitated the engagement of young people in high level Commonwealth meetings including Commonwealth Youth Ministers meetings and Education Ministers meetings so that young people has a voice at the table and are able to dialogue with heads of government.

**Commonwealth Youth Forum and Support to National Youth Councils**

The Commonwealth Youth Forum meets every two years bringing together youth leaders of National Youth Councils/bodies from across the Commonwealth to agree on and set policy/programmes/priorities that they as youth leaders will focus on to address the challenges and opportunities facing youth people today.

**Yourcommonwealth.org**

Yourcommonwealth.org is a website created and crafted by young people, students and youth leaders. Its contributors come from across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific. It gives young people across the world the opportunity to voices their views on topics that concern them.

**Commonwealth Youth Council**

The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) is an inclusive initiative that seeks to communicate, engage and advocate for youth led participation. The CYC will be an independent entity responsible for youth representation in the Commonwealth. It will represent 1.2 billion young people from different countries. The first General Assembly of the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) which will be held in Sri Lanka from 10th till 14th of November 2013 during the Commonwealth Youth Forum. Official youth delegates from each country will agree the constitution, nominate and vote for the inaugural CYC Executive, who will be responsible for the leadership and strategic direction of the CYC.
The role of ICT in promoting youth leadership

The rapid advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in recent decades have much to offer youth development globally and youth leadership in particular. Africa and other parts of the world have embraced mobile telecommunications in particular, leapfrogging the otherwise slow pace of infrastructure development. The number of mobile phone subscribers under the age of 30 in 2012 was estimated at around 380 million in South Asia, 108 million in sub-Saharan Africa and 188 million in Latin America.\(^{32}\) Internet usage has also expanded significantly but also unevenly. According to 2011 estimates, about 13.5% of African population has internet access, although two-thirds of overall online activity in Africa is generated in South Africa, which only accounts for 5% of the continent’s population.\(^{33}\) Illustrative opportunities that ICT offers youth leadership include:

Communication, linking, networking and calls to action

The widespread availability of the internet and mobile phones means more and more young people are able to connect and communicate. Facebook has 44.2 million users in Africa (a penetration of 4.7%) and 234 million users in Asia (a penetration of 6.1 %).\(^{34}\) 60% of Africa’s Twitter users are 21-29 years old (compared to a world average of 39%).\(^{35}\) These opportunities allow young people to share ideas, tap in to other knowledge sources and link to others across physical and cultural boundaries. As we have seen in North Africa and the Middle East, social media can also be used to mobilise and organise young people and galvanise them to action.

Data capture for accountability

Modern ICT also offers exciting possibilities for data capture, an important tool for gathering evidence which can be used to hold leaders to account. The Kibera project below is one example of the use of GPS to capture important social information. Elsewhere, mobile technology has been used to capture real-time information about service provision and other aspects of government performance and this has been used as the basis for advocacy.

Voice, advocacy and e-democracy

ICT also offers opportunities for youth voices to be heard and a broader engagement in governance. Online platforms have been established for capturing youth views on different topics (for example Restless Development’s online survey around the post-2015 agenda, part of the 12 country consultation outlined above). The concept of e-democracy is slowly starting to spread with 12% of government websites in Africa providing a statement that promotes open government data initiative\(^{36}\).

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\(^{32}\)UNICEF (2011)

\(^{33}\)http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm#africa

\(^{34}\)Mo Ibrahim (2012)

\(^{35}\)Ibid.

\(^{36}\)Ibid.
Challenges common to youth leadership programming

While every Global South country is different, there are some challenges to the planning and design of youth leadership programmes that are common to many or even all country contexts, and which need to be taken in to account.

Cultural barriers to leadership (particularly for girls)

In many parts of the world, there are long standing traditions of rule by elders and exclusion of youth from any decision-making or leadership roles. This is doubly true for girls who are often excluded for their gender as well as their age. These cultural norms run both ways; decision-makers are resistant to the idea of youth leadership while young people themselves cannot envisage being in leadership roles and are therefore reluctant to challenge the norms. The strength of such norms cannot be underestimated and needs to be taken in to account in youth leadership programming. Ensuring effective engagement, dialogue and sensitisation/education of existing community leaders of all kinds (traditional, local government, religious) is important as is ensuring an emphasis on safe spaces for youth leadership development to take place. Particular consideration needs to be given to girls and their additional barriers to leadership they face. Cultural norms cannot be transformed overnight, but as youth are given opportunities to demonstrate the value they can bring, the barriers will be slowly chipped away.

Structural barriers to leadership

Democratic space in many parts of the world is hampered by corruption, cronyism and political infighting, and the opportunities for genuine roles in governance are often narrow and hard to penetrate by any group let alone youth. Rather than confront these barriers head on, many of the youth voices and youth governance approaches described above look at creating parallel spaces in which youth voices and ideas can be aired. These approaches are an important step towards


Goal: Map Kibera – a partnership between local youth, non-governmental organisations and several United Nations agencies including UNICEF – is based in Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. It engages young people, particularly young women and girls, in the participatory digital mapping of risks and vulnerabilities in their community, which is Africa’s largest slum.

Approach: The project is helping to identify safe and unsafe physical spaces, as well as raising awareness and offering advocacy opportunities around the issues of HIV and AIDS and other vulnerabilities. Map Kibera involves five steps:

- **Stakeholder meetings**
- **Map data collection:** Thirteen young mappers from the community use global positioning system devices and open source software to create a map of safe and dangerous areas; then the data is uploaded to OpenStreetMap
- **Community consultations:** Using printed maps, tracing paper and coloured pens, the mappers conduct discussions with girls and young women about safety and vulnerability, leading to better situational awareness for both girls and planners.
- **Narrative media:** Young people from the community use videos, photos and audio to create short narratives about the issues they face, which are then interwoven into the map narrative.
- **Advocacy:** Quantitative and qualitative data are used for advocacy with local governments, community leaders and other decision-makers to obtain better services and protection for young people.

Impact: The project has helped empower young people by equipping them with a variety of skills and experiences. It has also helped raise awareness of the issues facing the residents of Kibera and bring those issues to the attention of the council.
achieving genuine youth involvement in governance and can help to pave the way to more meaningful youth governance as democratic rule slowly consolidates.

**Tokenism**

A common problem when trying to give voice to a disadvantaged or marginalised group is the risk of tokenism. Quite often youth engagement in consultations or other governance processes turns in to a ‘box ticking’ exercise where a few youth representatives (often with dubious legitimacy as representatives – see below) share their views but these are not meaningfully incorporated in to the decision-making process. Various youth groups have expressed dismay at different times about youth summits or consultation processes that involved a very tokenistic involvement by young people. For tokenism to be avoided, decision-makers have to both believe in the value of youth voice and be committed to giving real space for that voice to be heard and incorporated meaningfully. Once again, this highlights the importance of working not only with young people themselves but also with the decision-makers and structures which must make the space for youth governance to become real.

**Elite capture and poor youth representation**

A different but equally common problem is the issue of elite capture. In the context of scarce resources and widespread disadvantage, it is often the wealthy, privileged and/or politically connected young people who find their way into positions of civil society or political representation. This becomes problematic if those youth representatives are more concerned with consolidating their own power than in being effective representatives of youth and serving the needs and interests of the wider youth population. Unfortunately, too often such representatives hold on to their positions for many years (well beyond the age of youth) and fail to be effective youth leaders. Young people themselves should be empowered to question the legitimacy of the youth leaders that represent them and to advocate for change when such leaders are failing to represent them adequately. Implementers of youth programmes should also keep these issues in mind when selecting which youth representatives to work with and should also consider building in ‘exit strategies’ for youth representatives to transition out of their roles at the appropriate time.

**Inadequate mentors/implementers delivering youth programmes**

Many of the youth leadership programmes outlined rely heavily on the guidance, training and mentoring of experienced adult supporters. Such supporters have an important role to play in nurturing the leadership skills of young people and it is essential that they are equipped adequately to do so. Several interviewees consulted during this mapping drew attention to the difficulty of finding effective mentors for youth programmes and also mentioned the risk that some mentors may use their position of power abusively. Youth development programmes therefore need to bear these issues in mind and ensure sufficient investment is made in developing supporters who understand and believe in youth leadership and what is needed to make it happen.

**Lack of means to measure impact**

Measuring the impact of youth leadership programmes is a challenge facing all implementers. More broadly in youth development, there is a dearth of universally agreed indicators for measuring progress in different areas of youth development – although as described above various actors have been attempting to address this area. For those investing in youth leadership programming, there is a consequent lack of evidence about which approaches and programme models are the most impactful.
Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

The preceding three chapters have mapped out the theory and practice of youth leadership in the Global South. This last chapter reflects on what this might imply for organisations involved in promoting youth leadership.

Chapter 1 outlined the case being made for investing in youth leadership as an essential component of wider youth (-led) development, with the significant benefits to individuals, their peers, their communities and wider society. Chapter 2 looked at donor, government and private sector approaches and interest in youth and youth leadership. It is clear that until recently, youth leadership was an area largely overlooked by donors, and where it has been addressed there has been a general failure to relinquish the ‘beneficiary’ lens in most youth programming despite policy commitments to capitalise on young people’s agency and engage them meaningfully as partners. This relative donor neglect means that youth leadership programmes are few in practice and championed by only relatively few actors, mostly in the NGO sector. Despite the small number of actors currently engaged in youth leadership and youth-led development, Chapter 3 set out the wide range of programmatic possibilities and approaches to youth leadership development, many of which are already demonstrating positive impact.

This paper asserts that this coincidence of factors means that there has never been a better time to invest in youth leadership and demonstrate the impact it can have on tackling poverty and achieving development goals. In order to achieve this, actors involved in promoting youth leadership should set goals that go beyond youth leadership as an end in itself. It is particularly important to address the causes of the current divide between existing youth leadership programming and the broader vision of youth-led development which gives young people a real and meaningful role in designing, implementing and managing development efforts. Strategies should not only focus on the impact of youth leadership programmes on young people but also on achieving replicable and scalable models for use by young people and the youth sector on the one hand and government (youth) ministries, aid agencies and the private sector on the other.

It is suggested that those engaged in youth leadership programming should consider rooting their strategies in the following principles:

- **Linking youth leadership to youth-led development** – Giving young people a meaningful stake in decision-making and governance (the concept at the core of youth-led development) means influencing policy and practice and the attitudes and behaviours of decision-makers. Youth leadership programmes should be able to demonstrate how they are linking the young leaders in whom they are investing to decision-makers and/or how they are seeking to shape policy and practice spaces to accommodate youth leadership.

- **Rooted in the local context** – Every developing country faces different challenges although some challenges are common to many. Different groups of young people within a country also may face a range of different challenges. Successful youth leadership programmes understand these specific localised cultural and structural barriers and how to address them.

- **Ambitious beyond local impact** – On the other hand, it is clear that there has been a plethora of leadership programmes over the past decades that have never (or not yet) achieved transformative goals as they have been designed and measured as ends in themselves. Programming which looks beyond leadership as and ends in itself to the broader aim of promoting a youth-led model will contribute further to this transformative goal.

- **Modelling values** – Investing in youth leadership is an opportunity to promote youth leadership at every level through, for example, youth participation in programme planning and design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. It is also an opportunity to invest in NGOs that model youth governance in their structures.
In the coming years, there are some specific opportunities that youth leadership programming can take advantage of:

- **Enhancing the role of young people across the Global South to influence the success of a new Global Development Framework** – Young people are becoming one of the strongest voices in the discourse and planning towards a new framework that will influence every policy, strategy and fund in the next two decades. As has been noted throughout this paper, youth leadership without clear purpose and real links to the development of countries risks standing alone without transformative impact. There is a chance for a high-profile unified role for young people across the Global South to drive, monitor and support the success of a new framework.

- **Choosing development focus** – The global process to define a new set of development goals post-2015 has already yielded plenty of evidence around young people’s priorities for the future. From the UN’s *World We Want* surveys, ONE’s *You Choose* multi-country mass survey in Africa, Restless Development’s 12-country in-depth consultation with young people and the High Level Panel’s consultation with young people, young people have expressed consistent themes: inclusion in governance of a new framework, jobs and livelihoods, rights especially around sexual health and gender. These are also many of the British Government’s own aid programme priorities. We recommend that investment focuses attention on these areas, which can be analysed and assessed from the collated literature from these processes.

- **Creating a measurement framework** - This is an unique opportunity to address the current lack of measuring tools by developing and piloting a youth leadership measurement framework. Actors should therefore consider investing time and thought to a monitoring framework, and also consider how they could align this to other benchmarks being developed such Youth Wellbeing Index being developed by the Center for Strategic International Studies and International Youth Foundation.

- **Developing knowledge, best practice and sharing mechanisms** – There is an important opportunity to build upon the scant evidence base on best practice in youth leadership. Youth leadership initiatives should seek to generate best practice and create networking and sharing platforms between implementing partners both north-south and south-south.

- **Adapting and replicating models for scale up** – While the paper shows the positive impact of many youth leadership models and programmes, few if any have been on a scale that has been able to challenge the tide of youth unemployment and youth disaffection gaining much attention around the world in the last 5 years. Actors should consider investing in replicable and scalable models in which both youth and development actors can truly believe and thus invest.

- **Strengthening national youth sectors** – An important channel for the cultivation of youth leadership is represented in national youth-led civil society organisations. This is an area in which few donors have considered investing and which is consequently neglected. A unique area for youth leadership investment would be to work with partners to strengthen local youth-led civil society capacity and activities and to help strengthen the voice and action of national youth sectors.

- **Investing in youth voice and youth governance** – As this paper has shown, these two areas are central pillars of youth-led development but areas where the many challenges mean there is general under-investment and only a few programmes. There are some experienced organisations whose work can be drawn on and, in so doing, help to fill a large and important gap in youth leadership development.
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