

YOUTH LEADING THE WORLD 2030:

**A REVIEW OF DANIDA'S
YOUTH-RELATED ENGAGEMENTS**

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

“ THE WORLD IS HOME TO THE LARGEST GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE EVER, AN ESTIMATED 1.8 BILLION YOUNG PEOPLE, OF WHICH MORE THAN THREE IN FOUR ARE LIVING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. YOUNG PEOPLE REPRESENT A HUGE RESOURCE AND ARE VALUABLE DEMOCRATIC AGENTS OF CHANGE AS ENTREPRENEURS AND AS ACTIVE CITIZENS. ”

– The World 2030

In January 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Denmark launched a new strategy for Denmark’s development cooperation and humanitarian action: ‘The World 2030’, with youth as a key focus area of the strategy. The MFA commissioned a review of Denmark’s youth-related engagements, which has resulted in 19 recommendations demonstrating how young people can lead the implementation and vision for Denmark’s development cooperation and humanitarian action up to 2030.

Youth have, for some time, been a growing target group of Denmark’s development cooperation, and also featured in the government’s previous strategy ‘The Right to a Better Life’ (2012). Targeting and engaging youth is, therefore, not new to Danida and many of its multilateral partners, nor to Danish development and humanitarian organisations. Nevertheless, the **new strategy marks a significant step change in how Danida will engage youth in the future**, placing greater focus than ever before on **unleashing the potential of youth as agents of change**.



DENMARK AS A STRONG AND POSITIVE VOICE ON YOUTH

The 19 recommendations outlined in this report – covering gender equality, employment, democratic governance and human rights, humanitarian action and youth leadership – demonstrate how this vision for youth can be put into practice. The report highlights how Danida can develop **collaborative ways of working with young people and youth-led organisations**, supporting them to lead their own initiatives. To ensure quality, MFA staff and Danida partner organisations should be supported to **apply models and concepts of youth participation and development** into the design and delivery of youth-led and youth-focused programmes. The report identifies potential for **integrating a strong youth focus across all of Danida’s priority areas** – linking youth and gender, bridging the gap between development and humanitarian action, and embedding young people within review processes for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Denmark can and should take a leading role internationally as **a strong and positive voice on youth** by practising and advocating for a strong human rights-based approach to youth, which integrates other priorities and issues. Finally, **internal changes within the MFA** will be key to translating good intentions into tangible actions for staff and partner organisations, and in ensuring structures are created in which youth can participate in and influence its policies.

The full report is available for download on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (<http://um.dk/en/danida-en/goals/>).



UNLEASHING YOUNG PEOPLE'S AGENCY

Danida should develop collaborative programmes and ways of working with young people and youth-led organisations.

1. Create opportunities for youth to be partners in development cooperation
2. Support formal and informal youth-led organisations, networks and movements to lead, initiate, design and implement their own initiatives
3. Prioritise youth-to-youth exchanges between Denmark and developing countries. Particularly between youth-led organisations and movements



ENSURING QUALITY

MFA staff and Danida partner organisations should be supported to apply models and concepts of youth participation and development into the design and delivery of youth-led and youth-focused programmes, when the strategy 'The World 2030' is operationalised.

4. Apply a youth lens in the design of programmes, to better ensure a holistic, rights-based and gender-sensitive approach.
5. Strengthen monitoring and tracking of programmes focusing on or involving youth
6. Ensure learning on youth participation and empowerment and its contribution to wider development outcomes



DELIVERING ON DANIDA'S THEMATIC PRIORITIES

There is potential for integrating a strong youth focus in all of Danida's priority areas, to complement – rather than compete with – these priorities.

7. Ensure youth involvement and youth-specific approaches when developing and implementing inclusive, sustainable growth and employment programmes
8. Support linkages between youth and gender movements, and promote the nexus of the two in the SDGs
9. Harness the role of youth as partners and leaders in bridging development and humanitarian action
10. Embed young people in the formal and informal review processes for the SDGs



ALIGNING FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Denmark is encouraged to play a leading role internationally as a strong and positive voice on youth as rights holders with assets, rather than as a risk to development.

11. Mainstream youth across Denmark's multilateral development cooperation, particularly through partnerships with UN agencies
12. Champion youth priorities in national policy dialogues with governments in priority countries
13. Earmark funding that can be accessed by youth-led organisations and movements
14. Take a supportive approach to grant-making that also develops the capacity of youth-led organisations, movements and networks
15. Strengthen coordination on youth with other donors and government players in priority countries, especially youth unemployment



ROLLING OUT THE STRATEGY INTERNALLY

A new strategy is an opportune time to make changes internally within the MFA that reflect Denmark's belief in and commitment to youth and is key to translating good intentions into something tangible and accessible for the staff and partners close to implementation.

16. Develop and establish capacity to implement the youth focus within MFA
17. Prioritise support, incentives and inspiration to embassies
18. Strengthen Danida's outreach to a diverse range of Danish and international youth
19. Create structures, in which youth can participate and influence the MFA and its policies

METHODOLOGY

The review team used a range of qualitative methods to gather and analyse data, which have informed the final set of recommendations, including:

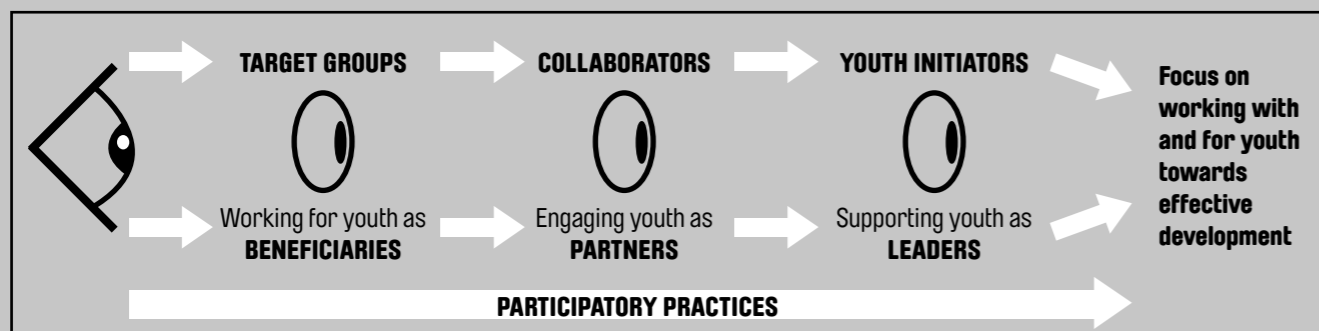
- Reviewing documentation from Danida and its various development partners.
- Field visits to Uganda, Kenya, Indonesia and a desk study in Mali.
- Key informant interviews with selected stakeholders, including MFA staff (including two Youth Advisers), representatives of partner organisations (multilaterals, NGOs, bilaterals), youth experts and representatives of youth-led organisations, Danish development partners, government staff and others in the youth and development sector.
- A questionnaire for Danish development organisations on their work with youth and their recommendations for Danida.
- Case studies that highlight ‘promising practice’, used as a tool for both research, evidence and learning in the review.
- Two Youth Focus Groups in Kampala and Nairobi, each involving 10 young professionals, including youth workers, researchers, advocates, project managers from youth-led and youth-focused organisations.
- International Youth Panel and online ‘Youth Conversation’ facilitated by Restless Development: [Box 2]

“Organisations ought to lead from behind, not see young people as blank slates [without] ability and capacity to lead. They need to see youth as partners and leaders capable of finding solutions with regards to issues that affect them.”

– Online Youth Conversation participant

Box 1: THREE-LENS APPROACH TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION

A human rights-based approach to youth underpins both the review methodology and the analytical framework used by the project team based on the principles of participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency.



This advocates that development cooperation should work for the benefit of youth (as target beneficiaries), with youth as partners (collaborators), and be shaped by youth as leaders (initiators). It corresponds well with Danida’s commitment to engaging youth as agents of change and as a target group.

Box 2: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PANEL

A central component of the methodology offered by Restless Development is the involvement of young people as active contributors – and not only the subject of – the review, from the very first stages and on all key questions.

An International Youth Panel made up of six Danish and five international youth representatives involved with the MFA, NGO partners or international youth networks, and selected through an open and competitive process, was convened twice during the course of the review. Youth panellists were also invited to review and comment on reports, documents and recommendations. In addition, Restless Development – supported by the Youth Panel – ran an online ‘Youth Conversation’ on Facebook over 10 days to engage young people in Denmark and around the world. 124 young people from 16 countries participated in the conversation, which reached 2,000 young people who registered to follow the event online. The highest levels of participation came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Denmark, Ghana, Nepal and South Africa.



PROMISING PRACTICE

The report includes twelve case studies highlighting ‘promising practice’, which provides an opportunity for a closer look at the experience and approach of Danida and its partners.

Amplify Change

This multi-donor global fund, of which Danida is a founding partner, provides grants to small-to-medium-sized civil society and community-based groups – including youth-led organisations (YLOs) and networks – that advocate for and promote better policy and action on neglected Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues. These grants aim to fuel the growth of a new generation of organisations and advocacy leaders, including youth-led and gender-rights groups. Amplify Change has adapted its application processes to better enable YLOs to successfully receive and manage funding, encouraging applications from consortia and coalitions, and allowing grantees to submit short videos in lieu of completing parts of the written application.

Danish-Arab Partnership Programme (DAPP)

Launched in 2003, the DAPP has been Denmark’s collaboration project with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) focusing on reform and democratisation. As part of the project, the Danish Youth Council (DUF) implemented the Ambassadors for Dialogue programme in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark from 2009–2015. In close cooperation with the West and East Centre for Sustainable Development (WE Centre) in Jordan and the Egyptian Youth Federation (EYF), the project’s objective was to foster a dialogical culture among Egyptian, Jordanian and Danish youth, and to enhance mutual understanding between youth across ethnic, religious, ideological, national and other divides. Since 2009, a total of 195 ‘Ambassadors for Dialogue’ have been trained (100 in Egypt and Jordan, 95 international) and they have implemented dialogue workshops for approximately 13,000 youth in Egypt, Jordan and Denmark.

CONCLUSION

DENMARK AND PARTNERS TO LEAD A PROGRESSIVE YOUTH AGENDA

This report can be used as a call to action for Denmark's partners, including young people and their organisations, working to realise the potential for young people to play a leading role in achieving the ambitious goals set out by 'The World 2030' and the Sustainable Development Goals. The overarching finding from this review process is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark can and should make the most of its experience, expertise and influence by leading a progressive youth agenda that focuses on voice, participation and empowerment – spanning all of its priority thematic areas of development. Although this review specifically examines the Danish context, it can also serve as a useful tool for other member states, international institutions and civil society organisations wishing to harness the agency of young people to partner in and lead development. The 19 recommendations outlined in this report put forward a range of ideas, approaches and proposed engagements that can put this vision into practice.

“ The young people must be given the opportunity to enhance their participation and influence in society as involved, committed and equal actors with the ability and opportunity to take development into their own hands. [...] It is a matter of development of and with young people, not merely for young people. ”

– The World 2030

