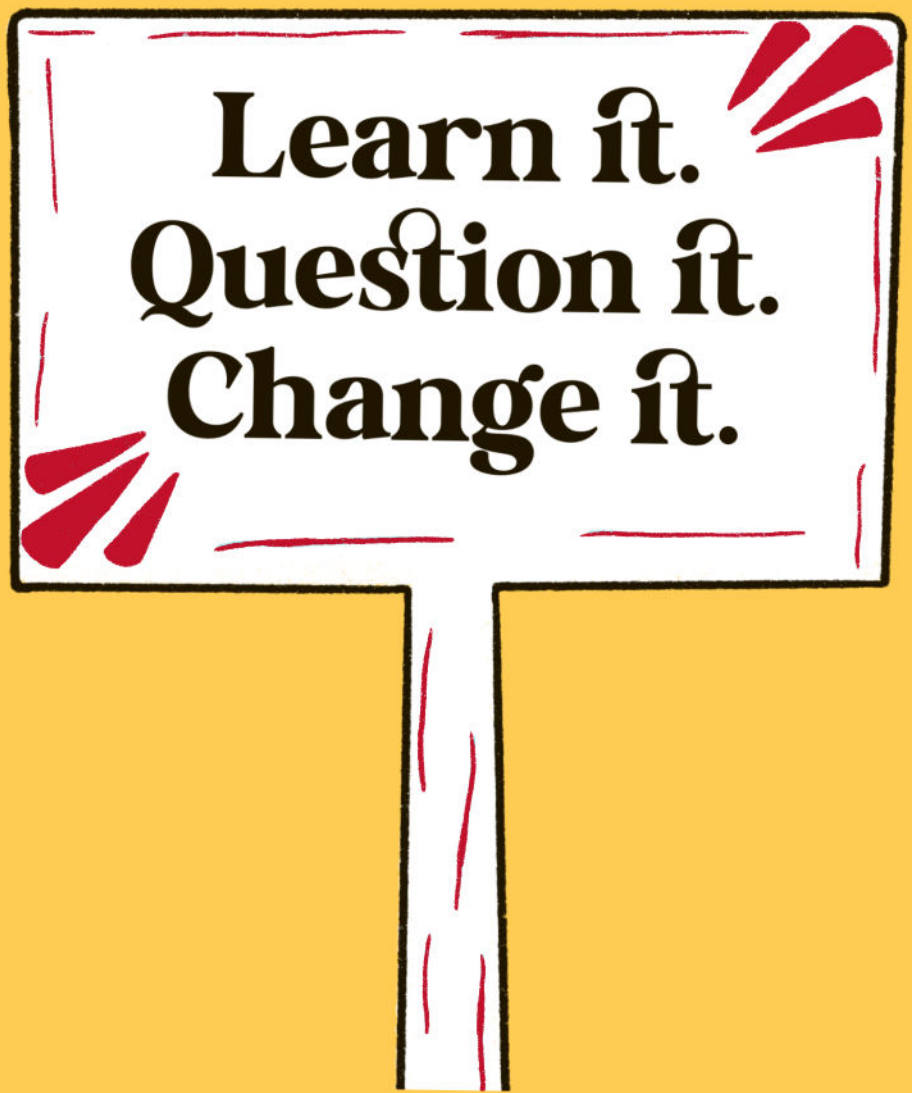
RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT

Walking the Talk

Financing Our Future:

The FFD4 Youth Toolkit



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Restless Development is a non profit global agency, formed in 1985, that supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. More than ever the world needs young people’s power and leadership to solve its greatest challenges. Every year Restless Development train, mentor, nurture and connect thousands of young people to use their youth power and lead change.

The Walking the Talk programme aims to boost the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policies (FFP) and gender equality in the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and the European Union. The programme advocates for an increase in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and funding dedicated to gender equality and women’s rights.

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Welcome To Our Toolkit!

The purpose of 'Financing Our Future: The FFD4 Youth Toolkit', is to ensure that the process of the 4th International Conference of Financing for Development (FFD4) is accessible, transparent and of interest to young people, adolescents and other members of our global civil society.

Recognising that young people in all their diversities and intersectional identities are crucial stakeholders in the global financial architecture, this Toolkit is designed to empower and support their engagement by offering a user-friendly and youth-friendly resource about financial processes. It aims to encourage readers' engagement in advocacy efforts for more transparent , collaborative financial processes that move away from top-down decisions in exclusive circles and foster broader participation and engagement.

Therefore, this Toolkit bridges the gap between these global processes and young people; who are the most affected by the decisions being made in finance discussions yet lack systemic, institutionalised and continuous engagement processes to share their vision. By providing simple overviews of the FFD4 mechanisms, recommendations for youth engagement , and a call to action for effective youth mobilisation, this Toolkit opens the doors of a closed process.

This Toolkit Has Been Created By Young People In...

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What Is the Fourth Financing For Development Conference (FFD4) ?

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) is a high-level global gathering taking place in Seville, Spain.

It brings together governments, civil society, the private sector, and international institutions to assess progress since the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (FFD3, 2015) and shape a renewed global financing framework. The conference aims to address systemic issues in the international financial architecture, and unlock sustainable resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The process leading up to FFD4 has included months of negotiations and "PrepCom" meetings, where governments work on a shared Outcome Document that will guide development finance priorities for the next decade. The agreed Outcome Document, as of June 2025, focuses on tax justice, domestic resource mobilisation, debt sustainability, and reform of the global financial system.

While only governments formally negotiate the text; youth, feminist, and Global South advocates have helped shape the agenda through consistent pressure. The Civil Society Forum (28–29 June) is a vital space where these movements and wider civil society align messaging, coordinate advocacy, and make joint demands.

During the main conference (30 June–3 July), youth can engage through ministerial roundtables, interactive dialogues, and side events—whether attending in person or following online. These are key moments to raise youth demands, question leaders, and influence the political tone of negotiations.

Thematic forums like the International Business Forum provide further opportunities to advocate for climate-resilient, feminist, and socially just financing models. Although civil society cannot change the text directly, strategic advocacy and presence can help shift priorities and outcomes.

The Key Issues At Stake Here...

Gender Equality focusing on how financial systems can better support women's economic growth. Addressing the gender gap in economic participation and ensure that financial policies are gender-responsive.

A tax system that ensures all entities (individuals and corporations) contribute fairly by closing loopholes, preventing tax evasion, and stopping profit shifting to tax havens. Fair and transparent tax systems promote economic equality by reducing tax evasion and ensuring corporations pay their share.

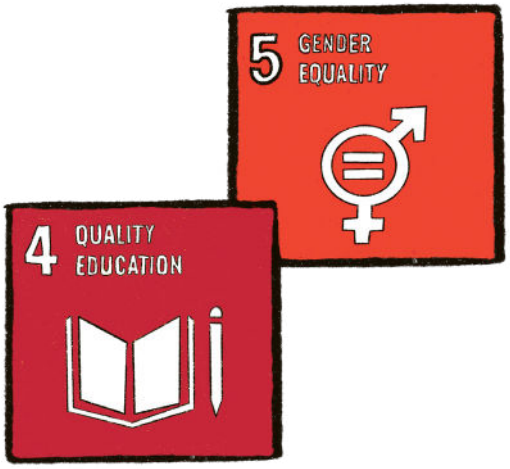
Unequal access to digital technologies and the internet affects education, economic growth opportunities, and social inclusion. The gap between those who have reliable internet, devices, and digital skills and those who do not, has huge impacts. During COVID-19, 50% of Sub-Saharan African students couldn't access remote learning due to a lack of digital learning infrastructure.

Access to information, services, and rights related to sexual and reproductive health is crucial for human dignity and well-being. The teen pregnancy rate indicated that 25% of girls aged 15-19 have begun childbearing (UDHS, 2022). Young people living in rural areas face further marginalisation as they often have to travel over 10 km to reach a health center, delaying their access to fundamental health care and critical emergency care. Organisations providing reproductive health services and advocating for SRHR can empower individuals to make informed choices.

Efforts to mitigate climate change and promote sustainable development involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy. Initiatives like the Green Generation Initiative promote tree planting and environmental conservation.

Why Is FFD4 Important Now?

Ten years after the last Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the upcoming conference in Seville, Spain, marks a key moment to advocate for greater financial investment in building a sustainable, equitable, just, inclusive, and peaceful future. With only five years to 2030 and knowing that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are far from being achieved, world leaders and civil society members have a unique opportunity to advocate for greater mobilisation of resources and stronger alliances to reform and address the financial challenges that are blocking progress towards sustainability.

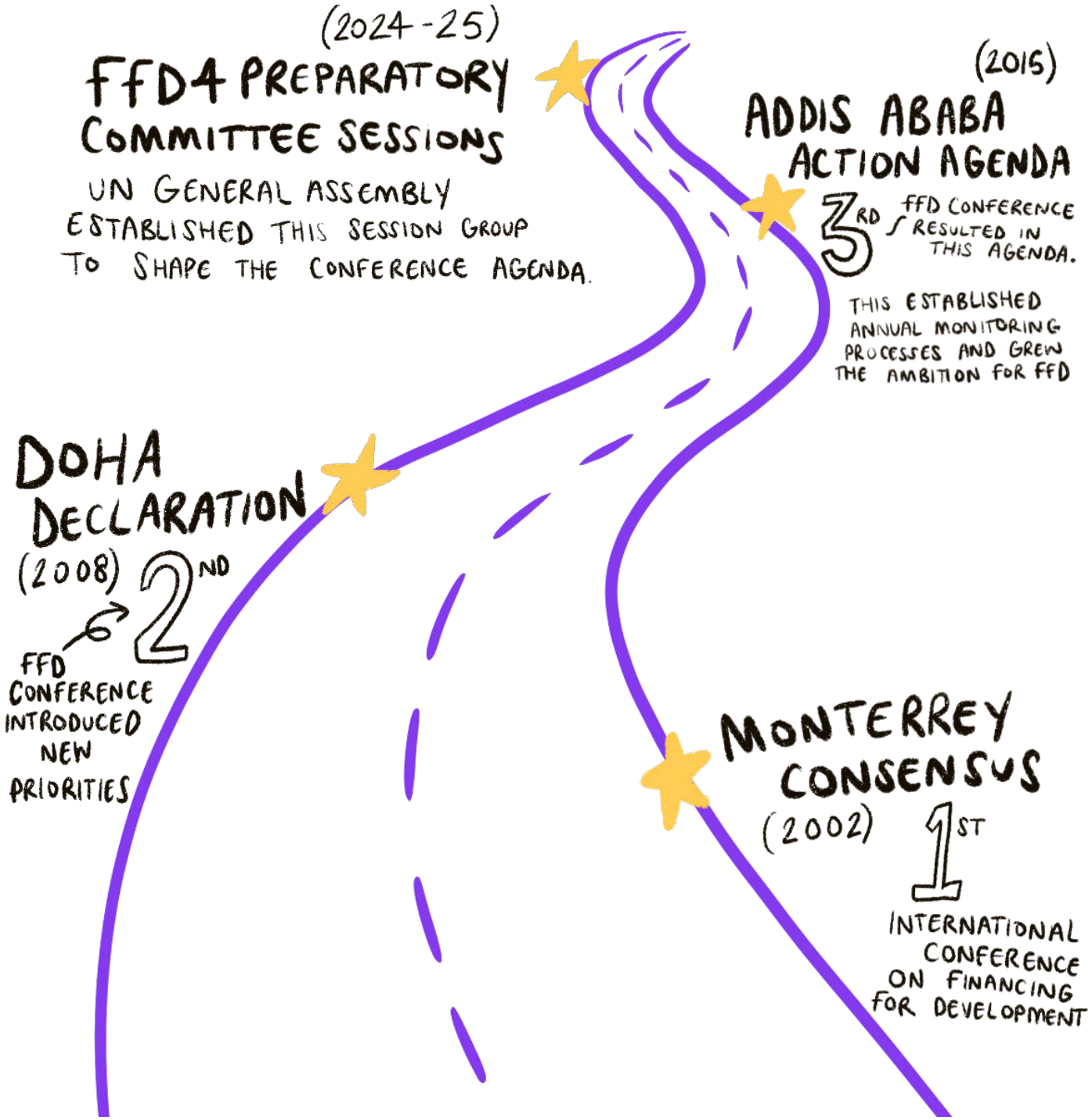


In this context, the urgency of FFD4 to deliver cooperative solutions is underscored by the global challenges that have been exacerbated by escalating political and social tensions, including the crisis of multilateralism, growing inequalities, and public distrust, among others, which threaten the success of international cooperation. In the meantime, the global economic situation is also hindering progress. Nations globally are facing a period of slow growth, struggling with shrinking fiscal space, and, in most cases, an unprepared workforce that has to confront the rapid advancement of new technological tools.

At the core of all these challenges are young people, who, as many studies affirm, are one of the most affected groups in areas such as incorporation into decent jobs, lack of political participation, or exclusion from formal financial services. All in all, the lack of youth inclusivity is directly obstructing the progress of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, FFD4 comes at a time that can help identify pathways to unlocking their potential and promote inclusive solutions that truly leave no one behind.

The Road To FFD4

FFD4 is being convened in response to urgent calls for reform of the international financial architecture, particularly from Global South countries seeking a more democratic and inclusive system. The conference aims to address the financing gaps that threaten the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in light of stalled progress on poverty, gender equality and debt sustainability. This is how FFD4 began...



"The world is not on track to achieve the SDGs—and that's not just because of a lack of funding, but because of a global financial system that entrenches inequality. From debt burdens that rob countries of public investment, to fossil fuel subsidies that undermine climate goals, to tax rules that let wealth flow out of the Global South—these aren't flaws, they're features of a system designed without democratic representation.

This broken architecture fuels injustice, deepens gender inequality, and sidelines the priorities of young people and marginalized communities. FFD4 is a critical opportunity to call for a just and feminist shift in how the world finances development—toward a system that puts people and planet before profit."

– Esme Abbott.

What Is The FFD4 Process?

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), as shared earlier, is a part of a bigger journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to create a strong, multilateral approach to financing opporations. The Outcome Document, which is a long document outlining what the signing Member States commit to achieve, is only formally negotiated behind closed doors.

However, as with many multilateral spaces, the activists on the ground are not far away! Youth, feminist, and Global South advocates have helped shape the agreed language throughout the Outcome Document through consistent pressure to their delegations, closed door meetings and public campaigns.

Civil society has made it clear that Member States can not make decisions about our futures without us in the room, and without our voices represented. The Outcome Document, adopted in June 2025, would not be what it is without the hours, days, weeks and months spent by community leaders advocating for their causes. Whether it is calling for gender-responsive budgeting, climate-conscious finance models or debt justice for all; those most impacted by the decisions made at FFD4 have continued to share their power, resources and time with anybody who needs it. We know that together, we are stronger.

Engagement Spaces

The Feminist Forum (27-28 June) is a feminist space for civil society to collectively call for gender-respsonive, feminist financing and analyse what we can do next in our intersectional, feminist advocacy around FFD4 and beyond.

The Civil Society Forum (28–29 June) is a vital space where movements align messaging, coordinate advocacy, and make joint demands.

During the main conference (30 June–3 July), Member States further agree and discuss the Outcome Document within plenary meetings and there are multi-stakeholder roundtables to engage in too (one for each theme of the Outcome Document!) Youth can engage through these roundtables, interactive dialogues, and side events—whether attending in person or following online. These are key moments to raise youth demands, question leaders, and influence the political tone of negotiations.

Who Is Involved In FFD4?

UN Member States
Setting the agenda, assessing progress, and agreeing on measures to enhance development financing.

United Nations (UN)
Facilitating negotiations, providing a platform for dialogue, and endorsing key outcomes and reports.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (e.g., World Bank)
Providing technical and financial support, and promoting policies for sustainable development financing.

OECD Members
Offering data, analysis, and policy recommendations to improve development financing strategies.

Development Finance Stakeholders (including civil society, private sector, and philanthropies etc.)
Contributing diverse perspectives, advocating for inclusive finance, and supporting implementation efforts.

Country Delegations (low and middle income countries)
Negotiating commitments, sharing experiences, and implementing agreed measures.

Interest Groups and Civil Society Organizations
Monitoring progress, advocating for accountability, and promoting inclusive development policies.

Private Sector Entities
Investing, innovating, and partnering to mobilise additional financial resources for development.

Youth are not considered to have an official role but many youth constituencies and organisations are self organising various advocacy campaigns aiming to bring youth voices to the relevant discussions.

Where Are The Young Leaders?

Multilateral processes such as FFD4 often remain inaccessible and exclusionary to young people due to structural barriers. These can include travel barriers and costs, complex and non-transparent accreditation procedures, and the use of technical, exclusionary language. Youth participation can often be turned symbolic in nature with minimal influence on core decision-making. While youth are frequently invited to participate in side events or given speaking opportunities, the core negotiations on; global financing, debt, employment, and climate typically occur behind closed doors, with little to no youth presence which dismisses the importance of young people's lived expertise.

It signals that young people's perspectives, despite representing 1.8 billion people globally, is seen as anecdotal rather than essential. This exclusion has consequences: 65% of young people globally feel policy decisions ignore them (UNDP 2022). Half of the world's population is under 30 and yet less than 3% of Member in Parliament globally represent this age group (IPU Parline 2024).

Prioritising genuine inclusion in FFD4 and similar multilateral spaces is therefore not optional, but critical. This exclusion compromises the quality and legitimacy of decision-making. Policies developed without meaningful youth engagement risk overlooking emerging challenges and lack intergenerational equity. Young people offer invaluable perspectives on issues such as digital transformation, economic insecurity, and the escalating climate crisis, areas where youth are both experts and the most affected. Prioritising youth inclusion is therefore not merely a matter of representation; it is a strategic need.

For FFD4, and the processes beyond, to be truly effective and future-oriented, young people must be engaged as equal partners in shaping the policies that will define our shared future. True inclusion transforms tokenism into partnership, ensuring policies are relevant, innovative, and leaves no one behind.

Youth Across Communities: Ignored

The Financing for Development Conference presents a critical opportunity for addressing the systematic exclusion of young people from economic opportunities and decision-making processes that directly impact their futures.

Young individuals including those from ethnic minorities, fishing communities, rural areas, conflict zones, and those living with disabilities face compounding barriers that extend beyond 'typical' youth challenges.

They encounter discriminatory practices, limited access to social services such as education, health care, digital financial services, exclusion from entrepreneurship programs, and absence from policy discussions despite bearing the heaviest burden of economic inequality. Their lived experiences of navigating multiple forms of marginalisation provides invaluable insights into the gaps and failures of current financing mechanisms.

When a young indigenous woman struggles to access microfinance due to both gender bias and ethnic discrimination, or when a young refugee cannot open a bank account despite having viable business ideas, they illuminate the precise points where financial systems perpetuate exclusion. These experiences make marginalised young people not just beneficiaries of development financing, but essential architects of solutions. Looking at it broadly, restricted funding means that there will be fewer people with disabilities accessing assistive devices like wheelchairs to help improve their mobility and learning. It means schools won't have the necessary resources to improve infrastructure and afford learning materials, it means that adolescent girls will drop out of school because they don't have access to sexual reproductive health services and support among others. All these require equitable funding.

Consequences of lack of inclusion are devastating and measurable. For example, across 11 Sub-Saharan African countries, children with disabilities complete primary school at 10-13 percentage points lower than peers due to underfunded infrastructure (UNESCO-IICBA 2023). When it comes to health, 2.5 billion globally need assistive devices, but 90% in low-income countries lack access (WHO 2022), impacting mobility and learning. Economic exclusion is a significant issue for youth, particularly those in conflict zones and rural areas, as highlighted by a 2023 UNDP report. Youth in conflict zones are three times less likely to access entrepreneurship programs, and discriminatory lending practices deny rural youth access to capital.

These experiences make marginalised youth essential architects of FFD4 solutions. The inclusion of these groups of youth in global decision-making processes is not merely about representation, it is about leveraging their unique understanding of intersectional barriers to create more effective, equitable financing mechanisms. Without their voices at the table, development financing will continue to reproduce the very systems of exclusion it claims to address, ultimately undermining the goal of 'leaving no one behind'.

"FFD4 provides an opportunity to address systemic inequalities and promote tax justice, which is essential for reducing inequality."

– Ashiraf Mugalula

How Will FFD4 Outcomes Impact Youth Priorities?

Youth priorities, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reflecting key concerns, focus on critical areas such as climate action, gender equality, economic opportunities (jobs), affordable housing, quality healthcare, quality education, and peace. These priorities are central to ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for young people.

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) plays a pivotal role in shaping these priorities by determining policy frameworks, funding allocations, and partnerships that directly impact the lives of youth.

Decisions made at FFD4 will have significant implications across these areas:

Climate Action: Funding for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts will be crucial in addressing the escalating climate crisis, enabling countries to implement sustainable practices, transition to renewable energy, and build resilience against climate-related disasters.

Gender Equality: Resource allocation for gender-responsive policies will support the empowerment of young women and girls, promoting equal access to education, economic opportunities and healthcare, and addressing systemic barriers that hinder their development.

Economic Opportunities: Investments in job creation and entrepreneurship will be vital for youth employment, fostering innovation, and supporting small businesses and startups, which can drive economic growth and reduce poverty.

Affordable Housing: Funding for sustainable housing initiatives will address the housing needs of young people, ensuring access to safe, secure, and affordable living spaces, and promoting urban planning and development that prioritises affordability and sustainability.

Quality Healthcare and Education: Allocation of resources for health and education systems will ensure access to essential services, enabling young people to lead healthy lives, acquire knowledge and skills, and reach their full potential, ultimately contributing to the development of their communities and societies.

Our Demands!

The Fourth Financing for Development Conference (FFD4) must not be another summit of empty promises. We demand radical financial justice—a complete overhaul of the systems that perpetuate poverty, inequality, and climate destruction. By prioritising youth needs, FFD4 can drive progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foster a more equitable future. Strong partnerships, adequate funding, and a commitment to inclusivity will be key to the success of these efforts.

Radical Financial Justice: A complete overhaul of systems perpetuating poverty, inequality, and climate destruction that disproportionately affect young people.

Systemic Change: A non-negotiable agenda for governments, institutions, and global leaders to address the root causes of these issues, prioritising youth needs and perspectives.

Climate Action: Increased funding for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, supporting sustainable practices and renewable energy transitions that ensure a livable future for young people.

Financial Reform: A reform of the global financial architecture to promote greater equity, transparency, and accountability, enabling young people access economic opportunities. This includes: A UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, A UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt, A UN Convention on International Development Cooperation to address unmet aid commitments and A UN-led process to transform IFIs and MDBs.

Debt Relief: Meaningful debt relief for countries struggling with unsustainable debt burdens, freeing up resources for development, poverty reduction, and youth-focused initiatives.

Increased Investment: Increased investment in essential public services, including education, healthcare, and social protection, that benefit young people and support their development.

Tax Justice: A fair and equitable tax system that promotes progressive taxation, reduces tax evasion, and increases domestic resource mobilisation to fund youth-focused programs and services.

Inclusive Decision-Making: Meaningful youth participation and inclusion in decision-making processes, ensuring that young people's voices are heard and their needs are addressed in all aspects of economic and social development.

Feminist Finance: A gender lens must be integrated into all dimensions of financing for development—through gender-sensitive budgets, gender-responsive policies, and equitable access to funding. At least 20% of bilateral assistance must go to gender equality-focused initiatives, with 10% directly to women's rights organisations. Strengthen accountability through integrating gender data collection into development funding, and using standardised gender equality markers (e.g., OECD DAC) to report funding.

By integrating youth into these demands, we emphasise the importance of prioritising young people's needs, perspectives, and participation in shaping a more just and equitable future.

"We need FFD4 to prioritise financing for initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, which is critical for achieving sustainable development."

– Ashiraf Mugalula

Activism Cheat Sheet

In order to advocate for our needs, we must be informed on the statistics and facts behind our lived realities to help illustrate why it is vital to prioritise your calls to action. Here you can find useful information on various thematic areas.

Economic Inequality and the Wealth Divide

- Since 2020, the world's five richest men have more than doubled their wealth—while five billion people became poorer. The richest 1% now own more than 95% of the world's population combined.
- Despite gains, 1.73 billion people live on less than $3.65/day. At current pace, 575 million will still live in extreme poverty by 2030.

Climate Finance

- Although wealthy countries committed to $300 billion annually by 2035 at COP29, experts say $1.3 trillion is needed each year to meet climate goals. Without it, vulnerable communities—least responsible for emissions—face the harshest impacts.

Youth and Opportunity

- A study from 2014 urged that with the right investment, Sub-Saharan Africa alone could see a $500 billion annual economic boost. At the time, 500+ million youth lived on less than $2/day, and over 175 million lacked basic literacy skills. Despite the gravity of these numbers, updated data on the vulnerabilities and potential of youth are hard to find.
- Economic inequality limits social mobility for youth, with the poorest rural women nearly six times more likely than the richest urban men to never attend school
- According to the World Bank, in the last decade the investment in education has increased, yet limited budgets and rising debt hinder government investment in education. Which means investment in education is often insufficient, and for young people this means, proportionally, the reduction in livelihood opportunities.

Gender

- Not one country is on track to achieve gender equality throughout the SDGs by 2030. In fact, nearly 40% of countries saw progress stagnate – or even decline – between 2019 and 2022.
- Investing in gender equality is critical to achieving the sustainable development goals as nearly three quarters (74%) of SDG targets are considered to be directly or significantly reliant on gender equality.
- Despite widespread recognition of their importance, women's rights organizations (WROs) received just $432 million in 2021–22—less than 0.2% of total ODA.

Activism Cheat Sheet

The Financing Gap - Debt and Aid

- The SDG financing gap now stands at an estimated $4 trillion annually, widened by conflict, disasters, and economic shocks. Wealthy countries have missed long-standing aid promises: in 2023, only five OECD-DAC donors met the 0.7% ODA target. Oxfam estimates 'rich countries have effectively built up a debt of $5.7 trillion in aid to developing countries' over the last 50 years.
- Meanwhile, debt repayments for 'developing countries' to divert critical resources from essential services like health and education, undermining progress on the SDGs. 'Developing countries' face borrowing costs twice as high as wealthier nations, and over 56 countries spend more than 10% of their budgets on debt interest—often more than on health or education.
- In 2023, low- and middle-income countries spent a record $8.8 trillion servicing debt. Existing relief efforts like the G20's Common Framework have failed to resolve the crisis.
- During COVID-19, 84% of IMF loans pushed austerity measures—cutting public services instead of investing in recovery.

Broken Financial Governance

- The IMF's voting system gives wealthy countries disproportionate power, as voting power is based on a country's financial contribution (quota), not on the UN principle of one country, one vote. The U.S. holds over 16% of votes—enough to veto decisions which require an 85% supermajority. While low- and middle-income countries represent 85% of the global population, remain underrepresented, they hold only a minority stake in decision-making
- The leadership of both the IMF and World Bank is reserved for citizens of the U.S. and Europe, respectively, further entrenching the lack of representation for the Global South.
- The share of ODA with gender-equality objectives has also declined for the first time in a decade, dropping from 45% in 2019–20 to 42% in 2021–22, with 20 of 32 donor countries reducing their commitments.
- Most WROs have never received unrestricted or multi-year funding, and in Asia, ODA to civil society organizations advancing gender equality has declined since 2014.
- Meanwhile, anti-gender movements received an estimated $6.2 billion from 2008–17—vastly outpacing support for feminist movements.

"Without adequate support, young people's potential is stifled and their initiatives are left to struggle or disappear."

– Ashiraf Mugalula

Real World Impacts Of Global Financial Decisions

In Uganda, the fate of youth-led initiatives hangs precariously in the balance of funding. Two examples starkly illustrate the devastating impact of lost funding.

Inspire A Dream Initiative: This youth-led group trained 300 girls annually in coding and entrepreneurship, empowering them with skills for a brighter future. According to a study by the Uganda NGO Forum (2020), initiatives like the Inspire A Dream Initiative have been shown to significantly improve girls' confidence and socio-economic prospects. However, when donor funding ended in 2022, they were forced to shut down. Many girls were left vulnerable, with some returning to early marriages or informal work, undoing the progress they had made (IDI, 2022). The sudden loss of support not only affected the girls but also the community, which had begun to benefit from the initiative's ripple effects.

Kampala Youth Rights Network: This organisation fought tirelessly for LGBTQ+ safety and support, providing a safe space for young people to access essential services, including mental health support and advocacy. A report by Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) (2020) highlighted the critical role organisations like Kampala Youth Rights Network play in promoting the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals in Uganda. But after grants were cut, they were unable to continue their vital work, leaving vulnerable youth without a lifeline. The organisation's closure not only left a gap in services but also created a sense of abandonment and isolation among the community they served (Amnesty International, 2022).

The collapse of these initiatives highlights the critical role funding plays in determining the success and sustainability of youth-led organisations in Uganda. The impact is felt deeply, with far-reaching consequences for the young people and communities they serve, including **reduced capacity for youth-led organisations to drive positive change** (UNDP, 2020).

These examples underscore the need for sustained funding and support for youth-led initiatives in Uganda, enabling them to continue their vital work and create lasting impacts in their communities. By investing in youth-led initiatives, governments, donors, and stakeholders can help unlock the potential of young people and promote sustainable development in Uganda. Finance decisions determine whether youth thrive or survive. FFD4 must direct funds to grassroots youth movements—not just big Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), because when young people lead, entire communities rise.

We use these examples to illustrate the lived realities of cuts and lack of investments, but this pattern of underfunding is not isolated and only further highlights the warning signs of a weakening democratic system world wide.

Why Should Young People Mobilise Around This?

Young people hold a unique power to mobilise around finance because they are on the front lines when it comes to being the most affected by financial decisions that shape communities, global economies, environments, and social systems. As future leaders of governments, companies and organisations the involvement of young people in financing also represents a high-return activity, as it can lead them to make informed decisions, prioritise innovation, and ensure that an intergenerational approach is incorporated for future generations.

As the largest generation in history, youth carry the future in their hands- yet their voices are often overlooked in critical discussions about budgets, investments, and development policies. With the unique understanding of the challenges that communities are facing on a daily basis and the innovative ideas needed to create fairer, more inclusive economies - youth not only deserve, but they are owed, to be placed into the heart of FFD4 process. Furthermore, young leaders are best placed to challenge the status quo, advocate for transparent and equitable financial systems, and push for sustainable investments that prioritise people over profits. By mobilising now, youth can influence policies that will impact not only today's generation but also generations to come, ensuring that young people's futures are built on justice, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

"Youth Voice is the most powerful mechanism we have in this world – let's use it wisely."

- Christal Kihm

Youth Centred Events Within FFD4

In this list you will be able to find some youth centered side events happening at FFD4. These kind of events are built and proposed by civil society organisations in alliance with international cooperation, UN partners and other stakeholders. **Click here for the full list.**

On the frontlines of change: What Youth-Led Organizations need for Advancing Sustainable, Just and Equitable Societies
Wednesday 2 July 2025 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm Side Event 19

Financing for Gender Equality: upscaling commitments to foster inclusive economic prosperity and sustainable development for all women and girls
Wednesday 2 July 2025 10:30 am -12:00 pm Side Event 2

Financing Climate and Nature for Prosperity: Aligning NDCs, Biodiversity, and Development Agendas
Monday 30 June 2025 4:30 pm-6:00 pm Side Event 5

Financing for Development and gender equality: a feminist agenda for action for Sevilla and beyond
Tuesday 1 July 2025 8:30 am to 10:00 am Side Event 10

Youth as Architects of Equitable Financing: Local Innovations, Global Impact
Tuesday 1 July 2025 8:30 am to 10:00 am Side Event 7

Civil Society Forum: The Forum
Date: June 28-29, 2025

Rights-Based Development Finance: A post-Seville Agenda
Monday 30 June, 12:30pm to 2pm, Room Side Event 21.

Future Africa- Europe Intergenerational Dialogue: Young Finance Experts Reinventing Africa-Europe Cooperation:
Monday 30 June, 4:30pm to 6pm, Room Side Event 24

Youth at the Forefront of FfD4: Financing Climate Action and Reforming Global Financial Architecture - Intergenerational Collaboration for a Sustainable Future.
Thursday 3 July, 10:30am to 12pm, Side Event Room 16

Youth 360 - Hackathon on Innovative Financing for Sustainable Development
Thursday 3 July, 12:30pm to 2pm, Auditorium 3

Engagements Outside Of Traditional FFD4 Spaces

While FFD4 in Seville marks a significant milestone in global discussions around financing for sustainable development, it also serves as a catalyst for ongoing youth engagement and advocacy. As youth constituencies continue to build on the outcomes of FFD4, several virtual engagement spaces, online events, and youth-led platforms offer opportunities for sustained collaboration and action.

Several youth-led and youth-serving networks provide ongoing spaces for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy related to financing for development and broader global justice agendas. These include:

Walking the Talk Global Youth Network - An international hub for young activists advocating for inclusive foreign policies that champion gender equality and reflect the voices of women and LGBTIQ+ people from the Global Majority. This includes funding for progressive, intersectional feminist organisations in the Global Majority.

Youth Moving Beyond GDP - The Youth Moving Beyond GDP initiative, in partnership with Rethinking Economics International and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), aims to break the "intergenerational glass ceiling" in economic discourse by fostering inclusive and transformative engagement of young people and promoting the needs and interests of future generations. It is possible to apply online to join this global network of young people and have your say on sustainable development and economic policymaking.

United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY) - UNMGCY hosts multiple thematic clusters, including Financing for Development, which enables youth to directly engage in UN processes and consultations.

South Asia Solidarity Group - An anti-imperialist, anti-racist group founded in the UK that supports and raises awareness of South Asians' fights for democracy and justice. In line with the concepts of FFD4, SASG aggressively opposes war, imperialism, gender and caste-based oppression, and exploitation by promoting fair funding and prioritising marginalised voices.

Africa Youth Movement Group - A pan-African youth-led organization empowering young people to lead transformative development and policy advocacy across Africa. AYM promotes inclusive leadership, grassroots mobilization, and continental youth solidarity to influence global and regional agendas, especially around financing for sustainable development and equitable resource distribution, key themes at FFD4.

Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development - An annual regional platform empowering young people across Asia-Pacific to engage in sustainable development policy and advocacy. The forum gathers youth to discuss the SDGs, build capacity, and develop a Youth Call to Action presented to regional and global bodies. It centers youth voices in advancing inclusive, evidence-based solutions to the 2030 Agenda.

These platforms represent critical avenues for sustained involvement and cross-movement solidarity. They also offer opportunities for intergenerational learning, engagement with policymakers, and participation in regional and global advocacy campaigns.

Join community-led discussions on WhatsApp, participate in Instagram Lives or share your FFD4 reflections using #Youth4FFD !

Top Campaigning Tips!

Whether you're just starting your advocacy journey or you want to develop new skills to contribute to global solutions, here's a list of tips to help you along your way!

Define Your Goals:
Before you start, it is essential to understand your purpose, what you want to achieve, and how you can accomplish it. Breaking down your goals into specific milestones can help you identify key tasks and kick off your advocacy journey more effectively.

Prioritise Quality Over Quantity:
It is valid to want to do as much as possible, but keep in mind that prioritising quality is better in the long run and to show what you're capable of. This also allows you to manage your time, energy, and resources more effectively.

Stay Informed:
Try to learn as much as possible about the topics you're interested in. Following the work of different organisations and leaders will allow you to gain valuable insights and perspectives and develop your expertise.

Ask Questions:
Go beyond the surface-level information that is presented at first glance. Asking questions can allow you to relate the information to real-life examples, seek detailed knowledge, and identify any gaps and opportunities.

Top Campaigning Tips!

Connect, Connect, Connect:
Building a network is probably the most important aspect for an advocate. Try to communicate with as many people as possible, either in person or through virtual tools like social media, to build a strong network of support.

Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone:
Going out of your usual routine means you're developing new skills and living new experiences. Although it may be uncomfortable at first, keep in mind that everything starts with a first step in the right direction.

Protect Your Mental Peace:
Advocating for social issues can be challenging, especially as you encounter the many setbacks of the system. But don't forget that there's so much that you can do as an individual, and taking care of your mental health will allow you to continue fighting for your purpose.

Celebrate the Wins:
Celebrate every milestone you achieve to reflect on everything you've accomplished. Documenting your wins will help you visualize your progress and stay motivated for what's to come.

What Happens After FFD4?

FFD4 doesn't mark the end of advocacy, as there are plenty of more opportunities to raise our demands for a sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful future. Here are other spaces where we can continue to advocate for our future:

SDG Review Forums - July 2025
The world promised to end poverty and protect the planet by 2030 - but these promises need funding. FFD4 is where countries decide how to raise and distribute money for schools, hospitals, green jobs, and more. Its outcomes will directly affect whether the SDG Review Forums can move from reporting gaps to driving action. With only 5 years to go, FFD4 is a make-or-break moment to put real money behind real change.

UN General Assembly - September 2025
Every year, world leaders gather at the UN. What's decided at FFD4, on fairer tax rules, debt relief, and aid commitments will shape global priorities at the General Assembly. If FFD4 builds momentum for systemic reform, these ideas can gain wider political traction, leading to stronger support for youth demands like universal healthcare, education, and gender equality.

COP30 – Brazil, November 2025
What FFD4 decides about money matters big time for climate action. If leaders agree to give more funding (not loans!) to countries facing climate disasters, it can fund renewable energy, disaster recovery, and support frontline communities. These decisions will directly influence climate justice talks at COP30 in Brazil, especially around the Loss & Damage Fund, just transitions, and expanding the Green Climate Fund. FFD4 will also impact the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and other sustainability goals that need serious financing to succeed. This is where the push begins for fair finance to fight the climate crisis.

Second Global Summit of Social Development - November 2025
FfD4 is the starting point of global summits to review the way investment is made in development. Is important for young people to keep track of this international event in order to gain inputs for UNGA and CSW2026

Why Does Continuous Advocacy Matter Beyond FFD4?

Continuing advocacy after FFD4 is crucial to ensure that young people worldwide truly benefit from the commitments made and the decisions taken during the conference. While FFD4 sets important global targets and frameworks, real change depends on sustained pressure and ongoing engagement. Outcomes to multilateral pledges consistently highlight the “promise-delivery gap”, where pledges often remain unfulfilled due to missing monitoring frameworks and shifting political priorities. Without continued advocacy, there is a risk that policies may be delayed, watered down, or not fully implemented, leaving young people- especially those in marginalised communities- without the support they need for meaningful economic participation and development.

The transition from declaration to action is where advocacy proves indispensable. Young advocates play a vital role in ensuring governments and institutions embed FFD4’s principles into national budgets and local programs. Persistent advocacy helps keep governments, institutions, and private actors accountable, ensuring they follow through on their promises and prioritise youth interests. This can involve activities like campaigning for policy changes, monitoring the use of financial resources, and raising awareness about the importance of inclusive financing. By staying engaged, young people can influence the allocation of resources, push for greater transparency, and advocate for policies that promote justice, equality, and sustainable growth. Continued advocacy empowers youth to shape a future where their perspectives and needs are met, long after FFD4 ends.

"Success happens when young people and governments work together to build accountability mechanisms that ensure we are creating a fair, inclusive and sustainable future. A future where everyone has the opportunity to succeed."

– Christal Kihm

When governments are accountable, they are more transparent about how they spend resources and make decisions, ensuring that aid and investments reach marginalised groups, youth, women, and vulnerable communities.

Youth can hold governments accountable in many ways. For example, using social media to demand action, track government promises and progress via official reports, building local networks and working with organisations and/or professionals can amplify their voice, and participate in community discussions or public hearings. Additionally, holding leaders accountable isn't just about tracking the progress on paper; it's also about giving feedback on policies, asking questions in forums, and demanding regular updates on progress.

This means policies move from promises to real actions—improving access to quality education, healthcare, social protections, and economic opportunities for all young people. When young people succeed in holding governments accountable, we see better use of resources, less corruption, and increased trust in leaders. This leads to stronger policies that promote equality, economic justice, and sustainable development—creating a future where youth can thrive. Accountability ensures promises made are promises kept, turning goals into real progress. As youth, your voice and actions are powerful tools to create lasting change and build a future where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

As young leaders, your voice, passion, and determination are powerful tools for change. Together, we can hold governments accountable, demand fair and inclusive finance, and build a world where everyone has equal opportunities to thrive. Our hope is to create a future rooted in justice, sustainability, and collective prosperity- one where youth are at the center of decision-making.

Youth energy and ideas are the spark that can ignite lasting change so let's unitedly push for a better world where no one is left behind.

With Thanks...

‘Financing Our Future: The FFD4 Youth Toolkit’ would not have happened without the incredible amounts of time, wisdom and passion of our co-authors:

Ashiraf Mugalula - Uganda,
Christal Kihm - France, based in the United Kingdom,
Esme Abbott - United Kingdom,
Lynda Eunice Nakaibale- Uganda,
Ljubica Fuentes - Ecuador,
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Olga Devic - Serbia,
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Sophia Raineri - United Kingdom,
Yande Banda - Zambia
Yashiba Sanil - India, based in Cardiff, Wales.

Their endless determination to create a better world for all is commendable. Every word within this Toolkit is crafted by these amazing activists, alongside their full and complex lives. Each page is crafted with an undeniable hope for the future and we know that with the force of young leaders across the world uniting for a better tomorrow; anything is possible.

"Together we can turn hope into action, and action into real change!"

- Christal Kihm

Decolonial Glossary

Bilateral and multilateral grants - Financial aid given by one country (bilateral) or multiple countries/organisations (multilateral)that doesn't need to be repaid. These grants can support development but must respect local priorities and avoid reinforcing donor-driven agendas.

Capacity building - Supporting communities, countries, civil society and citizens to develop skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively manage their development and address challenges.

Debt sustainability or sovereignty - Public debt is a significant tool for governments to finance investments in development. Debt sustainability refers to governments' ability to continue servicing their debt (i.e. not requiring significant debt relief or accumulating arrears). For many countries in the Majority World, debt payments far outweigh what they can invest in public services. Dominant narratives generally present it as a technical, financial or corruption issue. This erases the role of colonialism in creating the indebtedness of these countries. It also naturalises that debt is still used by Global North governments and institutions to extract wealth and exert control over countries in the Majority World today.

Domestic public resources - Money raised within a country (mainly through taxes and fees) to fund national development and services. Strengthening domestic resource mobilisation can reduce dependency on external aid and ensure more sovereign financial planning. However, colonialism has had a profound and long-lasting impact on the domestic public resources of countries formerly colonised. Its impact continues to shape these countries' trade systems, fiscal capacity, governance structures, and public investment
strategies.

Epistemic justice - The recognition that the legitimacy of knowledge production and decision-making is closely linked to Western hegemony at the expense of knowledge from the Majority World. Epistemic justice is the right of all people to be heard, believed, and respected in knowledge production and decision-making. It challenges the dominance of Western economic models in shaping global finance policy.

Decolonial Glossary

Feminist Finance - Financial approaches that recognize, reduce and redistribute economic inequalities rooted in gender advocating for economic policies and practices that empower women, girls and marginalised groups.

Financing for Development - A comprehensive approach to securing financial resources, fostering economic growth, and addressing global inequalities to achieve sustainable development, as outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Fiscal systems - The ways in which governments collect revenue (taxes) and spend money to fund public services and development. These systems are often shaped by policies imposed by international organisations such as the IMF onto countries from the Majority World in exchange for loans.

Global South and North - Terms used to describe regions; the Global South generally includes countries in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia, with low or middle income, while the Global North refers to higher-income countries in North America and Europe.

IMF - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 member countries that works to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) - A strategic plan that helps countries align their financial policies and resources to achieve sustainable development priorities.

Just Economies - Economic systems that reject exploitative systems by prioritising fairness, equity, and sustainability, ensuring access to opportunities and resources for all.

Majority world - A term that refers to the regions of the world where most of the global population lives, often overlapping with the Global South. It shifts the focus from deficit-based terms like “developing countries” and highlights the global majority’s experience and voice.

Decolonial Glossary

Multilateralism - The multilateral system serves as a platform for international dialogue, cooperation, and collective action. It is critical for addressing global issues such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, and human rights.

Official Development Assistance, (ODA) - ODA is government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. ODA has been the main source of development aid since it was adopted by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as the "gold standard" of foreign aid in 1969.

Public debt - The total amount of money a country's government owes to creditors (various global funds, other countries, international banks etc.), which must be repaid over time with interest. Money borrowed by a government, often from foreign lenders, to fund national expenses. While debt can support development, excessive or unjust debt burdens can limit sovereignty and divert funds from services like health or education.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - A set of 17 global goals adopted by the UN to end poverty, protect the environment, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

Tax Justice - Fair and equitable tax systems that ensure everyone pays their fair share, especially aiming to prevent tax avoidance and evasion by corporations and the wealthy.

The care economy - paid and unpaid labour that involves caregiving activities such as cooking, cleaning, and assisting individuals—particularly society's most vulnerable, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. This work is disproportionately performed by women and minority groups, especially in the Global South. Feminist scholars and activists have emphasized how the care economy is systematically undervalued, despite being essential to the functioning of all other sectors of the global economy.

Watch our short explainer videos for more information!

Why Should Young People Be Involved in FFD4?

What is FFD4?

Resources

Throughout this Toolkit we have mentioned various statistics, facts and learning that we would love for you to delve deeper in to!

Wider Reading.

SDGs far from being achieved.
Lack of Youth Inclusivity obstructing progress on Agenda 2030.
Impacts of Youth Participation.
UN World Youth Report.
Inclusive Education Report.
Global Report on Assistitive Technology.
Inclusive Youth Entreprenuership Report.
Rich Countries have efffectively built up a debt $5.7 trillion in aid in developing countries.
84% of IMF Loans pushed austerity measures.
Since 2020, five of the worlds richest men have more than doubled their wealth.
The richest 1% now own more than 95% of the worlds population combined.
1.73 Billion people live on less than $3.65/day.
575 million people will still live in extreme poverty by 2030.
With the right investment, Sub-Saharan Africe could see a boost in an annual $500 million
500 + Million youth lived on less than $2/day.
175 Million young people lacked basic literary skills.
The poorest rural women nearly six times more likely than the richest urban men to never attend school.
Not one country is on track to achieve gender equality throughout the SDGs by 2030.
(74%) of SDG targets are considered to be directly or significantly reliant on gender equality.
Women's Rights Organizations received in 2021–22—less than 0.2% of total ODA.
The share of ODA for Gender Equality Objectives has declined for the first time in a decade.
Most WROs have never received unrestricted or multi-year funding.
In Asia, ODA to civil society organizations advancing gender equality has declined since 2014.
Anti-gender movements received an estimated $6.2 billion from 2008–17.

Movements.

Youth Moving Beyond GDP.
United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY).
South Asia Solidarity Group.
Africa Youth Movement Group.
Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

Join Walking the Talk's UK Campaign Group: Fund Feminist Futures!

RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT

Walking the Talk

Finding the Fourth Financing for Development Conference (FFD4) too complicated to follow, or maybe you have never heard of it and want to learn more?

Check out 'Financing Our Future: The Youth FFD4 Toolkit' to understand why it should matter to you and learn directly from young leaders on what they want to see from FFD4 and how YOU can help to make it happen.

This toolkit is brought to you by Walking the Talk, led by Restless Development.