



Youth Programming TOOLKIT

Contents

Glossary	3
Section 1: Introduction to the toolkit	4
Core principles of youth programming	5
What is youth participation?	7
Youth safety in LRPs: A three-step approach	13
Are you ready to start engaging youth in your LRP?	17
Youth Self-Assessment: How youth-friendly is your LRP?	19
Section 2: Youth in LRP appraisals	26
Let's get ethical! How to consult with young people	26
Young researchers	30
Involving youth as researchers	33
Selecting, training and supporting young researchers	36
How to do a Youth Rights Analysis and which Reflection-Action tools to use	39
Policy analysis: A youth perspective	41
Partnership selection and youth engagement	44
Section 3: Strategic planning	45
Involving youth in LRP strategic planning	45
Planning tools for use with youth	47
Stakeholders for youth	51
Linking Activista with LRP programming	54
Section 4: Youth in implementation	56
Involving youth in programme implementation... An overview	56
Youth in project management	60
Mobilising youth	63
Youth groups...do we set one up or not?	68
Top tips for retention of youth in LRP programming	72
Youth engagement in child sponsorship	74
Integrating youth into different Strategic Objectives	77
Section 5: Youth in review & reflection	78
Involving youth in review and reflection processes - an introduction	78
Examples of youth involvement in monitoring and evaluation	80
Involving youth in review and reflection...A step by step guide	82
Youth-friendly Reflection-Action tools for measuring change	87

Glossary

Activista = ActionAid’s network of young activists around the world

Age-out = refers to person(s) who have graduated a stage of life (see “Life cycle approach” in the [Youth Engagement Plan](#)) – or structured experience for a designated age-group. For brevity we may refer, for example, to “age-out sponsored children” – while mindful that interventions and past experiences never fully define us as people (see “Youth”) – as agents of individual/collective change

Appraisal = an exercise undertaken to explore and understand the context, feasibility and value of a new long-term partnership or programme based on financial, technical and political factors

Baselines = the starting point against which we can measure change in people’s lives. We collect baseline data and information about indicators we want to monitor over time

Campaigning = harnessing people’s power through organisation, mobilisation and communication around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change. ActionAid’s understanding of campaigning overlaps its understanding of “solidarity” (the process of uniting allies in a politically supportive relationship that may cross geographies or “areas” of struggle); and the process through which we enable people living in poverty to become rights activists who are critical and aware of power relations (“empowerment”)

Critical Pathway = a visual representation of how we believe we will achieve impact, linking actions to outcomes and impact. A tool to help us design strong human rights-based approach to programmes

Evaluation = taking a more critical and in-depth look at a programme or piece of work to assess whether it is meeting its objectives, and understand what outcome and impact (positive or negative, expected or unexpected) the programme is having

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) = our HRBA centres on supporting people living in poverty to become conscious of their rights, to organise themselves to claim their rights, and to hold duty bearers to account

Local Rights Programmes (LRPs) = our long-term programmes in particular communities

Youth participation = is essentially the same as youth engagement – the ‘active, informed and voluntary’ involvement of young people in their communities and in all decision-making that impacts them locally, nationally and internationally. It means that young people lead organising, programmes and work that impact them, as opposed to others working on behalf of them. ActionAid subscribes to the UNICEF position that youth participation is a basic right

Youth engagement = civic engagement is about young people’s individual and collective actions to identify and address issues of public concern; and to get involved in non-partisan decision-making. Political engagement is about discussion and action that is aware and explicit about the power dimension – be that in voting or other party political activity, lobbying, or demonstrations against abuses.

Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) = the process of engaging communities and others identifying, understanding and analysing threats, hazards and vulnerabilities; one key element of a Reflection-Action process

Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP) = PRRPs describe ActionAid’s approach to ongoing participatory monitoring, and periodic moments of in-depth review and reflection with key stakeholders

Reflection-Action = a new approach to change that integrates Reflect, PVA, STAR and other participatory methods into a single coherent rights-based process for conscientisation and empowerment

Youth = “Youth” is a short word for a heterogeneous (diverse) category. This is why at ActionAid we refer to “the many faces of youth”. Our definition of youth focuses first on the socio-political identity of young people who are seeking the rights and independence that adulthood should bring. It is by its very nature therefore contested, and hence age definitions vary across the world. We use 15-30 as a guide only



Section 1: Getting started

Introduction to the toolkit

This Youth Programming Toolkit will aim to support and strengthen youth engagement in appraisal, strategy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local rights programmes, in accordance with ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach and best practice in relation to youth programming. This will ultimately contribute to the delivery of Key Change Promise 6 and deepen our accountability to young people in the areas where we work. It will also uphold principle 5 of ActionAid's HRBA approach, where we state that people living in poverty, including youth, should 'take part in local rights programme appraisal, planning, implementation, monitoring and review'¹.

Additionally, strengthening the quality of youth engagement in LRPs will contribute to the following actions in the critical pathway for KCP6:

- **Engage youth actively through youth-appropriate methodologies in the design of ActionAid rights programmes at all levels.**
- **Promote youth participation in all our programmes around resilient livelihoods, democratic governance, education and women's rights.**

It will support the achievement of the following intermediate outcomes in the critical path:

- **ActionAid rights programmes have integrated youth concerns in respect of all change promises and have actively engaged/mobilised young people**
 - **Youth in LRPs have improved livelihoods and prospects**
- **Young people have a critical analysis and increased awareness of injustice and poverty²**

¹. [People's Action in Practice](#), p39
². [People's Action in Practice](#), p155

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit will be particularly useful for KCP 6 National Youth Focal Points, including LRP managers, programme staff, child sponsorship staff, Activista network members and, importantly, local partners¹ working with ActionAid at LRP levels. Local partners can include, but are not limited to, youth-focused organisations or youth networks. It will also provide useful guidance for programme staff working on other Key Change Promise areas - because KCP 6 is a mainstreaming promise, it is an expression of other programme units working closely together.

Although this toolkit has been designed with ActionAid local rights programmes in mind, many of the approaches outlined in this resource can be applied to national rights programmes, too.

1. Over 75% of our LRPs are managed through partnerships with community-based organisations and local partners. 25% are managed by ActionAid itself – this is usually in particularly remote areas where there is a lack of local partners, or in areas where it is politically expedient for ActionAid to lead implementation efforts

Core principles of youth programming

The approaches outlined in this toolkit are fully consistent with ActionAid's eight Human Rights Based Approach principles outlined in People's Action in Practice. Below, we outline what these principles mean for youth programming in ActionAid:

1. We put rights holders first and ensure participation of rights holders

- We aim to involve young men and women at every stage of the LRP programme cycle;
- We involve young men and women across Key Change Promise areas and Multi-Country Campaigns;
- We ensure young people's participation in LRP programming does not put them at unnecessary risk, and that the nature of their engagement does not interfere with their other commitments (e.g. school, work);
- We aim to analyse the rights violations faced by youth, as well as their assets, capabilities and visions in all LRP appraisals
- We support working in partnership with youth, as well as youth-owned and youth-led processes.



Core principles of youth programming

2. We analyse and confront unequal power

- We aim to transform unequal power relationships from household to international levels, taking into account power differences between generations, as well as gender norms;
- We support adults to make space for young people to lead and drive change through mentoring, facilitation and coaching;
- We support young people themselves to understand different forms of power and to challenge unequal power relations.

3. We work in partnership with youth

- We support our partners to meaningfully engage young people in their work, and will learn from approaches used by our partners;
- We value youth-adult partnerships – each bringing different perspectives to fighting poverty;
- We have the flexibility to work with alternative youth partnerships, such as social movements and more adhoc forms of organisation;
- We believe that youth themselves can foster new generations of young leaders – e.g. through partnerships and mentoring with children, including sponsored children.

4. We are accountable and transparent

- We involve young people in reviewing and reflecting on our LRP work, and will analyse the impact of all of our work on young people;
- We provide opportunities for young people to be involved in decision-making related to our programming at LRP levels;
- We seek to ensure that our methods of communication at the LRP level are youth-friendly;
- We will ensure that strategic documents, workplans and indicators are reflecting results in favour of youth rights.

5. We advance women's rights

- We will support young women to participate and lead LRP programming;
- We ensure that our youth rights analysis always considers gender dimensions.

6. We critically reflect and learn to improve our work for change

- We promote participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques that are inclusive of young people, and that build their critical consciousness;
- We involve young people in the analysis, documentation and dissemination of our findings;
- We intend to document and share good practices on engaging with youth, and learn across our local rights programmes and ActionAid countries.

7. We ensure links across all levels – local, national, regional and international

- We will link up young people in LRPs to movements, information, and strategies for change on other levels; ensuring young people's voices are amplified from local to national and international levels;
- We will ensure that youth representatives at national and international events represent diverse, localised constituencies;
- We connect programming work on different development issues with campaigning led by Activista.

8. We are innovative, solutions-oriented and promote credible, sustainable alternatives

- We encourage innovation and experimentation by young people, and are not afraid to learn from our mistakes;
- We will connect our work on alternatives and youth with different thematic areas, such as women's rights and livelihoods;
- We encourage young people to dream and vision for the future.



Further reading...

For more information on how ActionAid applies HRBA principles to its work with youth, see [Youth Engagement Plan](#), page 20.

What is youth participation?

Meaningful youth participation guides the approaches laid out in this toolkit. Youth participation is about far more than just gathering the views of young people, or inviting a young person to an ActionAid meeting, or having a discussion with a group of young people to find out what they think about a certain issue. Instead:

Youth participation is the ‘active, informed and voluntary’ involvement of young people in their communities and in all decision-making that impacts them locally, nationally and internationally. It means that young people are actively involved in, or are leading programmes and work that impact them, as opposed to others working on behalf of them. ActionAid subscribes to the position that youth participation is a right.

Young people’s rights to participate

Young people’s right to participate is enshrined in human rights instruments. For example, Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, stipulates that all young people up to the age of 18 have the right to participate in any matter concerning them and to have their opinions taken into account. Article 11 of the African Youth Charter says that young people have right to participate in ‘all spheres of society’.

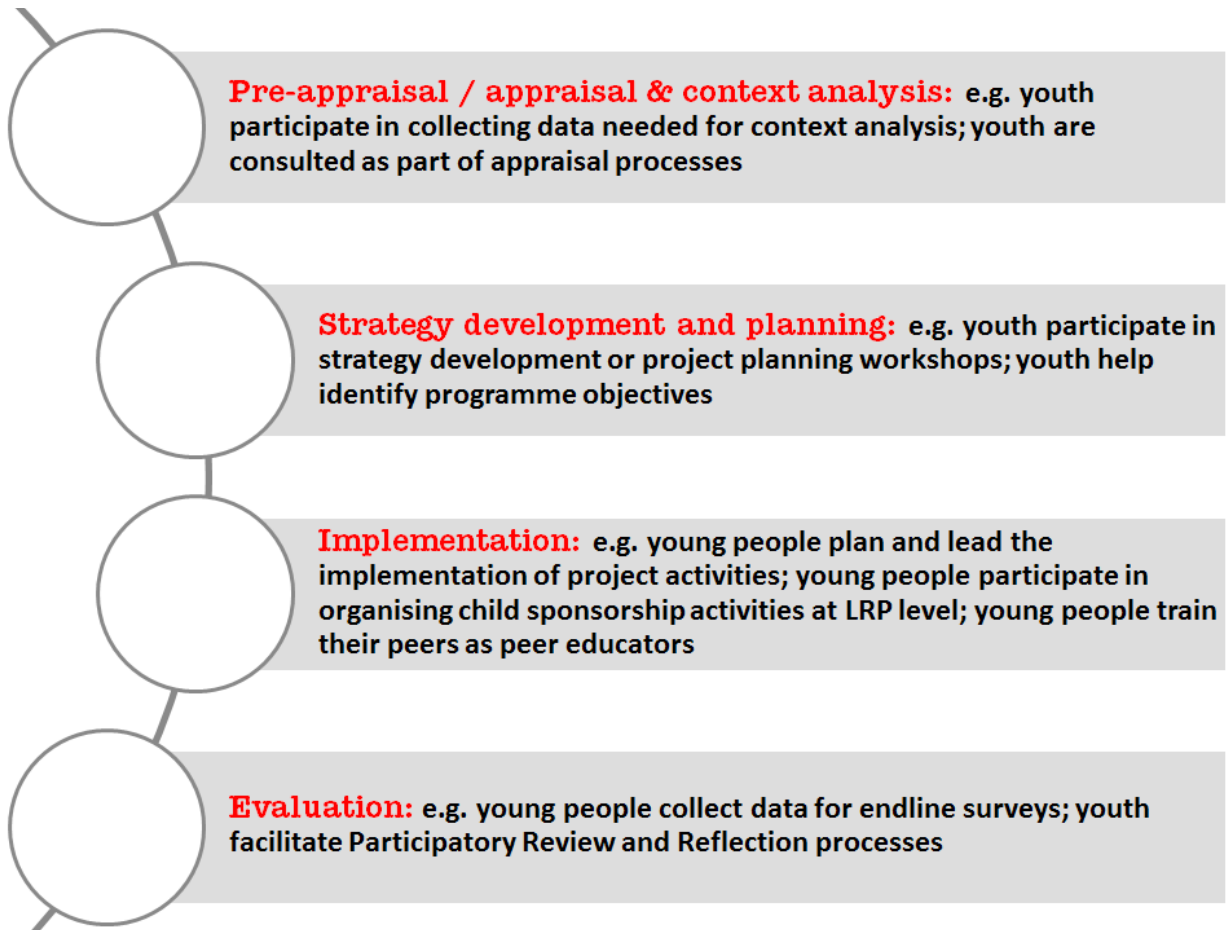
In LRPs, ActionAid and its partners should be promoting youth participation at all stages of the programme cycle. This is in line with the minimum standards for principle 1 of ActionAid’s Human Rights Based Approach:

Principle 1: Putting the active agency of people living in poverty first – and building an awareness of their rights.

Minimum standard: People living in poverty have been actively involved in the drawing up of all our LRPs. Our national (and international) programmes are based on analysis and learning done with people living in poverty.



Examples of youth participation at each stage of the programme cycle:



“I’m confused about youth participation Vs youth engagement!”

ActionAid basically uses the terms youth participation and youth engagement interchangeably. However, ActionAid also thinks of youth engagement in the following ways: civic engagement is about young people’s individual and collective actions to identify and address issues of public concern; and to get involved in non-partisan decision-making. Political engagement is about discussion and action that is aware and explicit about the power dimension – be that in voting or other party political activity, lobbying, or demonstrations against abuses. For more information on youth engagement, refer to the [Youth Engagement Plan](#).



What are the benefits of youth participation?

Benefits to ActionAid

- More targeted and relevant programmes at LRP levels that have integrated youth concerns in respect of all Key Change Promises, and that have actively engaged young people
- It can promote sustainability of programmes, as young people have greater ownership of the work and have developed the skills needed to take them forward into the future
- Delivering on our commitments to mainstream our Human Rights Based Approach principles into our work at all levels, as well as our commitments towards achieving Key Change Promise 6
- ActionAid is committed to supporting people living in poverty to access their rights. Young people – especially young women - are often some of the most economically and socially marginalised groups in the areas where we work
- A clearer and more detailed analysis of the context
- Fresh ideas, creative solutions and support for generating ALTERNATIVES¹
- Stronger, evidence-based advocacy
- More accountable and improved structures, policies and decision-making processes
- It acknowledges a shift in the view of youth as 'beneficiaries' of adult interventions, towards respect for them as rights holders and 'drivers of change'

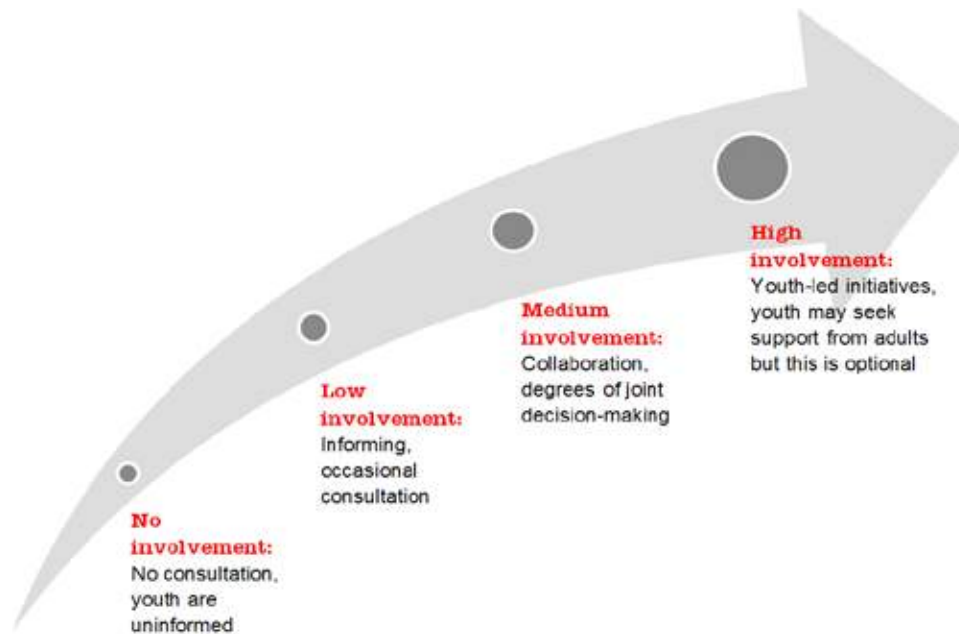
Benefits for youth

- Young people develop stronger communication and critical thinking skills, as well as gaining confidence
- Youth have an increased awareness of injustice and poverty
- Youth participation leads to the fulfilment of other rights
- Young people are able to be active and responsible citizens
- Youth are empowered to hold duty bearers to account
- Young people begin to drive change

1. As outlined in [People's Action in Practice 2.0](#): 'alternatives' are ideas which stretch the scope of our existing interventions or frameworks – promising something different for the future, something positive, something that changes systems.



What does youth participation look like?



Low level participation

- Young people are passive
- Young people are invited to an activity that has been designed by adults
- Young people are only informed and consulted
- Young people are only involved irregularly or on a one-off basis
- Adults have most of the power

Examples

- Consultations/focus group discussions
- Attending campaign/lobbying/advocacy events designed by adults
- Attending workshops/training designed by adults

Medium to high level participation

- Youth collaborate with adults
- Decision-making is shared
- Adults and youth respect each other as equal stakeholders
- Youth are involved in designing LRP programmes, and facilitating or running LRP activities
- Youth participation leads to changes at LRP level
- Youths gain more skills
- Youth participation is regular and not a one-off event
- Young people take the lead and only ask for support from adults where necessary
- Adults do not interfere with youth-led processes

Examples

- Youth training their peers or other community stakeholders
- Youth empowering children through child sensitive programming and child sponsorship
- Youth facilitating Reflection-Action groups
- Youth leading lobbying and advocacy work with support from adults
- Youth co-planning work with LRP staff and local partners
- Youth developing IEC materials for their peers
- Youth planning and organising events/conferences/workshops

This toolkit will make reference to the following approaches for working with youth, and will show you how you can promote young people as **PARTNERS** and as **LEADERS**.



This toolkit will not promote a ‘Youth as BENEFICIARIES’ approach. Instead, it will support you to work with youth as **PARTNERS** and as **LEADERS**¹.

These approaches are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes, you may choose to use a combination of approaches in your programming

1. The ‘working with youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders’ approach is taken from ‘[Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers](#)’, DFID-Youth CSO Working Group, 2010

work, or use one approach as a springboard to another. For example, you may choose to collaborate with youth to build their leadership skills, in this way, you are setting the foundation stones for working with youth as leaders.

Various factors can influence the approach we choose – for example, social and cultural attitudes, gender discrimination and local concepts of childhood and youth.

Examples of youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders:

Working for youth as **beneficiaries**

- Young people are target groups in your LRP and are adequately informed
- Youth attend workshops or training

Working with youth as **partners**

- Believing that youth are integral to the success of LRP work
- Youth are regularly consulted and informed
- There are examples of shared decision-making between youth and adults

Engaging with youth as **leaders**

- Young people initiate and run activities
- There are spaces for youth to lead decision-making
- Youth may seek support and guidance from adults, but this is optional

Youth participation is meaningful when...

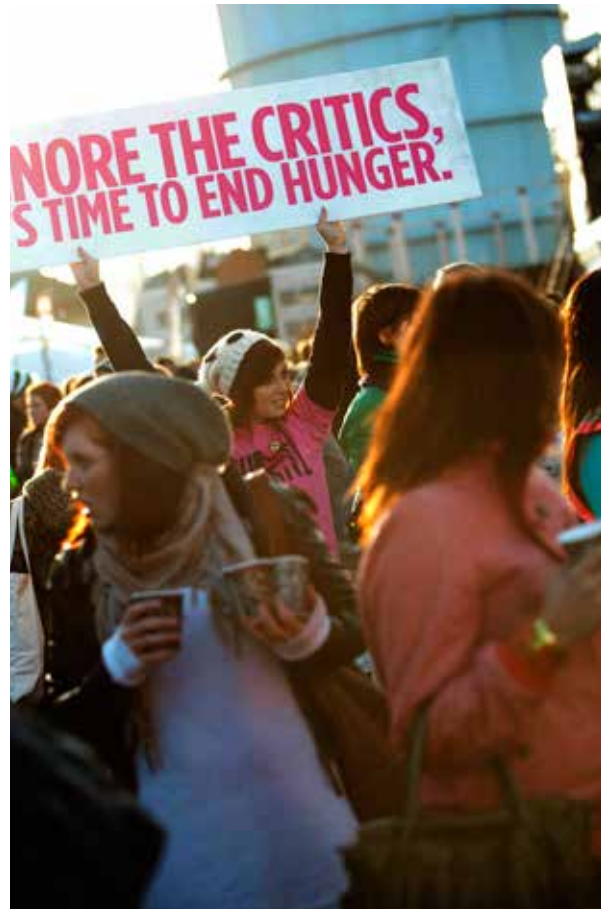
It is **DIVERSE...** Our approaches should not reinforce existing patterns of discrimination. We will encourage the involvement of those groups of young women and men who are often excluded from activities on the basis of their race, colour, age, sex, language, ethnicity, disability, or any other status. We will pay particular attention to issues of gender to ensure that patriarchal structures do not limit the involvement of girls and young women.

It is **RELEVANT and VOLUNTARY...** We will not force youth to participate, and we should make it clear that they can withdraw their involvement at any time. They should be involved in ways that are appropriate to their capacities and interests. We will not set young people up to fail. We should seek to involve young people in issues that are relevant to them, and that draw upon their knowledge, skills and abilities.

It is **TRANSPARENT and ACCOUNTABLE...** We are always clear with young people about the purpose of their participation, and their roles, as well as the level of impact and influence they will have throughout the process. We do not hide information from young people and make every effort to ensure that youth-friendly versions of key documents and policies are available.

There is an **ENABLING ENVIRONMENT...** When we invest resources in training adults to prepare them to engage with youth; when we adopt measures to build young people's skills and ability to participate, we lay a strong foundation for meaningful youth participation.

It is **SAFE...** We must balance young people's right to participate with the need to ensure their involvement does not expose them to risks.



Careful assessments of risks should be in place to minimise exposure to harm when youth engage in programming, campaigning or advocacy at LRP levels and beyond.

It is **SUSTAINABLE...** We will aim to learn from, as well as build the capacity of our partners to engage youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders. It is important that young people understand what has been the outcome from their participation, and are involved in monitoring and evaluation – this can help encourage them to continue their involvement over the long term.



Further reading...

- [One Stop Shop Version 2.0 How to Engage with Children](#) contains more information on best practice for child participation in particular.
- Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers', DFID-Youth CSO Working Group, 2010 (<http://www.ygproject.org/>)
- Checklist for quality youth participation – found under '[Youth in Implementation](#)' section of the toolkit

Youth safety in LRPs: A three-step approach

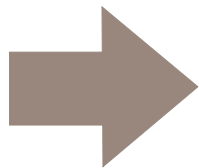
In promoting youth engagement in LRPs, it is important to balance young people's rights to participate with their rights to stay safe. In addition, in line with a rights-based approach, young people aged 15-18 are officially children, and afforded extra protections in line with their age¹. All children and youth are at potential risk of harm as a result of their involvement in development programmes – and inequalities relating to gender, age and other forms of social difference can play a role in the types of harm they face.



What are some of the risks?

- Youth who are still in school may be involved in the project at the expense of their education
- Girls and young women have an unmanageable workload between home, school and programme responsibilities
- Youth-adult tensions as adults in LRPs do not buy into promotion of youth participation and youth rights
- Involvement in research or campaigning on sensitive topics or trying to challenge power imbalances may expose young people to a (violent) backlash
- Young people undertake activities in unsafe places or on issues that may expose them to violence or social exclusion

In order to integrate a youth safety approach into your LRP, follow the three step approach below:



STEP 1: What analysis do I need?

At **pre-appraisal or appraisal stages**, explore the following issues highlighted in the table below. It is important to involve male and female youths from the LRP in this process, as their perceptions of safety will often be different from those of adults. Where there are information gaps, consider which stakeholders are essential to both gathering the information and analysing it.

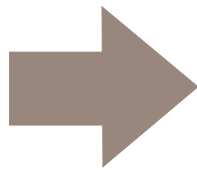
¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

<p>Who?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which stakeholders in the LRP play a key role in ensuring the safety of youth? E.g. community leaders; police; social workers; women’s groups. NB remember to include child protection stakeholders in this mapping, as this may be relevant for younger cohorts of youth • Which groups of youth in the LRP are the most vulnerable to the risk of abuse?
<p>What?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key laws and policies that can protect young people from abuse and harm? Pay attention to laws and policies that are specifically relevant for young women • What are the key child protection systems¹ in the project areas? • What do young men and women do to keep themselves safe (e.g. travelling in groups)?
<p>When?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the appropriate times for young people’s engagement in the programme activities? Pay particular attention to the gender division of labour in the LRP and how it might impact upon the involvement of young women • Do the risks posed change according to times of day or times of year/seasons? NB Festivals, holidays and sports events are often times when youth can be most at risk
<p>Where?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has safety scanning/safety mapping² of LRP areas been conducted with young people of similar ages? • Have travel routes to project sites (e.g. from school to resource centres) been assessed for safety?
<p>Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a clear idea on the discriminatory attitudes and practices towards young people that may put them at risk (e.g. son bias; restrictions on females’ mobility)

1. A child protection system refers to laws, policies, regulations, services that aim to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect or exploitation of children. Systems can be formal (mandated or implemented by the state) or informal (for example, customary laws, traditional practices such as kinship care, locally driven child protection work carried out by e.g. churches, women’s groups, community groups)

2. Safety scanning involves scanning a programme area for potentially safe and unsafe places – this is normally done together with girls of a similar age, as younger age cohorts may have different perceptions of safe places than older groups of children. Safety scanning is often also done with key stakeholders such as teachers and parents. For more guidance or examples of simple safety scanning tools, email leila.billing@actonaid.org





STEP 2: Designing safeguarding strategies

The analysis done at Step 1 can be used to design safeguarding strategies that ensure young people are protected throughout programme implementation. These strategies should ideally be developed with young men and women themselves when developing an LRP Strategic Plan. The Safety Strategy Tool (below) can be used for this purpose.

Safety Strategy Tool:

Activity	Risk to young women	Existing safety mechanisms	Actions required to reduce risk	Stakeholders needed to support

Examples of safety strategies

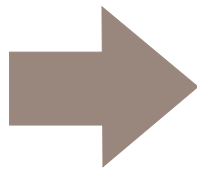
Young people and children can, and do, play a substantial role in protecting themselves from harm. Consider how the LRP can draw upon their self-protection abilities and empower them to protect themselves. The programme should provide entry points for youth to understand and critically analyse the risks associated with the programme. Examples of empowering youth to stay safe include:

- Ensuring youth, staff and LRP partners involved in the programme are inducted into ActionAid’s [Child Protection](#) and [Anti Sexual Harassment](#) Policies
- Ensuring all youth involved in the project understand where they need to go if they wish to report an incident or (risk of) abuse, or if they feel unsafe at any stage
- Mapping programme-related risks together with youth and jointly developing safety strategies. This will generate more relevant and robust risk mitigation strategies, as well as empowering young people to develop the skills needed to self-protect



Young women can act in solidarity by supporting each other to stay safe. Examples include:

- Travelling in groups when passing through or to risky areas
- Older youth in the programme provide safety support to younger age cohorts of girls. For example, by supporting younger girls to understand ActionAid’s policies and building their capacities to respond to risky situations via a mentorship scheme.



STEP 3: Risk-free implementation

The following checklist can be used to determine the extent to which ongoing implementation is safe. Review this checklist at regular periods during implementation, review and reflection processes.

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have local partners and youth signed up to ActionAid's Child Protection Policy/been inducted into ActionAid's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy? • Have family members/guardians provided informed consent for children's participation in the programme? • Are relationships being built with agencies/actors that support the rights of young people to protection, so that if an issue arises, they can be signposted to where they can get specialist help? • Are key community stakeholders/programme stakeholders supporting safety strategies in the programme?
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are capacity-building activities on risk management for youth and project stakeholders taking place? (e.g. do risk analysis exercises involve youth and stakeholders?) • Have peer support mechanisms for youth safety been set up? • Are youth in the project aware of the procedures for reporting abuse/feelings of unsafety? • Are risks and safety being discussed regularly during programme implementation and being addressed through adaptations to the programme? • Child-friendly/youth-friendly version(s) of key ActionAid policies are available and visible in all project sites
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are meeting at appropriate times • Young women's involvement in programmes is not compromising their other responsibilities, jeopardising their education or overloading them
Where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When youth need to travel to, or through, risky places, they do so with a peer supporter or an adult
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth have increased capacity to understand and respond to risks to their safety • Youth women are more confident raising safety concerns with programme staff



Further reading...

- ActionAid is in the process of developing a Duty of Care Policy for Volunteers. For more information on this, contact Javeria.malik@actionaid.org
- Please also refer to [ActionAid's Child Protection Policy](#), as well as its [Anti-sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Are you ready to start engaging youth in your LRP?

What?

These **ten tough questions** should be discussed by stakeholders wishing to increase youth engagement at LRP levels. The questions will help to determine whether you have done enough to prepare the ground for increasing youth participation in your LRP.

Who?

If possible, it is important to gather the same group who participated in the self-assessment process to discuss the **ten tough questions**. This group includes LRP staff, LRP partner organisations, young people who have been/are involved in LRP programmes.

When?

This discussion should take place a few weeks after you have conducted the self-assessment. By then you will have had a chance to think more deeply about the findings of your self-assessment.

1. Do we know what we are aiming to achieve by increasing youth participation in our LRP?
2. What benefits will young people gain from the process?
3. Is this the right time for us to start to engage more meaningfully with youth – for example, why haven't we done this before?
4. Are we ready to commit to a long-term process?
5. Are we willing to engage young people from the start?
6. Are we ready to have our ideas and assumptions challenged by youth, and amend our approaches based upon their feedback?
7. Are we willing to hand over some of our power to young people – e.g. to let them make decisions?
8. Are we willing to allocate time and resources (financial and human) to support youth engagement in your LRP, and spend time developing strategies to support the engagement of young women in particular?
9. Are we willing to challenge entrenched attitudes towards youth in our own organisation as well as in the communities where we work?
10. How will we manage young people's expectations?

If you have trouble answering any of the ten tough questions, you may need to:

- 1) Spend another few days considering what else you need to do to get ready to promote youth engagement in your LRP. Use the following tool to help you:

What still needs to be done?	Who needs to be involved?	By when
Revise work plans to accommodate more time spent on youth engagement	LRP staff, Heads of Programmes	End of this week

- 2) Consider whose buy-in you need to secure to move forward. e.g. is it the Head of Programmes, LRP Manager or a local partner?

Winning hearts and minds

- Refer to the [What is youth participation?](#) section, that highlights the benefits of youth engagement at LRP level, to persuade cynics of the value of youth participation
- If a barrier is Senior Management Team (SMT) buy-in, consider asking to make your case for youth engagement at an upcoming SMT meeting. You can give a presentation where you a) invite Activistas to take part; b) suggest a pilot testing period initially; c) highlight the prominence of youth in People's Action in Practice 2.0, and how youth approaches are integral to the HRBA; d) invite the Global Child and Youth Rights Co-ordinator to Skype into the meeting/presentation, to share some strong case studies of youth work across the federation and e) share the findings of your self assessment process with SMT members
- [Click here](#) for **participatory exercises you can use to Win Hearts and Minds**



Youth Self-Assessment: How youth-friendly is your LRP?

Why do a self-assessment?

This self-assessment is essential for anyone wanting to use the approaches in this toolkit.

It provides a simple way for to measure the impact of these new approaches on your work. The self-assessment will enable you to reflect upon how you are currently involving youth in actions to bring about positive change at every stage of the programme cycle. The self-assessment and its findings will enable you to start a dialogue with colleagues and key stakeholders about how to improve the quality and impact of youth participation in your LRP. It can be a good starting point for starting to look at youth as a cross-cutting issue in your LRP, and will give you ideas for how to start to mainstream youth in your work.

In particular, the self-assessment will help you to understand:

- **The extent to which youth engagement is valued in your LRP**
- **The extent to which young people have an opportunity to participate meaningfully in your LRP**
- **The extent to which youth participation in your LRP is supported by effective systems, plans and policies**
- **The extent to which youth participation in your work is supporting young women's leadership**



Top tips:

- This self-assessment can be used during the process of identifying a new LRP partner in order to establish their current levels of commitment towards and capacity gaps in relation to youth rights.
- Consider mobilising a team of youth to facilitate self-assessment processes at LRP levels. The ActionAid M&E advisor/focal point could be involved in training/ supporting the youths to do this, and learning from this innovative approach could be documented and shared via ActionAid's Youth Community of Practice.
- This self-assessment can also be used with the optional Youth-Adult partnerships self-assessment.
- Click [here](#) for the [Youth-Adult Partnerships Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- This self-assessment can be adapted for use at country office level to review youth engagement in the entire country programme.

When to do the self-assessment?

This self-assessment can be done at any stage of the programme cycle, but we recommend it is carried out before you start to use any of the approaches/tools in this toolkit.



How to do the self-assessment?

1. Before embarking on a self-assessment, it is a good idea to get support from senior members of staff, such as the Country Director, Head of Programmes and the rest of the Senior Management Team. Their endorsement and involvement in the process will help to secure wider buy-in and support for the actions you choose to take to respond to the findings of the self-assessment.
2. The self-assessment takes the form of group discussion. It is important to invite as wide a range of stakeholders to the self-assessment as possible, and not just staff members who work specifically with youth. The self-assessment can be specific to your entire country programme, or specific to a particular LRP. Participants should include: **LRP staff, LRP partners, programme, policy and campaigns staff, child sponsorship staff, as well as a mix of young people (male, female, varying age ranges) to participate.** These young people should have experience of engaging with ActionAid and its partners at LRP levels. The youths could be Activistas, formerly sponsored children or young people who have benefited from projects at LRP levels.
3. Make sure that all participants are aware in advance about the purpose of the self-assessment, what the process will look like, and what is likely to happen next.
4. Select a staff member/volunteer/partner staff member who has good facilitation skills to facilitate the self-assessment process. The facilitator should ideally have experience of working directly with youth, and of encouraging their participation in discussions. If your country has a designated Youth Advisor or Inspirator from the People For Change programme, they would be a good choice for facilitator.
5. Find a suitable venue and make copies of the self-assessment to distribute to participants (you may wish to do this in advance). **Allocate at least 2.5 hours for this process.**



Self-assessment questions

The self-assessment questions fall under the following headings:

1. **Youth in appraisal**
2. **Youth in strategic planning**
3. **Youth in implementation**
4. **Youth in review and reflection**

NB because your group discussion will involve a wide range of different stakeholders, please ensure you use the comments column to highlight any differences of opinion, or any instances where the group could not reach a consensus.

Self-assessment terms:

Ethical approaches = efforts are taken to minimise risks to youth during consultations; appraisal findings are shared with youth; efforts are made to ensure a diversity of youth, including young women with childcare responsibilities are able to participate.

Actively involved = young people are involved as partners or are supported to lead aspects of appraisal processes – e.g. by facilitating focus groups; conducting surveys; mobilising research participants; analysing appraisal findings.

Commitment = the LRP partner gets a diversity of young people; recruits staff with expertise in youth rights programming; and promotes youth participation in its work.

Influences = informs the choice of LRP strategic plan objectives, activities and target groups.

Strategic/project planning tools = these include, but are not limited to, participatory tools such as ranking tools, timelines, rivers, roads and mapping tools.

Linked up = this could include ensuring formerly sponsored children are offered opportunities to join Activista.

Recognition and reward = this could be the provision of certificates or opportunities for further training for young people to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions they have made through their participation.

1. Youth in appraisal

	Yes, sufficient	Yes, but not sufficient	No	Explain your answer/further comments
1. Are ethical approaches followed when consulting with young people at LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stages?				
2. Are a diversity of youth consulted at LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stages?				
3. Are young people supported to be actively involved in LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal processes?				
4. Is an analysis of youth rights included in LRP appraisals?				
5. Do LRP partnership identification, selection and assessment processes take into account the partners' commitment to youth rights?				
6. Young people's feedback in LRP appraisals influences the development of LRP strategic plans				

2. Youth in strategic planning

	Yes, sufficient	Yes, but not sufficient	No	Explain your answer/further comments
1. Are a diversity of young people invited to LRP strategic planning workshops/meetings where goals, objectives, outcomes for the LRP are identified?				
2. Are we engaging youth by using strategic/project planning tools that work well with young people?				
3. Are Activista members involved in LRP strategic planning processes?				
4. Does the monitoring and evaluation framework for the LRP have indicators that are specific to youth, and that link to the Global M&E Framework indicators for KCP 6?				
5. In our LRP strategic plan, have we identified which activities/ programme components will be youth-led, and which ones will involve us working with youth as partners?				
6. In our LRP strategic plans, have we identified how Activista members can be involved in LRP programming?				
7. In our LRP strategic plan, have we identified how formerly sponsored/ age-out sponsored children can be linked up to programming with older youth?				



3. Youth in implementation

	Yes, sufficient	Yes, but not sufficient	No	Explain your answer/further comments
1. Are young people recruited as staff/volunteers of ActionAid and its LRP partners?				
2. If so, do young people receive standardised inductions?				
3. Are youth represented on programme decision-making structures at LRP levels?				
4. Are programme meetings held at times that are appropriate for young people – especially young women?				
5. Is leadership training or support for building young people's capacity in leadership available as part of the LRP programme?				
6. Are the risks associated with young people participating in implementation at LRP level reviewed and responded to on a regular basis?				
7. Are you orienting adults and youth involved in the LRP on the benefits of working in partnership?				
8. Are we using a range (i.e. more than two) of targeted mobilisation strategies to ensure a diversity of youth are participating in programme implementation?				
9. Are child sponsorship and programme staff working together at key stages of the programme cycle to ensure age-out sponsored children are integrated into LRP programming?				
10. Does the LRP provide services, such as child care provisions, that supports the participation of young women throughout its work?				

4. Youth in review and reflection

	Yes, sufficient	Yes, but not sufficient	No	Explain your answer/further comments
1. Do ActionAid staff and local partners understand the benefits and added value of involving young people in review and reflection processes at LRP levels?				
2. Are young people always consulted during PRRP processes?				
3. Does young people's feedback during review and reflection processes influence LRP planning and future programming?				
4. Are young people supported to play an active role in on-going monitoring of our LRP work?				
5. Do you recognise and reward the contribution young people make to LRP programming as a result of review and reflection processes?				
6. Do you assess or evaluate the quality of youth participation at the LRP level on an annual basis?				



What do we do now?

After completing the self-assessment, it is important that the group spends some time action-planning. The let's get youth-friendly! table below can help you to structure your discussions around how to respond to the assessment. Each section of the self-assessment refers to a specific section of the toolkit, so you can clearly see where you need to refer for further guidance. Once complete, it is a good idea to make sure that key stakeholders who can support you to implement the actions have a copy of this plan. These stakeholders may include Heads of Programmes, Programme Managers, LRP Managers and local partners.



Top tip:

For ease, you can prioritise two or three main points from each of the self-assessment headings that you feel you can try to improve, depending upon the results of the assessment. For example, under Youth in Implementation, you may prioritise making sure project meeting times are youth-friendly. A one page summary of the findings of the self-assessment can be used to get buy in from a wide range of stakeholders who may be cynical about the need to increase a focus on youth.

Let's get youth-friendly! table:

Which areas in the self-assessment are we not addressing well?	What will we do to improve?	Who will lead?	By when?	Do we need any resources?

Reviewing progress

We recommend you review progress against your self-assessment on an annual basis, by trying to involve as many of the original team of participants as possible.





Section 2: Youth in LRP appraisals

Let's get ethical!

How to consult with with young people

There may be several times when you consult with groups of young people in the LRP programme cycle. According to People's Action in Practice 2.0, it is essential that:

'People living in poverty and their organisations have been actively involved in the drawing up of all our local rights programmes'

It is important to ensure that you follow an ethical approach whenever you consult with young people, so that the process can be as empowering as possible for them, and so that it does not cause distress or place them at any disadvantage.

Entry points for youth consultation

- LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stage
- Community assessments and community sensitisation
- Developing an M&E plan/indicator-setting for the LRP
- Participatory Review and Reflection Processes (PRRPs)
- LRP phase-out stages



Common consultation methods at LRP levels

- Focus groups with young men and women
- Key informant interviews
- Semi-structured interviews
- Participatory research with young men and women – involving the use of Reflection-Action tools
- Surveys – e.g. knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys



An ethical approach to consulting with young people during the LRP programme cycle requires that you pay attention to the following areas: collaboration; minimising risk; and ensuring empowerment (see ethical framework below).

An ethical framework for consulting with youth in your LRP:

Collaboration...

- Seek support from child sponsorship staff who may be better versed in how to consult with young people when you are designing and carrying out consultations with youth
- Work with youth themselves or local partners with sound knowledge of the local community to reach out to excluded young people - your selection criteria for consultation participants should always be guided by principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination
- In the local context, consider if it is important for key community stakeholders to give permission for youth consultations to take place
- Consider whether translation/interpreting services are needed for the consultations - language should never be a barrier to youth participation

Minimising risk...

- Consider any adverse consequences of the consultations - e.g. is there a chance that young people might get upset during the consultations - and how you will deal with them
- What will you do if you uncover a serious case of abuse of a young person during the consultation? Making a list of possible referral agencies before carrying out the consultation is a smart idea
- Consider if consulting with marginalised youth (e.g. HIV-positive adolescents) in a public space/without due attention to confidentiality might increase community stigma against those groups
- Keep consultation groupings with youth of similar ages - young people aged 15-18 are likely to have more in common with people of a similar age than youths aged 25-30

An empowering process...

- Make sure young people know the limits to the consultations and what is likely to happen next. NB children in particular may be vulnerable to raised expectations as a result of involvement in consultations
- Consider how you will share the consultation findings with youth. If you plan to prepare a youth-friendly document, consider how illiterate youth can access the same information. A community debrief workshop might be a more inclusive process
- Prioritise informed consent throughout the research process (see box below)
- Explore whether youth can be involved in/are interested in designing the consultations. They could: decide what questions should be asked; mobilise their peers; organise logistics for the consultations
- How will you arrange it so that young women with care responsibilities are able to be part of consultations? Carefully consider issues of timing and whether childcare provision is necessary
- Can you allocate time at the end of the consultation for young people to sit down together and assess their experience of the consultation itself? NB this will have time and may have budget implications



Top tips:

- Young people can review consultation questions before wider use to ensure they are age-appropriate, easy to understand and ethical from a youth perspective
- Follow-up is an important part of ensuring consultations follow an empowering process. Lack of follow-up can be very demotivating for young people who have given their time for the consultative process. Ensure that you are engaging key stakeholders in the LRP (e.g. community leaders, local government authorities) who are involved in the follow-up actions to the consultation to ensure they are able to bring youth on board

Understanding informed consent

Informed consent is not a one-off act. When consulting with youths, make sure they know they can pull out of the consultations at any point if they feel apprehensive or uncomfortable. Particularly in relation to sensitive topics, participants may not realise the impact that discussing a particular issue may have on them until they are mid-way through the process. In short, informed consent means knowing you can refuse to answer any question; that you can pull out mid-way through the process; and that you can refuse to participate from the beginning. Young people under 18 will need the (verbal or written) consent of a parent/guardian to participate in consultations.



Further reading...

ActionAid's Transforming Girls' Education in Tanzania and Nigeria programme developed specific ethical guidelines for conducting research with children. These can be found on page 5 of the [TEGINT Research Protocol](#).



Young researchers

Why should we do it? Can we do it?

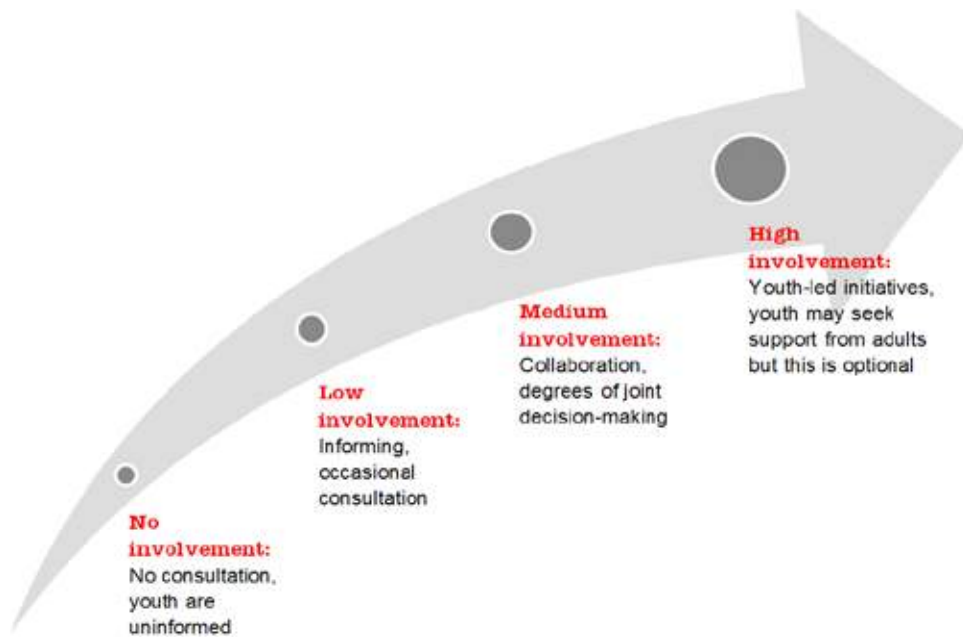
“Research is not too big an animal that youth cannot do!”

Kasena Kenga, LRP partner, ActionAid Kenya

Typically, most research about young people is done by adults. However, there is huge potential for young people to be engaged as partners and supported to lead research and consultation processes in your LRP. There are many examples across ActionAid of young people actively conducting research, participating in appraisals, situation assessments and context analyses. These examples are a mixture of low – high levels of youth involvement (see diagram and box below).



What does youth participation look like?



What do we mean by research?

Research can be used for a variety of purposes and can take many forms. In relation to this toolkit, research means any process taking place in a LRP for the purpose of discovering new knowledge or information, or for the purpose of assessing the outcome or an intervention. Research findings will support decision-making. Research can include:

- Fact-finding/information-gathering processes done at LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stage;
- Participatory vulnerability analyses;
- Focus groups; rights analysis;
- Surveys and questionnaires;
- Social audits;
- Budget tracking.

Why involve youth?

- There is a broad range of evidence to show that young people make strong researchers.
- When young people lead research processes with their peers, they are more likely to get more detailed and nuanced findings and analysis – not least because their peers are more likely to open up to someone of a similar age (see the example of the IPPF programme in the box below).
- They can ensure Reflection-Action tools are adapted or used in a way that works well with younger groups.
- When youth present research findings and share their own related experiences, this can have a greater impact on audiences.
- Youth involvement can help to bridge gaps/address power imbalances between young people and adults – it offers new ways of working with young people and can help push through changes in organisational culture.
- The process of conducting research and analysis can be very empowering for young people, as it exposes them to new skills and new understandings about power and poverty in their communities, providing a springboard for sustained action to address some of the issues facing youth. Kenneth Okoineme, Activista Co-ordinator from ActionAid Nigeria sums it up well here:



“If we expose young people to do research, it can be extremely empowering for them, as they learn more about the issues first-hand. Especially when that research is informing programmes, strategies, actions and duty bearers!”

Examples of youth engagement in research

AA Liberia: Young analysts

Young people from Monrovia, Zwedri and Gbama conducted a Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) to find out more about the issues facing young urban Liberians. Youth were trained in participatory approaches by ActionAid Liberia during a four-day training workshop that also included staff from LRP partner organisations. Here, young people successfully learned how to use participatory research tools; how to conduct focus groups; and helped to design the research framework. Importantly, young people were involved in analysing the research findings, and developing actions and recommendations from the research. For more information, contact ActionAid's Programme Manager for Youth and Urban Poverty in Liberia: pobuwolo.towaye@actionaid.org

AA Gambia: Youth research for advocacy

In The Gambia, young people have been involved in conducting research on land grabs. For example, they have conducted surveys to assess the number of young farmers who have had their land taken away, they have carried out key informant interviews, and developed case studies and videos on issues of land rights. They have then presented the findings to duty bearers in an attempt to reform local, regional and national land laws.

AA Pakistan: Research supporting child sponsorship

In a new LRP, young people were mobilised and formed into youth groups. They were trained by ActionAid Pakistan in child sponsorship and volunteerism. Following this training, they mapped the local areas, did research on the children living in the LRPs and collected child profiles. All this supported the development and set-up of a new LRP in Pakistan.

AA Brazil: Digital research for activism

Activistas in LRPs do video collections, take photos and collect testimonials on a regular basis in order to support programmes and advocacy work in Brazil. They also regularly help to research and develop case studies and produce articles for blogs to raise the profile of Activista locally and nationally. For more information, contact marcelo.montenegro@actionaid.org

Youth-led digital research

As part of the pre-positioning work for the Safe Cities campaign, and to generate additional evidence for Safe Cities programming, Activista has produced a series of vox pops videos. Activistas, including those from LRPs, from across the globe have put their minds together to do a temperature check on what city life is really like. This video gives you voices from city life across the world. Are cities really safe for all of us? Cities offer many opportunities - but city living can also pose real threats. The voxpops were launched and shared widely as part of UN Orange Day. Read this blog on the action: <http://www.actionaid.org/activista/2013/10/cities-safe-all>

The videos were produced through a collaborative process between Activistas from Brazil, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Liberia, Nepal and Bangladesh, with support from the Global Engagement Team and Peter Murphy from International Communications. For more information contact the Activista Digital Officer: casper.knudsen@actionaid.org.

Youth-led research in Kenya and Ghana: The added value of youth participation

In 2005, the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF) commissioned a rapid participatory assessment on sexual decision-making among young people in Kenya and Ghana. IPPF wanted this research to be youth-led. Young people were supported by adult IPPF staff to design research questions, develop research methods, and following this support, they carried out the research themselves. This method of gathering data on young people's sexual decision-making gave a different set of data compared to earlier, adult-led studies. Evaluations of the research showed that young people felt more comfortable talking to researchers they could identify with. This resulted in more honest and open discussions about their sexuality.



Top tip from ActionAid Bangladesh:

In order to strengthen solidarity between urban and rural youth, include both groups in LRP appraisal processes. Actively seek out university students to participate – once they are equipped with an understanding of how research of this kind works, they can support rural youth to engage in community research in the future.

Involving youth as researchers...

how do I start?

“I wouldn’t know where to start if we wanted to involve youth in research. I don’t know how to support rural volunteers who are poor and not well educated to do research. They would have to design surveys, collect data, and this is too much to ask!”

Roberto, Youth Co-ordinator, Nicaragua

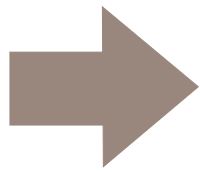
There are many fears about involving young people in research activities. However, if you have ever been involved in an LRP appraisal, or a PRRP, then do not worry – you will find it easier to support young researchers, as you will understand some of the challenges they may face. The following steps will give you some ideas for how to involve youth. Remember that there will be times when young people may be involved in just a few stages in the research; at other times, they may be involved throughout the whole process. However, we recommend that you involve them as early as possible.

Ideas for youth involvement in research

A common assumption is that youth must have high educational levels to be involved in research. However, there are multiple ways that young people can get involved, and the way they can be involved will depend upon their age, capacities and levels of interest. Youth can...

- Facilitate focus groups
- Mobilise research participants
- Plan research activities / arrange logistics
- Generate survey questions
- Ensure research tools are worded in a language that is clear to their peers
- Interpret research findings
- Conduct desk-based research
- Train other young people in research techniques
- Participate in baseline studies
- Write research reports
- Present research findings to the community
- Film participatory videos, or take photo diaries to support research objectives

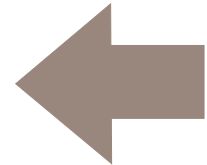
Involving youth in research - a five step approach:



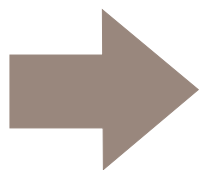
STEP 1: Internal advocacy - preparing the ground

- Make sure you have wide buy-in for engaging youth in research at LRP levels to avoid future obstacles. Consider whether your LRP partners support this initiative, as well as key programme staff within ActionAid;
- Use examples of youth led/youth involvement in research to make your case. For example, find out if your Activista network in country has been involved in conducting any campaigns-related research;
- Be clear from the beginning that promoting youth engagement in research is likely to involve extra time and potentially financial resources.

STEP 2: Mobilise your research team

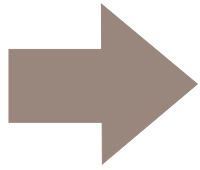


- If you are aiming to include young people into existing LRP processes, such as appraisals, consider inviting a couple of young people to be part of your appraisal team. If you are mobilising a specific research team, make sure you have youth representation on it. Mobilise diverse youth from existing ActionAid programmes in the LRP, from Activista networks, or consider mobilising age-out sponsored children;
- Make sure that you are clear with young people about the purpose of the research and what the next steps might be. Consider preparing a simple, short explanation of what you are trying to do.



STEP 3: Create a plan

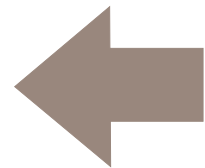
- Together with your research team, develop the goals and objectives of the research; get youth input on what they believe is an appropriate level of involvement that suits their age, capacities and interests. Remember that young people can be involved in many ways (see the 'What does youth participation look like?' diagram on page 30). Will young people's involvement be: low, medium or high? Look at 'Ideas for youth involvement in research' on page 33);
- Decide on your selection criteria for young researchers (see 'Selecting young researchers' box, on page 36);
- Consider what young people's training needs are - what skills will they need in order to support the delivery of the goals and objectives of the research?;
- Develop your resourcing plan - think about the budget and time needed to make your plan a reality;
- Consider in advance how young people will be involved in analysis of the findings; offer them a chance to interpret research findings.



STEP 4: Safety and support

- Consider what the risks are to young people who will be involved as researchers. Are some risks gender-specific? Work together with young people to identify safety strategies to support their safe engagement throughout the process;
- If young people are going to be engaging in field research, ensure that they are supported by an experienced adult. Regular post-research debriefings are essential - they can maintain motivation levels and are a way to provide feedback to improve practices.

STEP 5: Reward and recognition



- How will you acknowledge young people's contribution to the process? Consider giving certificates of achievement; crediting youth participants in appraisal documents or PRRP reports; holding a public acknowledgement ceremony;
- Consult with young people after the process to find out how they have benefited from their involvement. Have they improved levels of confidence and self-esteem? What suggestions do they have for improving the process in the future? Ask yourself what have you gained from involving youth?;
- Make sure there is a process in place to share outputs of the research with young people - as a minimum, ensure they have access to research summaries and reports, and consider whether there is a need to share videos/posters with illiterate youth.



Selecting, training and supporting young researchers

Selecting young researchers

In 2011, Restless Development, an international youth NGO, supported a group of 13 young people to research the situation of youth in Karamoja, northern Uganda. Their experience shows that it is possible for a diverse group of young people to successfully lead research processes, such as facilitating focus groups and using participatory tools with youth, and that young people do not necessarily need to be educated to be involved. The selection criteria for the young researchers was:

- Experience and interest in the issue of youth and development
- Researchers should be from a variety of backgrounds
- Schooled and unschooled young people
- A good gender balance
- Youth must be good listeners and clear communicators
- Ability to show respect for others and openness to difference

ActionAid could mobilise young researchers from:

- Activista networks
- Youth groups at LRP level
- Age-out sponsored children or older youths who are part of Child Rights Clubs, Girls Clubs, etc. at LRP levels
- Youths involved in Reflection-Action groups



Training and supporting young people as researchers

...do's and dont's

Do...

- Provide youth with regular access to support whenever needed
- Plan for challenges youth may face during the process and develop ways of overcoming these jointly with young people
- Ask young people what aspects of the research they would like to be involved in – not all youth will be interested in data analysis, likewise, not all youth will want to facilitate a focus group. Ensure that young people are playing to their interests and strengths!
- Support youth to pilot test new tools or approaches they have learned in the training – e.g. youth can do mock focus group discussions and test key informant interviews
- Train youth how to deal with excluded and vulnerable groups
- Train youth in facilitation techniques
- Keep meetings short – have plenty of breaks and fun energisers
- Keep written information used in the meetings short and clear
- Spend time ensuring adults are on board with the idea of involving youth as researchers. Some adults may not see the value in involving youth, but youth-adult partnerships are likely to be important for ensuring successful youth involvement in a research initiative
- Consider the risks involved in involving young people in research – especially if the research subject is a sensitive one. e.g. involving young women in asking questions at community level on sexual and reproductive health may expose them to a backlash. It is important to have safety strategies in place



Don't...

- Overburden young people – particularly those who are combining their involvement in research with other responsibilities
- Put off young people with training processes that are very long and technical!
- Use lecturing techniques or long presentations during training
- Put off young people with low literacy levels – some may feel that their involvement will expose their lack of literacy, and may be reluctant to take part
- Assume that training youth to be engaged in research processes is automatically a lengthy process¹

1. For example, in ActionAid Zambia, young Activistas from LRP's were involved in developing case studies for a tax justice campaign. As part of this, they did simple questionnaires and held focus groups with key stakeholders. They were prepared through an afternoon briefing session, where the Activista Co-ordinator in Zambia explained to them basic research techniques. They then practised the techniques on their peers before starting the research in earnest.

Sample training plan from AA Zimbabwe

In 2010, AA Zimbabwe conducted a participatory baseline study for a youth project in Harare and Bulawayo. Young people led certain aspects of the baseline study – e.g. by facilitating focus groups, developing knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys and mobilising their peers. A summary training plan that was used to prepare youth researchers is below:

DAY 1	Agenda item
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising facilitation – piloting tools (ranking tools, spider diagrams, daily activity charts) • Peer feedback on facilitation in plenary • Identifying challenges and obstacles
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of collecting information – pros and cons of different tools • Research ethics – dos and don'ts, including safeguarding and protection issues, confidentiality • Being a good communicator
DAY 2	Agenda item
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising facilitation – piloting tools (ranking tools, spider diagrams, daily activity charts) • Peer feedback on facilitation in plenary • Identifying challenges and obstacles
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting a structured questionnaire • Mock one to one interviews • Feedback in plenary

To find out more about this initiative, please contact leila.billing@actionaid.org.



Further reading...

To read more about a young Nepali Activista's experience of engaging in research, click on the link [here](#).



How to do a Youth Rights Analysis and which Reflection-Action tools to use

A strong, effective LRP is based upon a detailed analysis of the local context. This includes analysing power, institutions, vulnerabilities and rights. It is important to ensure that analysis of youth rights is fully integrated into LRP appraisals. Your analysis of all thematic areas at appraisal stages – from livelihoods to women’s rights – should be informed by a Youth Rights Analysis. This analysis should build upon the information, views and opinions of young people themselves, as well as parents, caregivers and key stakeholders including community leaders and other duty bearers.

Programme Cycle Stage	Key guiding youth questions	Possible tools
Pre-appraisal / appraisal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which groups of young women and men are living in poverty and their numbers as % of the population of the LRP? 2. Which groups of youth are excluded? 3. What are young people’s most serious rights violations? 4. What are young people’s levels of awareness of their rights? 5. What are the key legal entitlements (laws/policies) for these groups – are they aware of them? 6. What structures exist to implement/enforce these laws or policies? 7. What needs to be done in order to develop or support these structures? 8. What are young people’s assets (social, economic, political)? 9. What communication capacities do youth need to develop spaces for influence? <i>A participatory communications assessment would include exploring where young people get their information (phone, letters, TV, meetings, radio, newspapers); the extent to which these sources are trustworthy from a youth perspective; and which sources of communication diverse groups of young people, such as poor young women, illiterate youth, are able to access.</i> 10. What are the risks if young people’s active engagement is to be promoted in this LRP? 11. How do each of the areas mentioned above differ in relation to gender or other social categories such as race, ethnicity, disability status? 	<p>Useful tools for 7 areas of HRBA analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights – problem tree, access and control matrix • Power – chapatti diagram • Actors and institutions – chapatti diagram • Women’s rights – body map or daily activity chart • Vulnerability - map or timeline • Communications – map or problem tree • Risks and Feasibility – matrix <p>Click here for examples of these tools on the Reflection-Action hive space.</p>



Top tip:

Your Youth Rights Analysis will be greatly enhanced if you can document some examples/case studies to highlight some of the key rights violations facing young people in your LRP. Examples taken at appraisal stages can strengthen the case for a greater focus on youth in the LRP and can be used for internal (and external) advocacy.



Further reading...

- The '[Integrating youth into different Strategic Objectives](#)' section of this toolkit gives specific guidance for key areas of analysis to include at pre-appraisal and appraisal stages, in particular relating to: livelihoods, governance, education, resilience and women's rights
- [Youth Engagement Plan, page 45](#)



Policy analysis: A youth perspective

A desk review of secondary data is common at LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stages. As part of this process, it is important to link local issues affecting LRP youth to the national policy environment. National policies will give you a sense of where youth concerns fit into government agendas (or don't!).



Policies and reports relevant for analysis of youth issues at LRP appraisal stage

- National Youth Policy (approximately 50% of countries worldwide have a national youth policy). Analysis of a wide range of youth policies can be found [here](#). In addition, short factsheets on the situation of youth policies and youth participation in decision-making in 198 countries can be found [here](#).
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
- Education strategies
- [State of the World's Children reports](#) by UNICEF
- [UN World Youth reports](#)
- National (Youth) employment strategies and action plans
- Ratified human rights instruments, such as the UNCRC and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)
- Concluding observations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and concluding observations for CEDAW
- National Gender Policies
- Adolescent sexual and reproductive health strategies
- National Development Strategies
- Statistics, research and reports produced by governments, UN Agencies, universities, research institutes and by local and international NGOs

At a sub-national level, you can also consider:

- Customary laws
- Local by-laws
- Local development plans

International policies

There are a wide range of international policies focusing upon youth in developing countries. For detailed information on international policies, see pages 14-16 in [Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers](#)



Top tips for reviewing a policy from a youth perspective:

When reviewing the policies mentioned in the box above, as well as any other policy not specifically focusing upon young people, consider the following factors to get a youth perspective:

1. **Participation** – how inclusive was the process of developing the policy? Were a diversity of youth – including young women - and civil society actors involved at early stages to ensure the policy is responding to their voiced needs and concerns?
2. **Needs analysis** – what baseline information informed the development of the policy? How comprehensive was this baseline? Are the concerns of diverse groups of youth reflected in the needs analysis?
3. To what extent is the national policy addressing the issues identified by your youth rights analysis at LRP level? **Where are the gaps?**
4. **Vulnerable groups** – does the policy make explicit reference to which groups of young people are affected by the relevant issue? Does the policy fail to mention young people at all? Or are young people and their needs generalised throughout the policy?
5. Is there a **budget and action plan** to accompany the policy, with a clear resourcing strategy and timescales involved?
6. Is there a **clear M&E framework** for implementation? Is there a role for participation of citizens in the monitoring mechanisms for the policy?
7. What is the **institutional structure for delivery** of the policy – for example, who is the lead agency? A cross-sectoral approach to policy implementation is very important to ensure there are positive outcomes for youth – what evidence is there for this in the policy document?



Case study from Zimbabwe...

Involving young people in policy analysis

In 2010, ActionAid Zimbabwe carried out national youth policy analysis with young people in Harare. Educational levels of the youth were mixed, though all participants had basic literacy skills. A workshop was held to sensitise youth on the key areas of content of the existing national youth policy. Representatives from the National Youth Council were invited to the workshop to provide clarification on any areas of confusion and concern. Young people then worked in small groups to identify gaps in the existing policy, and to make suggestions to feed into the national consultation process for a new youth policy. The groups then came back to plenary to present their recommendations. Finally, simple ranking tools were used so that young people could vote on their priority recommendations for a new national youth policy. These recommendations were compiled into a policy briefing paper by a group of youth representatives (elected by young people who attended the workshop). This was one part of the process of youth engaging in Zimbabwe's national youth policy review.



Partnership selection and youth engagement

NB to be updated in January 2014 once new Partnership Guidelines are issued

Partnership identification and selection processes will begin at LRP pre-appraisal and appraisal stages. This is a chance to evaluate to what extent potential partners are committed in their approach to youth rights, and to the rights of young women as well as young men.

During partnership selection processes, you can establish:

- To what extent partners target young men and young women in their programming, both directly and indirectly
- To what extent young people participate in programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and phase-out
- If staff in the local partner organisation have any specific expertise in working on youth rights or in engaging with young people at the community level
- If youth are represented on the organisation's board of governors



During partnership self-assessment processes, you can:

- Establish what capacity gaps the local organisation has in relation to child and youth engagement
- This can be done by including the Self-Assessment Tool included in this toolkit in the partner self-assessment process
- Ensure that partners' capacity development plans that are formulated during the self-assessment process include actions to address gaps in relation to youth rights and youth participation.



Top tip:

This guidance can also be used to assess a local partner's capacity to engage with children

Winning hearts and minds

Not all youth partners at LRP levels will be committed to involving young people in their work. You can access a wide range of participatory exercises that can support you to work with local partners to reflect upon how they engage youth in their work, and promote commitment towards greater youth participation. Click [here](#) for exercises you can use.



Further reading...

ActionAid Revised Partnership Guidelines (to follow January 2014)



Section 3: Youth in LRP strategic planning

Involving youth in LRP strategic planning

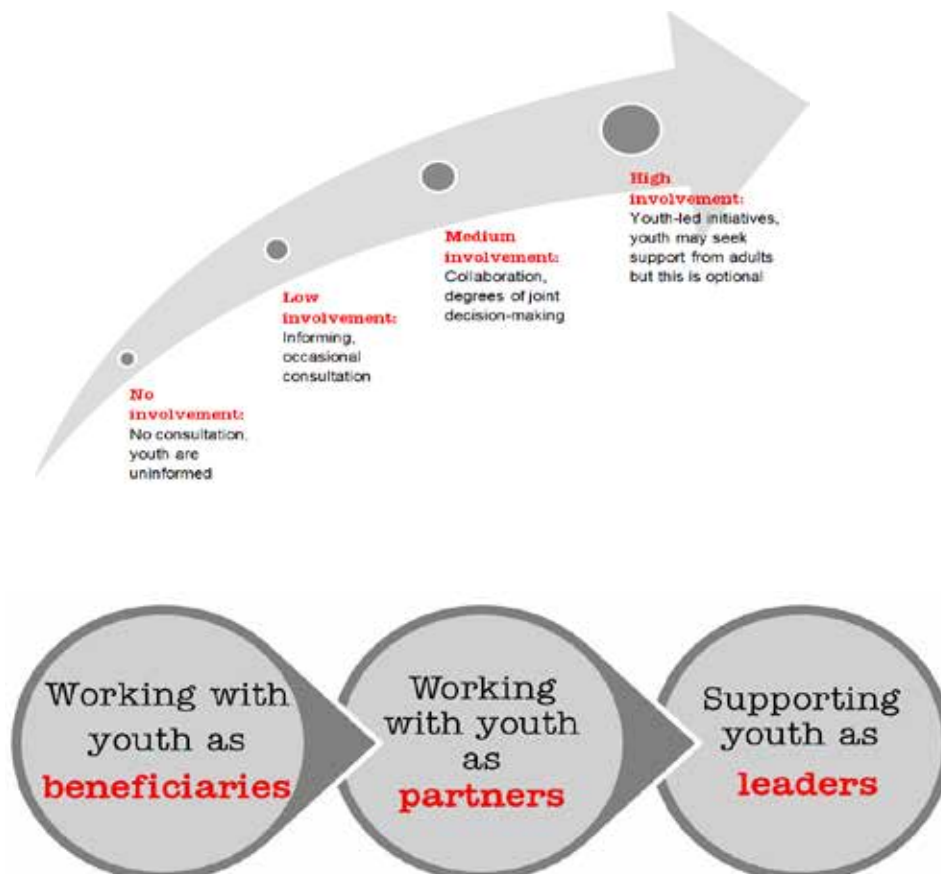
Entry points for youth involvement in developing an LRP strategic plan:

- Consider whether the **lead team for the LRP strategic planning process** can include at least one person with the relevant skills to promote youth rights and youth engagement. For example, this could be an experienced member of the Activista Network, or someone from a local partner organisation with expertise in youth rights.
- **LRP youth** and **Activista representatives** should be invited to LRP strategy planning workshops where you identify goals, objectives and outcomes for the LRP. Remember that it is best to involve young people at the EARLIEST STAGE POSSIBLE.
- It is a good idea to **invite the youth focal point from your country office** to participate in strategy development processes. If they cannot come, keep them informed and ensure they have a chance to feed back on your draft LRP strategy papers from the earliest stages. If you are not sure who the youth focal point in your country office is, refer to [this spreadsheet](#)

Entry points for youth involvement in developing an LRP strategic plan:

- **Engaging Activista representatives** will support you to make linkages between your plans for your LRP and work that is ongoing at national levels; and will help you to strengthen the campaigning component of your programme.
- **Setting indicators and developing your M&E framework for the LRP should be done collectively with youth**, and other rights holders. ActionAid's [Global M&E Matrix](#) can provide you with guidance for indicators that are relevant for measuring progress towards Key Change Promise 6.
- **Strategic plans should specifically highlight your approach to youth participation and youth engagement.** This approach should be developed collectively with young people. Use the two diagrams below bto help you determine the approaches you will use. For example, will you be working with youth as partners, or supporting young people to lead and drive change in the LRP? Will levels of youth involvement be low, medium or high? Remember that a combination of approaches may be the most appropriate.
- Consider whether young people in your LRP who have been involved in strategy development a) have the capacity to and b) are interested in writing up a section(s) of the strategic plan. **For example, young people could write up ActionAid's approach to youth engagement/youth participation.**

What does youth participation look like?



Planning tools for use with youth

The following Reflection-Action tools can be used when developing an LRP strategic plan with youth.

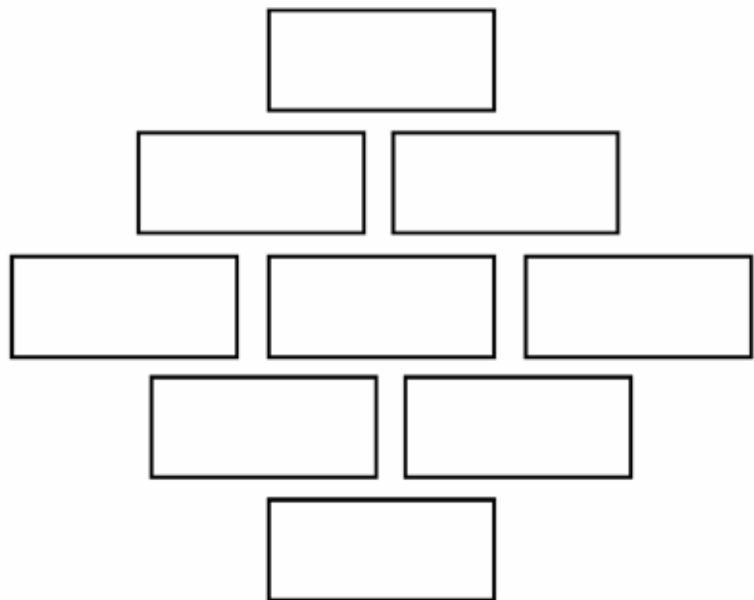
Setting goals, objectives and outcomes

1. **Maps** = Maps can be used at strategy development stages to anticipate changes or expectations for the future. They can help young people to create a vision for the impact of an LRP programme, and work particularly well for younger groups of youth. Visit [here](#) for more information on participatory mapping.

Deciding on priorities

2. **Ranking tools** = these can include pairwise ranking, or diamond ranking. For younger age cohorts, diamond ranking works particularly well if you need to set priorities after a discussion or a brainstorm. To use this tool, follow the steps below:

- Divide your group of participants into smaller groups of 4-8 people;
- Draw a boxed, diamond-shaped figure on each piece of flipchart paper so it looks similar to the figure to the right. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and some post-it notes/sticky notes;
- Ask each group to choose the nine most important issues that were discussed and prioritise them according to importance. They can post the post-its/sticky notes on the squares provided, with the most important one on top, then the next two in importance until they've ranked all nine.



Top tip:

Since this is not a typical hierarchy picture, youth should understand that the bottom of the diamond shape means that the problem mentioned there is the least important, but still contributes to the overall picture of the situation.

Planning for action

1. **Timeline/river/road tools** can be used to plot activities and highlight how young people can be engaged as partners/leaders in activities/events or key milestones that will take place in the LRP. You can, for example:

- Stick 2-3 pieces of flipchart paper together. Draw a line or image of a river/road across the paper. Use the start of the line/river/road as a reference point for the start of your LRP activities or events;
- Ask the group to plot activities in sequence on the line/river/road;
- Ask the group which activities will young people be involved in? Draw a circle next to these. Which activities will young people lead? Place a star next to these.

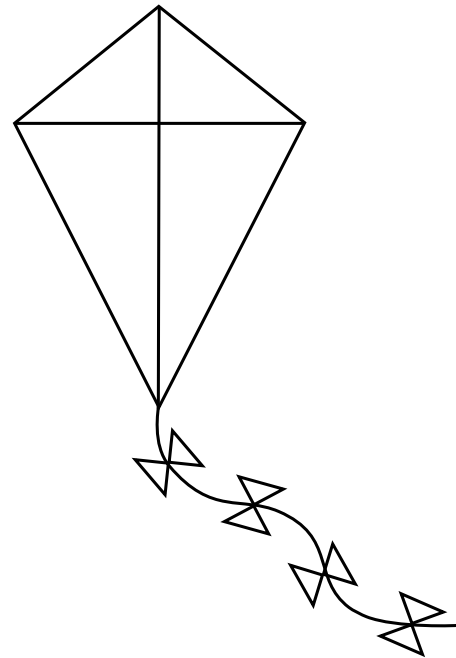
NB You can use these diagrams at the end of a project/activity cycle to evaluate whether things ran to plan, the difficulties faced along the way, and the extent to which youth really engaged as partners or as leaders in relation to the original plan. For more information on these tools, visit the [Reflection-Action space on HIVE](#).



Planning for action

2. The Kite

This tool can help you to work with a group to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, resource needs and staff support required to implement a project. It can also be used to identify barriers and enabling factors for promoting youth engagement of all aspects of your LRP work. It works well with younger groups of youth. To use the tool:



- **Draw a picture of a kite**, like the one to the right on a large piece of flipchart paper. Be sure to include a rope that is tying it to the ground, or maybe picture someone holding the rope. The kite should be large enough to write on, and there should be some extra space around the sides.
- **Ask the group to write inside the kite all the things that need to be in place so the kite can take off.** What will make our LRP project/ programme, or youth engagement in our project/ LRP successful? What do we need to implement our work? (E.g. staff, resources)
- **Whose support is needed?** On the tail of the kite, write the names of people or organisations that need to support the work for it to be effective.
- **What is tying us down?** On the rope write down the things that are holding back the project or youth participation in the project and keeping it from growing.
- **What would make the project fly?** Above the kite write down the things that would really make the project (or levels of youth engagement) soar – what would make it an even bigger success?
- **What could blow the kite off course?** On the sides of the kite, write down the things that could prevent the project from fulfilling its purpose or that could prevent youth engagement. What challenges might you face?
- The ideas you gather can be used to plan and implement.

Simple planning matrix tool - with a youth focus:

Activity	By whom?			By when?	Resources required
	Young women and men	Young women and men participate with others	Young men and women not involved		
Activity 1					
Activity 2					

Supporting young people to develop a critical pathway

A critical pathway is a visual representation of a theory of change for a project or programme. It helps to determine what change we want to see from a programme, and how we will make this change happen. This Reflection-Action resource highlights how you can develop a simplified critical pathway with a group of rights holders. There are many tools that can help a group visualise a critical pathway, for example:

- **A river** can be used to visualise the outcomes needed to get from where we are now (the start of the river) to where we want to be (the end of the river).
- **A bridge** is another way to imagine how to create change. Consider which planks are needed (outcomes) to get you from this side (the current situation) to the other side of the bridge (the ideal situation).



Further reading...

- For more information visit the [Reflection-Action tools space](#) on the HIVE.
- Refer to the [Youth Rights Analysis section](#), which provides links to examples of how Reflection-Action tools can be adapted for youth, and when they should be used.
- For more information on ActionAid's Theory of Change and youth, see page 11 of the [Youth Engagement Plan](#).



Stakeholders for youth

A stakeholder analysis is essential when planning your LRP strategy. It can build upon the Youth Rights Analysis you did at appraisal stages¹ by exploring certain themes in greater depth. By the LRP strategy development stage, you will have a clearer idea of the issues facing youth, and where the focus of your LRP objectives may lie.

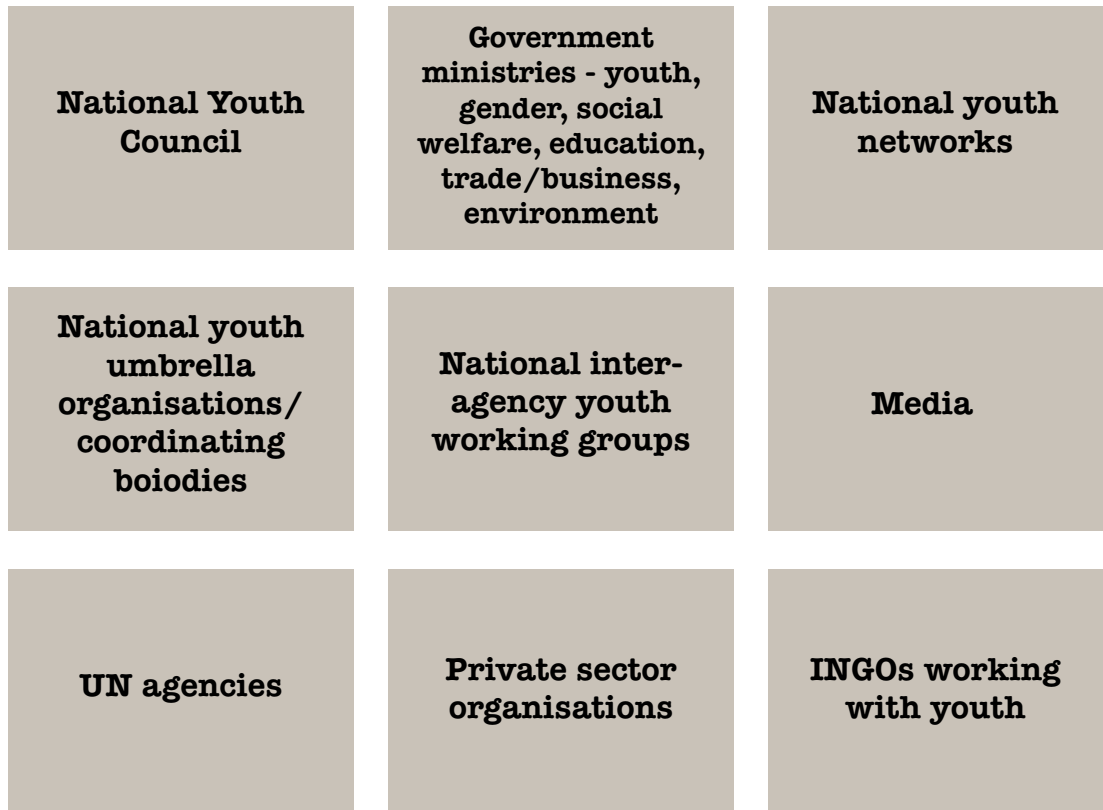
Stakeholders are those who are directly/indirectly affected by the work you are planning to do in the LRP. They are also those who have the resources, power or influence to promote or obstruct youth rights.

Key LRP-level stakeholders for youth:



1. You may have used a chapatti diagram tool with groups of young people to analyse key actors or institutions that are relevant to youth

Key national stakeholders for youth:



Key questions for stakeholder analysis:

- Is the stakeholder directly or indirectly affected? How?
- What is the stakeholder's interest in this area of youth rights work?
- What goals/motivations guide the stakeholder?
- What is the stakeholder's attitude to this area of youth rights work? What support do they provide for youth?
- How much power/influence does the stakeholder have over our proposed objectives? What positive/negative impact can the stakeholder have?
- What win-win strategies can be used to benefit both the LRP and the stakeholder?

Case study from India...

Never forget your stakeholders!

Failure to conduct a thorough stakeholder analysis at LRP planning stages can lead to problems when you start implementation. Consider this case study from a small NGO in northern India:

The organisation was working on a project to promote youth rights to sexual health. As part of this project, the organisation supported youth to do a role play in order to convey messages of risks related to HIV and AIDS to other youth in the community. Since the organisation had been working in the community for a long time, on issues relating to malaria and TB, it did not foresee an issue. However, community elders who saw the play were scandalised and called it 'pornographic'. The organisation ended up losing six months of project time trying to convince the community elders of the need for the programme and to re-establish credibility in the community¹.

1. Taken from 'Stakeholder Analysis for Youth Programmes', Rutgers WPF



Top tip:

In designing your LRP strategic plan, mapping out your youth partners/key youth stakeholders at local and national levels on flip chart paper can help you to bridge gaps between programming at local and national levels. For example, you can draw a line between those partners/stakeholders that are already linked up. You can draw a dotted line between those partners/stakeholders that should interact/be linked up, but who do not currently engage. How can you support these linkages to be strengthened in your LRP strategic plan? How will local to national linkages support you to meet your LRP strategy objectives?



Linking **activista** with LRP programming

Integrating programming and campaigning work at LRP levels is consistent with ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA).

At LRP strategic planning stage, we recommend that you involve Activista network members¹ in your processes, and that you read any key Activista planning documents that exist in your country. This will help you to ensure that your LRP strategic plan has carefully considered how it can link up with Activista to increase the impact of work. Doing this can help to promote solidarity actions between young activists and rights holders in LRPs and those at national levels, such as university students. It can help you to forge links from local to national levels and upwards.

Below are some ideas for how LRPs across the Federation engage closely with Activista networks to increase the impact of their programming. These examples align well with ActionAid's HRBA and Theory of Change.

Examples of LRPs linking with Activista networks

AA Zambia: Linking urban to rural, linking local to national

In Zambia, Activistas implement youth leadership training for young people in LRPs. This training has a focus on understanding tax and tax justice issues. After this training, some young people from the LRPs go on to do further training at national level, so that local and national level campaigning on tax issues is better linked. AA Zambia has found that meeting Activista members who work mostly at national levels exposes youth from our LRPs to new learning, and vice versa. Activistas also provide support to LRPs so that they can participate in the photo campaigning elements of the tax campaign.

AA Gambia: Promoting sustained and solidarity action

ActionAid Gambia has started recruiting formerly sponsored children in its LRPs to become Activista members. This helps to ensure the engagement of young people across the lifecycle, and helps to promote sustained action of young people. This means we are directly contributing towards the delivery of Key Change Promise 6: 'By 2017, we will have mobilised over five million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty free planet'. In addition, Activista Gambia conducts activities that promote solidarity between Activistas and women farmers. For example, in 2011, Activistas in Gambia organised a campaign to promote women smallholder farmers' land rights. As part of the campaign, Activistas held meetings with women farmers at LRP levels, and supported them to voice their demands at national levels – e.g. to the National Assembly Select Committee on Agriculture.

AA Bangladesh: Linking local to national, urban to rural and building solidarity

Young people from AA Bangladesh's LRPs are invited to participate in national-level activities involving Activista. They then return to do step-down trainings at LRP level, and they are supported to apply their learning. Activistas in Bangladesh also set up mentoring programmes for disadvantaged youth at LRP levels.

1. Not all ActionAid countries have active Activista networks at LRP levels – it may be the case that your Activista network is active at the national level, creating barriers to their engagement in your LRP work.

Examples of LRPs linking with Activista networks

Voices from the field: Nigeria's experience

"Youth in LRPs are not empowered to deeply understand the issues affecting them and take action. In Nigeria we are working on promoting collective action between LRP youth and youths who are urban or university students, many of whom are Activistas. We organise Activista through a cell structure – we have cells in the LRPs, on university campuses and in urban centres. We are training them together and supporting them to work in solidarity to build a viable, diverse youth campaigning movement." *Kenneth Okoineme, AA Nigeria*



Top tips for strengthening Activista engagement in LRPs:

- Invite Activista members to LRP appraisal, strategy development, planning and M&E events and ensure their active engagement
- Consider linking formerly sponsored children to the Activista network, as well as older children who participate in already existing structures at LRP level, such as Girls' Clubs, or CREST circles
- Involve the Activista Co-ordinator in the country in LRP strategic planning processes
- Conduct joint training between LRP youth and Activista members – explore how this training can lead to the development of joint actions
- Consider developing Activista groups at LRP levels – these can even be in schools. For example, Activista Gambia has Activista clubs/networks at school levels
- Coordinate in advance with Activista if you are planning events at the LRP level for World Food Day, International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child, International Youth Day etc



Section 4: Youth in implementation

Involving youth in programme implementation... An overview

The table below gives some examples of how youth can be involved in programme implementation. It also shows how levels of youth engagement can vary according to the activity. A mixture of approaches may be used in your LRP – these will depend upon young people’s desire and ability to combine participation in programming with their other responsibilities, as well as how activities are designed and facilitated.

How to involve youth in programme implementation:

Examples of low level youth participation	Examples of medium-high level youth participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are informed about LRP implementation plans • Youth are informed about where and when activities will take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth undertake/lead community mobilisation activities • Youth facilitate Reflection-Action groups • Youth are trained and act as peer educators

Examples of low level youth participation

- Youth participate in international advocacy days – e.g. International Day of the Girl Child; International Youth Day
- Youth are interviewed for case studies/ radio/news broadcasts



Examples of medium-high level youth participation

- Youth conduct referrals to youth service providers for their peers
- Youth provide counselling to peers
- Youth implement campaign activities
- Youth mentor sponsored children in the LRP – e.g. through setting up homework clubs for younger children
- Youth engage in child sponsorship activities – e.g. by supporting or leading community sensitisation; collecting child messages and engaging children in LRP programming through child-focused methodologies
- Youth allocate and manage small grants in the LRP
- Youth develop and disseminate communications materials
- Youth represent ActionAid and its partners at external events
- Youth conduct outreach work – e.g. with out-of-school youth to support them to return to education
- Youth conduct social audits, lead budget tracking initiatives
- Youth participate in decision-making spaces at the LRP level
- Youth write blogs or take photos/videos to support advocacy initiatives
- Youth are involved in identifying potential LRP partners
- Partner organisations are involved in youth agendas

Examples of how to involve youth in programme implementation

Lessons from the field: AA Ghana

Child Rights Clubs at the LRP level in Ghana have been successful in conducting outreach work with children who dropped out of school to engage in illegal mining activities. As a result of children and youth in the clubs conducting sensitisation with their out-of-school peers, as well as parents, over the course of a few weeks, fifteen pupils from one LRP returned to school. Children in LRPs in Ghana are also active members of Community Anti-Violence Groups made up of community members who are trained in child rights and child protection and support at-risk children in their communities. ActionAid Ghana have developed training manuals for the Child Rights Club members, including children, detailing techniques for supporting children and youth to participate meaningfully in these structures. For more information, contact: esther.boateng@actionaid.org.

Examples of how to involve youth in programme implementation

AA Ethiopia supports youth to lead

AA Ethiopia has set up youth groups in villages at LRP levels. These youth groups carry out diverse activities – from organising livelihoods initiatives, to campaigning for social justice. Some groups are youth watershed management groups, who have successfully managed to reduce deforestation in their localities. Youth groups and their associations play a leading role in programme activities, while AA Ethiopia and local government structures support them along the way in campaign planning and implementation. Staff from AA Ethiopia say, *“It is important to remember that youth can lead implementation. They are quick learners and can rapidly become change-makers in their communities.”*



AA Myanmar's Change Makers

AA Myanmar's approach to community development is an example of high levels of youth engagement at every stage of the programme cycle. AA Myanmar deploys 'change makers' (youth leaders) into target communities. These youth are trained by AA Myanmar, and go on to mobilise and organise the local communities, support them to analyse their common problems, and enable them to plan and take action in a participatory way. They have supported local communities to negotiate on land issues, and fight unfair compensation claims, as well as take action on other social injustices. Many fellows have gone on to set up their own community-based organisations or networks, and attribute their success to the grounding they had from the fellowship programme at AA Myanmar.

Catch them young: involving youth in budgeting in Ghana

The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), a local NGO in Ghana, has been implementing a youth budget advocacy project. As part of the project, 15 young people were selected to become Master Trainers in budget monitoring and advocacy. They were trained using practical and participatory techniques. Their training covered rights-based approaches, family budgeting, budget cycles and they were supported to gather evidence through field visits and key informant interviews with local authorities. They then went on to train 15 other young people, and supported these youths to develop a budget advocacy plan. One young female participant said: *“At first I doubted the possibility that I could teach my peers about budgeting, but the participatory approaches have helped me realise how I can contribute and support others to contribute their ideas.”*

As a result of their activities, youths have been monitoring District Assembly budgets and holding durbars with District Officials, where they present their advocacy asks via role plays and dramas, as well as concise budget reports. Youth groups have also been involved in advocacy at the national level – ISODEC supported them to engage in a forum of NGOs to make inputs into Ghana's 2011 budget statement.

Checklist for quality youth participation

Use the following checklist at the implementation stage to ensure meaningful youth participation throughout the process:

- ✓ We have encouraged the participation of young men and young women who are often excluded from programme activities on the basis of their race, sex, disability, or any other status
- ✓ We have put in place mechanisms that allow young women to participate – e.g. by ensuring there is available child care and by ensuring activities do not clash with young people's other responsibilities and by ensuring young women have 'safe spaces' where they can meet, and openly reflect in a supportive environment
- ✓ We are supporting youth with money for necessary transport and refreshments
- ✓ We have tried to involve youth in issues and activities that they are interested in, and that are appropriate to their capacities and skills
- ✓ We are supporting young people with regular opportunities for review, debrief and constructive feedback
- ✓ We are regularly assessing risks associated with youth involvement in programme implementation
- ✓ We are encouraging and building the capacity of adult staff in our local partner organisations and in ActionAid to actively provide on-going support and encouragement to young people involved in programme implementation



Top tip:

This checklist can also be adapted and used after implementation has been completed to enable you to critically reflect upon the quality of youth involvement.

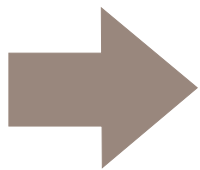


Youth in project management

Why involve youth in project management decisions?

- It is young people's right to be involved in the decisions that are likely to affect them
- Young people know what they need, and how project management decisions might be perceived by young people in the area.
- Involving them – and other rights holders - in project management decisions can help to ensure that your projects are robust, relevant and effective, as well as sustainable, as young people are trained to become future project managers
- Involving youth can bring fresh, creative and diverse perspectives to decision-making processes
- The process of engaging youth in project management processes can help to build young people's leadership skills, their ability to plan and make critical decisions. In the long term, it will enable them to develop as active citizens and active contributors to their communities
- Involving youth can encourage greater ownership of the LRP by young people and the wider community. This can promote sustainability of your work in the long term
- Youth may be more likely to engage more effectively with younger cohorts of children than adults, and can therefore play a key role in supporting the empowerment of children to future leadership roles

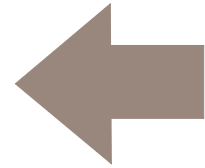
Where do I start? Follow the steps...



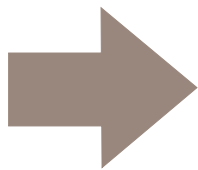
STEP 1: Map out where decision-making takes place in relation to your LRP

- Are there monthly project management meetings between ActionAid and its partners?
- Is there an LRP project management committee/steering committee?
- How do you decide about decisions relating to location of project activities; agreeing budgets and plans; or hiring staff?
- Do you normally seek input from rights holders on these decisions?

STEP 2: Ask young people in the LRP if and how they might like to be involved



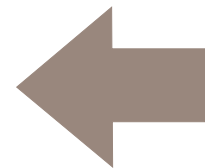
- Do not assume that all youth want to be involved – they may not be interested in participating in management processes and more interested in direct participation in implementing programme activities;
- You can consult via Activista networks, youth Reflection-Action groups, or any other spaces in the LRP where youth are involved.



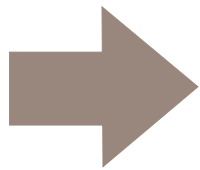
STEP 3: Prepare adults

- Invest time in preparing adults involved in programme management for youth involvement;
- Give adults a chance to voice their concerns frankly – they may be unconvinced about the benefits of involving young people, or concerned that they will have to give up power to young people;
- They may also need support to change their ways of working in project management meetings, so that the procedures and language used do not prevent young people from participating meaningfully;
- [Tools for winning hearts and minds](#) in the toolkit can be used to work with adults to bring them on board.

STEP 4: Recruitment / selection



- Carefully consider how you will select the youths for involvement in project management processes. It may be easier to select a well-educated, vocal and articulate young person as they will need less support to prepare them to participate;
- However, remember that youths should represent their constituencies in the LRPs, and that the most marginalised youths will offer unique perspectives, and will often have the most to benefit through their involvement;
- Make sure that your selection procedures do not exclude less literate youth or young women – e.g. if you ask for written applications or a presentation as part of the recruitment process; or if restrictions on female mobility mean that they are unable to participate;
- Also consider how age-out sponsored children can be involved in project management – their involvement in sponsorship programmes will have given them unique perspectives into ActionAid's work at LRP levels.



STEP 5: Preparing and supporting youth

- Make sure young people are clear in advance on what their role will be, and how much influence they are likely to have over decision-making;
- Make sure young people understand what they will get out of the process;
- Develop an induction plan for them – and involve them in the development of this plan;
- Consider what training they might need before they are able to participate: this could include planning skills, time management abilities, financial literacy or simple training on how to chair a meeting;
- Consider whether you can pair up youth representatives with an adult for mentoring purposes.

Lessons from the field: Youth take a seat at the table

In a CIDA-supported project on conflict resolution for adolescents in Columbia, a young representative from each of the six project regions participates in the Project Technical Committee. The Committee is an opportunity for young people to contribute to the project's operational aspects, including annual assessments of the effectiveness of the activities, work planning, management of risk mitigation strategies, and budget monitoring and allocation.

AA Bangladesh has a young person on its General Assembly. Showvik Das, a young General Assembly member, shared that AA Bangladesh often invited General Assembly members to key programmatic events in LRPs held throughout the year so they are able to participate and feedback on on-going work.

A Child Rights project run by Plan in Sri Lanka initially tried to involve young people in the Project Advisory Committee that met regularly in the capital city of Colombo. However, youth attendance at these meetings was very low. Upon exploration, Plan staff realised that this was because the young female participants (who were in the majority) felt it would be inappropriate for them to travel overnight unaccompanied by family members. The project then decided to hold regional meetings instead, so that only day travel was required.

TROUBLESHOOTING... Common problems

- Adults may feel threatened by youth involvement and reject the validity of the children's views; interrupt them or display unreasonably high expectations of young people. Ensure you build in enough time for adult preparation to avoid this scenario. Encourage adults to focus upon the assets young people have rather than what is lacking. Support the introduction of participatory facilitation and meeting management to ensure everyone gets a say. Also, use the [Youth-Adult Partnership Self-Assessment Tool](#) as a starting point for discussion with adults who are having trouble empowering youth to participate.
- Youth may not fully understand what is being asked of them or feel unable to give their views about issues they feel have no relevance to them. To combat this, making space after project management meetings/processes to do debriefings with youth can work well. Encourage critical reflection after meetings, allow youth to voice concerns or questions about areas they did not understand. This will help to build their capacity to engage at the next meeting. Use debriefings as a tool for assessing whether this is the best medium for youth to participate.

Mobilising youth

Why is mobilisation so important?

Mobilisation of young people is central to Key Change Promise 6:

By 2017, we will have mobilised over five million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty-free planet

Mobilisation is about much more than gathering people together for a meeting; it is about linking up diverse groups to share a vision, and build their capacity to take direct actions to tackle poverty. It is both the starting point and process for empowerment, solidarity and campaigning.



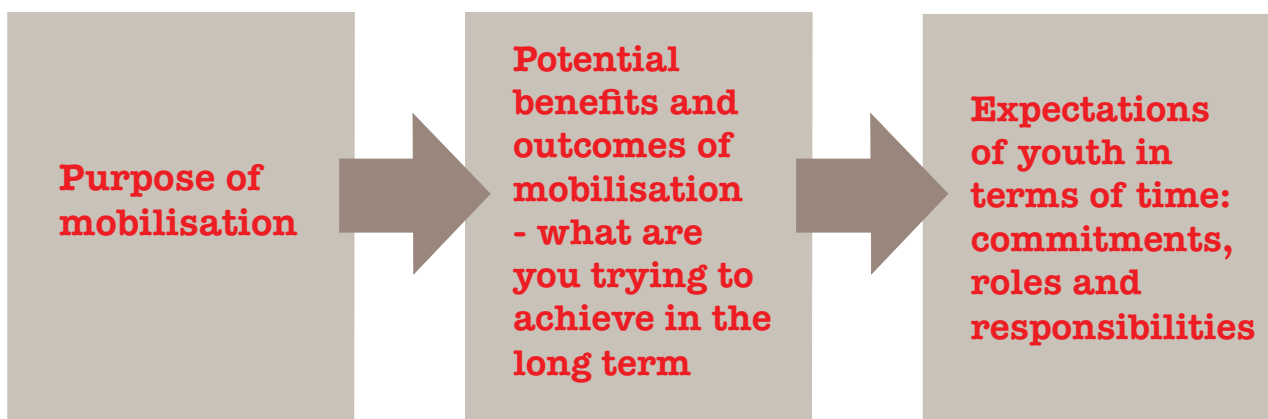
Mobilisation strategies

- **Identify and engage local leaders** in the community early on (refer to the stakeholder and institution analyses you did at LRP appraisal stages, see the diagram below). Failure to do so can mean that leaders become threatened and may block your intentions to engage with youth. Local leaders can include religious leaders, local government, and village chiefs.
- **Identify local opinion formers** who are influential with young people – refer to key stakeholders for youth diagram below.
- **Don't forget about informal leaders** who have a lot of influence with young people – e.g. football team captains, women's group's co-ordinators, teachers.
- **Use existing youth groups at LRP level** (e.g. Activista groups, youth Reflection-Action groups) to support your mobilisation efforts. Often, youth are the most effective mobilisers of other young people.
- Consider **innovative mobilisation techniques** that might appeal to youth: these could include roleplays; sports events; participatory theatre/drama; radio programmes.
- Conduct a **risk analysis** early on to ensure your chosen mobilisation strategies are safe.
- Make sure that you can clearly articulate the key points highlighted the 'What do I need to communicate' diagram below, throughout the mobilisation process.

Key LRP-level stakeholders for youth:



What do I need to communicate?





Top tips - Digital mobilisation:

Depending upon which groups you are trying to reach, and why, SMS mobilisation techniques might be the best option for you. For detailed guidance on how to use SMS messaging for mobilisation or campaigns-related purposes, use this [ActionAid guide](#).

Mobilising the most marginalised

‘Young people themselves are more likely to know how to reach out to other youth.’

ActionAid Ethiopia

You may need targeted mobilisation strategies for reaching out to marginalised, diverse groups in the LRP. Carefully consider gender dynamics in the local context and plan accordingly to get your messages across. For example, you may need to hold separate meetings for women, as in some contexts women, especially young women, will be reluctant to speak openly in meetings with local leaders. Carefully consider restrictions on women’s mobility when planning logistics and mobilisation/meeting locations.



Lessons from the field: ActionAid Afghanistan’s indirect mobilisation

ActionAid Afghanistan has used indirect methods to reach out to female community members in LRPs to inform them about child sponsorship and to involve them in the process. Having implemented health programmes before, AA Afghanistan had links to local clinics, and successfully used doctors as entry points for speaking to women. Cultural barriers meant that an indirect approach was necessary.

Lessons from the field: ActionAid Brazil’s targeted mobilisation

ActionAid Brazil works with girls and young women aged 13-23 who have been affected by sexual exploitation and drug abuse. Daiane Dultro, who works with these groups says: *“Selling this programme to these girls in a traditional manner would not have worked, so we did not do traditional mobilisation. [The girls] like social media and are often texting their friends on their phones. So the project used Facebook, movies and mobile technology to reach out to the girls in the first place. This helped to make sure that the activities in the project were more interactive and participatory from the very start of mobilisation onwards. This means the girls are more likely to engage and stay involved with us as time goes on.”*

Don't forget...

- Youth may be marginalised and not represented in existing spaces and platforms where you carry out mobilisation.
- Some youths, particularly marginalised young women, may need convincing that they are worthy of participating in your programme – this can take time.
- Peer-to-peer mobilisation techniques can work better than traditional methods, as young people will often have a better idea how to locate their peers, and which youth are the most excluded in the community.
- Girls/young women need childcare for their babies or their younger siblings. How will you factor their needs into your mobilisation strategies?

Role of a mobiliser:

- To build good relationships with communities
- To work closely with community leaders
- To create awareness and interest in the purpose for the mobilisation
- To set realistic expectations among the community
- To facilitate linkages with other organisations/institutions in the LRP
- To respect local knowledge
- To reach out to the most marginalised and seek out diversity in mobilised groups

Training youth to mobilise at the LRP level

Many ActionAid countries engage youth as community mobilisers in LRPs. For example, ActionAid Zimbabwe and its partners often work with youth groups to mobilise young people to participate in review and reflection activities. Training in the following areas can support youth to be effective mobilisers:

- Leadership training
- Problem-solving and decision-making (life skills training)
- Participatory facilitation
- Public speaking
- Conflict resolution
- Communication skills necessary for engaging with diverse audiences

AA Denmark's Global Platforms, located in nine countries worldwide¹, provide training in many of the areas outlined above to Activista members, young people from LRPs and for local partner organisations. To find out more about the Global Platforms, visit: <http://www.globalplatforms.org/denmark>

1. There are plans to increase the number of Global Platforms in 2014

TROUBLESHOOTING... Dealing with difficult gatekeepers

Sometimes, difficult local leaders/key stakeholders can be a barrier to effective mobilisation. If this is the case, and if your initial stakeholder analysis carried out at appraisal stage does not help you to tackle the problem, consider the following tips:

- Be patient
- Analyse what the underlying issue is
- Talk to other groups/people who have worked effectively with this stakeholder in the past to get their advice
- Identify who has influence over this gatekeeper. Can you approach them?
- Consider who is the best person to engage with this gatekeeper – would someone in a senior leadership position have more success?



Lessons from the field: ActionAid Zimbabwe and the police

When mobilising youths for a baseline survey in an LRP, local police confiscated all the refreshments for the research team and research participants. When the young research participants found out there were no refreshments, they were angry and refused to participate in the activities, as they had been promised that lunch would be provided. ActionAid Zimbabwe's local partners were confused about the police's reaction, as they had been informed about the research activities and mobilisation. Upon further investigation, they found out that the police were annoyed because they had not been invited to participate in the lunch, even though project activities were taking place very close to the police station.



Further reading...

- For more information on different mobilisation techniques for youth read [Understanding the Pros and Cons of different Mobilisation Techniques](#)

Youth groups...do we set one up or not?

When designing a programme or activities to involve youth, it is common to mobilise and organise young people via 'youth groups' or 'platforms'. Platforms offer opportunities where young people come together to discuss issues, make suggestions for resolving a problem, and take action. There are many examples of youth groups across ActionAid – see the box below – but how do you decide what type of space is the best for young people? Do you create a new space or try to mobilise young people via an existing space? Who should decide this anyway? And what do we hope to achieve with these youth spaces?

Youth groups - a checklist of questions

- ✓ What are our intentions for this space? What do we hope to achieve? We need to be proactive to ensure that the spaces/platforms we support further our objectives for youth rights. Simply having a space does not guarantee youth participation, voice and power in decision-making.
- ✓ If you are setting up a new group, how will you ensure sustainability in the long term, and how will you ensure the new platform does not work in a silo or vacuum?
- ✓ Already established or institutionalised spaces may have greater potential for long term influence; think carefully before you set up any new group.
- ✓ How is the platform connected to key stakeholders and duty bearers from the wider community? NB the platform should not operate in a vacuum; we should refer to our power analysis and consider how the platform connects to those spaces where influence lies. See the table below for examples from AA South Africa, AA India and AA Ghana.
- ✓ Is the platform connected to wider decision-making/governance processes that are on-going? And how will the platform be linked up to on-going structures/processes at national and international levels?
- ✓ Have you ensured that the platform is representative of a wider population of young people – do the young members in the space reflect the diversity of the larger youth community (in terms of gender, race, disability status, etc).
- ✓ Does the group offer a 'safe space' for young women to speak freely and confidentially?
- ✓ Are youth in control of the platform, its meetings and how it operates? If they are, it is more likely to appeal to them.
- ✓ Is the platform visible and recognised by other stakeholders?
- ✓ Does the platform support the capacity-building of young people to participate? Is it preparing young people to go on and play an active role in other decision-making platforms/spaces.
- ✓ Will this platform change youth-adult power dynamics in the long term?
- ✓ Does the nature of the platform/space stigmatise young women/particular groups by mobilising them around a particular issue or cause – e.g. a group for single mothers; sex workers; people affected by HIV and AIDS.
- ✓ What happens when young people 'grow' out of these spaces?

Stand up and be counted! Some examples of youth platforms and spaces...

- Girls' clubs
- Children's clubs/child rights clubs
- Youth Reflection-Action Circles
- Youth groups
- Activista groups/networks
- Youth advisory groups
- Youth committees
- Youth councils
- Scout movements/Scout groups



Linking youth groups to other structures

AA Ghana, India and South Africa are part of a multi-country project aimed at improving young urban women's access to decent work and sexual and reproductive health rights. Youth groups are being created as 'safe spaces' where young women can discuss sensitive issues of sexual health, sexual exploitation and abuse. Each country plans to link up their groups to a variety of institutions at local and national levels for the purposes of advocacy, knowledge sharing and training.

AA India	<p><i>Youth groups linked up to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical colleges (for training) • Women's Commission (for advocacy) • Minority Commission (for advocacy) • Domestic Workers' Unions • Welfare Board • Women's organisations
AA Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of co-operatives • National Youth Council • Women's organisations • Faith-based organisations
AA South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to sex work, LGBTI groups • Develop an internship programme for youth group members with local NGOs • Community radio and newspapers • Creative methodology experts

Case study from Zimbabwe...

Young people, know your place!

ActionAid Zimbabwe has worked to promote youth participation in local decision-making and governance structures for many years. A challenge they have faced is that young people have become very disillusioned with political processes, mistrust adult leaders, and are divided along political lines. Many young people choose to 'self-exclude' from local governance. ActionAid Zimbabwe and its partners have had to carefully consider whether the creation of new spaces for young people is the best method for promoting youth influence in decision-making. They have found that youth mistrust of local leaders often means that youth-only spaces are very attractive to young people, and offers them a chance to build their leadership skills in a safe place where there is no threat of political manipulation. AA Zimbabwe found that youth-only spaces have been a good springboard that enabled youth to build their confidence to go on to engage with other governance structures that had previously been off-limits to them.

Case study from Ghana...

Catch them young: Young female parliament in Ghana

In July 2008, ActionAid Ghana and its partners – which included the National Youth Council and district government assemblies - introduced a Female Youth Parliament, made up of elected representatives from schools in a particular district. It was felt that young women needed a safe space to develop their skills, exercise their skills and build their confidence if they were to effectively engage in governance, leadership and decision-making in the wider society. A female-only structure was felt to be useful, since young women often have common concerns, and it was hoped that there would be a stronger solidarity among them. Individual members have now developed the courage and confidence to contest political positions in local government elections and contribute their ability to do this to their involvement in the Female Youth Parliament.

Type of group	Advantage	Disadvantage
Adult only – young people excluded	Potential for youth to challenge these spaces – argue for greater transparency and accountability	Can be very bureaucratic, representatives not used to broad consultation or involvement
Adult-dominated – youth may be invited into these spaces	Chance for youth to practice and build their skills of engaging in an adult decision-making body; institutionalised spaces have greater potential for long-term influence	Youth may only be invited on an adhoc irregular basis; adults get to decide when and who to invite; young people’s participation may be tokenistic; youth may be expected to fit into adult structures and ‘ways of doing things’ that are not youth-friendly; adults are not prepared for or do not buy into youth participation
Shared spaces – where decision-making is shared between young people and adults	Opportunity for youth to develop skills and access their rights via youth-adult partnerships; there is a chance that the power dynamics in the space are reflective of wider social inequalities (e.g. adults having more power than youth)	Young people may be subject to manipulation by adults; ability of young people to demonstrate leadership skills in the space will vary; young people may not be well prepared to engage in a youth-adult space
Youth-led spaces – spaces created and managed by youth with little/ no adult involvement	Ample room for youth to take up leadership roles; can be ‘safe spaces’ where young people can practice their skills, and do not feel manipulated by adult agendas; can act as springboards for youth engagement in other decision-making structures	Effectiveness of the space will depend upon how well it is linked up to other decision-making spaces



Top tips for retention of youth in LRP programming

Common challenges

When engaging with young volunteers across the programme cycle, there are common challenges that you may face.

Challenges of working with young volunteers:

Unclear job descriptions and expectations mean youth are confused and unable to deliver according to original intentions

Lack of youth motivation for sustained engagement - youth may migrate for economic reasons

Poor communication and relationships between ActionAid staff, local partners and young volunteers

To support effective engagement with young volunteers, and encourage their sustained action, ActionAid has developed a [Guidance Note on Working with Young Volunteers and Networks](#). The guidance will provide you with top tips, checklists, and practical advice on the following areas:

1. **How to effectively recruit and retain young volunteers** – including sample job descriptions for youth volunteers
2. **How to supervise and manage young volunteers** – including top tips for building strong youth-adult partnerships
3. **How to reward and recognise the achievements of young volunteers** – including suggestions for non-monetary rewards for youth
4. **How to evaluate the performance and provide feedback to young volunteers** – including sample evaluation forms and feedback templates
5. **How to communicate with young volunteers** – including pros and cons of different methods of communication



Top tips:

- If young volunteers spend a lot of time working in partnership with ActionAid staff members in the ActionAid country office, they should be included in Staff Climate Surveys. Climate surveys are usually carried out every two years, and include an analysis of work environment, policies, systems and support, attitudes and behaviour. A mix of focus groups, questionnaires and one-to-one interviews are carried out as part of Staff Climate Surveys. For more information, please see [Alps: Accountability, Learning and Planning System, p37](#)
- If you are setting up youth groups in your LRP, consider retention strategies for the groups from the outset. AA Ghana, South Africa and India have developed retention strategies for the youth groups they are setting up as part of a multi-country project for young urban women. See the table below for more information.

Examples of retention strategies for groups of young urban women:

<p>AA India</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure young women in the groups are supported to access social assistance schemes as part of group work • Exchange visits for youth in groups
<p>AA Ghana</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure groups adopt creative ways of working, using drama, roleplay, music • Ensure youth groups are youth-led to promote young women's interest in and ownership of the space • Offer opportunities for rewards/certification for women who engage in group activities/training • Link up groups with ongoing work in LRPs – e.g. campaigning events, International Day of the Girl celebrations • Organise exchange visits for youth in groups
<p>AA South Africa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a mentoring scheme between young women in groups and older women • Ensure every young woman in the group has relevant telephone contacts for support networks • Linking up youth groups to Activista network in South Africa so they stay connected • Ensure fun and creative ways of working • Ensure group facilitators have excellent participatory skills

For more information contact the International Project Manager for the Young Urban Women Project – Baishali.chatterji@actionaid.org



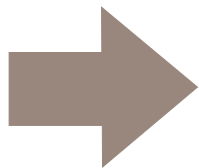
Youth engagement in child sponsorship

Why is this important?

ActionAid has the potential to 'give back' much more to its sponsored children, and formerly sponsored children. By considering the linkages between youth and child sponsorship, we can empower both children and young people as agents of change, and avoid approaches where children and youth are seen as 'passive' beneficiaries. Below we suggest four easy steps that can help to strengthen these links at the LRP level. But first, we need to overcome some challenges:

- Child Sponsorship and Programmes Departments can sometimes work in 'silos' –there can be poor communications and limited interaction between the two teams
- Likewise, colleagues focusing upon 'youth' and those focusing upon 'children' also risk working in silos, and do not consider how collaboration could strengthen programming
- This lack of collaboration between Child Sponsorship and Programmes staff can mean that children are not included in key stages of the LRP programme cycle, and may be left out of appraisal, strategy development, implementation and monitoring and review processes
- This lack of child participation can limit their ability to develop as agents of change as they get older and transition into being 'youth', and can negatively affect our ambitions to empower young people to drive change in their communities
- Supporting Child Sponsorship colleagues to increase child participation in LRPs can help to create an enabling environment for youth participation, and vice versa
- A lack of coordination can mean that children who have grown out of sponsorship are not systematically engaged in the youth work ActionAid conducts at the LRP level
- Therefore, greater collaboration between Child Sponsorship and Programmes staff can help support more joined-up programming and strengthen our ability to empower young people by building their skills to engage as children

TROUBLESHOOTING... Try these four easy steps for strengthening the links between youth and child sponsorship:



STEP 1: Involve youth in implementing child sponsorship activities

Young people in LRPs/Activistas can be trained on the importance of child sponsorship, child profile and child message collections, as well as community sensitisation. They can support the implementation of child sponsorship activities. E.g. in ActionAid Bangladesh, youth groups mobilise sponsored children to attend child centres, organise child sponsorship events and raise awareness on child rights.

STEP 2: Create youth-child partnerships

Just as this toolkit encourages youth-adult partnerships as a means to youth development and youth empowerment, it acknowledges that youth-child partnerships can be equally beneficial in empowering children and young people to act in solidarity and develop a mutual awareness of their rights. In AA Pakistan, youth groups are trained in child sponsorship processes. As part of their work, they help younger children with their homework, and organise sporting events, debates and other activities with and for sponsored children. Youth can raise children's awareness of local rights issues. Activistas could be trained and equipped with necessary tools for mentoring younger children and preparing them for their engagement with youth platforms in the future.

STEP 3: Engaging formerly sponsored children in youth platforms

It is important to ensure that children who have outgrown child sponsorship continue to be engaged in the development of their LRPs. AA Bangladesh has created **Phased-out Sponsored Youths Lifecycle Engagement Groups (PSYLEG)**. Child sponsorship teams are supported to develop a lifecycle engagement plan for formerly sponsored children and prove them with leadership skills, life skills and global change education. Ultimately, youth in these groups will engage with Activistas, as well as other LRP youths, to plan and design national level campaigns and advocacy strategies making sure that programme staff, as well as staff working with Activistas, have access to databases of formerly sponsored children can support some of these linkages to take place.

STEP 4: Joint programme management processes

Consider how you can include Child Sponsorship/Programmes colleagues throughout the programme cycle. You should jointly be engaged in:

- Key ALPS processes, including appraisals, planning, implementation, review and reflection and phase-outs. Child sponsorship timelines should be factored into your planning activities
- Consider whether you can link child sponsorship activities with youth programme activities - e.g. conducting Activista events to coincide with a sports event relating to child sponsorship. This is a key way to engage children as future change-makers
- Training – include Child Sponsorship staff in any upcoming youth-related trainings, e.g. Youth HRBA foundation course
- Involve child sponsorship staff in partner selection processes

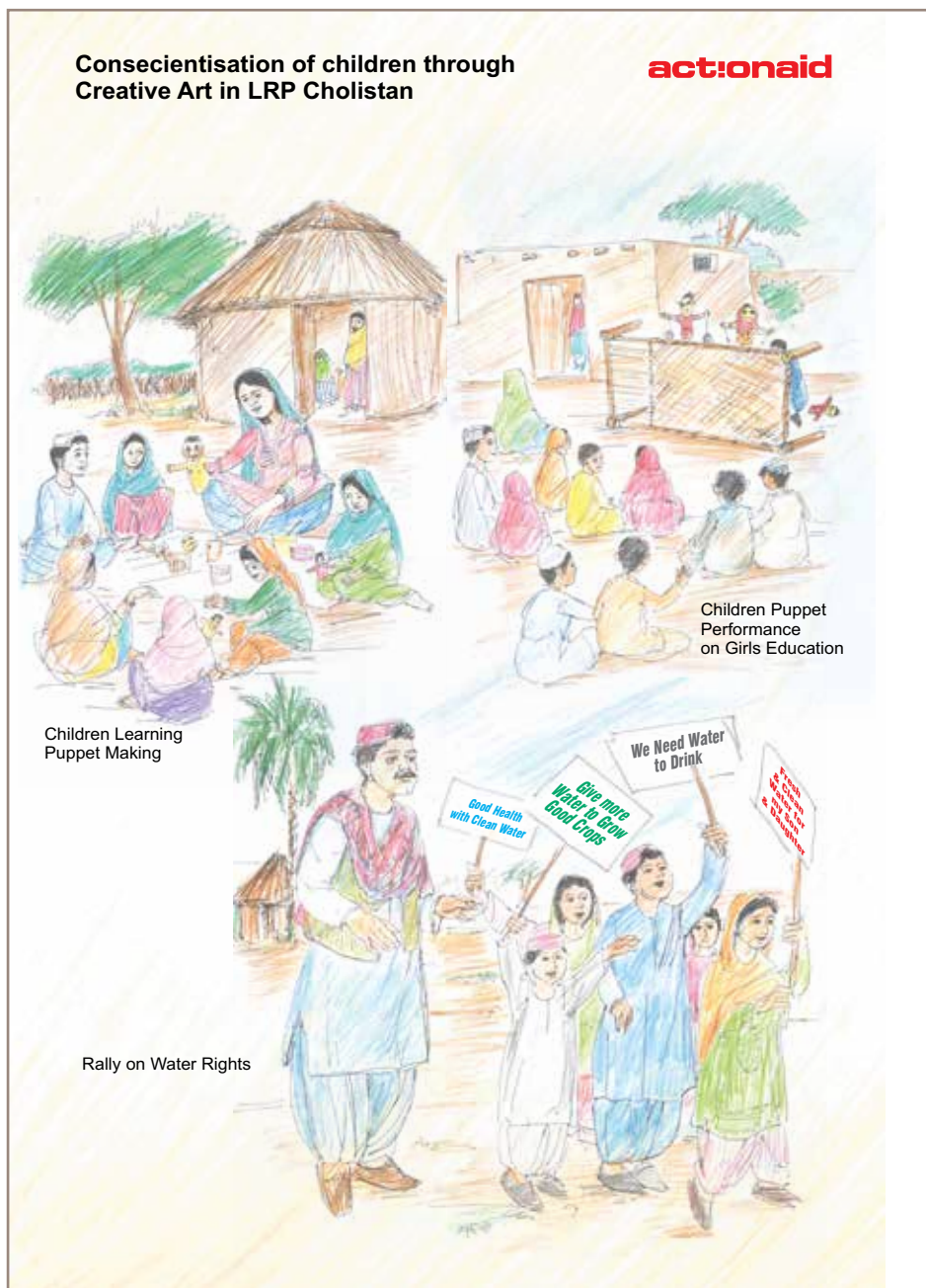
For more information, contact Senior Programme Officer, Sponsorship:
Charmaine.Shah@actionaid.org

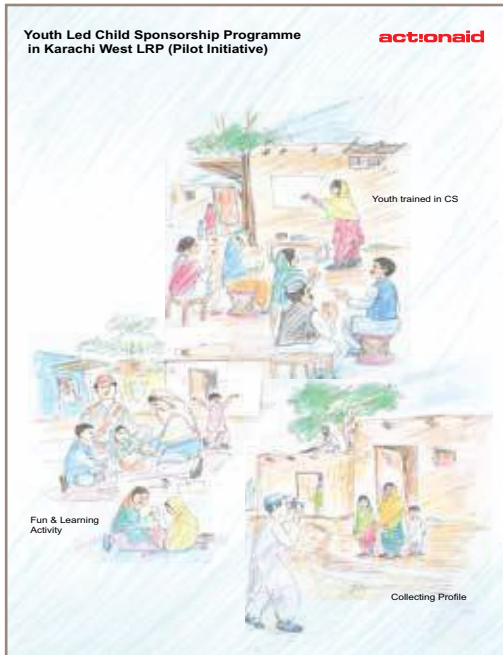


Further reading...

- [Supporting children and youth capabilities: continuing to empower and work with former sponsored children, ActionAid International](#)

Conscientisation of children through creative art in LRP Cholistan, Pakistan:





Youth-led child sponsorship programme in Karachi West LRP, Pakistan:

Activista LRP, Chagai, Pakistan:



Integrating youth into different Strategic Objectives

For guidance on how to integrate youth into the five Strategic Objectives, click [here](#).



Section 5: Youth in review & reflection

NB: all of the guidance in this resource sheet is consistent with key ALPS processes.

Involving youth in review and reflection processes - an introduction

It is important that young people understand what has been the outcome of interventions that have taken place in their communities and that may have involved their participation, and are involved in monitoring and evaluation – this can help to encourage them to continue their involvement over the long term:

- When young people see the results of their work and its impact, it can be a motivator and springboard for sustained action
- Youth involvement in M&E can be cost-effective – even when you factor in the costs needed to train and provide follow-up support to young evaluators
- Involving young people can lead to more effective monitoring and evaluation tools, as well as more accurate review and reflection results, promoting programme quality in the medium-long term
- Youth participation in review and reflection can be empowering for young people, as their exposure to new skills and learning can enhance their ability to critically reflect and respond to community concerns
- Can help to strengthen youth-adult partnerships and youth-community relationships as through the process young people interact with adults and diverse sections of the local community

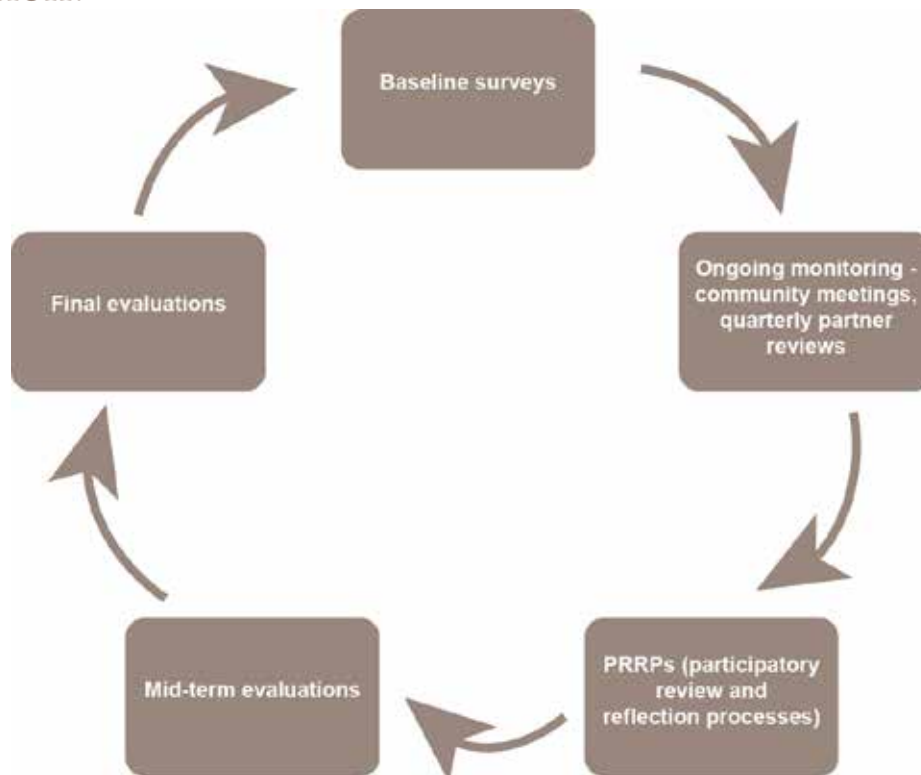
Why involve young people in review and reflection processes?

- It's an organisational requirement. People's Action in Practice stresses that 'people living in poverty should be involved in review and reflection processes wherever possible, as it is part of the empowerment process'.
- Involving young people in M&E means youth involved in your work are more likely to notify you when things are going off-track in the project, and when progress is not being made as planned.

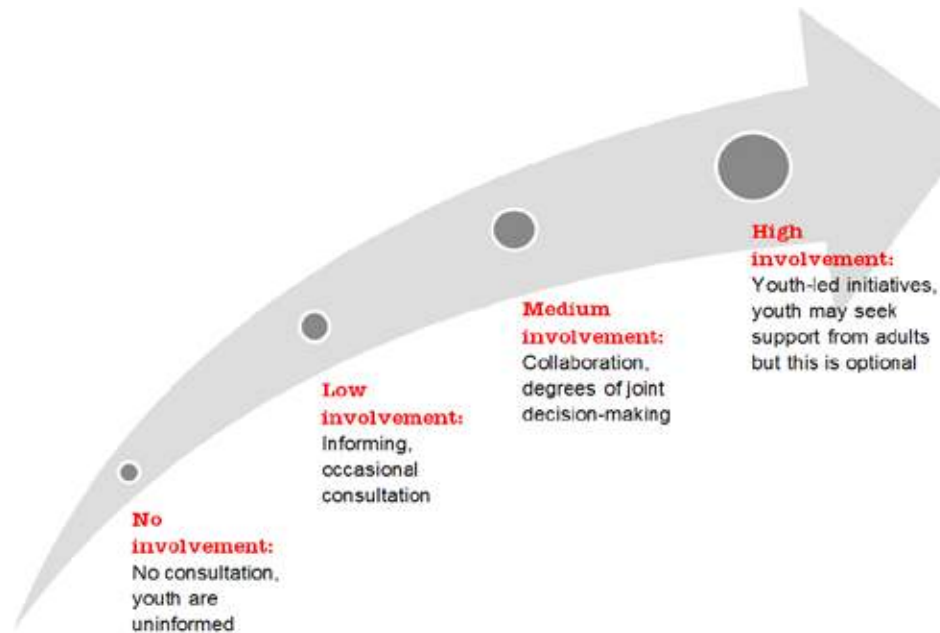
Barriers to involving young people in M&E

- Staff may feel that engaging youth is an overwhelming prospect as they feel they do not have the right skills and knowledge needed to engage young people.
- Staff may lack time and resources.
- Adults may not wish to hand over control of review and reflection processes to youth.
- Adults may not believe that young people can make a positive contribution to the field of monitoring and evaluation; they are unwilling to let youth take on new roles.
- Young people 'asking questions' may not be well-received by certain sections of the community.
- Cultural and religious barriers may prevent young women in particular from taking part due to, for example, restrictions on their mobility or possible exposure of young women to subjects that may be taboo.

Entry points for youth engagement in LRP review and reflection:



Levels of youth involvement in review and reflection:



Examples of youth involvement in monitoring and evaluation

Case study from UN Habitat...

UN HABITAT is engaging young people as partners and leaders in activities relating to monitoring and evaluating its programmes on housing and infrastructure for youth. For example, young people are developing M&E methodologies together with UN Habitat; establishing monitoring mechanisms; as well as identifying indicators. UN HABITAT has also supported youth to work closely with academics to develop methodologies for evaluating the impact of housing policies and programmes at local and national levels. In Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Senegal, young people are mobilised into a Climate Change Youth Corps. These groups are evaluating mitigating factors and effects of climate change through gathering anecdotal evidence from community members and carrying out climate mapping. As a result of these activities, young people will be carrying out a wide range of activities – from preparing policy briefs to developing simple toolkits for climate change mitigation in urban areas.

Case study from Uganda...

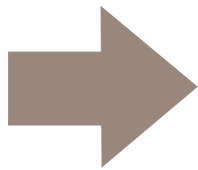
Restless Development, Uganda

A Youth Empowerment Programme in Uganda trained young people to lead field-based monitoring and evaluation as part of their work with peers on sexual and reproductive health, livelihoods and conflict resolution. They were trained on M&E by Restless Development, then were responsible for designing and pre-testing M&E tools; ongoing monitoring of programme work, which involved them keeping daily logs of all activities, workshop participant lists; implementing knowledge, attitudes and practices surveys with their peers. They were supported by Restless Development staff, who gave young people feedback on the quality of their M&E, and supported data analysis, as well as feeding back learning into programme delivery.

Case study from International Planned Parenthood Foundation's A+ Programme...

IPPF implemented a three-year programme called 'A+' to promote the sexual rights of young people in Nepal, Benin, Kenya and Nicaragua. The programme was evaluated through a process of youth-led participatory research that involved peer educators who had been involved in the A+ programme itself. As part of the evaluation process, a team of ten male and ten female youth in each programme country worked with an experienced adult researcher from an NGO in London called Panos, over a period of a week, where they received training in and support in M&E techniques. These young women and men then carried out research with their peers and adults in the community. They carried out key informant interviews, conducted surveys with their peers, and used photos and video to tell their stories of change. Meanwhile, an adult researcher in each country also conducted research with different local stakeholders, providing different perspectives. Youth protection was also an important consideration of the A+ assessment, so an ethical framework was followed to ensure that young people's participation was not at risk at any stage during the research process. Young people were subsequently involved in the analysis of research findings at the local, national and international levels.

Involving youth in review and reflection... A step by step guide



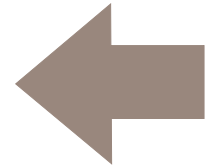
STEP 1: Planning your evaluation

Decide what the specific phases to your evaluation/review and reflection process will be. Working together with young people, decide which stages they could participate in and consult with youth on what aspects of evaluation they would be most interested in participating in. For each stage, consider what the challenges young people might face through their active participation. Use the tool below to guide you. NB if you involved young people at the appraisal stage, it is very important to ensure they are able to participate in ongoing review and reflection activities.

Planning a youth-friendly evaluation:

Phase of evaluation?	How are youth involved?	Challenges/risks
Determining goals of evaluation		
Designing evaluation framework		
Conducting a literature review		
Develop indicators		
Develop research tools		
Testing tools		
Implementation/fieldwork		
Analysing data		
Presenting/writing up findings		
Disseminating evaluation findings to community and other external audiences		
Advocacy linked to findings		
Critical reflection on the process		

STEP 2: Selecting young participants



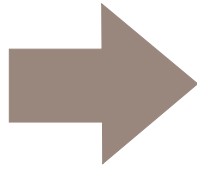
Be clear what skills are needed for carrying out specific review and reflection activities. See table below for ideas:

Activity / role	Skills needed
<i>Focus group facilitator</i>	Good communicator; good listener; committed to hearing the voices of everyone in the group; able to keep a group on track
<i>Key informant interviewer</i>	Non-judgemental approach
<i>Analysing quantitative data</i>	Analytical mind; people who enjoy looking at numbers and survey responses
<i>Writing evaluation report</i>	People who like to write; people who like to explain things in simple ways; respond well to feedback
<i>Presentation of research findings to external audience, e.g. community</i>	Confidence; experience of public speaking
<i>Mobilising community participants for an evaluation</i>	Good community relations; good communication skills
<i>Capturing stories of change via participatory video and photos</i>	Creative approaches; interest in media



Top tips:

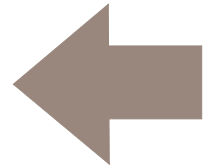
- Ask young people which M&E-related activities they are interested in being part of – remember, not all young people will want to get involved in every type of activity. Match young people's individual competencies to the skills needed for a particular activity – don't set young people up to fail!
- Child Sponsorship staff are key stakeholders in your M&E activities. For example, they can support you to identify young, age-out sponsored people who might be interested in participating as evaluators, and can help provide support to training young evaluators and assisting them to implement review and reflection activities.
- If you are nervous about engaging youth in M&E, or some adults you work with are unsure about the benefits of the process, then start small and take smaller steps to involve young people. Involve critical adults in the process as much as you can – start the journey together with them and share learning along the way.
- Co-presenting evaluation findings in an adult-youth team may work best if young people might have challenges responding to questions asked after the presentation by community members/external audiences.



STEP 3: Assess risks and secure buy-in

A risk faced by some young evaluators has been adverse community reaction to them acting in new roles or 'asking questions' in the community. Allocate time for consulting with key stakeholders if there is a likely risk of 'backlash' against young people conducting evaluations. Allow frank and open discussion of what stakeholder concerns are, and consider how gender norms might be behind the opposition. For example, AA Zimbabwe found that young female evaluators of a life skills programme faced opposition from local religious leaders who did not think young women should be asking questions relating to reproductive health or family planning. As a response, they allocated more time in their workplans for involving religious leaders in the programme; sharing its success stories with them in efforts to get them on board.

STEP 4: Training / supporting young participants



Youth will need support and/or targeted training if they are to be meaningfully involved in monitoring and evaluation – the type of training given will depend upon who the young people are; and the evaluation methodology. However, there are some subjects that are foundational to good M&E practice (see 'training topics' box below).

Post-training, follow-up support to enable young people to critically reflect and improve their skills is essential. Consider allocating young people with adult 'mentors' or adult 'M&E coaches' to provide them with on-going support to apply new learning to everyday practice. See example from IPPF A+ case study, above.



Training topics for young evaluators

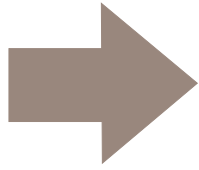
- The programme cycle
- Participatory (Reflection-Action) evaluation tools and how to use them, taking into account community dynamics
- Facilitation and communication skills
- Ensuring an ethical approach; confidentiality
- Safeguarding – staying safe throughout the research process
- Analysis
- Documentation/reporting



Learning from the field: Training young reviewers in India

In 2002, three young reviewers (aged 15, 16 and 13) worked with two adults to lead a participatory review of Young India's Project (YIP) in Andhra Pradesh. A larger group of children and young people from the project had been involved in developing the indicators and the methodology for the process at the beginning of the project. During a one-day workshop, the young reviewers pilot-tested participatory tools with children – as a result, children influenced which tools to use. The young reviewers were supported to introduce the assessment to different stakeholders, how to ask open-ended questions, etc. during an additional one-day workshop. Each day, the young reviewers reflected on and recorded key findings; they also reflected upon challenges faced while doing the evaluation and with feedback from the adult reviewers, discussed solutions for improving their skills. At the end of the week, the young people presented their findings to a group of community stakeholders. It was recognised that the children and youth had made excellent evaluators – they were able to gather information in systematic and effective ways, to analyse information and make recommendations.





STEP 5: Implementing review and reflection activities

Use the following checklist at the implementation stage when you are engaging young people in M&E activities to ensure meaningful youth participation throughout the process:

- We have encouraged the participation of young men and young women who are often excluded from programme activities on the basis of their race, sex, disability, or any other status;
- We have put in place mechanisms that allow young women to participate – e.g. by ensuring there is available childcare and by ensuring M&E activities do not clash with young people's other responsibilities;
- Youth who participate in the activities are supported by their organisations to ensure they do not suffer loss of an economic or social nature while they engage in the evaluation process. This might include providing acceptable reimbursement for transport and meals while on duty;
- We have tried to involve youth in issues and M&E activities that they are interested in, and that are appropriate to their capacities and skills;
- We are supporting young people conducting M&E with regular opportunities for review, debrief and constructive feedback;
- We are regularly assessing risks associated with youth involvement in M&E;
- We are encouraging adult staff in our local partner organisations and in ActionAid to actively provide ongoing support and encouragement to young people involved in M&E activities.



Top tips:

- This checklist can also be adapted and used at the end of the process to enable you to critically reflect upon the quality of youth involvement in review and reflection.



Further reading...

- [Alps: Accountability, Learning and Planning System, ActionAid International](#)
- [Building internal support for integrating youth](#) resource sheet

Youth-friendly Reflection-Action tools for measuring change

ActionAid has a long history of using different participatory tools for raising critical consciousness, analysing power, and measuring the impact of its work. ActionAid uses seven lenses of analysis when conducting LRP appraisals. These lenses should be revisited at key review and reflection moments throughout the programme cycle, to see where progress has been made, and what impact has been achieved. Suggestions are given for tools that are relevant for each type of analysis, including suggestions for making the tools relevant for use with, and by, youth. Click on the individual tools for detailed guidance on how they can be used.

Levels of analysis	What are we measuring?	Suggested tool for measuring change
Rights analysis	Changes in types of rights violations experienced by youth; changes in duty bearers' actions to prevent and respond to rights violations faced by young people; changes in numbers of young people living in poverty	Problem tree Access and control matrix
Power analysis	Changes in levels of power held by young men and women and in key institutions/ stakeholders relevant for youth; changes in levels of power and influence held by 'youth' spaces or platforms	Chapatti diagram
Actor / institution analysis	Changes in relationships between young people and a range of different actors; changes in levels of power and influence held by 'youth' spaces or platforms	Chapatti diagram
Women's rights analysis	Changes in critical awareness of young men and young women of gender roles and norms; changes in power relationships between young women and others in the community; changes in patterns of violence against young women; changes in levels of decision-making power held by young women; changes in young women's access to and control over resources	Body map Daily activity chart
Vulnerability analysis	Changes in young people's vulnerability to disasters; reductions in the numbers of young people who are vulnerable to such disasters	Maps Timelines
Communications analysis	Changes in young people's access to different types of media; changes in young people's ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders	Maps Problem trees
Risk and feasibility analysis	Changes in young people's perceptions of safety in programme areas; changes in risk levels faced by specific youth	Matrix Maps

**Top tip:**

- Any of the Reflection-Action tools mentioned in this toolkit can be adapted for use in an evaluation, providing they are used at regular intervals during the programme cycle – e.g. during PRRPs on an annual basis. If you are in the middle of a project/programme and do not have baseline information, you can consider using a map/river/timeline tool to chart the changes that have occurred since the beginning.

Examples of other participatory tools for evaluation

Stories of change can be used effectively with young people. These can be documented via poetry, paintings, photos, journals/diaries, drama, song or even puppetry. Tips for engaging young people in documenting a story of change are below:

- Give young people a few weeks to gather and develop stories in different, creative ways
- Stories of change can be identified after participatory evaluation tools have been used with young people. For example, after you have done a body mapping exercise with young participants, ask them to identify what the most important change has been for them. Use this priority change as a basis for choosing what could be documented in a story of change.
- It is important to document the discussions young people have when presenting their stories of change, as this will add value to your analysis of impact
- During any discussion about stories of change, remember to ask young people:
 - What has happened?
 - Who was involved?
 - How did that change occur?

Case study...

Young directors

War Child Holland has used small Flip cameras to document the impact of young people's participation in a project in Northern Uganda. Young people were trained for just half a day in how to use the Flip camera before they were able to go out and start recording. For a video about exactly how this initiative was carried out with young people, and the impact of participatory video, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srGNFkztrPU>

Case study from Sierra Leone...

Participatory videos in Sierra Leone

Local Sierra Leonean NGO, the Network Movement for Justice and Development, has trained young people to use participatory video as a monitoring and evaluation and advocacy tool. Staff from the Network explained that *“the initial reaction of youth to participatory video was awe and disbelief. They never believed that uneducated people could use a video.”* As part of this work, youth were trained in how to use video equipment, participatory tools and community-level engagement. A smaller cohort of youth were also trained in basic video editing by trainers from international development agency CAFOD. Before filming, young people and adults from the Network got buy-in from local community leaders for the project and what their intentions were. The youth facilitated workshops with communities to identify key changes that had taken place as a result of project activities, and used simple ranking tools to help communities prioritise changes. Films were edited in youth-adult partnerships – young people were supported by experienced CAFOD staff to edit footage. The materials were used to conduct advocacy with local duty bearers. Young people reported that this initiative helped to improve youth-community relations, as well as local perceptions about youth.



Further reading

- Resources for Implementing ALPs, Participatory Review and Reflection Processes
- [Building internal support for integrating youth resource sheet](#)





For any queries relating to this toolkit, or for further information on youth programming, please contact Leila Billing (leila.billing@actionaid.org) or Sarah Huxley (sarah.huxley@actionaid.org)

Acknowledgements

Rachel Mumbi Gichuki - Activista Kenya

Rachel Moussie & Christy Abraham – Women's Rights Unit, AAI

Karen Jorgensen – AA Denmark

Charmaine Shah – Child Sponsorship Coordinator, AAI

Rose Atim Obita, Simon Sentamu and Emma Pearce – HRBA Unit, AAI

Samiuddin Ahmed & Mostafa Kamal – AA Bangladesh

Ibrahim Nthalika – AA Malawi (Scaling up Youth work)

Sekou Beysolow – AA Liberia

Soren Warburg – Activista Coordinator

Casper Knudsen – Activista Digital Officer

Bevis Kapaso - Organisational Effectiveness

Laura Hawksworth – Research and Communications Officer, AAI

Strategic Oversight Team for Key Change Promise 6