

**Strategy for Youth Participation in the  
Solutions for Youth Employment Coalition**



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# Executive Summary

**“Young men and women today face increasing uncertainty in their hopes of undergoing a satisfactory entry to the labour market, and this uncertainty and disillusionment can, in turn, have damaging effects on individuals, communities, economies and society at large. Unemployed or underemployed youth are less able to contribute effectively to national development and have fewer opportunities to exercise their rights as citizens. They have less to spend as consumers, less to invest as savers and often have no “voice” to bring about change in their lives and communities.” (KILM 8th Edition, ILO, 2014)**



Globally, nearly half of all young people are unemployed or underemployed (1). Large numbers of youth enter the job market every year, and an estimated 600 million new jobs need to be created by 2030, just to keep pace with the growth of the global working age population (2). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of decent work in achieving sustainable development, and SDG 8 specifically recognizes the need for a global strategy to address youth employment issues and to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE) is a multi-stakeholder coalition among public sector, private sector, and civil society actors that aims to provide leadership and resources for catalytic action to increase the number of young people engaged in productive work.

The S4YE Coalition is committed to incorporating youth voice and engaging with youth more consistently in its work. Restless Development was contracted as a “Youth Participation Specialist” by the S4YE Coalition in August 2017 to consult young people and S4YE partners on how young people could and should be involved, and to develop a set of recommendations to guide and inform the S4YE Coalition on how to meaningfully engage young people. The agreed Terms of Reference can be found in Annex 1.

A central component of the methodology offered by Restless Development is the involvement of young people as active contributors – and not only the subject of – the research, analysis and recommendations. This has included convening youth consultations in India, South Africa and Colombia, as well as inviting members of an international Youth Review Team to review and comment on reports, documents and recommendations. Further information on the methodology, including youth participation in the review, can be found in Annex 2.

1. Goldin, N. Patel, P., Perry, K., “The Global Youth Wellbeing Index: A Report of the CSIS Youth, Prosperity and Security Initiative and the International Youth Foundation”, (April 2014).

2. Solutions for Youth Employment, ‘Toward Solutions for Youth Employment: A Baseline Report’ (2015) pg. 34

Using the ideas shared by young people during the youth consultations, the Youth Review Team, supported by Restless Development, have identified key recommendations for youth participation in the Solutions for Youth Employment Coalition. The recommendations and action plan focus on unleashing the potential of youth as agents of change.

These include recommendations for: the roles young people could play in the leadership and governance of S4YE; how S4YE could engage young people at an operational level; how S4YE could work with young people in the areas of innovation and knowledge, learning and communications; and recommendations for how S4YE could and should work with young people to reach a wider network. It also includes an action plan to guide and facilitate implementation of the recommendations.

## Summary of Recommendations

The 20 recommendations outlined in this report were developed by young people, with support from Restless Development. They cover recommendations for (1) youth participation in the leadership and governance of S4YE, (2) how S4YE could and should partner with young people, and (3) how S4YE could work with partners to create opportunities for young people to participate in its operations in two priority areas: firstly, innovation, designing 2nd generation youth employment projects, and secondly, knowledge, learning and communications.

Leadership and Governance: Young people recommend that the S4YE Coalition prioritizes youth engagement at the Board, Executive and Secretariat levels, integrating young people into existing governance structures and systems. This would involve building the capacity of and supporting Youth Representatives to participate meaningfully and as equals in order to have their voices heard and to influence.

Partnerships with Young People: Youth-led and youth-focused organizations can be strategic partners in identifying appropriate responses to national and local contexts, and to reaching and supporting the most vulnerable young people and those at most risk of being left behind. S4YE should invest in partnerships with young people, directing funding and capacity building towards young people's initiatives in the youth employment and enterprise sector, thus harnessing the assets and skills of youth in addressing the challenges that they face, unleashing young people's agency.

Recommendations for how S4YE could work with partners to create opportunities for young people to participate in its operations focused on making the resources available to youth-led organizations to deliver their employment and entrepreneurship innovations, ensuring diverse groups of young people are active participants in all stages of projects and research, and clear and appropriate communications.

# Hello from the Youth Review Team!

“The Youth Review Team members are Sunidhi and Ayesha from India, Nhlanhla and Athini from South Africa, Lina and Julio from Colombia. It is important the young people’s views are heard because we know our weaknesses and potentialities; we know our territory and we are capable with our activism to work for the development of our life plans. Unemployment is a very serious problem in our countries, companies do not usually provide us with employment opportunities first because we often do not have professional training and secondly because we do not have the necessary experience to perform the assigned role either in the public sector or in the private sector. We see entrepreneurship as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for us and our families, of course with a vision of building a country. However, the lack of technical and economic resources limits the progress of our projects.

The youth review team has played a very important role in creating this report, because we have been able to give our view, give recommendations and be an integral part of the whole process that Restless Development and S4YE carried out in our countries.

We want the S4YE coalition, together with our governments, foundations and companies, to voice our needs and potential. We dream of participating in decision-making and being ourselves who propose solutions to the challenges that the world's youth is going through, especially in the developing countries. We see S4YE as an opportunity to build youth policies where our dreams fit and we can turn them into reality.”



**Julio David Cordovilla Cabrera**  
Youth Review Team Member, Colombia



# High-level Assessment of the Youth Participation and Employment Ecosystem

The recommendations presented in this report are grounded in the experiences of young people and in established approaches to Meaningful Youth Engagement. As such, the following section sets out the global youth employment context, as well as the specific contexts of the three countries – South Africa, India and Colombia – in which S4YE Youth Consultations took place. This section also examines Meaningful Youth Engagement as an effective practice for solving youth unemployment, and sets out the global policy framework under which the efforts of the private sector, public sector, civil society, global institutions and young people converge in creating solutions to youth employment.

## The Global Youth Context

### Peak Youth

There are more young people on the planet than ever before, with 1.8 billion aged between 15–29 years (4). Almost 90% of those live in developing countries (5). This number is projected to climb until the end of the 21st century, before gradually declining in proportion (6), giving the world the largest youth population it has ever seen or is likely to see again. For this reason, Restless Development argues that the term ‘youth bulge’, commonly used to refer to this phenomenon, is better captured by the term ‘Peak Youth’.

With Peak Youth comes the economic opportunity – commonly termed the ‘demographic dividend’ – that a proportionally young, and therefore larger working population, can bring. The ‘demographic dividend’ argument is based on the theory that countries with relatively high ratios of working to dependent populations are more economically productive. Engaging young people in productive employment therefore leads to better economic outcomes for all.

However, youth employment is not just about economic productivity. What is not captured by the term ‘demographic dividend’ is that employment is a crucial part of the transition to adulthood for young people, allowing them to be recognized as such by state and society (7). Young people also cite increased control over their own lives and personal growth – and not only the desire to earn an income – as a reason to start a business (8). It is no surprise then that addressing the lack of economic opportunity is the number one priority for the majority of young people (9).

(4) UNFPA, “State of the World Population 2014” (2014), Available at: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report\\_FINAL-web.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf) Date Accessed: 04/12/2017

(5) The Commonwealth, “Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016”, (London: Commonwealth Secretariat: 2016), pg 4.

(6) Ibid., pg 29.

(7) Ibid., pg 7.

(8) Youth Policy Labs, “From Rhetoric to Action: Towards an Enabling Environment in the Sustainable Development Goals”, The Case For Space Initiative, (Berlin: Youth Policy Press: 2015), pg 68.

(9) Ibid., pg 37.

## Who are the young people?

Definitions of ‘youth’ vary between national contexts and amongst global institutions. The United Nations, for example, defines ‘youth’ as those aged 15 to 24 (10) while the African Youth Charter definition includes those between 15 to 35 years (11). Amongst the three countries in which Restless Development conducted Youth Consultations for this report, the definition also varies. India defines ‘youth’ as those aged between 15 and 29 years of age (12), while the Colombian definition includes those aged between 14 and 26 years old (13) and the South African definition includes those aged between 14 to 35 years of age (14). S4YE, in its strategy, defines ‘youth’ as aged 15 – 29 (15). Restless Development, recognizing the variance in definitions between national and regional contexts, defines ‘young people’ not as an age bracket but as those who are in a stage of transition from dependence to independence. For the purposes of this project, young people aged between 18 to 30 were consulted due to the focus on employment.

## Effective Practice: Meaningful Youth Engagement

The ability to effectively engage the Peak Youth generation – the largest ever global youth population – and allow them the space and opportunities to lead change in their communities, represents a historic opportunity to bring about transformative change on a global scale. A failure to support, engage and work alongside this generation of young people who are ready to do things differently would mean that this opportunity is missed.

Meaningful Youth Engagement programs engage young people as partners and leaders, empowering young people, whilst at the same time allowing them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults. Recognizing that youth can be both beneficiaries and partners in development action, this approach moves a step beyond by involving and supporting youth as leaders to engage, listen to and collaborate with, in achieving effective development outcomes. Achieving Meaningful Youth Engagement in development can therefore be recognized as an incremental process, in which individual projects and programs can engage youth on one of a range of different levels.

(10) UN DESA Division for Social Policy and Development, “Definition of Youth”, Available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(11) African Union Commission, “African Youth Charter”, (2006). Available at:

[http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african\\_youth\\_charter\\_2006.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf). Date Accessed: 06/12/2017.

(12) Government of India, “National Youth Policy 2014”, (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports: India: 2014), Available at:

[http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/India\\_2014\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/India_2014_National_Youth_Policy.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(13) Presidencia de la República de Colombia, “POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUD: Bases para el Plan Decenal de Juventud 2005–2015”, (La Imprenta Editores Ltda: Bogota: October, 2004). Available at: [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Colombia\\_2005\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Colombia_2005_National_Youth_Policy.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

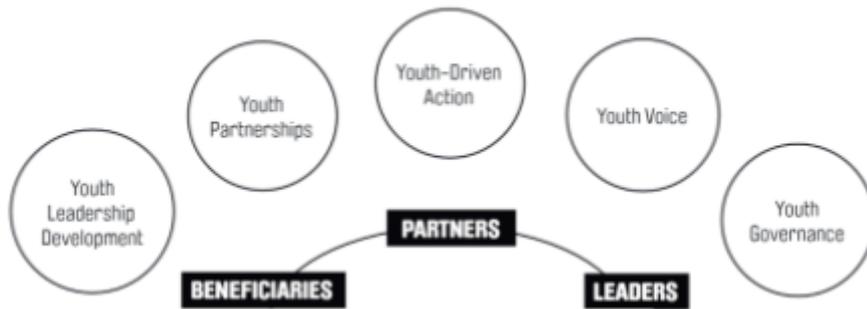
(14) Youth Policy Labs, “South Africa National Youth Policy 2009 – 2014”, Available at:

[http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/South\\_Africa\\_2009\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/South_Africa_2009_National_Youth_Policy.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017

(15) World Bank, “Solutions for Youth Employment Strategic Plan : 2015–2020”, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group: 2015), Available at:

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/765911468194956530/Solutions-for-youth-employment-strategic-plan-2015-2020>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP APPROACHES



This approach focuses on changing the development narrative and practice from one in which children and youth are viewed as beneficiaries or recipients of aid by governments, aid agencies and civil society actors, to one in which they can truly take up the mantle and lead sustainable development.

### **CASE STUDY: DANISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (DANIDA)**

Restless Development was contracted by DANIDA in December 2016 to undertake a review of its youth engagement strategy to inform how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs optimizes and operationalizes its new strategy “The World 2030” which focuses on youth.

Restless Development involved young people as contributors to – rather than merely the subject of – the review. This included convening an international youth panel who reviewed the report, and facilitating youth focus groups in Nairobi & Kampala. The youth panelists presented the strategy at a multi-stakeholder event in Denmark in March 2017. The report put forward 19 clear recommendations on how DANIDA can meaningful engage young people to lead their strategy which resulted ministerial commitment to take these forward.

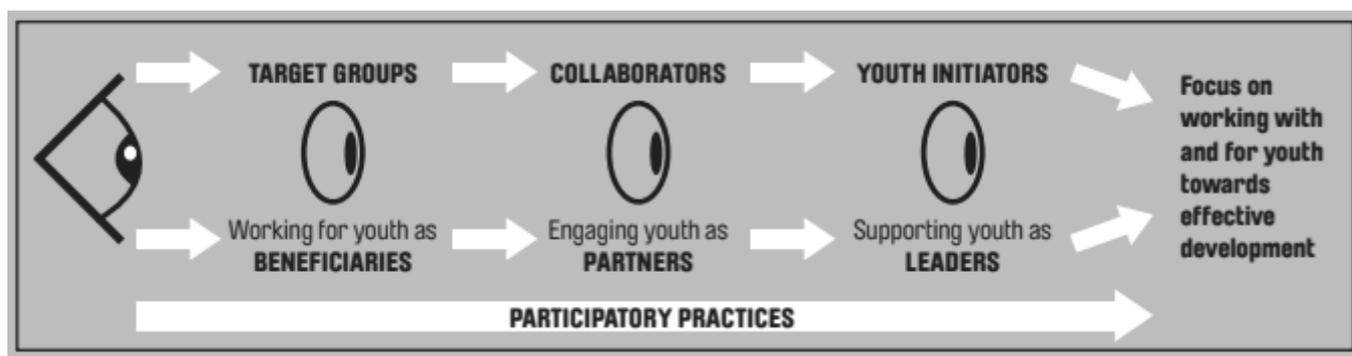
### **CASE STUDY: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

Restless Development supported USAID staff and implementation partners working on the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) Initiative to build understanding of and capacity in Meaningful Youth Engagement. Restless Development designed a tailored training program which combined both the methodology of Meaningful Youth Engagement, case studies, and practical guidance for engaging with young girls and women. Restless Development delivered in-person training in 5 countries to USAID staff and 57 DREAMS implementing partners, and undertook a full evaluation of the process. The evaluation highlighted that following the training, 47 DREAMS implementing partners were able to move forward with action plans. Highlights included recruiting a youth officer, re-designing engagement with youth livelihood groups and designing a tools for a youth-led needs assessment.

## Meaningful Youth Engagement Tools and Resources

There are a range of tools and resources available to support effective Meaningful Youth Engagement practice. These are used both in the development of programmatic approaches on this theme; and in the training of partner organizations across the development sector and beyond. Key examples of these include the following:

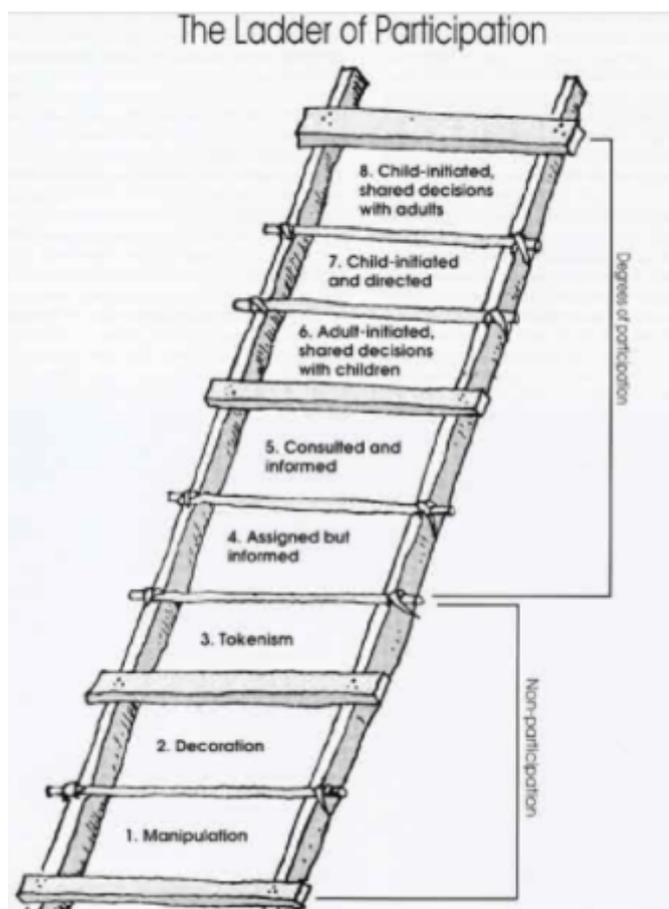
### Three-lens Approach to Youth Participation



The Three-Lens Approach to Youth Participation is a human rights based approach to youth which frames participation into three categories, Youth as beneficiaries, Youth as Partners and Youth as Leaders. This tool can be used as part of the capacity assessment to identify where youth sit within an organization, and to identify future ambitions.

### Hart's Ladder of Participation

Hart's Ladder of Participation includes eight steps along a spectrum of participation, with the steps higher on the ladder representing more meaningful engagement. The first three steps, manipulation, decoration and tokenism, are considered not to represent Meaningful Youth Engagement. The highest step is one in which the young people initiate the idea and invite adults to join in, sharing decision making.



## Meaningful Youth Engagement Bullseye

The Meaningful Youth Engagement Bullseye is a tool developed by Restless Development in consultation with DREAMS Young Ambassadors which summarizes best practice for Meaningful Youth Engagement. It identifies the role and behavior of both development practitioners and young people required to foster an environment where young people can fully engage.



## Meaningful Youth Engagement Video Series

Meaningful Youth Engagement Video Series: In partnership with USAID, Restless Development created a new video series on 'How and Why to Engage Young People in Development'. The series spans five countries and features young leaders from around the world. The aim of the series is to train partners and other organizations on how to do Meaningful Youth Engagement. In addition there is a version of the series for people with visual impairment.

[Click here to follow the link to the videos](#)



# The Global Youth Unemployment Crisis

**“Young people have been disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty. Even during periods of robust economic growth, the labor market is often unable to assimilate large numbers of youth. In recent years, the situation has been exacerbated by the lingering effects of the global financial and economic crisis, with declining numbers of youth able to find decent work” (16).**

**UN World Youth Report 2016**

Globally, nearly half of all young people are unemployed or underemployed (17) and young people are at least twice as likely as adults to be unemployed (18). Youth unemployment is one of only two indicators in the Youth Development Index to show a deterioration from 2010 to 2015. Job creation is slowing down, exacerbated by aftershocks of the global financial crisis, structural challenges in the global economy, climate change and geopolitical instability (19). According to the Solutions for Youth Employment Coalition, one billion young people will enter the job market over the course of the next decade. Only 40% are expected to be able to take on jobs that already exist, meaning 600 million jobs need to be created if we are to realize the potential of the Peak Youth generation (20).

In many cases, even where government or NGO youth livelihoods initiatives exist, there is limited involvement of youth in the project cycle (21). When young people, in all their diversity, are left out of planning and design of these initiatives, crucial solutions will be missed.

## Global employment trends

### Informal employment

During the S4YE Youth Consultations undertaken by Restless Development, young people in all three countries identified barriers to accessing formal sector employment as a major challenge. In developing countries, 85% of new work is in the informal sector (22).

(16) United Nations, “World Youth Report: Youth Civic Engagement”, (UNDESA, New York: 2016). p.28.

(17) Goldin, N. Patel, P., Perry, K. (2014) “The Global Youth Wellbeing Index’ A Report of the CSIS Youth, Prosperity and Security Initiative and the International Youth Foundation. (April 2014).

(18) The Commonwealth, “Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016”, (London: Commonwealth Secretariat: 2016) p.114

(19) Ibid.

(20) World Bank, “Solutions for Youth Employment Strategic Plan: 2015–2020”, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group: 2015), Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/765911468194956530/Solutions-for-youth-employment-strategic-plan-2015-2020>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017, pg. 3.

(21) Youth Policy Labs, “From Rhetoric to Action: Towards an Enabling Environment in the Sustainable Development Goals”, The Case For Space Initiative, (Berlin: Youth Policy Press: 2015), pg. 70.

(22) World Bank, “Solutions for Youth Employment Strategic Plan: 2015–2020”, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group: 2015), Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/765911468194956530/Solutions-for-youth-employment-strategic-plan-2015-2020>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017. p.139.

Informal sector employment is generally insecure, casual, and falls beneath recognized standards of decent work. Furthermore, the experience gained in the informal sector is not usually valued by formal employers and therefore keeps young people trapped in unregulated conditions (23). Youth researchers from the Mastercard Foundation's Youth Think Tank in East Africa identified some of the challenges faced by young people in accessing formal sector employment. In urban areas, young people reported that they are faced with intense competition and bureaucratic hurdles to gaining formal status including needing formal identification and mid-level finance. In rural areas, they lack access to information, services, infrastructure like electricity, and markets for business and investment (24). If young people are to successfully transition from entrepreneurs in the informal sector to employees and established businesses in the formal sector, then employers and governments alike must recognize the value of young people's experience and start to create better pathways to allow them to make the transition.

## **Rural youth**

The difference in experience between rural and urban youth does not stop there. Given that large proportions of rural youth are subordinate members of extended households, they are largely dependent on their older relatives for their livelihood needs. As young people grow older, the autonomy of males increases, but contracts for females. Moreover, in the more remote and traditional populations (which are often also the poorest), girls typically start child bearing and/or marry when they leave school (25).

It is widely recognized that rural youth are increasingly disinterested in subsistence and smallholder farming, which is viewed as 'dirty work' and 'an employer of last resort' (26). Interestingly, this view was not reflected in the S4YE Youth Consultation in Colombia in which participants expressed a desire to engage in traditional and agricultural work, but recognized that it is not usually valued by society. Research shows, nevertheless, that migration from rural to urban areas will continue on a large scale and that this is an essential part of the livelihood coping strategies of the rural poor. It is important therefore that young people in rural areas are prepared for productive lives in both rural and urban environments. Preparation of rural youth for productive work is poor, and there are major concerns about the relevance of schooling, as curricula fail to adequately prepare children for productive rural lives. Calls persist for increased vocational training opportunities in rural areas.

(23) The Commonwealth, "Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016", (London: Commonwealth Secretariat: 2016), pg. 7.

(24) Mastercard Foundation, "2015 - 2016 Youth Think Tank Report: Insights into Youth Economic Opportunities in East Africa", (Ontario: June 2016), pg. 14-15.

(25) United Nations, "World Youth Report 2016: Youth Civic Engagement" (UN DESA: New York: 2016), pg.28.

(26) IFAD, "Promoting Livelihood Opportunities For Rural Youth: Some Lessons from Tanzania", (February, 2007). Available at: <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/91dad72e-0f6b-42cb-99f6-d6beedb469d4>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017, pg 2.

(27) Jimenez, E., King, E., Tan, JP., "Making the Grade", Finance and Development, IMF, Vol. 49, No. 1, March 2012. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/03/pdf/jimenez.pdf>, Date Accessed: 04/12/2017. pg. 12.

In many lower and middle-income countries, rural youth face major health problems, including HIV and AIDS, TB, and unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. These contribute significantly to the ability of young people to pursue autonomous and productive livelihood activities.

Furthermore, at the community level and national level, rural youth do not usually constitute an organized and vocal constituency with the economic and social power to lobby on their own behalf. Older people, and especially older males, tend to dominate decision making at all levels. The subordinate position of youth has been further compounded by the 'traditional welfare approach', where youth are viewed as presenting 'problems', which need to be solved through the intervention of older people.

### **Skills mismatch between education and the formal sector**

S4YE Youth Consultation participants reported a gap between the formal education they receive and the needs of employers. Young people in developing nations are spending more time in school than ever before, but they are not learning the skills they need to find gainful employment (27). Skills training for young people has therefore increasingly become a priority for governments, NGOs and the private sector. However, S4YE Youth Consultation participants highlighted that an emphasis on skills training without a concurrent growth in jobs means young people remain unemployed. Bridges between skills training programs and jobs must be developed and strengthened in order to help young people transition into employment.

### **Gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability**

The Youth Development Index found that many young people continue to face inequalities and discrimination because of their gender, class, sexual orientation, geographical location, disability or ethnicity (28). S4YE Youth Consultation participants in South Africa, India and Colombia all highlighted that additional barriers to employment are faced by young women, LGBTQI+ youth, young people with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups in their respective contexts.

Vulnerable forms of employment are consistently higher for women across Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States. (ILO 2017). There is a widespread income gap between women and men with women often seen as casual, unremunerated family labor (29). Young women in particular must often tolerate abuse and risks to their safety in the workplace (30).

(27) Jimenez, E., King, E., Tan, JP., "Making the Grade", Finance and Development, IMF, Vol. 49, No. 1, March 2012. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/03/pdf/jimenez.pdf>, Date Accessed: 04/12/2017. pg. 12.

(28) The Commonwealth, "Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016", (London: Commonwealth Secretariat: 2016). Pg. 6.

(29) Mastercard Foundation, "2015 - 2016 Youth Think Tank Report: Insights into Youth Economic Opportunities in East Africa", (Ontario: June 2016).

(30) Youth Policy Labs, "From Rhetoric to Action: Towards an Enabling Environment in the Sustainable Development Goals", The Case For Space Initiative, (Berlin: Youth Policy Press: 2015), p.89.

(31) ILO, "Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Promoting Rights, Diversity and Equality in the World of Work." Results of the ILO's PRIDE Project, (ILO: Geneva). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_481575.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms_481575.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(32) ILO, "Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014 - 2017", (ILO: Geneva: 2015). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_370772.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_370772.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

According to the ILO, those identifying as LGBTQI+ face discrimination and occupational segregation in employment – that is, being deemed suitable for certain professions but not for others. Furthermore, they can face added stigma and discrimination on grounds of HIV and AIDS status which may be wrongly assumed based on their sexual orientation (31).

According to the ILO (2015), the unemployment rates of persons with disabilities are higher than those of non-disabled people with the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labor market representing an estimated loss of GDP of between 3 and 7 per cent. Furthermore, many countries have an insufficient coverage of persons with disabilities in their social protection programs (32).

Gender and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, disability, and geographic location intersect in various constellations depending on the context and must be considered from a cross-cutting perspective when tackling youth unemployment issues in order to reach the most marginalized.

## **Global Policy Framework**

Unsurprisingly, solving the youth unemployment crisis is a priority for governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and young people alike. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formally and unanimously adopted by world leaders at a United Nations special summit in September 2015, have been described by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the “most inclusive development agenda the world has ever seen” bringing together these multiple stakeholders to achieve its ambitious agenda.

### **Decent work – key to sustainable development**

The importance of decent work in achieving sustainable development is highlighted by SDG 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. SDG 8 recognizes the need for a global strategy to address youth employment issues and to substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The priorities of governments, the private sector, CSOs and young people converge under this agenda and act as a framework towards common goal of solving the youth unemployment crisis. The SDGs have set an ambitious agenda for the global community but they can only be achieved if young people are empowered enough to participate in and contribute to national development to the fullest (33).

(31) ILO, “Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Promoting Rights, Diversity and Equality in the World of Work.” Results of the ILO’s PRIDE Project, (ILO: Geneva). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_481575.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/briefingnote/wcms_481575.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(32) ILO, “Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2014 – 2017”, (ILO: Geneva: 2015). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_370772.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_370772.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(33) The Commonwealth, “Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016”, (London: Commonwealth Secretariat: 2016), pg.111.

Drawing on external research and input from S4YE Youth Consultation participants, the following section examines the youth employment contexts of the three countries – South Africa, India and Colombia – in which S4YE Youth Consultations took place.

## Spotlight on

## South Africa

“ [Youth unemployment is] the crisis that no longer looms, but now stares us in the face daily.”  
S4YE Youth Consultation participant, South Africa, 2017. ”

In June 2017 South Africa’s working-age population stood at 37.2 million of which 54% were young people aged 15–34 years (34). Despite the potential offered by South Africa’s large youth population, the youth unemployment rate in 2017 stood at almost 56% (compared to 27.1% among adults) (35). Furthermore, 3.3 million young South Africans aged 15–24 years are not in employment, education or training (NEET). For those who do secure a job, they face an increasingly precarious employment landscape and the challenge of accessing employment within the formal sector (36). As the Development Bank of Southern Africa notes, ‘finding pathways to employment for the 15–24 age cohort is critical to transforming South Africa’s future employment and growth trajectory, if growing poverty and inequality are to be redressed’ (37).

### Trends

#### Skills mismatch

According to one S4YE Youth Consultation participant, young people without post school qualifications are “one of the most vulnerable groups affected by youth unemployment [...] opportunities for them to get meaningful employment are slim to none.” However, despite educational attainment improving in South Africa, the labor market prospects of young people have declined reflecting a ‘structural weakness in the labor market due to the mismatch between skills and available jobs (38). According to the IMF (2012), ‘Even those who do manage to get an adequate basic education may be unable to find work because they do not possess the skills needed by today’s – and, more important, tomorrow’s – employers.

(34) Statistics South Africa, “Quarterly Labour Force Survey – QLFS Q2: 2017”. (Pretoria: 2017). Available at: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02112ndQuarter2017.pdf>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(35) Statistics South Africa, “Quarterly Labour Force Survey – QLFS Q2: 2017 Media release”, 7th August 2017. Available at: [http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media\\_release\\_QLFS\\_Q2\\_2017\\_Final%2007\\_August\\_2017\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Media_release_QLFS_Q2_2017_Final%2007_August_2017_FINAL.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(36) ILO, “PRIDE at work: A study on discrimination at work on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in South Africa”, Working Paper No. 4 / 2016, (Geneva: 2016). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms\\_481581.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_481581.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(37) Mayer, M. et al., “Towards a Youth Employment Strategy for South Africa” (Development Bank of Southern Africa: 2011). Available at: <http://www.foresightfordevelopment.org/sobipro/55/803-towards-a-youth-employment-strategy-for-south-africa>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(38) Statistics South Africa, “National and provincial labour market: Youth”, (Statistics South Africa: 2014) p. 27.

Despite persistent joblessness among young people, surveyed employers complain that they can't find enough workers with the skills they need to grow their businesses' (39). This situation is acknowledged as a serious concern in the National Development Plan of South Africa (40).

## **Social identity factors**

Employment opportunities in South Africa are directly affected by factors of social identity. According to the ILO (2016), unemployment in South Africa is largely concentrated among black Africans, young people and women (41). The S4YE Youth Consultation participants in South Africa also advised that the youth unemployment crisis is more pronounced for young women, LGBTQI+ youth, rural youth and those with disabilities. Unemployment rates in South Africa are significantly higher amongst young women (40.7%) compared to young men (33.8%) (42). In addition, a gender pay gap exists meaning women on average earn less than men (43). Moreover, in the more remote and traditional populations (which are often also the poorest), girls typically start to marry and have children when they leave school (44), diminishing their chances of employment. LGBTQ+ and gender nonconforming people also face barriers to employment. Although South Africa was the first country in the world to safeguard sexual orientation as a human right in its constitution in 1995, the ILO found that challenges of discrimination persist for LGBTQ+ people in the workplace (45). Despite proactive government efforts to promote equality, unemployment rates in South Africa also vary between different ethnic groups, standing at 31.3% for black South Africans compared to 13.3% for Indian/Asian, and 5.7% for white South Africans (46). In 2014, white employees earned four times the median earnings of black employees (47). Young people in rural areas face additional barriers to employment including urban bias in the provision of publicly funded education and training services and lack of employment opportunities resulting in migration from rural to urban areas on a large scale. Rural youth in South Africa also face major health problems, including HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. Restless Development Youth Consultation participants also identified a lack of English language skills and a lack of connections as barriers to employment faced by young people, a challenge which is particularly prevalent among rural youth.

(39) Jimenez, E., King, E., Tan, JP., "Making the Grade", Finance and Development, IMF, Vol. 49, No. 1, March 2012. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/03/pdf/jimenez.pdf>, Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(40) Statistics South Africa, "Statistical Release P0211.4.2. National and Provincial Labour Market: Youth Q1:2008 – Q1:2015", P.32. Available at: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P02114.2/P02114.22015.pdf>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(41) ILO, "PRIDE at work: A study on discrimination at work on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in South Africa", Working Paper No. 4 / 2016, (Geneva: 2016). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms\\_481581.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_481581.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(42) Statistics South Africa, "Quarterly Labour Force Survey – QLFS Q2: 2017", (Pretoria: 2017). Available at: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02112ndQuarter2017.pdf>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(43) My Wage, "Gender Pay Gap in South Africa", Available at: <https://mywage.co.za/main/salary/gender-pay-gap-in-south-africa>. Date Accessed: 15/11/2017.

(44) Bennell, P. "Promoting Livelihood Opportunities for Rural Youth", (International Fund for Agricultural Development: 2007) pg.2-3.

(45) ILO, (2016).

(46) Statistics South Africa, 2017.

(47) ILO, (2016).



## Spotlight on

## India

India has the world's largest youth population, with 354.4 million people aged between 15 and 29 years, making up 27% of its population (48). The Indian working-age population expands by around 14 million people each year (49) representing a huge opportunity for economic progress. However, in 2012, approximately 30% of young people in India were not in employment, education or training (NEET) compared to the OECD average of under 15%. Furthermore, the gender gap in the NEET rate among young people in India is 41%, the largest among emerging economies (50). The latest statistics (from 2012) showed that just over 10% of young people aged 15 to 24 in India were unemployed, although this figure does not capture those in informal or casual labor (51).

### Trends

#### Informal employment

Informal employment and the quality of employment opportunities are major challenges facing young people in India. Informal employment accounts for 92% of total employment in India, affecting young people, women and low-skilled workers disproportionately as major contributors to the informal sector (52). Agriculture accounted for half of all employment in India in 2013, although that has been on the decline. Restless Development Youth Consultation participants reported that a decline in fertility in agricultural lands due to environmental degradation has resulted in a high level of rural-urban migration and that a lack of employment alternatives to the agricultural sector is affecting young people's opportunities. According to the OECD (2017), 'the increase in non-agricultural employment has been accompanied by a greater use of short-term contracts and other forms of casual labor' (53). Furthermore, according to the ILO (2016), 'most of the new jobs being created in the formal sector are actually informal because the workers do not have access to employment benefits or social security' (54).

(48) ILO, "India Labour Market Update". (India: July, 2016). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_496510.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_496510.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(49) OECD, "Promoting Strong and Inclusive Growth in India". (OECD: February, 2017). Available at: [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/economics/promoting-strong-and-inclusive-growth-in-india\\_9789264275164-en#.WhG9GIVL\\_IU#page13](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/economics/promoting-strong-and-inclusive-growth-in-india_9789264275164-en#.WhG9GIVL_IU#page13). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(50) Ibid.

(51) Financial Times, "Youth unemployment bucks India's rapid growth", Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/ec92d162-04d2-11e7-aa5b-6bb07f5c8e12>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(52) OECD (2016)

(53) Ibid.

(54) ILO, "India Labour Market Update". (India: July, 2016). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_496510.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_496510.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

## Urban/rural divide

Unlike many countries in which unemployment is more prevalent in rural areas, the ILO (2016) reported that young Indian people living in urban areas are most vulnerable to unemployment (55). According to the report, the youth unemployment rate reached 18.8% for urban women aged 20–24 and 12.8% for young urban men aged 15–19 in 2011–2012. By comparison, the unemployment rate for rural youth peaked at 6.3% for young women aged 20–24 and 8.9% for young men aged 15–19 during the same period (56). This reflects research by Youth Policy Labs which found that unemployment in India is actually higher among the educated who are looking for better quality jobs (57).

## Not just more education, but better jobs

Education and training, while important, are not the sole solutions to youth unemployment. Restless Development Youth Consultation participants highlighted a phenomenon known as ‘Time Pause’, in which the employment gap between university graduates and job opportunities leads to young people continuing to earn educational degrees instead of entering the workforce. A government initiative called ‘Skill India’ seeks to bridge this gap by offering funding to organizations providing skills–training workshops to young people. However, Restless Development Youth Consultation participants felt that this has led to an over–emphasis on skills training programs among youth organizations, while creating decent employment opportunities to match has not been a government priority. Furthermore, where government employment programs do exist, Youth Consultation participants reported that they don’t reach the grassroots due to a lack of awareness, especially in rural areas.

## Gender inequality

Participants identified patriarchal societal norms as a major obstacle to employment for young women. India has the lowest female labor force participation rate among BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa) economies, estimated at 27% in 2016 (58). Women’s work is often not documented and many are engaged in domestic work (59). Participants also cited constraints on women’s freedom to work, early marriage, and workplace harassment as contributing factors to unemployment. Young women in India face constant threats to their safety, both in public spaces and the workplace, with worse risks in the informal sector (60). Furthermore, participants reported that young women are not encouraged to take up leadership positions, contributing in part to the gender income gap and also drew attention to the additional challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities.

(55) ILO, “India Labour Market Update”, (India: July, 2016). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_496510.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_496510.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(56) Ibid.

(57) Youth Policy Labs, “Country Factsheets: India”, Available at: <http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/india/>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(58) World Bank, “Labour Force participation rate, female”, (March, 2017) Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(59) Verick, S., “Women’s labour force participation in India: Why is it so low?” (ILO: 2014). Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_342357.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_342357.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(60) Youth Policy Labs, “From Rhetoric to Action: Towards an Enabling Environment in the Sustainable Development Goals”, The Case For Space Initiative, (Berlin: Youth Policy Press: 2015), pg. 68.

Participants also pointed to discrimination as an obstacle to employment for LGBTQI+ youth. A World Bank pilot study (2014) found clear evidence of discrimination against LGBTQI+ people in India which affected their employment opportunities (61). Besides the intrinsic value of promoting human rights for LGBTQI+ people in India, the study also found that LGBTQI+ discrimination has a significant economic cost as a result of lower labor productivity because of stigma and exclusion.



## Spotlight on Colombia

Colombia is a diverse country with one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. Despite recent advances in material conditions, crime, violence and conflict remain persistent problems. Young people – particularly indigenous young people, Afro-Colombians, young farmers and young women in rural areas – experience the worst effects of these conditions (62). In 2016, the youth unemployment rate in Colombia stood at 16.9%. Furthermore, 21.2% of young people were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2016 (63).

### Trends

#### Conflict-affected youth

More than 50 years of conflict in Colombia has affected the youth employment landscape. According to Youth Policy Labs (2015) ‘children and young people have been recruited as soldiers, affected by landmines, killed extrajudicially as ‘false positives’, used as informers and sex workers within the armed groups or urban gangs, and forcefully displaced’ (64). Furthermore, the report found that there is a higher dropout rate and later start to education for youth displaced by conflict.

Although Colombia has a National Youth Policy (65), S4YE Youth Consultation participants felt there is a lack of investment by the government in youth unemployment and that government policies are not adapted to youth. Youth Policy Labs reported that in the aftermath of conflict ‘the perceptions of young

(61) Badgett, M.V. L., “The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India” (World Bank: 2014) Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/527261468035379692/pdf/940400WPOBox380usionOof0LGBT0People.pdf>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(62) Rodriguez, G. et al. “Youth and Public Policy in Colombia” Youth Policy Review Series, (Youth Policy Press: 2015). Available at: [http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth\\_Public\\_Policy\\_Colombia\\_En.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth_Public_Policy_Colombia_En.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(63) ILOSTAT Country Profiles, Colombia. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/ilostatcp/CPDesktop/?list=true&lang=en&country=COL>. Date Accessed: 05/12/2017

(64) Ibid.

(65) Ibid.

people in Colombia are often seen through a context of risk, security and prevention' (66) which was reflected in a comment by one S4YE Youth Consultation participant who stated that 'Young people are seen as revolutionary people,' highlighting a weakened social contract between government and young people in Colombia.

### **Informal employment**

The challenge of creating formal sector employment for young people was also highlighted by the S4YE Youth Consultation participants in Colombia. According to the ILO (2012), informal employment among young people aged 15–19 years in Colombia was over 30 percentage points higher than that of adults in 2009 (67). Youth Consultation participants also stated that a lack of opportunities has led some young people to seek work illegally in the drugs trade, adding that recruiters from gangs take advantage of vulnerable unemployed youth. According to participants, government policies focus on the eradication of illicit crops, instead of on generating alternative opportunities for those employed by these means.

### **Gender inequality**

Participants identified patriarchal discrimination in society as a barrier to employment for women. The female youth unemployment rate is much higher at 21.4%, than the rate for males at 13.6%. Colombian women are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence both in situations of armed conflict and in peacetime (68). According to Youth Policy Labs (2015) Colombia has a high maternity rate and low access to and use of contraceptives (69). Youth Consultation participants also stated that undesired teenage pregnancies create obstacles to employment and that there is a need to increase education on family planning. Youth Consultation participants warned, however, that gender interventions in programs should not only focus on employing more women, but identify how gender norms result in occupational segregation for both men and women, examine the gender pay gap and provide specific supports for single mothers. Participants also highlighted the need to promote the engagement of men in household responsibilities to equalize the domestic burden which falls disproportionately on women.

### **Sexual orientation and ethnic identity**

Participants stated that there is a need to reduce stigma about where you come from, sexuality, and race and to change mindsets from an early age. LGBTQI+ discrimination is illegal in Colombia and same-sex marriage has been legal since 2016 (70), however, S4YE Youth Consultation participants

(66) ILOSTAT Country Profiles, Colombia. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/ilostatcp/CPDesktop/?list=true&lang=en&country=COL>. Date Accessed: 05/12/2017

(67) ILO, "The youth employment crisis: Time for action", (Geneva: 2012). Available at: [http://adapt.it/adapt-indice-a-z/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ILO\\_The-youth-employment-crisis.pdf](http://adapt.it/adapt-indice-a-z/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ILO_The-youth-employment-crisis.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(68) Rodriguez, G. et al. (2015).

(69) Ibid.

(70) Equaldex, "LGBT Rights in Colombia", Available at: <http://www.equaldex.com/region/colombia>. Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

stated that LGBTQI+ young people still face discrimination in the workplace. Participants also stated that there are fewer opportunities for certain ethnic groups, which is reflected in research by Youth Policy Labs which found that ‘the Afro-Colombian settlements in rural areas and slums of cities rival those of the indigenous peoples as the poorest in Colombia, with extreme poverty rates over 60%’ (71). Furthermore, Afro-Colombian illiteracy rates estimated to be twice as high as the national average. Youth Consultation participants highlighted the need for government to invest more in vulnerable populations and marginalized communities.

## **Rural youth**

One of the challenges of youth unemployment, according to participants, is geographic location and the question of how to create jobs for people in isolated communities. Those in rural areas also tend to have a lower quality of education than those in urban areas. Participants stated that there is a need to value local entrepreneurship and for better ownership of employment opportunities at the local level. According to research by the Case for Space Initiative, ‘Young entrepreneurs are starting businesses, not only to generate employment, but also to express cultural and civic values’ (72). Participants stressed the need to place a higher societal and economic value on traditional work rather than pushing young people to conform and aspire to a certain set of careers such as lawyer or doctor. Participants expressed a strong desire to recapture culture through their businesses and to integrate environmental sustainability in business plans. Youth Consultation participants stated that an emphasis on skills training programs does not guarantee employment as there often aren’t any suitable jobs to match. They also reported that a negative attitude to entrepreneurship prevails. “If I start my own business it doesn’t matter. It is frowned upon as it’s not related to education.” If seeking employment in an existing company, participants have found that they will often only hire young people with many years experience and often stipulate English language proficiency.

(71) Rodriguez, G. et al. “Youth and Public Policy in Colombia” Youth Policy Review Series, (Youth Policy Press: 2015). Available at:[http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth\\_Public\\_Policy\\_Colombia\\_En.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/pdfs/Youth_Public_Policy_Colombia_En.pdf). Date Accessed: 04/12/2017.

(72) Youth Policy Labs, “From Rhetoric to Action: Towards an Enabling Environment in the Sustainable Development Goals”, The Case For Space Initiative, (Berlin: Youth Policy Press: 2015).

# Summary of Youth Consultations

Throughout September and October 2017, Restless Development facilitated three youth consultations in India, South Africa and Colombia with 27 young people who work on youth employment and entrepreneurship at a grassroots level in their national context. These young leaders were all recruited from existing national youth networks, partners, volunteer alumni, and S4YE partner youth networks to participate in a three-day workshop with experienced youth facilitators from Restless Development.

The workshops were designed to answer three key questions:

- 1. What solutions to the challenges of youth employment are young people engaged with, and leading?**
- 2. What do Youth Leaders envision for Youth Participation in the S4YE Coalition?**
- 3. What role could technology play to realize or enhance greater Youth Participation with the S4YE Coalition?**

The workshops consulted with young people on how S4YE can incorporate youth voice and engage with youth more consistently focusing on Youth Participation at the S4YE governance level; in S4YE strategy formulation; and in S4YE operations and knowledge outputs of the coalition.



**Delhi, India**  
**25th – 27th September**  
**2017**  
**Facilitators: 3**  
**Participants: 10 (6 Female,**  
**4 Male)**



**Johannesburg, South Africa**  
**10th October 2017**  
**Facilitators: 2**  
**Participants: 9 (5 Female, 3**  
**Male, 1 Non-binary)**



**Bogotá, Colombia**  
**18th – 20th October 2017**  
**Facilitators: 2**  
**Translators: 2**  
**Participants: 8 (5 Female, 3**  
**Male)**

The following section of the report outlines key summarized findings from the three consultations. These findings have greatly influenced the development of recommendations for Youth Participation in S4YE.

(N.B. This section is abridged from the full 'Summary Report: Solutions for Youth Employment Youth Consultations', which can be found in the report Annex 6).

# What solutions to the challenges of youth employment are young people engaged with, and leading?

Participants, across the three consultations, identified over 80 innovative youth employment initiatives that either they, or young people they know, directly engage with. These initiatives were divided into a number of sub-categories by participants, which include:

- Direct employment opportunities
- Vocational skills training and capacity building programs for young people
- Soft loans and financing schemes
- Women's employment programs
- Sports employment projects
- Agricultural production
- State support/state direct employment programs
- University internship and employment initiatives
- Youth empowerment programs (which also create training and employment prospects)
- Policy and research initiatives (with a focus on addressing employment gaps)

## Examples of Youth Employment Initiatives

N.B. This is a summarized representation, please refer to the full Summary Report (Annex 6) for the full list and detail of innovative employment initiatives identified by consultation participants.

### Youth Led Initiatives

Impact Research International  
Ekasi Entrepreneurship Movement  
Food at University  
Lifty  
Inspire Foundation  
Pravah  
Kgomonoko

### Public Sector

National Youth Development Agency  
The Jobs Fund, National Treasury  
Technology Innovation Agency  
Department For Rural Development and Land Reform  
Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme  
Micro-agricultural Financial Institutions  
The Land Bank  
Small Enterprise Development Agency  
National Commission for Civil Service  
Government Law of First Employment  
National Sports Association  
National Agency For Integration  
Kudumbasru  
Nehru Yura Kendra  
ITI Vocational Training Centres

### Private Sector

Coalition of South Africa Trade Unions  
ABSA Bank  
Standard Bank of South Africa  
Tiger Brands  
We Think Code  
Codex Academy  
The Innovation Hub  
TOSTAO  
Weavers Association  
Intelliworkz

### Civil Society Organisations

Magic Bus  
Avval Foundation  
Those In Need  
Mobile Chreches  
Action for Social Advancement  
Gooni Foundation  
Entrepreneurship Development Insitute  
Oprah Winfrey Academy For Girls  
Buhle Farmers Academy  
Livity Africa  
Youth Business International  
One Litre of Light  
Foundation for Women and Gender

## Spotlight – Youth-led Entrepreneurship in Colombia

Who: Maria Elena Gonzalez, 28, Colombia

What: Youth-led hair and handicrafts business in Jamundi called 'Black Beauty'

The Innovation: Maria Elena started Black Beauty, an African American hair styling and handicrafts business, as a way to fund her higher education and empower young African American women in her community. For Maria Elena, she saw her business as a way of generating income, while also raising awareness, pride and knowledge of Afro-American culture in Colombia.

Entrepreneurship training and seed funding from Plan Colombia empowered Maria Elena with the skills and resources required to grow her business, while also ensuring the initiative was truly led by her, and remained relevant to her local context and community needs. Through expanding her business Maria Elena is now able to run her own leadership program for young women, which focuses on building their skills in entrepreneurship, knowledge on their sexual reproductive health and rights, and understanding of the Afro-American cultural traditions.



## Spotlight – Empowering Female Students in India

Who: Agnetta Amalraj, 20, India

What: Earn While You Learn, Student-led initiative to find paid work at the University of Chennai

The Innovation: Agnetta is a women's convener in her college, representing the voices of approximately 4,500 female students at her college. Passionate about the empowerment of female students, she started a program so young women could earn an income while studying. As part of the program, she and her team have conducted workshops with participants to improve their leadership, communication, and other handicraft skills. Through the program, many participants have gained corporate employment as part of their campus placement. Other participants started small enterprises, such as a candle making business, sold in local markets. The main aim of her program was to empower female students in her college, and further, encourage them to take their skills and experience to support other women, also increasing their opportunities to gain employment.



## Spotlight – Youth-led employment and livelihoods skills building in South Africa

Who: Athini Nyatela, 24, South Africa

What: Enke, Make Your Mark Project

The Innovation: As a young person working for Enke, Athini trains and mentors vulnerable young people from across South Africa to address the barriers they face to seeking employment. Her work includes delivering training to prepare participants for a ‘world of work’, which is relevant to their context, available opportunities, and crucially their own visions for meaningful and resilient employment. They focus on building a range of practical skills from CV writing and interview techniques, to understanding government-led employment and education policy and pushing for structural and institutional change, which can also have significant impact young people’s ability to seek work. To date, Enke has trained over 2,000 youth, whose projects have had a positive impact on over 40,000 people in communities across South Africa.



**“ I am a young person who grew up in one of the most impoverished provinces in the country with my own fair share of experience in economic displacement. I studied economics, with great interest in entrepreneurship and beyond school, built a career in youth development.**

**I currently work with one of the most vulnerable groups affected by youth unemployment, young people without post school qualifications, and I believe insights from these young people is unique from that of graduates. Our programming, alongside professional development uses the theory of emotional intelligence to hone the likelihood, awareness and willingness of these young people to self-sustain in a country where opportunities for them to get meaningful employment are slim to none.**

**My experience is built from my own background, education, and speaks directly to those I work with.**

**Athini, South Africa**

General reflections on relevant employment opportunities for young people across the three consultation countries are summarized as follows:

### India:

- Non-governmental, Community Based Organization (CSO) led initiatives were identified as providing the most valuable opportunities for young people. Often CSOs have a better focus on sustainability, which was viewed as important by participants, and something they felt the private sector did not prioritize.
- It was acknowledged that many CSOs do not solely work on employment, and often focus their work on skills-building training to prepare young people for employment. In fact, they felt that governments and CSOs were focusing too much on skills training and not enough on the job market.
- With the 10 young people present, they could only identify one private sector organization working specifically on youth employment.

## South Africa

- The most popular initiatives discussed by the group were programs which combine both work-readiness training for young people, and directly match this with private sector job creation.
- It was acknowledged that it was impressive that nine young people were able to provide information on so many initiatives, which could partly be accredited to the prominence of youth employment as a key social and political issue in South Africa.
- It was also recognised that all sectors, public, private, civil society and young people are contributing to tackling youth unemployment in South Africa.

## Colombia

- The most popular initiatives discussed by the group were those in areas of agricultural production and training programs which focused on skills for the workplace.
- The group also discussed the need for more programs to focus on entrepreneurship, which provide young people access to business training and credit.
- It was recognized that employment opportunities need to reflect Colombia's cultural heritage and respect for the environment, complementing this with modern techniques and innovation.
- The group identified that there had been many government and civil society programs focused on the employment of young women, however this resulted in young men struggling to find secure employment, and had led to young men seeking employment in illegal industries and conflict.



## What do Youth Leaders envision for Youth Participation in the S4YE Coalition?

To identify what young people’s role in S4YE’s might look like, we extracted various aspects of the coalition’s work and summarized in three main categories – governance, partnership and research. Summarized visions are as follows:

<b>Young people’s role in Governance</b>	<b>Young people’s role in Partnership</b>	<b>Young people’s role in Research</b>
<p><b>India workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Youth participation at all three levels of S4YE’s structure with elected youth representatives, held accountable by other youth.</p>	<p><b>India workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Create an online platform for individual young people to pool their different networks, research and connect to each other.</p>	<p><b>India workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Young people play a strong role in conducting research, sharing and learning in a creative interesting way.</p>
<p><b>South Africa workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Young people playing meaningful roles with capacity building to perform them. Youth-led accountability to S4YE commitments at all levels.</p>	<p><b>South Africa workshop vision:</b></p> <p>A global mobile phone app to link job seekers to opportunities, led by young people and coordinated with S4YE.</p>	<p><b>South Africa workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Young people to play a leading role in the development of research briefs, data collection and sharing reports with S4YE.</p>
<p><b>Colombia workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Young people represented at decision-making level and integrated into existing systems, supported with training to meaningfully fulfil these roles.</p>	<p><b>Colombia workshop vision:</b></p> <p>S4YE to provide a clear offer to young people to foster partnerships at grassroots level. Young people to work with S4YE to promote entrepreneurship and working with the private sector.</p>	<p><b>Colombia workshop vision:</b></p> <p>Young people can support creative distribution of knowledge on employment opportunities and training online and offline, reflecting cultural heritage and practice.</p>

Additional findings included:

- In India, the group was able to provide tangible examples of how young people could strengthen S4YE in these key areas.
- In South Africa, the group had to be prompted to ‘think big’ and be more ambitious. The facilitators felt the young people were constrained by their own experiences and local perspectives.
- In Colombia, the group referenced the Ladder of Youth Participation throughout the presentations, and were keen to design roles for young people within the S4YE coalition governance groups that were meaningful.
- A recurring theme throughout all three consultations was ‘youth-led accountability’ of S4YE commitments. Consultation participants highlighted that young people can play a useful and critical role in holding the S4YE coalition accountable to its ambitious targets, through the establishment of robust feedback loop.

The visions for young people’s meaningful participation in the S4YE Coalition have been further developed by the Youth Review Team, supported by Restless Development, to articulate clear recommendations and accompanying actions for the S4YE Coalition.

**“ S4YE should have a clear feedback system that is accessible for young people. ”**  
**India Consultation Participant**

What role could technology play to realize or enhance greater Youth Participation with the S4YE Coalition?

**The Challenge:**

Across all three consultations, participants discussed many challenges to the access and usability of technology, particularly for young people living in rural communities. In South Africa, for example, mobile phone data costs are very high, approximately ten times more expensive than in India. In all three countries, poor network coverage and lack of access to electricity in rural areas remains a persistent problem.

Further to this, while social media can provide free and accessible platforms for young people to connect, participants highlighted that it can be hard to reach new audiences as often people are only connecting with networks similar to themselves.

Given this, all three consultations highlighted the need to also communicate ‘outside of technology’ to ensure full and meaningful participation. Alongside face-to-face meetings, dance, street art and music, were also discussed as creative, accessible and non-formal approaches to communication.

**“ We need to be aware that technology is sometimes received as a ‘top-down’ approach from ‘outside’. Technology has been rejected in some communities. This doesn’t mean technology can’t work in rural areas, it just needs to be part of a clear program. ”**  
**India Consultation Participant**

**The Opportunity:**

Consultation participants highlighted that, young people, more than any other demographic group, are using technology to connect globally, innovate, and create new and exciting real time data. Radio, TV, social media, smartphones (in particular for the use of Whatsapp) were highlighted as the most accessible and widely-used communication channels used by young people.

The following suggestions were made on how S4YE could best utilize technology to interact with young people under the the categories of governance, partnership and research and learning. N.B. These findings have also been incorporated into the recommendations for a community of practice (an online platform and a communications strategy) to enable S4YE to reach as wide a network of young people as possible.

## Technology's Role in Governance:

- S4YE Board, Executive Committee and Secretariat can use skype, google hangouts, emails, Whatsapp, newsletters, and phone calls to regularly connect with youth representatives.
- Information regarding S4YE governance decisions to be published on an easily accessible website.
- Use S4YE Polls (e.g. Facebook Polls) for Board, Executive Committee and Secretariat members to access quick decisions from young people.
- Use Internet Radio or podcasts for Board members, Executive Committee and Secretariat to share relevant information to a broad audience.

## Technology's Role in Partnerships:

- Use Social Media to raise awareness S4YE's profile to young people (in particular via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube).
- Youth-led organisations often have their own social media networks (Whatsapp groups, Facebook groups) which reach more young people. Promoting S4YE through these channels could help reach broader networks of young people.
- S4YE partners to offer technical training to young people through webinar training.
- Use an online platform or social media to link young people with S4YE partners and opportunities.

## Technology's Role in Research and Learning:

- Use smartphones as a tool to collect data, take videos and make voice recordings
- Use social media to collect data through online polls and surveys.
- Share research findings on social media platforms using creative and accessible visuals such as videos, memes and infographics.
- Build the capacity of young people to engage in research through webinar training.

“ The system is for youth. Youth is not for the system. ”  
Alex, India Workshop Participant

... followed in S4YE  
... can be brought together through

- (i) Smart Phone Apps
- (ii) Whatsapp groups
- (iii) Facebook, Twitter, Instagram Pages.
- (iv) Skype calls, etc.

to further operationalise their networks for possible partnerships.

# Consultation with S4YE Partners

## Feedback from key S4YE Stakeholders including Board members

Key S4YE Stakeholders, including members of the S4YE Board, were invited to input into the consultation by phone interview with Restless Development staff. Five key stakeholders took part in these interviews:

- Bill Reese, President and CEO, International Youth Foundation
- Sean Burke, Strategy & Innovation Lead for Corporate Citizenship, Accenture
- Ann Miles, Director of Financial Inclusion, Mastercard Foundation
- Delores McLaughlin, Senior Policy Advisor, Economic Security, Plan International
- Andrew Devenport, CEO, Youth Business International

The answers to the consultation questions to S4YE stakeholders are summarized below.

### **How does your organization currently engage with young people?**

Two S4YE stakeholders reported that their organization engages with young people through the workforce, as interns, young graduates or on a scholars programs. Stakeholders also reported engaging young people as program beneficiaries, with all reporting that young people are consulted at the design and planning stages of these programs. Three S4YE stakeholders reported that young people are engaged in governance within their organizations, as Board members or as part of a Youth Advisory Panel. Three stakeholders also reported engaging with young people indirectly through partners.



### **What challenges, if any, does your organization have in engaging with young people?**

Stakeholders reported challenges accessing young people at the grassroots, logistical challenges with securing visas and work permits, understanding the right level of expectation to place on young person and how to support them to become independent of the organization's support. Another challenge highlighted was in understanding how to design the right projects and how best to include young people as much as possible at every step of the process. Providing a safe space for young people to engage in programs, building realistic expectations, and a lack of government public policy on youth were also noted as challenges.

## What role do you think young people can play in providing solutions to youth employment?

S4YE stakeholders recognized and valued the unique skills, perspectives and life experience that diverse young people bring which helps innovation and challenges organizations to do things differently. Several stakeholders recommended that young people play a role in project design and particularly the design of new technology. Others suggested that young people provide solutions already through their own entrepreneurship.

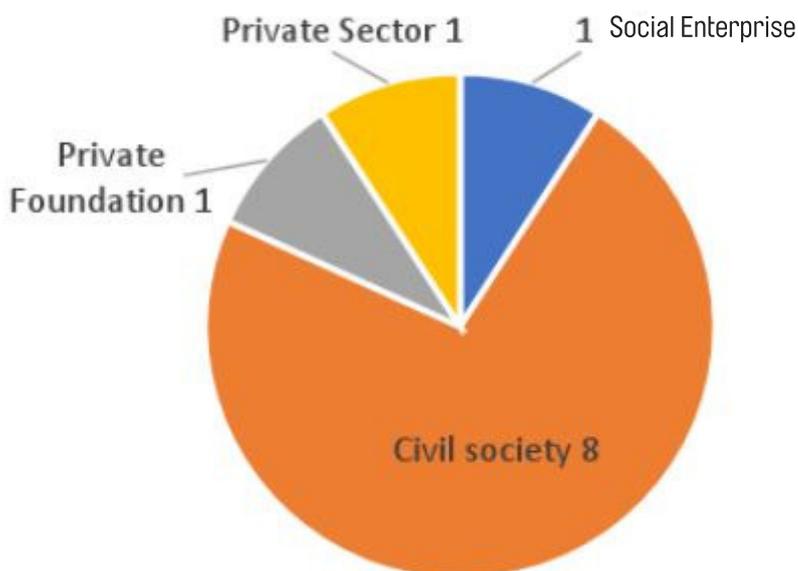
## How do you think young people could participate in the S4YE Coalition?

Several S4YE stakeholders strongly recommended that young people be involved in governance of the S4YE Coalition both on the Board and by strengthening the connection between young people and the Executive Committee. Others added that young people are also needed at the project and national level where solutions are being tested, designed and scaled. In addition, stakeholders believed that young people can play a large role in communications, facilitating the creative dissemination of the work of the S4YE Coalition among their peers.

## Analysis of S4YE Survey with Impact Portfolio Partners

Restless Development worked with S4YE to identify organizations which are part of its "Impact Portfolio" to assess the impact of employment and entrepreneurship projects. Impact Portfolio partners were consulted by survey. 10 partners, based in Bangladesh, Canada, Ireland, Qatar, South Africa, Uganda, UK, USA and working in over 120 countries globally, responded to the survey.

**For more information on survey participants please refer to Annex 4**

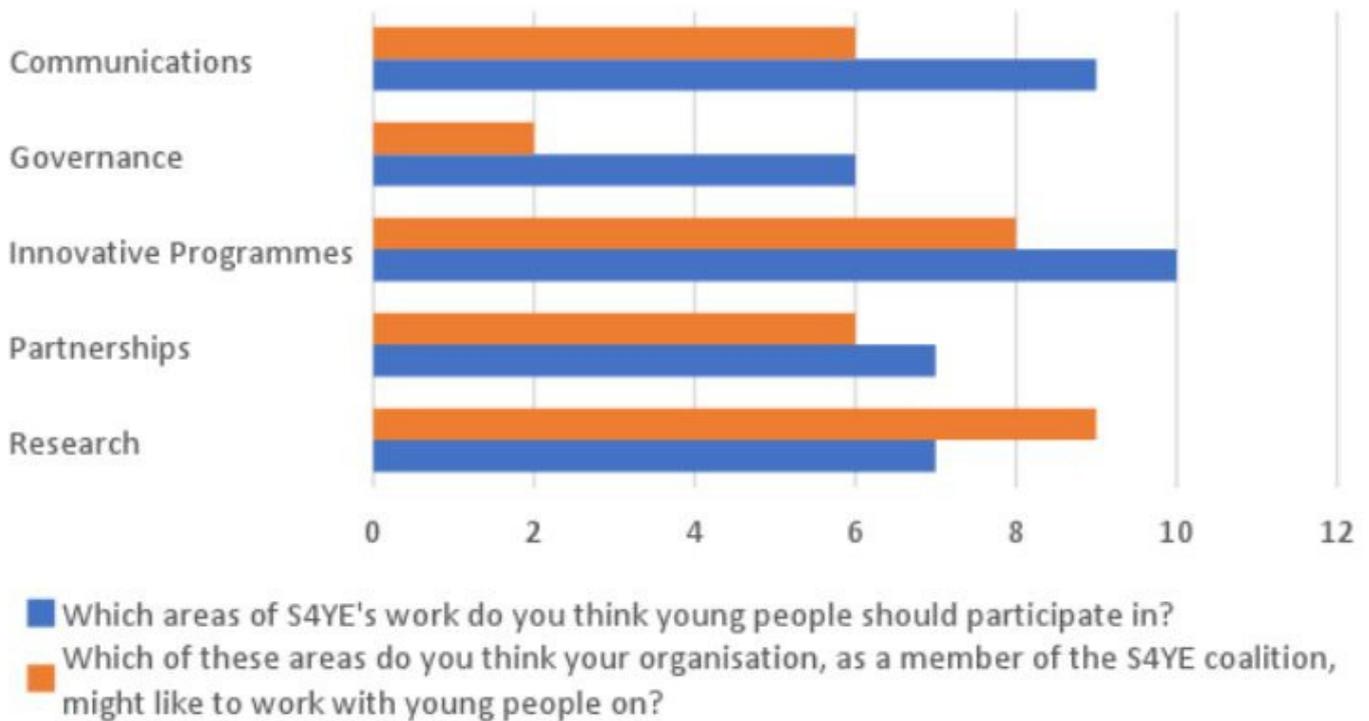


**Employment and Entrepreneurship Programs that participating organizations are involved with:**



**Youth Participation in the S4YE Coalition**

100% of respondents agreed that young people should be part of the S4YE coalition. S4YE partners were asked which areas of S4YE's work they think young people should participate in. Out of 10 organizations that responded:



These findings demonstrate a strong commitment to youth engagement among the S4YE partners, though the commitment is weakest when it comes to engaging young people at the governance level.

# Recommendations for Youth Participation in the S4YE Coalition

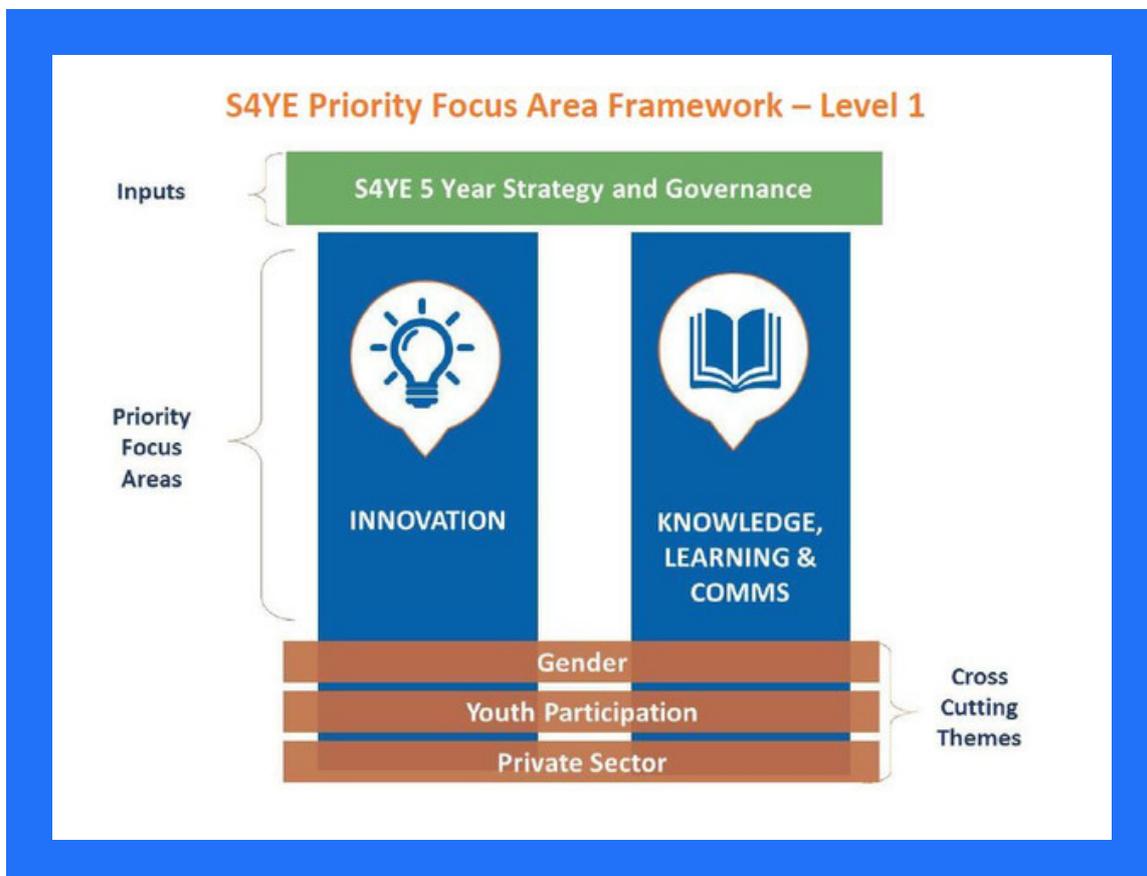
Using the ideas shared by young people during the youth consultations in India, South Africa and Colombia, The Youth Review Team, supported by Restless Development, have identified key recommendations for Youth Participation in the Solutions for Youth Employment Coalition. These include recommendations for:

- The role young people could play in the leadership and governance of S4YE
- How S4YE could and should work with young people to reach a wider network

On reviewing S4YE strategic priorities for 2017–2020, we have also included recommendations for how S4YE could work with young people in two key areas of its operations:

- Innovation
- Knowledge, learning and communications

During the development of these recommendations, gender inequality was identified as a recurring theme from all three consultations; however, it was decided that gender should be a cross-cutting theme (reflecting the S4YE strategy) throughout all recommendations, and that when we talk about “young people” we include male, female, transgender and non-binary young people. For recommendations where we think S4YE should take specific steps on gender, this has been included in the “How” sections.



# Recommendations for Youth Participation in the Leadership and Governance of S4YE

1. Establish youth participation at all three governance levels of S4YE.

“ I’d love for us to have a few young people on the Board. It would be very helpful. ”  
**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE establish youth participation at all three governance and leadership levels of the coalition.

**Why?** The S4YE coalition has recognized Youth Participation as a cross-cutting theme, necessary to enable the successful delivery of the 2015–2020 strategy, therefore it is extremely important that young people are represented and their voices heard at the highest level in the organization, to hold the coalition and its partners to account for their commitments, and drive innovation and ideas at the Board level. However, it was recognized by young people during the consultations that youth representation at governance level is not enough to drive implementation of a Youth Participation strategy. Therefore we propose youth leadership is integrated into the existing executive and secretariat structures, to ensure day to day decisions and operations include a youth voice.

**What is youth participation? Refer to page 4 in the high level assessment to read more about "Why Youth?"**

**How?**

- Consult with S4YE Board members, Executive and Secretariat on introducing Youth Participation at all three levels.
- Develop role descriptions for Youth Representatives at Secretariat or Executive level – likely to include spearheading youth leadership and participation within S4YE.
- Outreach to S4YE partners to nominate young members of staff or young people in an existing leadership role in their organization to join the S4YE Secretariat and Executive, specifically requesting that partners put forward a gender diverse pool of young people for consideration.
- Support young members of the secretariat to work with S4YE partners to develop meaningful roles for young people at the governance level. A meaningful role for young people at the governance level includes that they are consulted on major decisions, as like any other Board member, rather than just informed, and that they share decision making with fellow Board members.

2. Ensure that youth representatives at the governance level are recruited with an open and transparent process.

“ One problem with involving youth in...governance is choosing youth who are representative of and who represent youth constituents. S4YE Impact Portfolio Partner ”

**What?** We recommend that S4YE use an open and transparent process in the recruitment of Youth Representatives at the governance level. The recruitment process should include an element of nomination from peers to verify their role as a Youth Representative.

**Why?** S4YE, as a multi-stakeholder coalition working at the global level, has a commitment to transparency in its communication. This principle should be upheld during the recruitment of Youth Representatives. During the consultations young people raised the importance of an open and transparent process, to ensure all young people in S4YE’s partner networks have the opportunity to take up a governance role. It is important that Youth Representatives at the Board level are nominated or elected by their peers so that they can draw legitimacy to represent their views.

- How?**
- Design an application process, in consultation with S4YE partners, which includes an element of peer to peer selection or nomination.
  - Develop clear criteria and a description of the roles and responsibilities for Youth Representatives at the governance level.
  - Work with S4YE partners to communicate the process and opportunity to a wide network of young people, targeting young women and marginalized youth where necessary to ensure a diverse pool of applicants.
  - Ensure the selection panel is representative of S4YE partners with expertise in youth engagement.
  - Publicly communicate when the Youth Representatives selected, and the process involved.



3. Create systems to enable young people to hold S4YE to account for its commitments and decisions.

“S4YE founders need to drive implementation and ensure consistent feedback loops with young people to ensure this is being done effectively.”  
S4YE Board Member

**What?** We recommend that S4YE develop a clear process which will enable young people in the S4YE network to hold S4YE to account for its strategy, commitments, and decisions.

**Why?** During the consultations young people identified that all young people engaged with S4YE, not just Youth Representatives at the board level, have a role to play in holding S4YE and its partners to account for commitments (such as to increase the number of young people engaged in productive work by 2030). It was agreed that S4YE needs to communicate decisions made with young people, to enable S4YE to gain trust and commitment from young people, many of whom have distrust in international or adult-led institutions.

- How?**
- Put in public domain information about S4YE as a coalition, this should include youth participation strategy, how budgets are spent, key actions of decision makers and impact reports.
  - Ensure that information is understandable for young people. Language should be non-academic and creative methods such as videos and social media should be considered. Where possible young people should be at the forefront of communications.
  - Proactively share updates with young people through the Community of Practice. For example selection of new board members, awarding of funding, new partnerships entered.
  - Establish a clear feedback loop for young people working with S4YE to share their ideas, and raise any concerns. This has been included in the design for the Community of Practice Online Platform.



4. Ensure that young people’s voices are equal to those of adults in decision making in governance structures.

**“ There should be training for the S4YE secretariat and exec committee on youth participation ”**  
**India workshop participant**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE Board, Executive and Secretariat members, receive training on Meaningful Youth Engagement.

**Why?** During consultations young people reflected on the challenging experiences youth representatives or youth board members often have entering governance spaces with existing adult-led power dynamics. During consultation, S4YE Board members also recognized the need for capacity building in youth engagement within the coalition, to ensure engagement is meaningful and not tokenistic. Greater understanding of youth engagement will enable the existing S4YE board to create an environment at board level where youth representatives are fully included, and their voices are heard equally to adult experts at the table.

**What do we mean by meaningful? Please refer to page 4 in the high level assessment to read more on the Meaningful Youth Engagement approach**

**How?** We suggest that S4YE identify a partner from within or outside the coalition, with expertise in Meaningful Youth Engagement, that could undertake the following steps;

- Undertake capacity assessment and design training for S4YE Board members and Staff in Meaningful Youth Engagement and effective youth governance.
- Deliver participatory training with S4YE Board Members and staff, to prepare for more direct engagement with young people.
- Follow up with S4YE Board Members and staff to ensure best practice regarding Meaningful Youth Engagement.

## 5. Provide capacity building support for young people to take up and succeed in governance roles

“ There should be training for young people so they have confidence to engage, express themselves freely and can meaningfully engage. ”  
Colombia workshop participant

**What?** We recommend that S4YE develop a package of capacity building support for Youth Representatives working at the governance level.

**Why?** To enable youth representation at the Board level to be meaningful, it is necessary that the young leaders are capacitated and supported to fulfil their role. This includes ensuring Youth Representatives are fully informed of their role and responsibilities, understand the processes of decision making, are able to access materials in their language, and can effectively access and use the necessary technology

**How?**

- Identify key practices and processes of the S4YE Board (e.g. presentation style, minutes, voting) and summarize to develop a youth-friendly governance handbook.
- Provide training for youth representatives in these key practices and processes, as well as an induction to the S4YE coalition.
- Ensure youth representatives are able to access all materials, including arranging for translation or providing access to IT if needed.
- Establish ongoing buddying or mentoring relationship with existing S4YE Board member. We recommend that if possible the Board member selected, or the organization they represent, has some existing experience working with young people.
- Provide direct line of contact for Youth Representatives to raise concerns, and receive additional ongoing support as required.



# Recommendations for how S4YE could and should partner with young people

6. Develop a clear and transparent offer to young people so that they fully understand the opportunity presented by S4YE.

“ 100% of S4YE Impact Portfolio partners surveyed think young people should be part of the S4YE coalition. ”

**What?** We recommend that S4YE develop a clear and transparent offer to young people, developing a clear outline of the range of opportunities developed out of the Youth Participation Strategy.

**Why?** On reviewing the recommendations, and the potential opportunities for young people that S4YE and its partners could develop going forward (such as youth representatives on the Board; using the Community of Practice online platform; and participating in research design), the Youth Review Team identified that it is important that S4YE develop a clear offer, which they can communicate to young people in their partners networks. This will ensure young people understand what opportunities are available and what to expect from S4YE (this will include: roles and responsibilities, time commitments, financial remuneration, recognition).

- How?**
- Review the full set of recommendations and identify the opportunities that S4YE would like to offer to young people.
  - Consolidate these opportunities into a clear document which outlines key information such as criteria, roles and responsibilities, timeline and any financial reimbursements .
  - Communicate any opportunities clearly using the network of S4YE partners and directly to young people using online spaces such as the website and the Community of Practice online platform.
  - Review and update this internal document, and any public information, as new opportunities are developed (through research design, new projects etc.)



7. Invest in partnerships with young people to ensure S4YE activities adhere to the meaningful youth engagement approach.

**“ It is not automatic that anyone can do this. Meaningful Youth Engagement takes time, experience, and resources to do properly. ”**  
**S4YE Stakeholder**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE work with partners to leverage funding from within and outside the coalition to ensure Meaningful Youth Engagement (such as youth-led design, delivery and evaluation) is included in S4YE activities. We recommend S4YE invest in its future partnerships with young people, to support them to be development actors and leaders, as well as implementers of activities.

**Why?** During the consultations young people identified that when international organizations or networks, similar to S4YE, partner with youth organizations, projects can be underfunded with reliance on willingness of young people to volunteer and self-fund activities. S4YE partners also identified concerns that if S4YE were to enter partnerships with young people, this would require resource and expertise, to do it “properly” and adhere to the approach of Meaningful Youth Engagement.

**How?**

- Review the full set of recommendations and identify which activities S4YE would like to take forward with young people, and what partnerships they wish to develop with young people and their organizations and enterprises.
- Identify the type and amount of funding required to pursue these partnerships and activities in a meaningful and engaging way for young people and S4YE.
- Develop budgets accordingly, recognising the need to prioritize activities, according to funds available. Ensure all activities include elements of capacity building for S4YE and young people.
- Develop partnerships with funders, from within and outside S4YE’s existing networks, to secure financial backing for these activities.

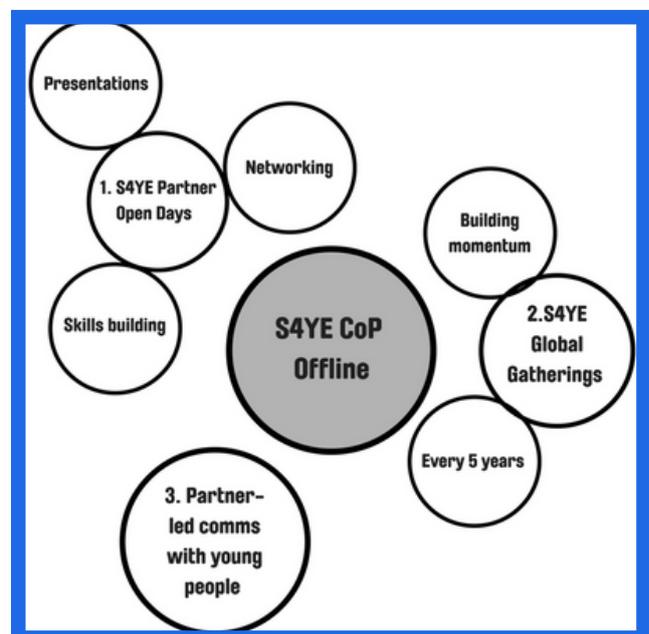
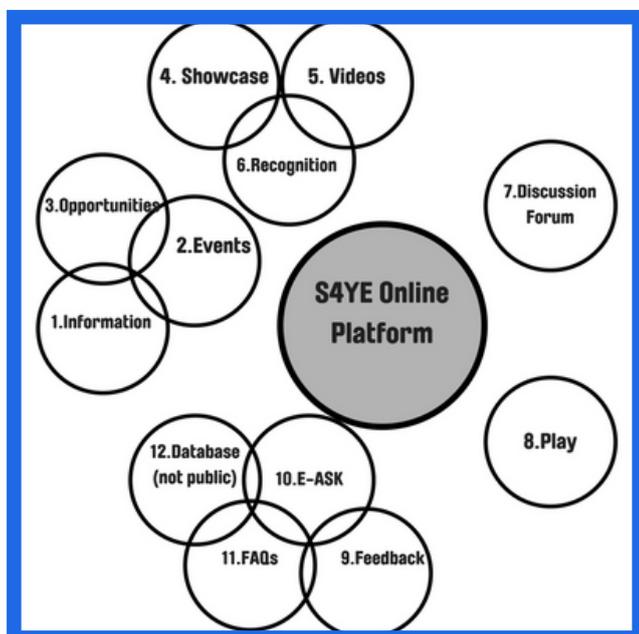
## 8. Curate a network of young people leading youth employment and entrepreneurship innovations

“ **Lack of economic opportunity is the number one priority for the majority of young people.** ”  
**Case for Space Initiative, 2015 (3)**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE develop a Community of Practice which will create a community of organizations and enterprises, who are already making change in their communities to tackle the youth employment crisis. The Community of Practice will link these young people with S4YE, and S4YE partners to build momentum towards achieving SDG 8 and Agenda 2030. The Community of Practice will include an online platform and also offline spaces to support this network.

**Why?** Lack of economic opportunity is the number one priority for the majority of young people globally. The youth consultations highlighted huge passion by young people for tackling youth unemployment issues. However currently there is no globally coordinated network for young people to connect on these issues. S4YE, through its network of partners (which include organizations working with young people) has the potential to mobilize a large number of young people to connect, work together and with the S4YE coalition to tackle the youth employment crisis.

**How?** For detailed information on HOW the Community of Practice could be implemented, please refer to the Community of Practice Framework in Annex 7



## 9. Develop peer to peer learning and capacity building structures for young people.

“ There are fewer differences between educators and learners. Within peer education learning is a two-way process. ”  
**British Youth Council**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE integrate peer to peer learning and capacity building opportunities into partnerships and activities with young people. We suggest that the Community of Practice online platform and offline spaces are key resources to deliver this recommendation.

**Why?** During youth consultations young people identified that as well as connecting with S4YE, young people would like to connect with each other, and learn from each other, sharing experiences of working on youth employment issues. Peer to peer learning is recognized as a successful model for learning and development, and we envision it could work well using an online platform to connect young people across countries and continents.

- How?**
- Utilize the Community of Practice to facilitate peer to peer sharing and learning in an online and offline space.
  - Work with S4YE partners to showcase success stories of youth leadership from within their employment and entrepreneurship projects – and upload these to the platform.
  - Incorporate peer to peer learning and networking into upcoming events (such as report launches or consultations) or "open days" or "global gatherings" (refer to Community of Practice Framework Annex 7 for more details)



10. Work with young people to make the case to national governments to invest in solutions to youth employment challenges.

**“ We need more than little cute pilot projects, we need scale from the beginning. We need governments and donors to take on a multisectoral approach. ”**  
**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE works with young people to develop partnerships with national governments, and to use these partnerships to leverage greater national and international investment in youth employment.

**Why?** During the youth consultations it was identified that in many countries with high youth employment, the government plays a huge role in the employment and enterprise sector. Young people reflected that S4YE should have more partnerships with national governments, and that young people could support with this. As recognized in the S4YE strategy, partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders including national governments are essential for the buy-in and sustainability of youth employment programs, to enable S4YE to achieve the scale of 600 million jobs by 2030.

**How?** These are suggested next steps based on experience of Restless Development and the young people we work with. Specifics will depend on strategies developed by S4YE.

- Work with S4YE members (such as German & Albanian Ministries) to identify specific national governments to outreach to introduce the S4YE Coalition. This may also align with plans for implementation of upcoming S4YE 2nd Generation Youth Employment projects.
- Identify young leaders within the selected countries, via S4YE partners or the Community of Practice network and work with them to develop the case to national governments (through campaign planning).
- Support young leaders to advocate the importance of investing in solutions to youth employment, and for national government support for S4YE initiatives. This should include briefing and capacity building support with advocacy to ensure this role is meaningful for young people.
- Establish partnerships with national governments and work towards securing support for S4YE and financial investment in youth employment projects .

# Recommendations for how S4YE could work with partners to create opportunities for young people to participate in its operations

## Priority 1: Innovation: designing 2nd generation youth employment projects.

11. Leverage funding from partners which can be allocated to, and accessed by, young people.



**S4YE could provide resources and seed funding for entrepreneurs.**



**South Africa workshop participant**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE work with its partners to develop a specific funding package which can be accessed by young people to build on and scale up their employment and entrepreneurship innovations.

**Why?** Young people, in all three countries, identified that access to funding is a key barrier in the employment and enterprise space as initiatives are dominated by government programs and, in rare cases, international NGOs and the private sector. Youth-led organizations or enterprises often don't meet the legal and due diligence requirements of funders (such as registration, bank account, % income limitation), with processes sometimes taking up to 2 years, in which an emerging innovation or enterprise may have collapsed.

S4YE has recognized the need for innovation to develop a 2nd generation of youth employment programs. Demonstrated by the participants we consulted, young people are already leading innovative projects tackling the youth employment crisis at a local and national level (with the group representing over 20 different exciting projects). Therefore we propose that S4YE have a role to convene partners to develop solution to ensure funding is accessible, to increase the reach and impact of youth innovations.

**How?** Collect evidence to build the case for a youth innovations funding package, building on the consultation undertaken for this Youth Participation Strategy.

- Convene a conversation between young people who have faced challenges accessing funding and S4YE funding partners, to collaboratively design a new funding mechanism.
- Develop a framework for the funding mechanism which outlines the role for S4YE (as a sub-granter or convener) and S4YE partners. This framework should outline how it will be accessible to young people leading employment and entrepreneurship innovations, and overcome the existing barriers identified. The framework should outline how the mechanism is open and transparent.
- Communicate the funding mechanism to young people, utilizing the Community of Practice online and offline network, with the support of S4YE partners.
- Implement the funding mechanism, awarding funding to youth-led grassroots solutions to youth employment.

12. Work with S4YE partners to ensure diverse groups of young people are active participants in all stages of projects.

**“Young people are problem solvers, not problems to be solved. They need to be included in all aspects of development.”**  
**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE works with its partners to ensure that young people have an active role in all stages of projects initiated by S4YE. We recommend that S4YE are proactive in ensuring that they reflect the diversity of young people, ensuring young women and young people from marginalized groups are included.

**Why?** As young people are the target demographic of S4YE’s mission to tackle youth unemployment, young people have a big role to play in shaping the development of interventions. During the consultations, young people identified that it is very important to make sure that those young people who are consulted during a needs assessment, or tasked with evaluating a project, are representative of diverse groups – especially that young women and those from rural areas are included. The need to include young people at all stages of the project cycle also reflects Restless Development’s extensive experience, where engaging young people in all stages of the project cycle results in better development outcomes.

**Check out Restless Development and USAID’s video on “how to engage young people in all stages of the project cycle” for an example.**

[Click here to view](#)

- How?**
- Identify an S4YE partner, or external stakeholder, with expertise in including young people in a meaningful way throughout the project cycle (from design to evaluation).
  - Develop internal guidance for S4YE, based on best practice, on how young people should be engaged in projects developed by S4YE and its partners. This guidance should include outreaching to young women and marginalized groups.
  - Pilot using this guidance in the design and implementation of a “2nd generation youth employment project”.
  - Ensure there is an element of capacity building training in key areas such as project design for young people to fully participate in the design and implementation of projects.

13. Work with young people and S4YE partners to ensure that employment and entrepreneurship projects are designed to tackle both rural and urban unemployment.

“ Private sector initiatives can bring employment to rural areas. ”  
India workshop participant

**What?** We recommend that S4YE as a coalition ensures that new 2nd generation employment projects tackle both rural and urban youth unemployment. Within these projects we recommend that resources are allocated to help young people bridge the access gap.

**Why?** A common theme across all three consultations was that there are inequalities faced by young people in rural areas, and participants felt that the majority of existing youth employment initiatives are targeted at urban communities. Therefore we suggest this is an area that S4YE could explore further, in partnership with young people, to redress this imbalance. We recommend that S4YE and its partners work with young people to ensure projects are targeted where they are needed across urban and rural areas, based on consultation with youth in target communities.

**How?**

- Draw on existing analysis of youth employment projects (such as the Impact Portfolio) to assess whether this matched the reflections of young people.
- If a gap is identified, identify and convene S4YE partners interested in pursuing this challenge, and gather evidence on best practice on ensuring projects meet targeted communities.
- Ensure that young people from target communities are consulted by S4YE and partners during the development of 2nd generation youth employment programs. to design programs that give employment and opportunities to young people in both rural and urban contexts.



14. Ensure that when technology is used in projects to engage young people, young people have been consulted on its use and appropriateness.



**Young people can see the application of digital technology and ways of doing things that haven't been done before.**

**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE and its partners engage directly with young people in the design of technology initiatives.

**Why?** In response to consultation on the role technology could play in solving youth employment challenges, young people shared their experiences of the use of technology in development programs. Concern was raised that often technology as a solution is oversimplified and does not consider the large numbers of young people with limited access to technology. Concerns were also raised about the need for face-to-face activities to build capacity of communities, including young people, in the use of technology. In some contexts technology was seen as an input from the “outside” and not community led. Whilst technology is one solution, it needs to work alongside grassroots face-to-face work.

Therefore we suggest that S4YE works with its partners to further this discussion and engage directly with young people from the community during the concept and design stage developing 2nd generation youth employment programs.

- How?**
- Use the Community of Practice—both the online platform and offline spaces – to collect evidence of young people’s experience on the use of technology for development, and share this with S4YE partners.
  - During the design phase of every 2nd Generation Youth Employment program, review the technology elements of the project,
  - Within the role of a convener, encourage S4YE partners to consult with young people from the benefiting community on the use of this technology.
  - Ensure that technology is use in partnership with offline and face to face connection to ensure holistic approach to meaningful participation.

**For more information on what young people and partners said about technology, please refer to the Community of Practice Annex 7**

15. Convene S4YE partners to build on young people’s passion for environmental sustainability.

**“ We need to consider environmental sustainability and protection of resources in employment programs. ”**  
**Colombia workshop participant**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE integrate the passion of young people for social and environmental issues into its 2nd generation employment projects. We recommend that S4YE convene its partners, including private sector stakeholders, to ensure that 2nd generation employment and entrepreneurship projects designed have a positive environmental impact.

**Why?** Environmental sustainability was an issue raised particularly strongly during the Colombia consultation, and put forward by the Youth Review Team as a key issue for S4YE to consider taking forward. Globally, young people have proven to be effective environmental campaigners and activists. Young people, especially young women, are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and climate change. The consultation process highlighted that young people are eager to work in way that does not have a negative impact on the planet, or to worsen the effects of climate change they will inherit. Therefore 2nd generation youth employment programs should reflect this.

**How?** We recognize that environmental sustainability is not a current S4YE strategic priority, however here are some suggested activities which could explore this area further.

- S4YE to consider including employment and environmental sustainability as a topic for a research piece or discussion event.
- Work with S4YE partners, and external partners, to identify young speakers and facilitators for this event, particularly those whose livelihoods are most affected by environmental degradation and climate change..
- Collaborate with young speakers, facilitators and S4YE partners to deliver event, identify the links between employment and environmental sustainability, and identify a core set of “green standards” that could act as a watermark for 2nd generation youth employment programs and ways of working.

## Priority 2: Knowledge, Learning and Communications, gathering evidence and sharing learning in youth employment and entrepreneurship.

16. Create opportunities for young people to share their own evidence of innovative solutions for youth employment.

“ It needs to be an online two-way conversation, an opportunity to have chat rooms, dialogues, webinars and voices heard from young people in S4YE programmes.”  
**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE develop a function within the Community of Practice that enables young people to share their own evidence, data and stories.

**Why?** S4YE has recognized the need for greater evidence on what works in youth employment programmes, reflected by the Impact Portfolio. Young people consulted would like to extend this to enable S4YE to gather evidence from youth-led and informal programmes working in this space. This will enable S4YE and its partners, and stakeholders to develop a greater collective understanding of solutions to youth employment. In addition, enabling young people to share their experience also contributes towards the recommendation to “develop peer to peer learning and capacity building structures for young people”.

**How?**

- Enable young people to directly upload evidence of their experience using the online platform, and sharing their experience in offline spaces.
- Work with S4YE partners to encourage their youth networks to submit evidence to the platform, using existing case studies or resources developed as needed so as not to duplicate work.
- Establish a system internally to manage and collate this evidence, and feed into S4YE’s knowledge bank.

**For more information on how the Community of Practice could enable young people to directly share evidence of their experience, please refer to Annex 7**



## 17. Develop research briefs and evaluation designs in consultation with young people.

“ 70% of Impact Portfolio partners surveyed think that S4YE should work with young people in the area of research, and 90% said their organization would like to work with young people in this area. ”

**What?** We recommend that S4YE establish an internal process where young people are always consulted on the design of research briefs and evaluation.

**Why?** S4YE in its first two years of operation has established a strong reputation for its contributions to research, producing insightful knowledge briefs and reports on youth employment. Young people consulted identified that young people with expertise in the relevant topics, whether it be digital jobs for girls or migration, should be involved in the design of the research to ensure it is framed to find solutions to the challenges, or find answers to the questions, that come from their direct experience of the issue. During the consultation young people also reflected that materials need to be technical whilst also being accessible to a wider audience, and youth input to the design could support with this.

- How?**
- Review internal processes and procedures for designing research briefs and evaluations within S4YE.
  - Engage with partners from within or outside the S4YE network with expertise in youth-led action research.
  - Integrate the model for youth-led action research, building on expertise from the sector, to design a youth-led research pilot project for S4YE.
  - Implement the youth-led action research model by undertaking youth consultations, ensuring the pool of young people consulted reflect the diversity of young people and their experiences.
  - Share the progress of this youth consultation with S4YE partners, and wider stakeholders, to encourage youth-led research design.



18, Work with S4YE partners to build the capacity of young people to undertake data collection and analysis.

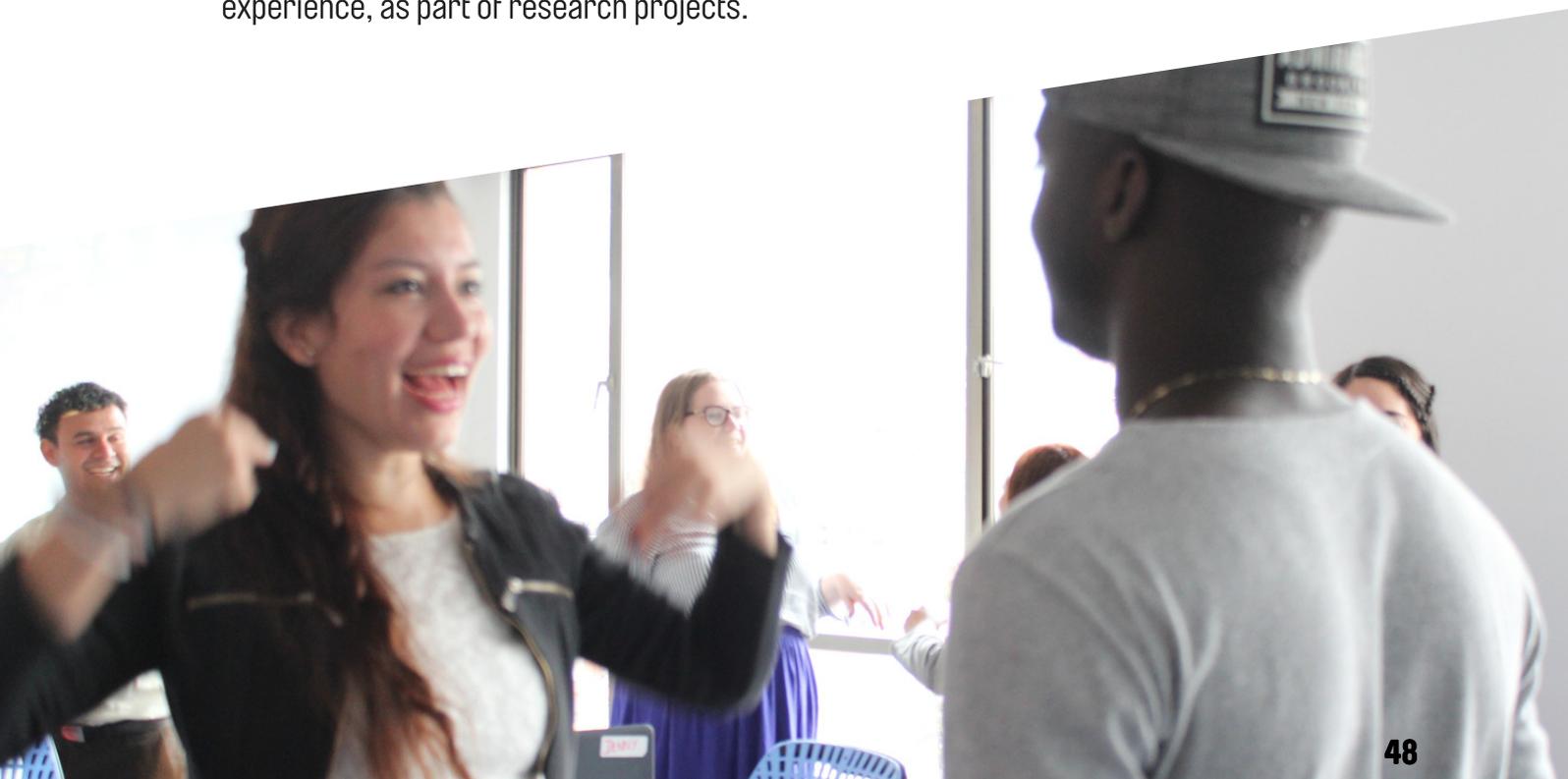
**“ We should build the capacity of young people to engage in research in skills such as online polls, telephone interviews, surveys. ”**  
**India workshop participant**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE commit to building the capacity of young people to enable them to lead in gathering evidence on youth employment issues, through participating in data collection and analysis.

**Why?** Young people consulted agreed that it was important for young people from the community to be involved in the data collection and analysis, as too often external researchers are used which can be viewed negatively by youth and others in the community, and it prevents participants' ownership of the data findings. However it was identified that there is a skills gap, and a need for capacity building in these technical areas for young people. Therefore it is important to include a specific recommendation for S4YE partners to play a role in building the skills of young people to lead on data collection and analysis, including targeting young women.

**How?**

- Consult with S4YE partners with specific technical or research background on the participation of young people in data collection and analysis.
- Work with S4YE partners to identify research projects where young people could lead on evidence gathering – and encourage them to partner with young people from the community.
- In such projects, work with S4YE partners to allocate resources to support the capacity building of young people to undertake these activities.
- Utilize the Community of Practice to gather evidence from young people and their direct experience, as part of research projects.



## 19. Ensure clear communication on action taken by S4YE and partners following research undertaken by young people.

“ **S4YE should communicate their failure as well as success with young people.** ”  
**India workshop participant**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE communicate to young people clearly on the actions taken following the completion of research. This should include the outcomes of the research, key leanings and how S4YE and its partners will take this forward.

**Why?** During the consultations it was proposed by participants that S4YE ensure that there are clear communications channels to feedback to young people who have participated in consultations, young people in any governance or leadership role within S4YE, but also all young people within their network to enable young people to hold S4YE to account.

**How?**

- Ensure that clear feedback loops and two-way communication channels with and for young people on action taken is included in the design of any youth-led research pilot projects within S4YE.
- Allocate responsibility for communicating back to young people to a member of the team,
- Communicate back to young people using the online and offline spaces of the Community of Practice, ensuring there is adequate space for discussion.

**For more information on how the Community of Practice could be used to communicate directly with young people, please refer to Annex 7**



20. Ensure young people play an active and meaningful role in the dissemination of data and learning.

“ **Young people can play a huge role in communications, particularly in finding ways to more broadly disseminate the work of the Coalition, finding ways to engage young people, facilitating channels for more young people to visit the S4YE website and make communications more interactive.** ”

**S4YE Board Member**

**What?** We recommend that S4YE works with young people to disseminate data and learning from the coalition, utilizing creative communications to reach wider audiences.

**Why?** During the consultations, on reviewing S4YE existing activities in this work-stream and plans for 2017, participants felt that there was information which could be of benefit to wider audiences, and that knowledge should be disseminated further. Recognizing that current materials, such as knowledge briefs, would not be accessible to wider audiences, the groups thought that they could use creative methods, such as video, music, graphics and social media to share this information.

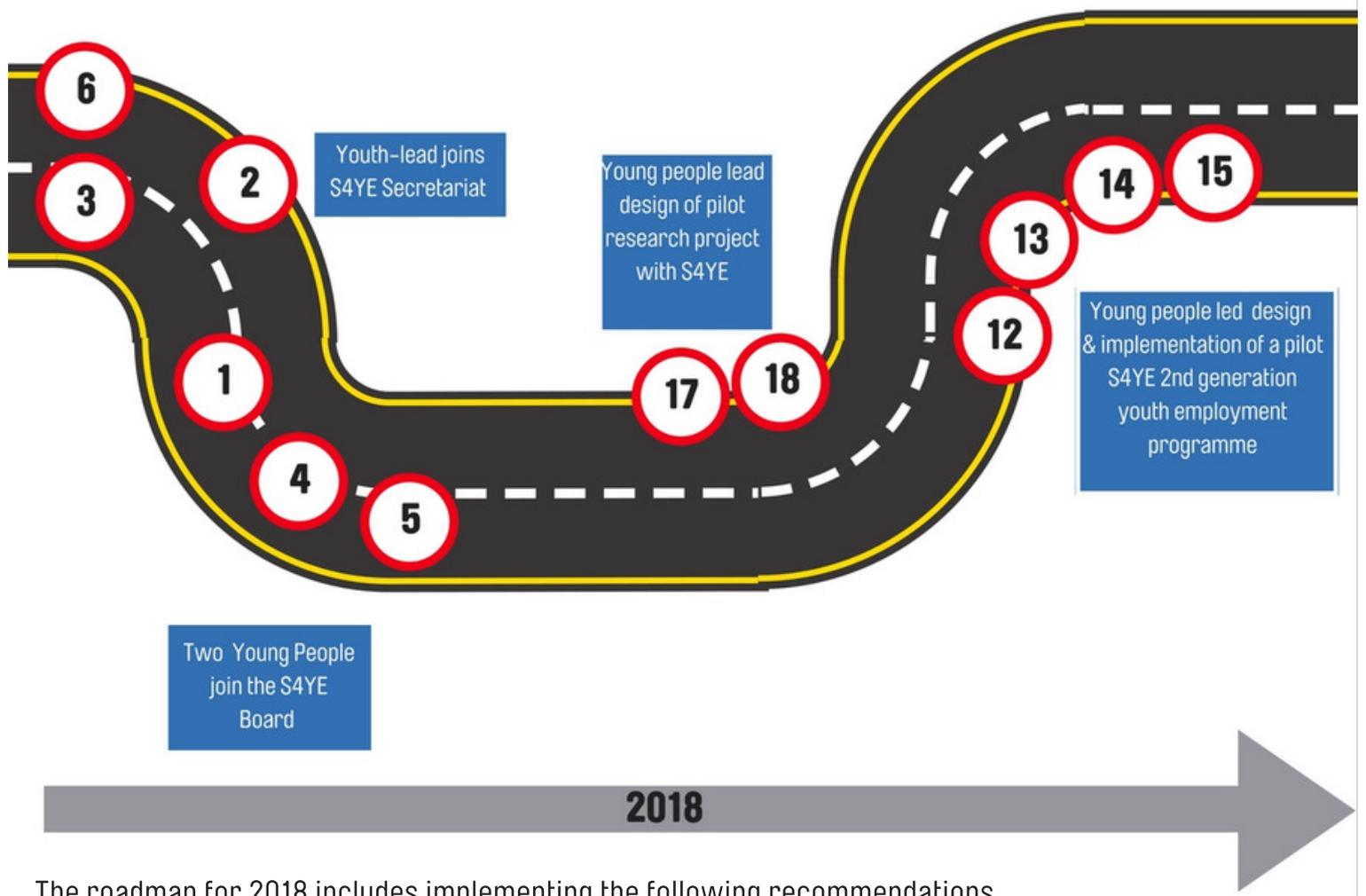
**How?**

- Review how S4YE currently disseminates learning from research pieces.
- For an upcoming release of a report, pilot collaborating with young people to disseminate this learning. This could include bringing together a working group of young people, with passion and experience for research to develop a dissemination plan. This could include thinking about the audience, developing a strategy and clear messaging and building in opportunities for feedback or contribution to the conversation.
- Support this working group to use creative communications – such as video, social media, music – to share the results and learning from the report.



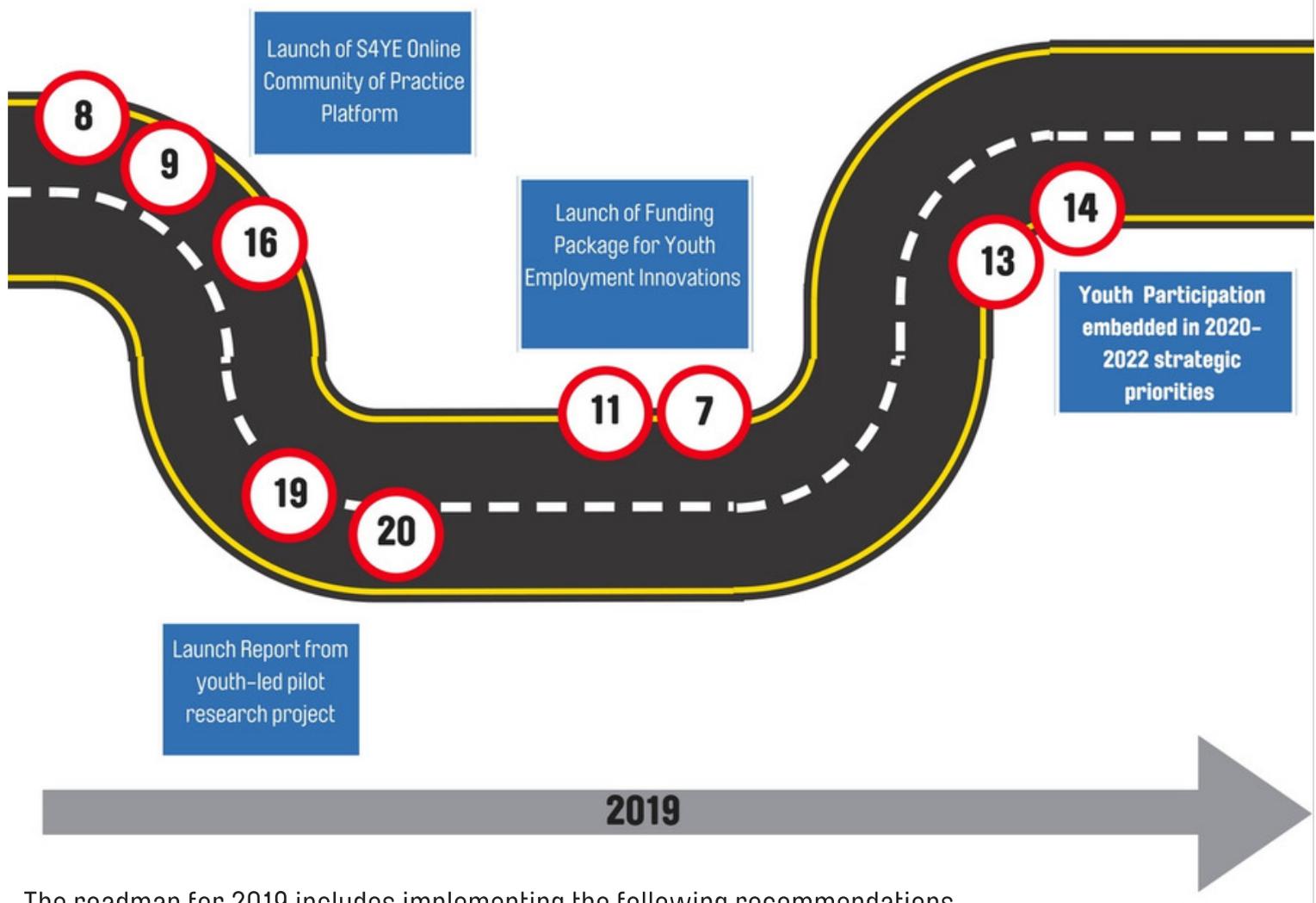
On the following 2 pages please see a suggested roadmap for implementation of these recommendations. The roadmap has been developed based on conversations undertaken with S4YE and initial feedback on the recommendations from the S4YE Board at the presentation.

We have outlined a suggested order to prioritize recommendations over the next two years (2018–2020), and signposted key milestones. This is aimed to be a useful tool to guide the development of an internal strategy.



The roadmap for 2018 includes implementing the following recommendations

- 1. Establish youth participation at all three governance levels of S4YE
- 2. Ensure that youth representatives at the governance level are recruited with an open and transparent process
- 3. Create systems to enable young people to hold S4YE to account for its commitments and decisions.
- 4. Ensure that young people's voices are equal to those of adults in decision making in governance structures.
- 5. Provide capacity building support for young people to take up and succeed in governance roles.
- 6. Develop a clear and transparent offer to young people so that they fully understand the opportunity presented by S4YE.
- 12. Work with S4YE partners to ensure diverse groups of young people are active participants in all stages of projects
- 13. Work with young people and S4YE partners to ensure that employment and entrepreneurship projects are designed to tackle both rural and urban unemployment
- 14. Ensure that when technology is used in projects to engage young people, young people have been consulted on its use and appropriateness.
- 15. Convene S4YE partners to build on young people's passion for environmental sustainability.
- 17. Develop research briefs and evaluation designs in consultation with young people
- 18. Work with S4YE partners to build the capacity of young people to undertake data collection and analysis



The roadmap for 2019 includes implementing the following recommendations

- 7. Invest in partnerships with young people to ensure S4YE activities adhere to the meaningful youth engagement approach
- 8. Curate a network of young people leading youth employment and entrepreneurship innovations
- 9. Develop peer to peer learning and capacity building structures for young people.
- 11. Leverage funding from partners which can be allocated to, and accessed by, young people
- 13. Work with young people and S4YE partners to ensure that employment and entrepreneurship projects are designed to tackle both rural and urban unemployment
- 14. Ensure that when technology is used in projects to engage young people, young people have been consulted on it's use and appropriateness.
- 16. Create opportunities for young people to share their own evidence of innovative solutions for youth employment.
- 19. Ensure clear communication on action taken following research undertaken by young people.
- 20. Ensure young people play an active and meaningful role in the dissemination of data and learning.

# Concluding Remarks

With half the world's population under 30 years old, SDG 8 and the S4YE coalition's vision will only be achieved if young people are fully engaged at every stage of addressing the challenge of youth unemployment. Working with and for youth is already S4YE's core business. The operationalization of young people's recommendations for youth leadership, youth engagement and partnering with youth can continue to build on the S4YE coalition partner's experience and expertise in order to increase the impact and reach of the coalition's work.

The S4YE coalition is already making a significant contribution to increasing enterprise and employment opportunities for young people. The overarching finding from the youth consultations is that the S4YE Coalition should engage young people in its decision making and leadership processes, not simply as beneficiaries of its programs. The recommendations suggest a range of ideas, approaches and proposed engagements that can put this vision into practice.

To ensure quality S4YE must find and prioritize ways to support staff and partners to apply models and concepts of youth participation into the design and delivery of youth-led and youth-focused programmes. The S4YE coalition and its partners should develop ways of working where young people and youth-led organizations advise on the design of programmes and research; are supported to take an active role in delivering, co-managing and evaluating activities and policies; and given the capacity and resources to lead their own initiatives. S4YE can make a contribution to the knowledge base on what works in youth participation and empowerment – making the most of the data and information that they have access to – and use that knowledge to contribute to evidence-based advocacy.

Rolling out the youth participation strategy internally is key to translating good intentions into something tangible and accessible for the S4YE staff and partners. The challenge is how and where to ensure commitment and capacity on the proposed action plan, when clear signals from the partners survey indicate that S4YE partners are not committed to youth participation at governance level. Successfully bringing all Board, Executive and Secretariat personnel on board with the new youth engagement strategy is key to operationalize through programs, funding, partnerships and political spaces.

These recommendations are intended to inform and inspire the S4YE coalition leadership and partners to undertake a new way of working, operationalizing an existing cross-cutting strategic focus on youth participation at all levels. The recommendations can hopefully be used as a call to action for S4YE's partners, including young people and their organizations, working to realize the potential for young people to play a leading role in achieving the ambition set out by the Sustainable Development Goals.



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6th December, 2017