

## ACTION LEARNING CYCLE #2

# Advancing Cross-Stakeholder Measurement of Youth Partnership in SRHR

## Recommendation from Action Learning Group Members

*At the YIELD Hub, we view youth partnership as an ongoing and evolving process. We define it as an equitable, mutually respectful, and beneficial relationship between all actors, including young people. Our action learning group members' insights highlight key factors to consider when determining what and how to measure youth partnership in the SRHR field.*

Five organisations engaged in Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) participated in the YIELD Hub's second Collective Action Learning groups: **Rutgers (Netherlands), Copper Rose Zambia, Amref Health - Africa, IPPF - Africa, The Torchlight Collective, and an Independent Consultant.** The learning topic focus for the group was Cross-Stakeholder Measurement of Youth Partnership. Representatives from these organisations embarked on a seven-month action learning journey to learn and take action on how to more effectively assess and measure the outcomes of strategies that promote youth partnership and the impact of youth contributions in SRHR.

## Why Measuring Youth Partnership Matters?



### Essential for More Than Accountability

Measuring the progress and outcomes of youth partnerships goes beyond mere accountability. It plays a crucial role in guiding organisations, especially those in the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) sector, to strategically plan activities and appropriately allocate resources.



### Facilitates Reflection and Effective Strategy Development

The process of measurement offers a valuable chance for stakeholders involved in youth partnerships to reflect on their practices. It enables them to discuss what methods are successful, identify areas for improvement, and strategize on how to progress effectively. This reflective process encourages openness and a critical, investigative approach among collaborators.



### Promotes Learning and Sharing Best Practices

Documenting the progress and outcomes of youth partnerships enhances the ability to share and learn from these experiences beyond the immediate stakeholders. This practice is instrumental in setting a standard, making youth partnerships a fundamental part of SRHR programs and contributing to the broader development of the field.

Through their collective experience and learning, the five organisations and YIELD Hub have identified significant areas for reflection, commitment, and recommendations that are invaluable for implementers, advocates, researchers, youth-led and youth-serving organisations, as well as donors and other development partners involved with youth and youth-serving organisations.

**The insights from the learning cycle can inform planning, monitoring, and evaluation efforts aimed at assessing and measuring youth partnerships in the SRHR field.**

## **A. Evaluating Social Factors**

When assessing youth-adult partnerships, it is crucial to consider the social factors at play. This includes reviewing prior assessments of these partnerships in specific contexts, understanding their functionality, and identifying their various dimensions. For instance, it is vital to comprehend how cultural traditions, values, social norms, and gender norms influence power hierarchies, 'rules' for respectful communication between younger and older individuals, organisational cultures, and hence, youth partnerships. These insights can aid in developing measurement tools and indicators not only for individual or programme-related aspects but also for institutional and structural elements. For example, indicators that look at supportive organisational norms or that measure progress around young people and adults' ability to act as a team or work effectively with young people in all their diversity

## **B. Addressing Institutional and Structural Challenges**

Recognising that challenges in youth partnerships often originate from institutional and structural factors is imperative. This involves minimising administrative, financial, legal, and operational barriers to support the growth, sustainability, and autonomy of youth initiatives. It is essential to extend beyond youth participation in programmes, advocacy, and research and also invest in the operational and capacity needs of youth-led or youth-serving organisations to ensure their long-term viability. For instance, including indicators that examine supportive institutional and structural processes that diminish administrative, financial, legal, and operational barriers to youth initiatives can aid in measuring progress and understanding what is effective and what is not.

## **C. Measuring Youth Partnership Goes Beyond Quantitative Indicators**

Youth partnerships are complex, as is their contribution to SRHR outcomes. A key insight from the learning cycle is that most methods and tools used to measure progress and outcomes on youth partnerships are qualitative. They prompt stakeholders to reflect on what renders the partnership meaningful and beneficial and allow for capturing feelings and motivations like trust, fears, team spirit, feeling rewarded, frustration, discrimination, etc. They also capture factors that enable or hinder them. Some tools then continue to request scores so results and progress can be reported quantitatively and visually or be utilised by stakeholders to set targets for improvements.

## **D. Gathering Evidence for Better Partnerships**

To enhance the definition and measurement of partnerships with youth-led and youth-serving organisations, evidence is crucial. Youth-led and youth-serving organisations should gather internal and external evidence to assess and document their experiences and methods of measuring youth partnership.

This evidence should spotlight effective practices, areas for enhancement, and where additional investment is necessary. By utilising this data, organisations can improve their partnership efforts and provide guidance to donors and stakeholders in the SRHR field, pinpointing areas where changes and investments are imperative to strengthen youth partnerships.



The lessons shared by the Action learning group members are pivotal for stakeholders in the SRHR field who seek to enhance their work on youth partnership. These insights ought to be integrated into planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes when assessing youth partnerships in SRHR initiatives. The Action learning group members are applying these lessons to enhance their work on institutional processes and youth partnership.



**Copper Rose Zambia** is leading internal documentation to assess their experiences in youth-adult partnerships. They are identifying what has worked, what has not, and areas necessitating improvement. This process generates essential data to inform best practices.

Rutgers

**Rutgers International**, with extensive global youth initiative experience, is reassessing its Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP) measurement methods. They will use this learning data to enhance MIYP in their programmes. They are gathering external insights on MIYP measurement to understand its purpose, what is effective, and what is not. This involves reviewing indicators, tools, and past programme data to determine the best MIYP measurement approaches.



**Susan Igras**, an Independent consultant and a programme planning and evaluation/ Adjunct faculty at Georgetown University Centre for Child and Human Development, is currently working on exploring practical tools and methods to assess the upstream social factors that influence youth-adult partnerships when evaluating youth programmes.



**The Torchlight Collective** is currently working on establishing an incubator initiative to tackle the challenges that youth initiatives encounter in their collaborations with various stakeholders, including donors and INGOs. This initiative aims to eliminate barriers such as administrative, legal, financial, and operational obstacles that hinder meaningful partnership, growth, sustainability, and independence for youth initiatives.



**Amref Health Africa and IPPF – Africa** have assessed the capacity of youth-led organisations they are collaborating with. Their aim is to identify gaps in their current partnerships and collaborate with these youth groups to improve their involvement in programmes and enhance ongoing partnerships.



The commitment and actions of these organisations reflect their ongoing efforts to advance Collective Action Learning to strengthen and enhance the measurement of youth partnership in Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Other stakeholders interested in improving their youth partnership practices can adapt and replicate the experiences and commitments of these organisations in their own contexts.

At the YIELD Hub, we are working with Action Learning group members to **create indicators for measuring youth partnership effectiveness**. These indicators aim to guide stakeholders in integrating strong partnership practices into their operational frameworks. Our goal is to develop a **theory of change that aligns with our vision of enhancing youth partnerships and contributions**, while also rethinking our approach to social and gender norms in these partnerships. We encourage collaboration from a diverse range of stakeholders, including implementers, advocates, researchers, and youth-focused organizations, to join us in fortifying youth partnerships in the Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights sector.

