

Sustainable Financing for Youth-Led Organisations: Exploring Challenges and Solutions

2025

When provided with sustainable funding support, young people can challenge harmful norms, advocate for institutional and legislative reforms, and drive positive transformations in the field of Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). Despite this potential, many youth-led organisations encounter substantial barriers to fair access and distribution of funding, both globally and nationally. This funding barrier restricts the possibilities for young people to innovate new ideas and expand successful initiatives.

The situation is even worse for youth-led organisations and initiatives based in the Global South, which often have limited financial resources and face legislative and institutional barriers. Findings of the Global Survey of Youth-Led Organisations revealed that **an overwhelming portion of the funds available for development and activism in the Global South go to long-established Northern organisations, while the majority of youth-led organisations in the Global South operate with under USD 5,000 annually.**¹

“If we make youth-led and youth-serving organisations sustainable and youth workers free of constant fundraising worries, we’d make the youth work sector more resilient to global challenges, free to innovate and follow young people’s needs”

Action Learning Groups Lead at YIELD Hub.

At the YIELD Hub, we are dedicated to improving youth partnership² in Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). This involves advancing practical cross-stakeholder learning to ensure that stakeholders (donors, governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and other key partners) in the SRHR field, have access to knowledge, resources, and a platform for learning the best ways to secure funding for youth.

Learning Objectives for the Action Learning Group

- 1. Understand Funding Challenges:** Reflect on the global funding gaps for youth-led organisations, particularly the reliance on seed funding, and learn how these limitations hinder long-term impact and scalability.
- 2. Reflect on Funding Practices:** Examine current funding practices, including tokenism, power imbalances, and administrative barriers, and learn how to foster trust and equity between funders and youth-led organisations.
- 3. Learn to Navigate Eligibility Requirements:** Understand the strict eligibility criteria imposed by funders and reflect on ways to support youth-led organisations in meeting these requirements while preserving their unique strengths.
- 4. Explore Local Funding Opportunities:** Reflect on the limited domestic funding available in the Global South and learn strategies to mobilise resources from governments, private sector actors, and other non-state entities to support youth engagement.

We extend an invitation to youth-led organisations, youth-serving organisations, international non-governmental organisations, researchers, and donors to participate in our upcoming collective action learning cycle. Together, we will learn, reflect, review existing resources and collaborate with other stakeholders in the field to design practical solutions for addressing institutional and field-wide challenges to secure sustainable financing for youth-led and youth-serving organisations.

1. Bridging the Evidence Gap on Youth-Driven Peacebuilding, The Hague.

2. The YIELD Hub is using the term “partnership” to reflect the nature of relationships between all actors, including young people. It connotes equitable, mutually respectful, and beneficial relationships that allow stakeholders to work together and make complementary contributions to processes that lead to achieving the Hub’s shared vision.