

## ACTION LEARNING CYCLE #6

# Sustainable Financing for Youth-led Organisations, Vol. 2

### Tips and Recommendations from Action Learning Members

Youth-led organisations play a critical role in driving positive change in the field of Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRRH). However, many of these organisations face significant challenges in securing sustainable funding, which limits their ability to operate effectively and achieve their goals. The organisations participating in the YIELD Hub’s 6th Collective Action Learning Cycle have identified key gaps and challenges in sustainable financing. Based on their reflections and experiences, the following tips and recommendations are proposed to support youth-led organisations in achieving financial sustainability.

*“One of the challenges of working with grant funding in general is that opportunities are often project based. It can be really challenging to find Funding Calls for core operational funds. So in my experience, there have been limited opportunities for funding that is truly sustainable.”*

- Young Experts: Tech for Health (ALC 6 Member)

Over the course of their seven-month Action Learning journey, these organisations collaborated to design and implement practical solutions through Action Learning goals, aimed at enhancing strategies and driving solutions for sustaining financing for youth-led organisations.



**Sustainable Jamii:** To position the organisation to innovate and adapt to new challenges, enhancing its competitive edge. Financial performance will improve, driving growth. The company's reputation and trust among stakeholders will be strengthened, and sustainable practices will be implemented, ensuring long-term viability and success.



**Young Women in Action:** To identify funders and donors who align in values and work and are willing to support Young Women in Action to compensate young people who are working with them. Let our brand be known - improving the communications department, documentation needs to be improved and channels of communications need to be streamlined and structured. Our goal is to develop a communication strategy and strengthen documentation efforts so that we can attract new donors and build partnerships with other like-minded organisations. This will support us to improve our funding streams and ensure regular and adequate compensation for young women who work with us.



**Young Experts: Tech for Health:** To strengthen our understanding of the funding space and identify/take action towards the best structure for our organisation concerning legal/registration status and governance. Through this effort, we aim to promote the sustainability of our organisation and position ourselves to be successful in diversifying our funding streams moving forward.





**Women Deliver:** To establish a convenient and efficient grant funding mechanism for young people we work with in the Emerging Leaders Program, ensuring that they can achieve their program advocacy goals and access funds conveniently to carry on with their work. Through this, we aspire to integrate participatory and equitable youth engagement funding practices while embracing Women Deliver's Child and Youth safeguarding in how we work with the Emerging Leaders.



**Youth Kommunity:** Our goal is to develop a youth-led organisation with functional governance, financial and communication systems that support our staff providing them with appropriate compensations and opportunities for growth. We will execute this in a year and half (18 months). This will enable us create strong internal structures to enhance quality delivery of all our programmes/initiatives, promote the well-being of our staff, and strengthen our values to humanity and empowerment, leading to the sustainable financing of the organisation.



**YUWA Nepal:** To enhance YUWA's funding stability and effectiveness by improving the quality of our proposals, expanding and maintaining a robust network of financial partners, and better showcasing our achievements. By achieving this goal, we aim to secure adequate funding consistently, increase organisational visibility and support, and ultimately enhance our capacity to implement and expand our programs to meet our strategic objectives.

Despite their efforts, the group collectively acknowledges the need to address significant challenges and gaps to ensure that hinder innovative approaches to finding and engaging new youth.

**The group has identified the gaps and challenges that hinder Sustainable Financing for Youth-Led Organisations.**

## The Gaps



### Over-reliance on Project-based Funding

Many youth-led organisations depend heavily on short-term, project-based funding, which creates instability and limits their ability to plan for long-term initiatives.



### Limited Access to Diverse Funding Sources

Youth-led organisations often struggle to access diverse funding streams, relying on a small number of donors or grants, which can be risky if funding priorities shift.



### Lack of Organisational Capacity for Financial Management

Some youth-led organisations lack the capacity to manage finances effectively, which can hinder their ability to attract and sustain funding.



### Challenges in Visibility and Positioning

Limited visibility and weak marketing strategies make it difficult for youth-led organisations to attract donors and partners.



To bridge these gaps, the group recommends strategies to help organisations strengthen their approach to securing sustainable financing for youth-led initiatives.

## Recommendations

### A. Develop a Comprehensive Fundraising Strategy

Organisations should create a detailed fundraising strategy that includes clear goals, target donors, and timelines. This strategy should outline both short-term and long-term funding goals, including diversification of funding sources.

### C. Strengthen Financial Management Systems

Implement robust financial management systems, including budgeting, financial reporting, and donor compliance. Ensure transparency and accountability in financial operations to build trust with donors and partners

### Collective Advocacy

Sustainable financing for youth-led organisations should be a joint effort of donors, INGOs, governments, and private sector actors. All stakeholders should advocate for fair access to funding and support the development of youth-led initiatives.

### B. Advocate for Core Funding

Work with funders to advocate for core funding that supports operational costs, not just project-based activities. Core funding allows organisations to maintain stability, invest in capacity building, and plan for long-term initiatives.

### D. Build Strategic Partnerships

Collaborate with other organisations, both locally and internationally, to share resources, co-fund projects, and amplify impact. Partnerships with governments, NGOs, and private sector actors can provide additional funding opportunities and technical support.

### E. Enhance Visibility and Communication

Invest in marketing and communication efforts to increase visibility and attract funding. Use social media platforms to share success stories, document impact, and engage with potential donors. Develop a communication strategy that highlights the organisation's mission, achievements, and future goals.

While these recommendations are not exhaustive, they serve as a starting point for further reflections for relevant stakeholders within the AYSRHR field. We invite you to share and, where applicable, integrate some of these recommendations into your ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable financing for youth-led organisations.

