

ACTION LEARNING CYCLE #8

Capacity Development for Youth Transition, Vol. 2

Recommendations from Action Learning Members

Young people are eager to use their evolving skills to participate in Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRRH) efforts in more diverse ways. They want to build skills that prepare them to lead their own initiatives or assume influential organisational positions. The organisations participating in the YIELD Hub’s 8th Collective Action Learning Cycle have identified key gaps and challenges in supporting youth transitions into leadership and professional roles. Based on their reflections and experiences, the following tips and recommendations are proposed to support organisations in improving their practices and commitment to youth capacity development.

“I believe youth leaders should be treated as integral parts of an organisation, not just bystanders. We need to provide space for them to learn and to comfortably report failures. Meaningful engagement implies that adolescents or youth leaders have a seat at the table.”

- Grassroot Soccer -

During their seven-month Action Learning journey, these organisations worked together to develop and implement practical solutions through Action Learning goals, helping young people build the skills needed for a smooth transition into professional roles.



AMPATH: Academic Model Providing Access to HealthCare: To foster the holistic empowerment of adolescents by engaging former participants of the Adolescent Chamas program and key stakeholders in the development of a financial empowerment prototype. This prototype will be designed to be both practical and cost-effective and tailored specifically for newly recruited pregnant adolescents in our support groups. We aim to complete the prototype development within the next 6 months. Following its launch, we target a 50% adoption rate among new participants within 3 months, with the expectation of observing measurable improvements in their financial stability.



Copper Rose Zambia: To build an organisational platform that helps youth in leadership positions mentor/ guide younger staff transitioning up to leadership roles within the organisation as the youth leaders age up. This will require developing a framework for managers to use in identifying and preparing the younger staff by the end of three months



Grassroot Soccer: To promote a sustainable model for Coach training ensuring that our Coaches develop both personally and professionally. This, coupled with their ideal Coach journey would see them better prepared them for future employability opportunities. Additionally, we aim to ensure we limit the number of hours that Coaches spend doing GRS work to 8 hours a week to enable them to pursue other interests and activities that may augment their Coach stipends. If we can do this, our Coaches will be motivated, and determined and will be able to level up and transition within and beyond the GRS system.





Green Girls Platform: To secure and sustain at least three diverse and reliable funding sources within the next 12 months, (from November 2024 to October 2025) while developing a comprehensive fund sustainability plan to ensure long-term financial stability. This will allow Green Girls Platform to strengthen its organisational capacity, scale its climate action initiatives, and empower more girls and young women in Malawi while increasing its influence on national climate policies.



IPPF ESEAOR: To establish sustainable alumni and mentorship programs that are engaging and impactful, providing participants with valuable support, clear career pathways, and a sense of community. Achieving this will require a commitment to securing funding, fostering a supportive environment, and building stronger connections among participants. By creating a system where people are motivated to contribute and engage, we can ensure the program's long-term success and benefit for all involved.



Jhpiego: To develop a viable partnership strategy for one Jhpiego country office for a new business opportunity that positions a YLO to take on a leadership role in the opportunity, whether it be a YLO staff member filling a key leadership position, the YLO priming for the opportunity, or another example. The strategy will have replicable guidance (process?) that country offices can use to support successful, equitable and strategic partnerships with youth-led organisations that allow both the organisation and individual youth leaders to grow into more significant roles.



The Pact: To address key challenges impacting our youth engagement programs, including securing long-term funding commitments to enable sustained planning and execution of impactful initiatives, maintaining consistent youth engagement despite varying commitments and interests, and ensuring equitable resource allocation to support diverse and marginalised youth groups. By overcoming these challenges, we aim to enhance the continuity, inclusivity, and effectiveness of our programs, ultimately fostering long-term growth and success in our youth engagement efforts.

These organisations are operating within their capacities to assist the youth they work with to transition through coaching and training, capacity strengthening, and adopting management strategies that outline pathways for youth transitions.



Despite their efforts, they collectively acknowledge the need to address significant challenges and gaps to ensure that youth can transition meaningfully and progress in their career.

The Gaps



Lack of Sustainable Funding for Youth Transition:

Many organisations struggle to secure consistent funding to support youth transitions into paid roles. Short-term, project-based funding often limits the ability to sustain capacity-building initiatives.



Inconsistent Mentorship and Leadership Development:

There is a lack of structured mentorship programs to guide youth volunteers into leadership roles. Many organisations rely on informal mentorship, which can lead to inconsistent outcomes.



Limited Access to Practical Training and Skill Development:

Youth from underprivileged backgrounds often face barriers to accessing practical training and skill development opportunities, which are crucial for their professional growth.



Challenges in Securing Partnerships for Youth Employment:

Many organisations struggle to build partnerships with local governments, international NGOs, and private sector actors to create pathways for youth employment.



To bridge these gaps, the group offers a set of recommendations to support organisations committed to enhancing their practices for successfully transitioning youth.

Recommendations

A. Engage Youth in Program Design and Implementation:

Involve youth in the design and implementation of capacity-building programs to ensure they meet their needs and aspirations. Conduct surveys and focus groups to understand their preferences and challenges.

C. Develop Structured Mentorship Programs

Organisations should create formal mentorship programs that pair youth volunteers with experienced professionals. These programs should focus on leadership development, career guidance, and skill-building to prepare youth for paid roles within and outside the organisation.

E. Document and Share Best Practice

Organisations should document their youth transition practices and share these with the broader field. Case studies and success stories can help build a collective understanding of what works and inspire other organisations to adopt similar practices.

B. Advocate for Sustainable Funding Models:

Work with funders to advocate for flexible, multi-year funding models that include provisions for youth transition programs. This could involve co-creating funding proposals with youth-led organisations to ensure their needs are met.

D. Provide Accessible Training and Skill Development:

Offer practical training opportunities such as job shadowing, internships, and workshops focusing on leadership, financial literacy, and technical skills. Ensure these programs are accessible to youth from underprivileged backgrounds.

F. Build Partnerships for Youth Employment:

Collaborate with local governments, international NGOs, and private sector actors to create formal pathways for youth employment. These partnerships can provide financial support, mentorship, and job opportunities for youth transitioning into professional roles.

Collective Advocacy

Youth transition should be a collaborative effort involving donors, INGOs, implementers, and youth-led organisations. Supporting young people in their transition to leadership and professional roles is not just a matter of fairness but a strategic investment in their leadership and the long-term sustainability of youth-led initiatives.

