

# THE EU YOUTH ACTION PLAN NOW WHAT?

Insights from civil society on how to translate  
commitments to transformative action



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# INTRODUCTION

In October 2022, the European Commission launched its first ever Youth Action Plan (YAP) for EU external action, covering the years 2022-2027. The YAP acts as the EU's guiding framework to “promote meaningful youth participation and empowerment globally for sustainable development, equality and peace”.

In November 2022, EU Member States approved Council Conclusions on the YAP, expressing strong political support for its proposed actions and implementation. They committed to the objective of increasing meaningful and active youth participation, as well as youth empowerment in EU external action.

As civil society organisations (CSOs) dedicated to promoting youth empowerment worldwide, we commend the positive commitments and provisions encapsulated in the YAP. They establish a robust policy framework. This paper offers a brief analysis of the YAP and introduces a set of recommendations for its execution. Our insights are shaped by the lessons drawn from successful and impactful programmes our organisations have implemented, focusing on youth and child empowerment. By translating the YAP commitments into tangible actions, the EU can position itself as a credible geopolitical actor, fostering value-based partnerships with young individuals in partner countries.



# THE YOUTH ACTION PLAN: OUR ANALYSIS AND TAKEAWAYS

## KEY PRINCIPLES NEED TO BE APPLIED TRANSVERSALLY

We commend the YAP for its **focus on the right challenges**. The plan's four guiding principles — human rights-based approaches and gender equality, participatory approaches, youth inclusion, and evidence-based policy-making and accountability — are essential. However, monitoring the YAP's implementation is crucial to determine if it genuinely upholds these principles in practice. Both the European Commission and EU Delegations in partner countries must take a leading role in ensuring these principles are consistently and transversally applied and integrated into the design of programmes, actions, and policy dialogues with partner nations.

## STRONG POLITICAL SIGNALS ON PRIORITY TOPICS FOR YOUTH

The YAP's **three pillars - Engage, Empower, and Connect** — highlight essential aspects of partnering with youth. Emphasising **intersectionality and diversity**, coupled with a focus on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), is vital. Such emphasis ensures young people can lead healthy lives both within and outside the EU and sends a strong political message.

## INCLUDING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING

The YAP targets a broad audience, encompassing youth from 0-30 years old, with an ambitious objective: to shape EU external action in collaboration with young people. In this context, we appreciate the YAP's commitments to **intensify the participation of youth in EU decision-making processes**. This includes initiatives such as the Youth Sounding Board for International Partnerships and the establishment of youth advisory structures to guide EU Delegations on country-specific priorities. However, it is important to recognise that while such initiatives target youth aged 15-30, age-specific responses that are in line with child rights-based principles should be prioritised to ensure the active participation of children aged 15-18 in decision-making processes. Ultimately, for the YAP to emerge as a credible policy framework and serve as a benchmark for other donors, merely including young people isn't sufficient. The success of the plan hinges on the **ownership and active involvement of these young partners**. It's imperative that

indicators **reflecting meaningful youth engagement** are integrated into the YAP monitoring framework; without these, the commitments risk appearing hollow.

## ENSURING POLICY COHERENCE WITH OTHER FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES

From a policy coherence perspective, the YAP scores highly: It recognizes the **numerous synergies and complementarities with existing EU policy frameworks - a crucial consideration in such a multi-faceted and often overlapping policy environment**. In fact, the YAP is poised to build upon and enhance a range of pre-existing strategies. These include the EU Youth Strategy, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) (which places emphasis on the empowerment of girls and young women) and the UN Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Concurrently, the YAP will champion a 'Team Europe' approach in its implementation.

## CO-DESIGNING A MEANINGFUL MONITORING FRAMEWORK

With the adoption of the YAP, the European Commission has pledged to regularly monitor its progress and implementation, including through the publication of implementation reports. It is especially encouraging that the **monitoring framework will be crafted in tight collaboration with youth partners**. The establishment of the Youth Dialogue Platform is a notable stride towards this goal.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING WILL BE KEY

Merely **introducing a new policy framework won't suffice** to achieve the critical objectives outlined in the YAP. To truly render the YAP a transformative instrument, the EU must **now invest in its thorough implementation, guaranteeing wide awareness and endorsement from all pertinent stakeholders**. A predominant challenge remains: funding. While the YAP alludes to certain new flagship initiatives set for financial support, it predominantly lacks dedicated funding, which might hinder its effective roll-out. As CSOs, we will closely monitor the YAP's implementation. We are convinced that, with **appropriate resources and robust implementation, the YAP holds the potential to make a truly positive change** to the lives of young people around the world.

# CASE STUDIES: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS



# SMALL PROJECT GRANTS

## LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

North Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Albania

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) under YSAFE (Youth Network); Health Education and Research Association (HERA); Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan (AP3); Kazakhstan Association on Sexual and Reproductive Health (KMPA); Tajik Family Planning Alliance (TFPA); Albanian Centre for Population and Development (ACPD)

## FUNDER

IPPF own resources

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

This project resulted from a grant scheme built by IPPF EN to fund small, youth-led projects. The objective was to allow greater flexibility and autonomy for young people to create and implement their own projects and run a series of activities responding to the following priorities:

1. Addressing the needs of transgender, non-binary and otherwise gender non-conforming young people, especially in the area of access to SRHR.
2. Improving access to comprehensive sexuality education for marginalised people.
3. Removing barriers to volunteering in IPPF member associations for young people who are currently less represented.

## EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

Four projects were selected to be funded under this scheme:

- In North Macedonia, the grant was used for an innovative and collaborative TikTok campaign featuring Macedonian drag queens aimed at (1) sparking discussions about queer youth SRHR access and (2) encouraging more LGBTQI young people to access the youth-friendly services run by the IPPF member association in the country.
- Youth in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan used the grant to increase the number of youth participants at a ground-breaking Central Asian conference on digital sexuality education, topping up existing support from UNFPA, UNESCO and UNAIDS. The funds were used to support media action plans undertaken by youth as a follow-up activity to the conference.



- In Tajikistan, the funding supported an initiative leveraging art activities to support youth at risk of or affected by child marriage. The project aimed at supporting youth to explore their feelings about the issue and disseminate a comic zine presenting existing options for young people at risk.
- In Albania, the youth group ran a project expanding access to CSE for queer young people.

## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- There is great appetite among IPPF young members for a more agile, less restrictive and flexible mechanism of accessing funding to implement their youth-led small activities, with minimal bureaucracy and a fast timeline from call to completion.
- The project highlights important lessons learnt for the Youth Empowerment Fund, the new YAP pilot initiative that will support grassroots youth organisations and youth-led initiatives.

# THE PURPLE CHAIR

## LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Europe, online

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

End FGM European Network (coordinator); Equipop (France), GAMS (Belgium) Save A Girl Save A Generation (Spain), AkiDwa (Ireland), FSAN (The Netherlands), FORWARD UK (United Kingdom)

## IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Purple Chair video series - 2019-2020  
Purple Chair podcast - 2023-2024

## FUNDER

European Union (Erasmus +)

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Purple Chair series are to:

1. Educate young people on sexual health and reproductive rights, in particular Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and its consequences.
2. Amplify and empower youth voices from FGM-affected communities and diversify the kind of youth activists we see taking the stage in Europe.
3. Create a youth-friendly, accessible digital resource on gender equality and anti-FGM activism, fostering youth involvement to challenge gender-based violence and harmful practices (the video series and the podcast episodes are created by youth, coming from FGM-affected communities, for other young people).

## EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

- The central activity of the first phase was the creation of a series of videos, based on conversations between End FGM EU Youth Ambassadors on FGM and SRHR.
- In its continuation, the Purple Chair Podcast series, youth ambassadors from the End FGM European Network will be continuing this educational project not only with peers, but also with allies and policy makers, integrating key advocacy messages into their content creation.



End FGM EU Youth Ambassador during Purple Chair video recording. / © End FGM EU

## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- Youth-centred and youth-led conversations on social issues promote peer-to-peer exchanges and dialogue. It is important to provide spaces and opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to lead content creation while building their capacity to communicate effectively and influence policies that matter to them.
- It is key to give recognition to the youth for their participation, including by providing certificates that can be used for professional advancement. In line with the latter, it is important to provide tailored support to youth participants to ensure that their involvement does not have a negative impact on their pre-existing commitments.
- Fostering dialogue, not only within FGM-affected communities' youth across different countries, but also beyond (i.e., with external experts and policy-makers), increases impact and sustainability in the longer-term.
- It is fundamental to integrate comprehensive and hands-on capacity building by budgeting for training, to ensure that the activities implemented during the project can continue to be carried out beyond the project duration.
- The creation of resources that remain available for free for continued awareness-raising adds to the sustainability of a project which can continue to live on, create knowledge, and inspire others to discuss taboo subjects, even after its conclusion.

# YOUTH RESOLVE

## Youth Empowerment, Participation and Advocacy for Social Stability in Lebanon

### LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq (also engaging youth from Syria and Palestine)

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

World Vision; Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA); UTOPIA; GAME

### IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

2020 - 2023

### FUNDER

European Union (Madad Fund)

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Youth RESOLVE 2 is the continuation of a project funded by the European Union, through the European Union's Regional Trust Fund, the "EU MADAD" fund, that aims to:

1. Empower young people by providing them with the tools to become leading actors in their communities.
2. Strengthen youth resilience and social stability by encouraging young refugees and host communities to interact for the benefit of their communities.
3. Reach 151,000 community members including children and youth aged 16-30.

### EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

- Establishment of youth committees through formal partnerships with municipalities across Lebanon.
- Comprehensively assessing the needs and skills of the youth, and then providing trainings for youth on a variety of personal development topics.
- Creation of a National Youth Platform to work on both national and local youth challenges, helping youth to plan small-scale, youth-led projects that answer the needs of their respective communities.
- Engagement with community decision-makers to facilitate the implementation of refugee and host community youth-led propositions for change.
- Development of National Youth Advocacy Plan as a reference point for youth committee activities.



The first meeting of the National Youth Platform takes place in Beirut as part of the Youth RESOLVE 2 project funded by the EU. / © Maria Bou Chaaya / World Vision

### BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- The activities of the Youth RESOLVE2 provide an excellent framework for children and young people to express their talent, creativity and energy, work on their own personal development, and make an active contribution to society.
- The Youth RESOLVE2 project helped equip communities with knowledge and capacity in order to support collaboration between young host communities and refugees. Moreover, the project enabled youth to engage in local-level advocacy, addressing issues expressed by children, youth and communities. In doing so, youth had access to national forums and were able to voice these issues, place propositions and influence decision-makers and stakeholders.

# WIRED4WORK

## Digital technology solutions for Youth Economic Empowerment

### LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Indonesia (Jakarta, Semarang and Lombok) and the Philippines (NCR, Cebu, Tacloban and Mindoro)

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Plan International, who in the Philippines worked together with the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Chambers of Commerce, and in Indonesia with the Ministry of Manpower and APINDO (Indonesian Employers Association)

### IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

2018-2022

### FUNDER

Accenture

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

This is a 5-year innovative Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) programme that leverages scalable digital solutions to offer quality employment and business opportunities for vulnerable youth by:

1. Increasing job opportunities for youth and developing effective market-driven training curricula to fill the gap between available training and labour market demand.
2. Enabling youth who are marginalised, especially young women, to pursue employment and economic empowerment opportunities through various support mechanisms.
3. Facilitating and leading alliances that favour greater inclusion in the labour market for youth who are marginalised, especially young women.

### EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

- Developing the Youth Employment Solutions (YES!) Digital Ecosystem, a suite of digital tools that function together to increase the quality of youth employment and entrepreneurship projects and programmes, facilitate their implementation at scale, and maximise their impact through evidence-based approaches.
- Building and scaling capacity of Plan International offices to integrate the YES! Digital Ecosystem assets into their YEE programmes, and expand them with additional services to evolve programmes into a full circle, digitally-enhanced approach.



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- The project reached almost 50,000 youth, with over 27,000 who received skills training and over 7,000 who got employed or grew their own business. In addition, digital courses were developed in Yes!Academy, an e-learning platform where young people can access job-relevant skills training and gamified courses for free.

### BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- A gender analysis should inform interventions as well as monitoring and evaluation parameters. Gender markers must be established and communicated from the design stage. It is essential to adopt a blended model (on-and off-line engagement) to ensure further inclusion.
- Young people benefit from the programme most when they are involved early and when their parents are fully supportive.
- Early market scans should include SMEs as they are less bureaucratic, and it is easier to involve the leadership and get buy-in on gender, inclusion and safeguarding policies.
- Dedicated resources are needed to stay in touch with alumni networks and employers through youth-led solutions.
- It is important to resource digital development appropriately (staff and budget) and to look early at complementarities and shared resources with partners (government and private sector) and technology allies.
- Youth empowerment goes far beyond economic empowerment and requires a holistic, gender-sensitive vision of 'empowerment'. This includes values and the ability to actively participate in social and political engagement (Active Citizenship).

# AFRICA-EUROPE TASKFORCE

## LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Digitally across Europe and Africa: Belgium, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and the Netherlands.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The ONE Campaign

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

From May 2021 to March 2022, young activists from the ONE Campaign, were selected to form a taskforce of 160 Africans and Europeans to conceive and deliver strategic recommendations ahead of the African Union-European Union summit in 2022. The starting point to develop the taskforce was to give young activists from both continents a space to identify shared challenges and co-create solutions to address them and present these to decision makers. The main objectives of the project were:

1. To empower African and European youth to shape and promote a citizen-led vision for stronger and smarter inter-continental cooperation that tackles inequalities of health and employment and delivers common priorities.
2. To ensure the Africa-Europe partnership addresses the challenges that future generations will face, by meaningfully engaging policymakers on both continents with concrete proposals that were informed and driven by youth from Africa and Europe, to promote a truly equal partnership.

## EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

- Open letter calling on leaders to act on youth priorities, signed by over 20,000 people including 80 African and European members of parliament, and 26 former presidents, prime ministers, and experts.
- Over 20 [virtual] meetings with Ministers, Ambassadors, and Commissioners from both continents ranging from Senegal to Sweden, and from Greece to Tanzania.
- Participation in joint debates and events, such as the France-Africa Summit in October 2021, the Africa-Europe Foundation Summit event on vaccine equity in February 2022, and the AU-EU Summit in February 2022.



## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- Broad backgrounds of participants, from across Africa and the EU, encouraged a variety of ideas and perspectives that were further enriched by group reflection: building bridges to allow people to fight together for common goals helps activists better understand the global context of their issues.
- Capacity building sessions that allowed activists to share their knowledge and build a strong understanding of the political, economic and social contexts of both continents.
- Fostering cooperation between youth on different continents creates better ideas, campaigns, and activism to tackle shared challenges.
- The Task Force showed how valuable it is to bring under-represented voices and perspectives into policy discussions, which are traditionally dominated by voices from high-income countries.

# EUROPEAN WEEK OF ACTION FOR GIRLS (EWAG)

## LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Brussels, globally  
[europeanweekofactionforgirls.org](http://europeanweekofactionforgirls.org)

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

DSW, Plan International, End FGM EU, EPF, IPPF EN, The ONE Campaign, Save the Children, World Vision

## IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

2012 - ongoing

## FUNDER

Partners' own resources

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

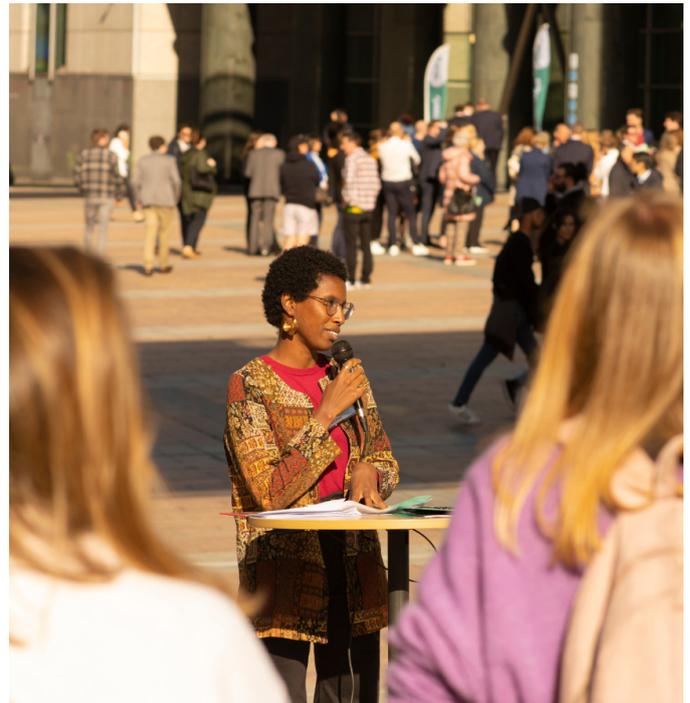
EWAG is a week-long programme of events and activities, based around the International Day of the Girl Child, on 11th October, held yearly in Brussels.

1. The end goal of EWAG is to bring the voices of girls and young women to the forefront of decision-making, and to create a space for girls' voices to be heard by the EU Institutions in Brussels.

## EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

The preparation of the EWAG week is divided into three phases every year:

- Firstly, all partners come together to agree on the coordination and main priorities of the week and how best to involve the youth advocates throughout the process. This is always based on lessons learnt from previous editions, the feedback of the youth, and tailored around key advocacy opportunities in EU policy-making and implementation.
- A series of capacity-building moments are prepared, to involve the youth through online sessions and to make sure that they get to know each other in advance and feel well-prepared before coming to Brussels for their advocacy efforts.
- In October, youth from all over the world come to Brussels to participate in a series of events, gatherings and bilateral meetings during which they have the opportunity to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and resources, and present their issues and advocacy asks to key policy-makers and stakeholders.



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## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- EWAG is a unique opportunity for youth from around the world to experience first-hand the inner workings of EU decision-making processes and get to engage with the key actors that shape the policies affecting their lives.
- EWAG, as with all projects directly involving youth, is more effective when the youth advocates are involved as much as possible in all stages of the project design and implementation.
- Youth advocates gain empowerment and valuable insights through their exchanges, mutually learning and drawing inspiration from one another. This equips them with effective strategies to advocate for both their own rights and the rights of the communities they represent.
- EU stakeholders appreciate the direct interaction and insights gained from beneficiaries of the projects they fund in partner countries. This feedback enables them to enhance policy and project design, ensuring they are adapted to the actual needs of the populations they serve.

# YOUTH FOR HEALTH

## Expanding Life-Changing Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare

### LOCATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW), MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI), Centre for the Study of Adolescence (CSA) Kenya, Health Alert Sierra Leone (HASiL), Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG), Sikika Tanzania, Restless Development Zambia, and Youth Network for Sustainable Development (YNSD) Ethiopia

### IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

2022 - 2025

### FUNDER

The project is co-funded by the European Union, with additional co-funding provided by ClIFF, Danida, MSI's own resources, and DSW's own resources

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

1. Expand access to life-changing adolescent sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights (ASRHR), increasing the demand and delivery of information and services, with a focus on reaching the poorest and most marginalised adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, in rural and hard to reach areas.
2. Partners are also working to improve the enabling policy and funding environments for ASRHR at the national and sub-national levels.

### EXAMPLE OF KEY ACTIVITIES

- Training of adolescents in advocacy actions for domestic resource mobilisation to support ASRHR services.
- Adolescent champions engage with decision-makers such as parliamentarians or local decision-makers to raise awareness about their needs and demands.
- Y4H adolescent champions actively participate in national and subnational fora and engage with the media to further share their demands.
- Youth champions conduct budget analyses and social accountability work.



© DSW Tanzania — Youth for Health

### BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- Promoting youth leadership, building the capacity of adolescents and ensuring they can lead advocacy efforts at the local and sub-national levels has a positive impact on local communities because young people can innovate, demand, and call for positive change.
- When focusing on youth needs, it is crucial to reach out to and involve the poorest and most marginalised adolescents, including girls and young women, adolescents with disabilities, and young people in rural and hard-to-reach areas.
- Investing in the role of small, grassroots, youth-led organisations and initiatives is important as they have the on-the-ground knowledge to navigate processes, and have built credibility with various stakeholders who trust and know their involvement.
- Prioritising the rights of girls and young women is key to an inclusive approach. Training stakeholders and health workers on using a gender-sensitive approach is critically important to foster a youth-friendly environment.
- Establishing a strong research and evidence base for advocacy serves as a foundation for holding decision-makers accountable to their ASRHR commitments. It encourages them to take informed decisions that will have the greatest impact on the health outcomes of the most vulnerable and marginalised adolescent populations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE YAP IMPLEMENTATION



# GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## The European Commission should:

- Once a comprehensive monitoring framework, developed with the meaningful involvement of young people and youth-led/youth-focused organisations, is in place, **maintain active engagement with youth and youth organisations to monitor the effective implementation of the plan.**
- Heed the call from the Council of the EU and incorporate YAP commitments and priorities in the development of country-level programmes. The upcoming mid-term review of the NDICI-Global Europe offers a pivotal opportunity to **allocate adequate financial resources to the implementation of the YAP priorities.**

## The European Parliament should:

- Take a proactive stance in overseeing the YAP's implementation, holding the European Commission accountable to its commitments, and **making sure YAP provisions will inform the development of the future EU funding instruments for external action after 2027.**

## EU Delegations in partner countries should:

- Act upon the YAP commitment to **set up youth advisory structures at country level**, involving children and young people in all their diversity, including youth living in marginalised settings.
- **Use the Multi-annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) review to scale up funding to youth-led programmes** and mainstream youth participation throughout the MIPs priorities.

## In view of the European Elections in 2024, the future EU leadership in the European Commission and Parliament should:

- **Continue prioritising the promotion of youth empowerment and engagement** as part of the EU's external action agenda, both from a policy and funding perspective.
- In light of the global backlash against gender equality and human rights, **continue to act as a champion** for those issues that are too often considered as sensitive, but are key to achieving youth empowerment, such as **the promotion of SRHR and CSE.**



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# CASE-STUDY-INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE YAP IMPLEMENTATION

## **Within the partnership to ENGAGE, which aims to increase young people's voice in policy and decision-making, the EU should:**

- **Create space, opportunities and an enabling environment for young people, in all their diversity**, particularly for those living in marginalised, poor conditions and rural areas, to engage with decision-makers in the EU institutions, Delegations and partner countries at local, national, regional, and international levels through the creation of youth platforms.
- **Enable young people, in particular girls, to have a say at all stages of decision-making**, especially in the areas of accountability and budget analysis, and throughout the development, design, implementation, funding and monitoring of programmes.
- **Promote cooperation between different youth-led movements and organisations** and facilitate connections between smaller youth organisations and larger networks that have more capacity, such as youth-led transnational movements, to strengthen capacities and build synergies.
- **Support youth civic engagement and make sure that young activists can lead their activities in a safe, protected and enabling environment.**
- **Encourage collaboration and exchanges between young people and a diverse set of stakeholders**, within both the private and public sectors.
- **Work with child-focused organisations to ensure the active involvement of children in EU Youth Advisory Initiatives**, and/or explore partnerships with established child parliaments and child participation platforms at the national level.

## **Within the partnership to EMPOWER, which aims to fight inequalities and provide young people with the skills and tools they need to thrive, the EU should:**

- **Recognise that empowerment goes beyond the mere promotion of economic status and requires a holistic, inclusive, gender-sensitive approach that promotes human development**, and enables youth to actively participate in social and political spaces.

- **Adequately fund programmes for capacity building**, which should be accessible to all young people.
- **Sponsor professional opportunities for young people** and fund projects that will help them strengthen their skills to increase their job opportunities.
- **Ensure direct funding for youth-led projects in a flexible, agile, and direct manner, to allow for activities to be implemented quickly and efficiently.** Consider also funding core activities of youth-led organisations to give them longer-term support and ensure they can adopt a transformative, long-term approach.
- **Promote access to quality and inclusive education, including CSE, and to quality youth-friendly SRH services** as a critical tool to advance young people's ability to lead healthy and self-determined lives, prevent harmful practices and counter gender stereotypes.

## **Within the partnership to CONNECT, which aims to foster opportunities for young people to network and exchange with their peers worldwide, the EU should:**

- **Promote exchanges between young people from diverse backgrounds and different parts of the world**, including through cross-regional dialogues. In promoting such exchanges, work simultaneously to tackle structural issues that prevent young people from participating and moving freely.
- **Encourage intergenerational dialogue initiatives**, so that older generations can become more aware of young people's challenges and, together with younger generations develop tools to respond to the needs of youth together.
- **Promote hybrid models for connecting young people** to ensure that participation is inclusive and made possible for relatively less digitised communities.

# PARTNERS



[www.countdown2030europe.org](http://www.countdown2030europe.org)



[www.europe.ippf.org](http://www.europe.ippf.org)



[www.dsw.org](http://www.dsw.org)



[www.plan-international.org/eu](http://www.plan-international.org/eu)



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