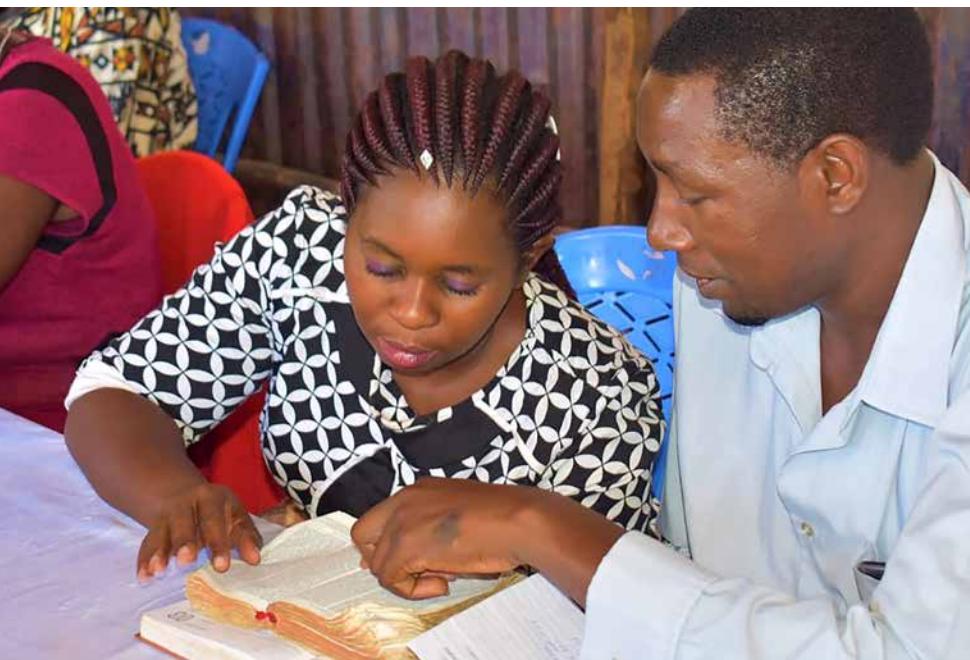


Champions and change-makers:

Young leaders supporting social inclusion



Young Nigerians at the National Day of Action demanding the passage of the #NTYTR Bill.
PHOTO: IBRAHIM FAROUK



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Champions and change-makers: case studies of young leaders addressing inequality and promoting accountability in their communities, ActionAid 2019

COVER PHOTOS:

Top left: Participants in a Nairobi event of the Kenya Alliance between LGBTQ activists and religious leaders. Credit: nature network/ActionAid

top right: Young People Visiting AAB stall, Bangladesh. Credit: Md. Golam Morshed/ActionAid

Bottom: Members of the Abda and Immriesh youth group helping with construction of the new school. Credit: ActionAid

Contents



| | |
|--|----|
| List of abbreviations | 4 |
| Glossary | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Young leaders supporting social inclusion | 9 |
| Jordan: fostering young people's leadership through safe spaces | 10 |
| Multi-country project: breaking silos and building alliances for LGBTQ rights | 13 |
| Palestine: young people forging partnerships for education | 15 |
| <i>Lessons learned</i> | 17 |

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| LGBTQ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer |
| MAHIPSO | Makasa KP HIV Prevention and Support Organisation |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |

Glossary

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Activista | ActionAid's global youth campaigning network. It comprises ActionAid country members, and local and national organisations of young people and partners. Activista focuses on young people's campaigning through mobilisation and engagement of young people at local, national and international levels. This is just one way that ActionAid works with young people – some countries engage with grassroots youth groups and the organisation also works with youth social movements. |
| Global Platforms | A Global Platform can either be a physical space for capacity-building where young people live and learn together, a youth hub for young people to convene and strategise, or an online community focusing on peer-to-peer learning. These Global Platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide innovative, creative and quality-based capacity-building for young people to lead social, political and economic change.• Support dynamic and democratic youth hub spaces where global and local young people can network, share visions, act and develop together.• Connect local and global struggles. |
| Reflection-Action | Reflection-Action is a harmonised participatory methodology based on the practice of Paulo Freire. It uses a range of participatory tools to help create an open, democratic environment in which everyone is able to contribute. Participants work together to analyse their situation, identify rights violations and bring about change. Where appropriate, Reflection-Action can also be used to support literacy, numeracy and language learning. For more information see: <i>ActionAid Networked Toolbox</i> , http://www.networkedtoolbox.com/pages/about-reflection-action/ |



Introduction

With the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in September 2015,¹ the world faced an enormous dual challenge and opportunity – to sustainably end poverty and reduce gender, economic, political and social inequality by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda established a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), incorporating 169 targets, which aim to address poverty, inequality and environmental degradation, and strengthen peace and justice by 2030. The SDGs have been adopted by almost every country in the world, with states bearing the primary responsibility for their implementation. The vision and preamble of the 2030 Agenda recognise the “*supremely ambitious and transformational*” nature of this commitment and note: “*We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.*”²

Given the scale of their ambition, the SDGs cannot be achieved without change to the economic and governance systems that drive poverty, and without the inclusion of those who have previously been left behind, including young people. However, after more than three years, despite 140 governments announcing and/or presenting Voluntary National Reviews, the transformative promise of Agenda 2030 is being diluted.³ The current economic paradigm, which reduces states’ resources and capacity to respect, protect and fulfil rights, redistribute wealth and power and ensure people are resilient from shocks, undermines Agenda 2030.

To deliver the goals and targets effectively and democratically, there is a need for pro-poor systemic economic and social mechanisms, such as universal publicly financed, publicly owned and delivered social protection and public services, access to decent (non-precarious) work, redistributing women's unpaid care and domestic work, and action and finance for climate justice. To achieve this systemic change, it is critical that new ideas and political alternatives can be developed and listened to, which cannot happen unless diverse voices – including those of young people, particularly young women or marginalised young people – are part of the conversation.

► The challenge facing youth movements

With more than 40% of the world's population under 25 years of age,⁴ and 89% of people aged 10-24 living in the Global South,⁵ young people⁶ play a pivotal role in transforming and shaping a more just, equitable and sustainable society. Despite this, young people are often denied positions of power and responsibility. Young people under 30 make up just over 2% of the world's parliamentarians (less than 1.5% in Africa and Asia), and less than half of that number are women.⁷

Young people are also living in a world of rising inequality. Since 1980, while the poorest half of the population have seen rising incomes and deteriorating living standards, the top 1% richest individuals in the world have captured twice as much growth as the bottom 50%.⁸ Growing up in an increasingly unequal world, young people face high rates of unemployment: 60% of young people aged 15-24 are jobless.⁹

Many young people, particularly those in rural areas, lack access to safe, affordable, quality and gender-responsive public services such as education, healthcare and vocational training. As well as being a violation of their rights, lack of employment and access to public services hampers young people's full participation in society. Young people are not a homogenous group, and many experience compounding and intersecting inequalities as a result of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, origin, religion, economic or other status.

We are also seeing shrinking civil society spaces in many countries, with state protections of freedom of speech and association being eroded, stricter regulations on civil society organisations, and crackdowns on public debate and protest.¹⁰ In many cases it is youth movements leading the fight for civic space, with young people creatively working within and outside the system to push for just and equitable policies and greater participation of young people in governance.

► Young people's innovative practices in creating change

Young people's exclusion from the democratic governance processes that drive implementation of the SDGs is a threat to their achievement. Young people were actively involved in the development of the SDGs (formally, through the UN Major Group of Children and Youth, and informally, through grassroots coalitions such as action/2015), and are key actors in ensuring that policies to implement the SDGs remain true to this vision.¹¹ The inclusion of progressive young people and their movements in democratic governance is an important part of the transformation that is needed if the SDGs are to be achieved. As well as championing accountability, young people and youth movements are part of shaping the alternative solutions that are needed to move past "business as usual", for example by pushing for more inclusive policies and laws, fighting for better working conditions and public services, and mobilising citizens around climate change.

This compilation of case studies highlights the work of young people and civil society working with or supported by ActionAid. Using the tools at their disposal – from social media to community consultations to political party manifestos – the young change-makers profiled here are expanding the space for youth participation in

governance, and fighting for inclusion of those who are marginalised due to their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, origin, religion, economic or other status. Many of these case studies are on a small scale, and changes made may seem far from the broader transformative economic and social changes needed to implement the SDGs. However, they serve to highlight why it is necessary to include the voices of young people and youth-led civil society in the larger project of SDG implementation, and they show the critical role young people can play in holding governments to account for the SDG commitments.

Who is this document for?

This document compiles case studies from 3 ActionAid and partner programmes –Jordan, Kenya, Palestine – all working on governance processes related to the SDGs, particularly Goals 4 (education), 5 (gender) and 10 (inequality). The case studies in this publication highlight a range of strategies that young people are using to ensure their equal rights are fulfilled and they have a stronger voice in the decisions that affect them.

Reflections with the young activists involved – documented in annual reports and through interviews, highlight a number of learnings for those hoping to support young people. This report makes available the lessons emerging across countries. We hope that ActionAid staff, partners and other civil society groups can use this knowledge to lobby other organisations, donors and international organisations looking to support youth-led initiatives in ways that are empowering and impactful. We also hope the knowledge and examples can be used to influence those government officials looking to engage young people in governance processes.

The case studies are clustered thematically, followed by reflections emerging from practice. These are not definitive, but are intended to spark further thinking and discussion among young people, their allies and accountable duty bearers.

Emerging issues for discussion and questions:

- **How to build in an intersectional feminist analysis?** As civil society organisations explore new interventions and understand the impacts of youth interventions, it is important to use an intersectional feminist approach and be mindful of *differential impacts* of interventions on young people related to their intersecting identities. Interventions will fail unless they ensure that the most marginalised young people can actively participate, and in order to do that they acknowledge the impact of power and go some way to breaking down the power structures that prevent participation.
- **How to balance competing interests when resources are limited?** Where civil society organisations and youth movements have complementary goals, opportunities for partnership and collaboration can bring mutual benefits. However, youth movements and organisations have limited resources to engage in social change initiatives. How can civil society organisations engage young people in their work without depleting young people's resources for their own work? How can civil society organisations best support young people's priorities where these diverge from the organisation's priorities?
- **How to build positive partnerships?** Young people's movements will be challenged to fundraise – and will have to make decisions around the type of funds they accept. For example, how can young people's movements maintain their own identity rather than be subsumed by business interests or the aims of others outside their movements? In practical terms, how can civil society organisations support youth movements with resources without requiring such movements to formalise?
- **How to operate politically whilst being non-partisan?** Non-partisanship is a key component of many civil society organisations' core values, and is key to their ability to work constructively with governments. At the same time, young politicians and parliamentarians play a vital role in opening up spaces for youth participation in democracy. How can civil society groups continue to support young leaders in political spaces while retaining independence from party politics?

Young partners advocating for gender and youth respective public services.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Young leaders supporting social inclusion



SDG 10, target 10.2 commits states to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status. This goes beyond ensuring better income distribution and political representation, although these are key elements needed for achievement of this target, and requires shifting social norms and discriminatory barriers to ensure meaningful participation in society for all.

The case studies in this section highlight examples of young people taking leadership roles in initiatives that aim to strengthen social inclusion of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. In Jordan and in the multi-country project working with LGBTQ activists, young women and men worked for stronger inclusion of marginalised groups, first within safe spaces, and then extending that work into the broader community. The Palestine case study highlights a youth group working to bring educational infrastructure and services to their disadvantaged rural community.





Jordan: fostering young people's leadership through safe spaces

For young people in Jordan, a number of constraints impact on their civic space. The increase in civil society activity and supportive policy space for NGOs that followed the Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011 has given way to a gradual tightening of restrictions on civil society action. Freedom of assembly is limited by government restrictions, and there are also restrictions on freedom of association, as the government oversees CSO registration processes and receipts of funding. On top of this, young people struggle to find work – 35.6% of young people aged 15–24 are unemployed.¹² The situation is worse for young women – Jordan has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation in the world.¹³

With its location as a historic migration crossroads, and sharing a border with several countries experiencing conflict, Jordan is the top refugee-hosting country in the world. At its last census, 31% of its population was made up of migrants.¹⁴ Since 2011 Jordan has seen the displacement of population from Syria, which has created pressure on the nation in terms of management of resources, support to refugees and managing relationships between host and refugee communities.

► Developing safe spaces for youth

As part of strengthening young people's active citizenship, ActionAid has supported a youth hub in Amman and community centres in Mafraq and Zarqa. In these centres, young people from diverse backgrounds come together to participate in a range of training and workshops – including workshops on youth community engagement, facilitating community change, action research and art, music and video campaigning. Young people have built skills and confidence, with many starting as training participants and going on to become training facilitators and group leaders. Young people have also used the hub and community centres to develop and launch their own campaigns and initiatives to strengthen accountability, human rights and social inclusion in their communities. Through the hub and community centres, young people have also become involved in initiatives around election monitoring, and joined campaigns to encourage young people to engage in Jordan's 2017 local elections.

Young people in the new Liwan Hub.

PHOTO: TAMMEY/ACTIONAID



A young woman using her voice for accountability

Saba 'Al-Khalayleh, a journalism student in Zarqa, was one of a group of 22 young women and 28 young men who participated in a local election observation initiative in 2017 organised through ActionAid's Youth Empowerment and Engagement project. Following two days of training covering different types of electoral procedure violations and abuses, Saba was registered as an official election observer. The training served her well when, during the observation, Saba observed an irregularity. In a tense moment, Saba asked the government representative to recount the polls, and was told that if she was incorrect, she would be asked to leave the room. Her observation was correct. *"I ended up being allowed to stay in the room and the government representative thanked me in front of everyone, even though he had previously put me in a very embarrassing situation. I insisted on my point of view and the result was really satisfying."*

Saba says that if she were to participate again in the electoral process, she would be even more rigorous and precise, and encourages other young women to participate in political activities.

"So many men and women, we have lots of energy to invest in change processes and we should make the best use of this. I have personally struggled with my family's complete refusal to attend events, initiatives and civil society activities. But I overcame this with love, dedication and belief in the importance of my role as a young woman in this area. I want to prove to everyone that we – the youth – have a crucial role in society and the right to lead and contribute to our community."

Connecting diverse communities.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID



► Moving towards greater youth ownership

In 2017, ActionAid formed a partnership with youth organisation Tammey for Human Development to establish a youth-led space in Amman. Tammey facilitated a participatory co-creation process, selecting 12 volunteers to lead the hub's development, researching successful youth hub models overseas, and facilitating a reflection process with young people.

Through this process, young people developed a plan for a youth hub with four functions: a safe space, networking platform, learning opportunities and support to youth social innovation. Reem Khashman, a member of the co-creation team, commented: “*The team worked for three months to create a youth space by young people for young people, something more than just a physical place, a place where you give in and take*”. Tammey’s Co-Founder, Rana H Taher, also commented on the power of a safe space: “*The hub provides a physical (safe) space where young people can freely convene, meet, discuss, debate and organise into groups and initiatives to actively engage in their communities,*” he said. “*There is a difference between a place and a space. While the place provides a physical location, the space is created by those who interact in it.*”

The new Amman Youth Hub, called “*Liwan*”, formally opened in August 2018. It is managed cooperatively by a committee of 5-7 members elected from the youth hub community. The *Liwan* aims to tackle inequality by welcoming all young people regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic status or citizenship, and by promoting young women’s leadership. One of the core members of the group that co-created *Liwan* was a person with a disability, who provided valuable input to ensure the space is accessible to all.

Experimentation has been a key value of the *Liwan* hub. Taher explains, “*the hub welcomes youth’s new ideas and alternative visions, as long as they are related to their growth and their communities’ development. Therefore, it operates on the basis of an open door policy for youth-led ideation, activism and initiatives. In the hub, there is no space to judge the quality of their activism, but rather youth will find a space of learning from their mistakes and unleash their potential.*”

Follow Liwan youth hub:

 @liwanspace

 <https://www.facebook.com/LiwanSpace/>

 Read a profile of Raheil Barakat, a member of the *Liwan* co-creation team, and her experience participating in a learning exchange with a youth hub in Denmark:

<https://arab-region.actionaid.org/stories/2019/love-voluntary-work>



Multi-country project: fostering young people's leadership through safe spaces

In 2017 ActionAid, in partnership with All Out,¹⁵ initiated a project aimed at strengthening the LGBTQ rights movement in Kenya and the broader region by supporting networking and activism skills-sharing and training for 75 human rights activists. Having previously worked with many LGBTQ activists on women's rights, healthcare and education, ActionAid was motivated to work more closely in partnership with a global LGBTQ movement on a project explicitly addressing LGBTQ issues. The programme has continued to grow and flourish, forging powerful alliances between progressive religious leaders and LGBTQ activists, and bridging divides.

► Building skills and alliances to strengthen activism

The initiative started as a one-year programme of training, organising and working with social networks. Training covered digital security, public mobilisation and creative non-violent action for promotion of LGBTQ rights. Attendees were from more than 50 organisations across several countries, with participants selected in collaboration with local LGBTQ partners. Based on risk analysis, measures were taken to protect the privacy and security of participants and ensure the workshops were a safe space.

► Sparking collaboration

The young activists who participated in the training programme have since undertaken activities reaching over 10,000 people in the region. The activists organised Pride Uganda 2017, blogged coming out stories, successfully fundraised for their organisations, created activist songs and organised social media campaigns. For example, after the training, the grassroots Ugandan organisation Makasa KP HIV Prevention and Support Organisation (MAHIPSO)¹⁶ broadened its mandate to campaign against intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ community – an issue that is often sidelined in conversations about domestic and family violence. Collaborations forged during the programme also led participants to share their stories online to inspire others and improve media representation of LGBTQ communities.

Read:

- Profile of MAHIPSO's founder Joseph Ssemmanda in the Rustin Times: <https://bit.ly/2Z56ReC>
- Profile of Gerald Hayo of Girls' Pride Kenya, an organisation supporting LGBTQ girls and women from underserved communities:
<https://bit.ly/2JUN6CK>
- Listen: Song 'Love is Love' created by activists participating in the training:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4G3PCFLGjXtQVdyRG8zQUppVE0/view>

► Strengthening alliances in Kenya

This one-year training programme has also sparked a continued and deepened programme of support for youth-led LGBTQ activism in Kenya.

Power mapping undertaken by the activists identified media, religious institutions, policymakers and community leaders as key influential stakeholders with the power to change law, policy and social norms on LGBTQ issues in Kenya. Based on feedback from the activists, ActionAid reached out to progressive religious leaders from both the Christian and Muslim communities to convene discussions between religious leaders and activists. The first discussion was difficult for both groups, and required each to ‘translate’ their views and ideas for the other and to challenge their own perceptions. The safe space of these initial dialogues helped to put a human face to a political issue, and provided an opportunity for some religious leaders to come out as members of the LGBTQ community themselves. As one activist commented, *“I will stop seeing religious leaders as the enemy but as people who don’t have enough knowledge of LGBTQ. I will start (...) to understand them and put myself in their shoes”*. A religious leader participating in the dialogues said, *“I will advocate to appreciate LBGTIQ (people) for I am equipped with the knowledge I will be associating with LGBTQ and help them where I can.”*

The project in Kenya has managed to form a well-functioning alliance between religious leaders and activists. As powerful opinion formers, religious leaders have been able to start discussions on LGBTQ rights in spaces that LGBTQ activists would not be welcome, and from a position of influence and authority. This alliance has been instrumental in supporting strategic litigation led by the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission aiming to overturn the penal code provisions criminalising homosexuality. For example, religious leaders from the alliance have testified in the case and supported scripture analysis, which has been a component of the arguments. This case also opened up opportunities for broader community awareness-raising on LGBTQ issues. The court is scheduled to deliver its verdict in mid-2019.

► Next steps

Over time the project aims to support a stronger sub-regional alliance of different actors in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – including media policymakers, religious leaders and LGBTQ organisations, working to strengthen LGBTQ rights. Small initiatives started by this project, such as changing training registration forms to recognise gender identities beyond male and female, are the building blocks for shifting power.

Participants in a Nairobi event of the Kenya Alliance between LGBTQ activists and religious leaders.

PHOTO: NATURE NETWORK/
ACTIONAID





Palestine: young people forging partnerships for education

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, although literacy levels are high, the education system is in disrepair largely as a result of the effects of the Israeli occupation, which has led to a lack of school infrastructure, not enough trained teachers and a lack of access to schooling in marginalised areas.¹⁸ This problem has been acutely felt by young people in Abda and Immriesh, neighbouring villages in the Dura region, located 10 kilometres southwest of the city of Hebron in the southern part of Palestine. The villages are home to a strong and active youth group that has successfully mobilised funds and people power to improve education for the next generation of students.

Members of the Abda and Immriesh youth group helping with construction of the new school.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



► Starting small

The youth group in Abda and Immriesh was established over four years ago. It was the first of its kind and it provided young people with a safe space to discuss matters related to their community and the challenges they were experiencing. The group, which has 15 active members (eight young men and seven young women) used the Reflection-Action participatory methodology and tools to work together to analyse their situation, know their rights and develop the power and skills to demand action. ActionAid has supported the group with skills-training and linkages to different stakeholders, including the Abda and Immriesh village council, Ministry of Education, South Hebron Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Palestinian Business Forum.

Based on their participatory priority setting, the group identified education as the key issue hindering young people in their village. The group prioritised support to the local school, volunteering and bringing in donations to support the school's overall education efforts, to add new, more appealing, education methods and to provide extra-curricular activities for the students.

However, this support was not enough to meet the most urgent need: extra classrooms to provide classes in the village past the tenth grade. Without local facilities, students at the Abda and Immriesh school were forced to complete the last two years of school in one of the nearby villages, the closest of which is a four-kilometre walk away. To complete school, many students had to walk this distance or further twice each day in the heat of summer or the cold rainy winter.

► Building trust

The youth group's history of work in the community earned them the trust and support of a local donor, who pledged to donate US\$8,000 so the group could build new classrooms in Abda and Immriesh school. Seizing this opportunity, the youth group formed a construction committee, and put in place an accountable and transparent system to monitor and manage expenditures.

However, the initial amount, while a much-needed start, was not even close to enough to build the classrooms. As such, the youth group initiated a fundraising campaign targeting people in the village, community leaders, religious leaders, private sector and other organisations. Together, the group raised the additional funds needed to reach the cost of construction – around US\$50,000.

The project's success gave the community much more than a building: it also changed the community's views on what young people could contribute and achieve. One of the active members of the group, Salamah Sharawi, commented: "*other youth groups in nearby communities were impressed by our success and they started coming to us for advice and support. Also, some youths came to us to help them form their own youth groups.*"

► Scaling up

These approaches can only have limited success if the structural issues that are causing schools to be underfunded are not addressed. This was the youth group's next mission; they continued their work seeking more support, specifically for education that has been hampered by financial limitations. With this in mind, youth group members met with officials of the Palestinian Ministry of Education to share information about the situation, what they have achieved, and what is still needed. The discussions have been fruitful and the group will continue their advocacy with the Ministry for greater investment in education in their area.

"I am proud of my group, proud of the people and proud of my community who supported us financially and morally despite their initial scepticism. I am thankful to ActionAid for their support and helping us in developing our skills and linking us with key people." said Salamah. "I am confident that we will continue working hard to develop our community and bring out the spirit of belonging and cooperation among us."

Lessons learned:

► **Lessons learned from the case studies:**

The above case studies highlight a number of lessons for working with young people to reduce social exclusion. They highlight ways in which youth activism and leadership can create change at both local and national levels, and how civil society groups can foster and support youth-led spaces.

- **Create and protect safe spaces:** safe spaces for young people can provide opportunities to strengthen social inclusion of young people from marginalised or socially excluded groups, by providing opportunities for them to share experiences with others and develop their own leadership skills. In doing so, the safe spaces also allow young people to build the networks they need to challenge their limited civic space at the national level. Supporting young people's empowerment effectively means more than facilitating opportunities for young people to speak within existing spaces: it also means giving control of those spaces to young people themselves.
- **Act-reflect-learn-act:** supporting youth groups, networks and movements is a long-term process. As shown in the case study from Palestine, the processes of building a democratic and safe space for reflection, understanding the context and planning for action all contribute to building trust and confidence among group members, and developing thoughtful and impactful actions. Reflecting and learning from these actions is as important as the action itself. This iterative process takes time, but can be helpful in moving from local problems to eventually addressing the structural causes of poverty and injustice.
- **Build unlikely solidarity alliances:** building unlikely alliances outside of activist silos was essential to the success of the Kenyan LGBTQ activists profiled in the above case study. This required time, patience and sensitivity – but the benefits of this convening and dialogue have lasting effects well beyond the project itself. Collaboration is critical. When civil society groups work collaboratively with each other and with a broad range of allies, it can have a transformative impact at local and national levels.
- **Ensure safeguarding:** tight security, risk mitigation and safeguarding measures are important when working with human rights defenders. For example, in the multi-country project supporting LGBTQ activists, participants were selected in collaboration with local LGBTQ partners, and a context analysis and risk assessment undertaken in all three countries in consultation with LGBTQ communities. All communication was strictly private, invitations used broad wording to protect the safety of border crossings to Kenya, location was revealed last minute to invited participants only, and identities were only revealed at the site. Strict rules were established around sharing of pictures and information.

► **Reflections from broader initiatives**

A number of organisations have opened up spaces for youth leadership within or alongside their organisation to ensure that youth voices are part of decision-making. For example, CIVICUS organises a Youth Assembly (usually biennially) to provide a space for young people to engage in civil society discussions. In 2013, recognising the need to reflect young people's important role in civil society within the organisation itself, CIVICUS established a Youth Advisory Group (now the Youth Action Team), with representation on the CIVICUS Board of Directors.¹⁹ The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) has a young feminist activist programme, created to make sure the voices of young women are heard and reflected in feminist discourse.²⁰ This programme initiated Young Feminist Wire,²¹ an online community that provides a space for young feminists to share resources, tools

and news; connect and collaborate; and raise the visibility of young feminist activism.²² Amnesty International has developed a Youth Strategy 2017-2020, which sets the direction and provides a framework for youth work at the global, regional and national levels. As well as identifying youth-related priorities for external work, the strategy also sets out goals for strengthening youth membership and including young people in leadership and decision-making structures within the organisation.²³

In its global research on inequality, Oxfam has made a number of recommendations for civil society organisations working with youth on initiatives to reduce inequality, many of which reflect the experiences in the above case studies:

- Work with youth as partners and keep them involved from start to finish.
- Look beyond official youth groups for youth-led grassroots projects to support.
- Work with youth, educators and decision-makers to shift norms and behaviours regarding gender role stereotypes, and to encourage all to value the equal rights of girls in society.
- Facilitate safe environments for young people to engage with other civil society actors and government institutions, in which they can develop their capacities, skills and confidence.
- Support the development of an enabling environment for young people to participate meaningfully by engaging constructively with adults who hold decision-making power.
- Actively work to ensure that programmes and activities are not maintaining or replicating pre-existing inequalities that affect youth.²⁴

Endnotes

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ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to achieve greater human rights for all and defeat poverty. We believe people in poverty have the power within them to create change for themselves, their families and communities. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change.

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