

# Abstracts

## **1. Seeing like a young citizen: youth and participatory governance in Africa**

*Rosemary McGee and Jessica Greenhalf*

All over the world citizens are starting to demand accountability from those in power. We are seeing exciting experiments in participatory governance. But are they working for young people? What spaces are most promising for the participation of children and young people in governance?

Across Africa youth (particularly boys and young men) are seen as a frustrated and excluded 'lost generation' who are marginalised from decision-making processes. Contributors to this special issue demonstrate how this is changing. Young people in Africa are challenging the norms and structures that exclude them, engaging with the state and demanding accountability. This article explores how young people are exercising their right to participate and developing the knowledge, skills and confidence to affect to change. It examines some of the methods of communication, appraisal, monitoring

and research which are involving these young people in decision-making spaces. It asks how can we re-shape how young people perceive and exercise citizenship? How can we redefine and deepen the interfaces between young citizens and the state?

This overview article to *PLA 64* demonstrates the persistence, passion and enthusiasm that youth bring to governance processes – and how they are driving change in creative and unexpected ways. It highlights how young Africans are doing this: addressing the documentation gap that surrounds youth and governance in Africa and enabling other participatory practitioners – young and old – to learn from their experiences.

## **2. Digital mapping: a silver bullet for enhancing youth participation in governance?**

*Linda Raftree and Judith Nkie*

When armed with solid information and community backing, young people can successfully engage local and divisional

authorities in resolving issues youth care about. Starting with the desired goals, understanding local context and building youths' self-esteem, building confidence as well as research and communication skills are key. A variety of tools – community mapping, participatory video, painting, songs, theatre, dance, photos, cartoons and digital mapping – can support this process. Digital mapping is potentially useful for youth to initiate and follow up on conversations with local authorities around allocation of services and resources. However, digital mapping in isolation from other participatory processes holds limited value. This article aims to share experiences with practitioners and theorists interested in using information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) in youth and participatory governance work. It explores Plan's use of digital mapping in the Youth Empowerment Through Technology, Arts and Media (YETAM) project in schools and communities in the Pitoa, Ndop and Okola areas in Cameroon.

### **3. Kenema youth change lives and perceptions with participatory video**

*Sallieu Kamara and Abdul Swarray*

Generally, youth are one of the most neglected and socially-excluded groups in Sierra Leone. As such, they are ill-prepared to meaningfully contribute to decision-making. This article provides insights into how the youth of Kenema district in Sierra Leone successfully used participatory video to engage in governance processes, change citizens' perceptions about them and position themselves to get elected into district and municipal councils. The article provides a practical guide for young people, youth-serving agencies, development practitioners and local communities to the processes involved in setting up and running local participatory video groups. It is intended to build the confidence of all those wanting to be

authors of their own stories to take up the challenge. It also provides a critical contextual analysis of the situations of youth in Sierra Leone, and re-echoes the message of these young citizens that they are prepared and ready to increase their involvement in governance processes.

### **4. Our time to be heard: youth, poverty forums and participatory video**

*Anderson Miamen with Annette Jaitner*

In this article we reflect on how participatory processes like participatory video (PV) and dialogue forums empower youth to engage with public officials and demand transparency and accountability in decision-making around public funds and provision of public services.

Poverty forums and PV are an integral part of the Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia's (CENTAL's) Poverty and Corruption in Liberia project. Both approaches are complementary to each other as they bring together citizens and their government officials to directly discuss local development issues. PV is particularly attractive to youth and can serve to amplify their concerns. We show practical outcomes and challenges, and how both approaches have contributed to more participatory governance. With this article we hope to encourage youth, development workers, government officials and national and international civil society organisations to use participatory approaches to initiate dialogue between young citizens and duty bearers, engendering positive change.

### **5. Youth participation in capturing pastoralist knowledge for policy processes**

*Charles Kesa*

This article describes a unique, innovative and youth-led participatory 'camel caravan' process. The camel caravan is a pastoral community survey, and part of Horn Relief's Pastoral Youth Leadership (PYL) project in Sanaag Region, a territory

disputed between Somaliland and Puntland governments. This semi-arid area is mainly inhabited by pastoralists whose livelihoods are on the decline. This article shows how determined youth involved in the PYL project, as part of their learning process, went back to their pastoral roots amid challenges of insecurity and a hostile environment. The evidence generated through the survey brought to the fore the situation of pastoralists in this region. Through the camel caravan process, indigenous pastoralist knowledge was transformed into policy knowledge that could be taken up and used by government policy makers and development partners such as aid agencies and NGOs.

### **6. What business do youth have making HIV and AIDS laws in Nigeria?**

*Fadekemi Akinfaderin-Agarau and Temitope Fashola*

This article highlights how a group of young people in Nigeria were able to influence Nigeria's national legislation on HIV and AIDS anti-stigma and discrimination bill, in order to make it more responsive to the needs of young people in the education sector. We explore how a youth advocacy group (YAG) meaningfully contributed to national policy. We highlight the different strategies used by the YAG to engage with peers and with policy makers and legislators. It is aimed at policy makers and institutions that work to increase young people's participation in governance issues and young people themselves. Key lessons learnt about young people's participation in the policy-making processes are also highlighted. It demonstrates that young people do not need a legal background or formal education to participate in legislative processes. No matter how small their number, they can effectively mobilise, educate and motivate their peers to action and bring about policy change.

### **7. How far have we come with youth in governance?**

*Jennifer Tang*

Around the world, efforts to secure the rights of children and youth are increasingly directed at incorporating them in governance processes. This gives rise to a need to critically analyse the quality of these activities in accordance with child participation and governance principles. This article describes the first steps in developing an analytical framework that explores how to promote children's participation in participatory, accountable and transparent governance processes. The beginnings of a framework aim to address: spaces, structures and systems; effective processes; and necessary resources for child and youth participation in governance. Practitioners contributing to this special issue of *Participatory Learning and Action* were interviewed for feedback on the proposed framework. Researchers, practitioners, children and youth are invited to examine the analytical framework and provide feedback for further development.

### **8. Lesotho's shadow children's parliament: voices that bridged the policy gap**

*Lipotso Musi and Maseisa Ntlama*

In 2010, the Lesotho children's protection and welfare bill had been in draft form since 2004. It was time to move the process forward and put pressure on the Lesotho parliament to enact the bill. But what would be the most effective method to bridge this policy gap? This article is about the first-ever shadow children's parliament (SCP) sitting in Lesotho. The day-long event, a simulation of a real parliament sitting, took place in June 2010 in Lesotho's national parliament buildings and included one hundred children. The key objective of the SCP was policy-related: for children to call for the speedy enactment of the long-overdue bill, asking legislators to listen to their voices and

intentionally plan and budget to address problems identified and prioritised by the children themselves.

### **9. Catch them young: the young female parliament in northern Ghana**

*Edward A. J Akapire, Alhassan*

*Mohammed Awal and Rahinatu Fuseini*

Women in northern Ghana are underrepresented in decision-making at all levels. This is due to patriarchal cultural systems and a lack of appropriate skills and low self esteem among women. The young female parliament (YFP), designed by ActionAid Ghana (AAG) and the Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre (NORSAAC) seeks to provide space for young women to acquire the necessary skills and confidence to engage in participatory governance. It also links AAG's work in promoting girls' education with its work on women's participation in decision-making. This article explores why young women and girls in northern Ghana should be engaging in participatory governance – and why they require safe spaces in which to build their confidence. It presents how the YFP was established, discusses challenges and prospects and considers how appropriate the space has been. It then shares lessons learnt with practitioners, governments and civil society in adopting a female-only structure to enhance young women's participation in governance processes.

### **10. Young, but capable: youth lead the struggle against violence in Mali**

*Bedo Traore*

In Africa, and particularly in Mali, children are exposed to many forms of violence: physical, emotional and spiritual. This article examines how members of the children's parliament in Mali are advocating for better child protection as part of a regional project by Plan Mali in partnership with Save the Children. The main objective was to strengthen the capacity of child and youth organisations to

tackle violence by disseminating information, raising awareness and advocating for change with duty bearers. The children's parliament is a platform for youth participation and freedom of expression. Its role is to support the Malian government to implement national policies or initiatives which promote and uphold children's rights. The article describes the strategies, successes and challenges in building the capacity of children and young people to campaign for their own protection and enabling them to share their experiences of tackling violence.

### **11. As of now, we are stakeholders in local governance**

*The young people from Louga, Senegal with Serigne Malick Fall*

In 2009 a group of young people from Senegal took part in a governance project which gave them the opportunity to participate in local governance processes which, until then, had been reserved exclusively for adults. This article was written by 37 young people from the Louga region. Their co-author Serigne Malick Fall is a consultant for Plan Senegal and coordinated the project. This article describes how they learnt to actively and effectively participate in the management of their schools and community development planning. The young people describe how they organised themselves to carry out effective advocacy work with duty bearers, analyse their priorities and participate in their communities' annual investment planning sessions. It describes how the young people have both transformed the context in which they act – and how they are now perceived by the adults they collaborated with.

### **12. Seeing from our perspectives: youth budget advocacy in Ghana**

*Charlotte Bani-Afudego, George Cobbinah Yorke and Anastasie Ablawi Koudoh*

The neglect of vulnerable children and youth in policy and budgeting is changing

in Ghana, as youth gradually become part of planning and budgeting processes. But what are the best strategies to increase youth engagement with policy makers? This article recounts the experiences of a youth budget advocacy process in Ghana done by Plan Ghana and Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC). It describes a participatory youth budgeting training process, and how the youth then went on to apply what they learnt. It also explores the possible impacts of this process. What can we learn from the experiences of these youth groups and their evidence-based budget advocacy? This article points to the need to monitor the impact of youth participation in budgeting for their communities. In order to become active citizens, children and young people need to learn in ways that promote their own sense of empowerment by being proactive and initiating their own activities – so that the learning process itself becomes a form of active citizenship.

### **13. Local champions: towards transparent, accountable governance in Embakasi, Kenya**

*Edwine Ochieng and Cynthia Ochola Anyango*

In Kenya, young citizens engage little with the state. This limits their voice, choice and consequently their fundamental human freedom. But this article is about a counter example. In November 2009, a governance programme was introduced by Plan Kenya. This article illustrates how the programme responded to governance and exclusion problems in Embakasi. Co-author Edwine Ochieng is a government official from the district office for gender and social development. Cynthia Ochola Anyango is a member of the Embakasi and Jipange youth organisations. Their experiences demonstrate how young people are engaging in social accountability activities around service provision and other governance issues. They describe the processes used by young

people to engage with the local administration, including social audits, policy forums and accountability boards – as well as the role of duty bearers in promoting participatory governance. It discusses challenges and lessons learnt while reflecting on how to promote good governance at grassroots level. Given willing allies within government, the participation of young people in decision-making processes can contribute to the transparency and accountability of institutions at grassroots level.

### **14. Silent voices, unrealised rights – championing youth participation in Zimbabwe**

*Talita Ndebele and Leila Billing*

Promoting youth participation in governance in transitional political contexts has its own unique challenges. Complex and shifting power dynamics make it difficult for young people to penetrate and influence decision-making structures. This article describes how one rural-based Zimbabwean youth organisation, Bulawayo Integrated Youth Survival Programme (BUIYSAP), is working with ActionAid International Zimbabwe (AAIZ) to effectively navigate such a context, empowering young rights holders in the process. It describes the participatory methodologies used to build young people's ability to mobilise and constructively engage with duty bearers; how formerly hostile duty bearers were brought on board to fulfil their responsibilities to young people in their communities; and the lessons learnt from creating new participatory decision-making platforms for young people in the project area. The article emphasises the importance of conducting in-depth power analysis and applying a human rights-based approach while implementing a participatory governance programme involving young people in Zimbabwe. It also stresses the need to conduct robust gender analysis to ensure both young men

and women are supported to enhance their levels of participation.

### **15. Exploring expressions and forms of power in youth governance work**

*Salim Mvurya Mgala and Cathy Shutt*

Youth governance work requires engaging with power. In most countries young people occupy positions in social structures maintained by cultural and social norms. This means that their participation in governance processes is subject to constraints. Expressions like ‘they are too young to understand’ reflect commonly held opinions that affect how adults relate to young people. Such attitudes influence young people’s self-confidence and frustrate their ability to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Both authors have been involved in processes that suggest that consciously exploring the nature of power and how it operates can enable young people to overcome such barriers to participation. Here we reflect on Salim’s experience working with youth councils in Kenya, and Cathy’s research with student steering committees (SSCs) in Sierra Leone to propose practical tips towards this aim.

### **16. Youth as drivers of accountability: conducting a youth social audit**

*Kenyatta Maita Mwawasha*

The demand for social accountability in the management of public resources has been gaining ground in Kenya over the last seven years. Pressure from citizens has increased for government to account for the use of public finances in public service delivery. Since 2009, Plan Kenya’s governance programme has been organising youth forums and workshops for government fund managers to share information on the public funds destined for community projects and services. Youth in Kwale, Kilifi and Nairobi counties have been using social audits, which have been developed as both a participatory tool and a participatory process to enhance social

accountability. Social audits assess systems and processes of government institutions in public finance management at community level. This article shares our experience with other practitioners.

### **17. The community scorecard process: methodology, use, successes, challenges and opportunities**

*Jephter Mwanza and Nina Ghambi*

Budget tracking is not viable if national and local governments lack openness and fail to provide timely information on budget allocations. The alternative is to look at the final service provided at the point of access – hence the community scorecard approach. This article covers the use and basic functions of a community scorecard process. It is a social accountability mechanism used to exact social accountability from duty bearers vis-à-vis the state of services in various sectors. The process fosters unity and collective action within communities for engaging with service providers. Here, the authors draw on lessons from the community-based monitoring project implemented by Plan Malawi, ActionAid and the Council for Non Governmental Organisations of Malawi (CONGOMA). It covers the methodological approach, steps and decision-making levels at which it is used. It also examines the successes and challenges – and how innovation has been used to surmount them.

### **18. Government budget monitoring: as easy as child’s play**

*Christina Nomdo and Alexander Henry*

Understanding how government works is potentially a very complicated topic to discuss with children. This article describes a capacity building initiative with children in South Africa to support them to engage in government budget monitoring and advocacy. This initiative used learning through games to make difficult governance issues accessible to children. The project highlighted that

children, including those with disabilities, are able to share and learn knowledge and skills relating to governance. We explain the different approaches used to develop children's skills as peer facilitators; to support them to understand and share information about governance; and to build their confidence to do advocacy. We conclude with tips for adult facilitators and child advocates and other practitioners who may want to build children's capacity to engage in governance.

### **19. Drawing up a participatory youth situation analysis in Kenya**

*Edwinah Orowe and Richard Mabala*

The 2007 election violence in Kenya was a classic example of how young people have been caught up in destructive behaviour. This article describes how TAMASHA

(Taasisi ya Maendeleo Shirikishi Arusha, the Institute of Participatory Development Arusha) facilitated a series of workshops that enabled young people to develop a highly participatory rights-based youth situation analysis. The workshops helped young people to break out of the negative and superficial stereotypes imposed on them. Using a variety of participatory tools, the young people documented youth issues from different provinces and prioritised key issues to be taken forward to a national workshop. The national youth situation analysis was successful and presented a strong and holistic document to the ministry of youth and sports. The report examined the underlying issues facing young people – and also showed how much young people can achieve when given the opportunity to do so.