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participatory learning and action

Young citizens: youth and participatory governance in Africa

Participatory Learning and Action (*PLA*) – formerly *PLA Notes* and *RRA Notes* – is published twice a year. Established in 1987, it enables practitioners of participatory methodologies from around the world to share their field experiences, conceptual reflections, and methodological innovations. The series is informal and seeks to publish frank accounts, address issues of practical and immediate value, encourage innovation, and act as a 'voice from the field'.

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iied The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is committed to promoting social justice and the empowerment of the poor and marginalised. It also supports democracy and full participation in decision-making and governance. We strive to reflect these values in *Participatory Learning and Action*. For further information contact IIED, 80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK. Website: www.iied.org

We welcome contributions to *PLA*. For information and guidelines, please see the inside back cover.

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Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an umbrella term for a wide range of approaches and methodologies, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Farming Systems Research (FSR), and Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARP). The common theme is the full participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs and opportunities, and in the action required to address them.

In recent years, there has been a number of shifts in the scope and focus of participation: emphasis on sub-national, national and international decision-making, not just local decision-making; move from projects to policy processes and institutionalisation; greater recognition of issues of difference and power; and, emphasis on assessing the quality and understanding the impact of participation, rather than simply promoting participation. *Participatory Learning and Action* reflects these developments and recognises the importance of analysing and overcoming power differentials which work to exclude the already poor and marginalised.

Contents

Editorial

Welcome to issue 64 of *Participatory Learning and Action*.

All over the world we are seeing exciting experiments in participatory governance. But are they working for the young? This issue of *PLA* highlights how young Africans are driving change by challenging the norms and structures that exclude them, engaging with the state and demanding accountability. We hope that this issue will enable other participatory practitioners – young and old – to learn from their experiences.

About this special issue

In March 2011, IIED, Plan UK and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) brought together a group of adults and young people involved in youth and governance initiatives across Africa to take part in a 'writeshop' in Nairobi, Kenya.[1] The idea behind the week-long meeting was to share learning and experiences, build writing skills, form new relationships and develop a set of articles for this issue of *Participatory Learning and Action*. During the writeshop, participants also worked closely together to define the key messages and objectives of this special issue (see Box 1). They shared their writing with each other for informal peer review, honing their article's content, structure and style. At least three of our writeshop participants were young people, and many more were involved in the earlier drafting stages of each article.

Guest editors

Rosemary McGee has been a research fellow in the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies since 1999. She has extensive work experience in policy and programme posts in the international development NGO sector. Her research and teaching focus in particular on forms of

[1] For more information about *Participatory Learning and Action* writeshops see Milligan and Bongartz (2010).

Photo: George Cobbinah Yorke

Participants came to the writeshop with draft versions of their articles. Bedo Traore from Mali presents his to a group of fellow participants. To his right are Sophie Bide, our translator from Plan UK, and Serigne Malick Fall, a consultant for Plan Senegal.

Box 1: Objectives for this special issue

During the writeshop, participants jointly decided on the main objectives for this special issue.

- To highlight ways in which youth governance approaches differ from – but are just as essential as – mainstream approaches to governance that target adults.
- To highlight the different approaches to youth and governance.
- To document good practice on the implementation of participatory approaches to governance and development processes.
- To share and be honest about the challenges and lessons learnt about engaging youth in governance processes, recognising that it is OK if we do not have it all figured out or completely right the first time – we are learning.
- To highlight strategies and approaches which promote youth engagement in governance and development processes.
- To promote youth as agents of social change in Africa.
- To promote the justification for youth involvement in governance.
- To share experiences of good practices around youth in participatory governance in Africa while recognising differences in context.
- To influence developmental strategies in Africa through better participation of young people in local governance.

citizen participation in decision-making, governance and rights-claiming processes – and on the international aid system, both official and non-governmental. Her doctoral research was conducted in a violence-torn region of Colombia, as was much of her NGO work, and she continues to work closely on issues of conflict and citizenship and on Colombia as well as other countries in Latin America and Africa. She has worked with Plan UK and Plan International as an applied researcher, consultant and advisor on several projects related to governance and young people's participation.

Jessica Greenhalf is currently the Country Director of Restless Development Uganda, a youth-led development NGO supporting innovative youth programming on civic participation, livelihoods and sexual and reproductive health. Prior to this Jessica was a member of Plan UK's governance team overseeing a five year DfID-funded youth and governance programme. The programme supported participatory governance initiatives involving young people across the health, sanitation, education and agriculture sectors in 16 countries. Jessica is a passionate advocate of meaningful youth

Photo: Holly Ashley

Participants and authors Cynthia Ochola Anyango, Charlotte Bani-Afudego and Abdul Swarray discussing their articles. In the background, guest editors Jessica Greenhalf and Rosemary McGee discuss the day's agenda.

participation, with experience supporting youth-led and youth-focused programming and research and learning processes in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Acknowledgements

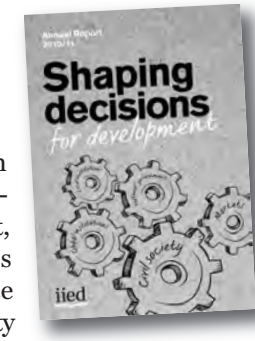
This special issue has been made possible by the fantastic energy and commitment of our writeshop participants and authors, and especially by our guest editors Rosemary McGee and Jessica Greenhalf. Their excellent writeshop facilitation and editorial support has generated some very valuable learning for the *PLA* team, which we look forward to sharing with others in future writeshops.

We would also like to thank Plan UK and IDS for their financial support for this issue. Special thanks also to Grace Ogolla at Plan International for organising the logistics for the writeshop and to Caitlin Porter of Plan UK for her continued support and for taking over as our main Plan UK contact following Jessica's move to Restless Development in Uganda. And we owe a huge debt of thanks to Sophie Bide, who provided tireless translations for our French-speaking participants both throughout the writeshop and afterwards.

In Touch

This issue includes a wide range of resources dedicated to youth and participatory governance issues.

Other news



IIED's annual report 2010–2011: Shaping decisions for development

While IIED works in many areas of environment and development, a common challenge is the inequality, injustice and lack of sustainability that mark many of the power relations and decision-making institutions across the world.

IIED'S 2010/11 annual report highlights this year's achievements, with a focus on our governance work and highlights this issue of *PLA*.[2] The *PLA* team also launched

[2] Online: http://tinyurl.com/iied-ar-pla64. Full URL: www.iied.org/general/about-iied/annual-report/african-youth-participatory-politics

Photo: Holly Ashley

Participants discuss issues affecting organisational learning at the launch of *PLA 63: How wide are the ripples? From local participation to international organisational learning*, 23rd November 2011.

issue 63 *How wide are the ripples? From local participation to international organisational learning* at IIED's new offices, which generated a lot of interesting discussion! Read more about the launch in the RCPLA Network pages, this issue.

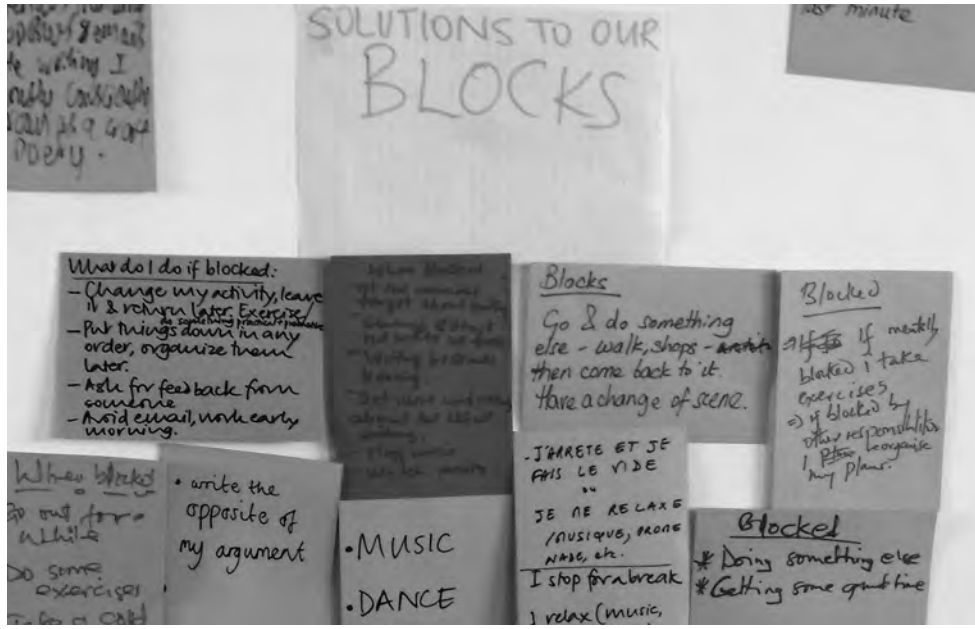
Next issue – *PLA* 65: *Biodiversity, culture and rights* (June 2012)

The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over their inter-linked biological and cultural heritage – or biocultural heritage – are increasingly under threat. Recent developments in international law should strengthen these rights. Indigenous peoples and local communities now have the right to secure their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for any law or proposed development which affects them. And the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and equitable benefit-sharing (ABS) requires countries to support the development of community protocols for ABS.[3] But there is a danger that standardised top-down approaches will be adopted which could undermine community governance of their biocultural heritage.

This special issue will be published ahead of the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP11) in India, in October 2012, which is also likely to be the first meeting of the parties to the Nagoya Protocol. It will capture learning from participatory processes for developing community biocultural protocols and securing FPIC in different contexts. It also aims to raise awareness amongst the biodiversity community of the importance of community designed and controlled processes for developing these protocols and FPIC – as experience shows that their real value lies in the community-level participatory processes they entail.

[3] The Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization is an international agreement. It is one of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity that was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on 29th October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. Adapted from source: www.cbd.int/abs

Photos: Holly Ashley



Getting creative: results from a participatory snowball session where participants discussed challenges and solutions to writing blocks.

Left to right: Sophie Bide, Serigne Malick Fall and Temitope Fashola discussing what makes a good article title.

Practical tips on writing an article for *PLA*

Are you thinking about contributing to *Participatory Learning and Action*? We have created a practical guide on writing an article for *PLA* which is now free to download.[4]

Preparing for the writeshop in Nairobi was an ideal opportunity to build on our previous *PLA* writeshop experiences (see also Box 2). I realised that the sessions on how to write an article for the series merited a handout for participants, to complement the PowerPoint presentations I had prepared. The resulting guide includes

Box 2: Some reflections on the writeshop

Throughout the week, we filmed some short interviews with participants. We asked them for their reflections on the writeshop process – and what impact and influence it has had on their thinking around youth and governance issues. Here are some short excerpts:

This week's writeshop has really helped me to think about applying more detailed analysis to my work on youth and governance… The process has bridged the gap between learning and application and I am already thinking about how to amend my activity plans to accommodate everything I have learnt.
Leila Billing, ActionAid International Zimbabwe

What has really excited me is that issues about young people in governance are beginning to be placed on the table – and on the agenda for NGOs and governments – as well as learning how this is a common thread that runs across Africa.
Lipotso Musi, World Vision Lesotho

The most important thing that you have given back to me is the desire to communicate through writing... The PLA *approach is demanding, original and innovative all at the same time. And I think it will make me want to look more closely at the journal.*
Serigne Malick Fall, a consultant for Plan Senegal.

[4] The writer's handbook is free to download online here: http://pubs.iied.org/G03143

George Cobbinah Yorke

Left to right: Jessica Greenhalf, George Cobbinah Yorke, Fadekemi Akinfaderin-Agarau and Bedo Traore. Then back left to right: Sophie Bide, Sallieu Kamara, Annette Jaitner, Serigne Malick Fall, Lipotso Musi, Rosemary McGee, Edwine Ochieng, Temitope Fashola and Edward Akapire. Then front left to right: Holly Ashley, Kenyatta Maita Mwawashe, Jennifer Tang, Anderson Miamen, Cynthia Ochola Anyango, Linda Raftree, Abdul Swarray, Leila Billing and Charlotte Bani-Afudego.

tips and guidance on our readership and how to write an article, as well as lots of practical examples taken from previously published *PLA* articles. The first draft of the handbook is now online. If you are considering writing an article for the *PLA* series, I hope that you will find it useful.

Final thoughts…

Our week in Nairobi was an intense and exhilarating experience. Aside from the packed writeshop agenda throughout the week, many of our authors worked long hours to improve their articles. I would get up at 5.30am to watch the sun rise with a mug of coffee, before settling down to a few hours of reviewing before breakfast. I made good friends too, and have enduring memories of everyone's good humour, energy and enthusiasm. And above all, I was struck by our participants' dedication, passion and commitment to promoting the rights of young Africans as active citizens, helping them – and others – to change their lives for the better.

Our writers are supporting youth to share their learning, perceptions and reflections with an international audience. They have reminded us that young Africans are the citizens of the future and that with the right support, they can achieve extraordinary things.

Holly Ashley, co-editor, *Participatory Learning and Action*

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Glossary

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally binding international instrument. The CRC recognises the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. It establishes in international law that states parties must ensure that all children – without discrimination in any form – benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.
Source: www.unicef.org/crc

Duty bearers
A duty bearer is responsible to a rights holder and for making sure that their rights are being met. Duty bearers should be clear not only about the nature of the rights but also about their corresponding duties and commitments as a duty bearer.
Adapted from source: www.right-to-education.org/node/74

Participatory governance
There is a growing consensus that democratic governance has to involve ample opportunities for citizens and their organisations to engage with government – what is usually termed 'participatory governance'.[1] Governance can be defined as the interaction between government and civil society – 'the sphere of public debate, partnership, interaction, dialogue and conflict entered into by local citizens and organisations and by local government' (Evans *et al.*, 2005). Stewart (2000) describes governance as concerned with steering community development and engaging multiple stakeholders.

[1] Adapted from source: www.civicus.org/what-we-do/priority-areas/influence-of-civil-society/pg-project

There are many reasons for the increased concern with linking participation and governance. There is a widening understanding that policy processes are not the sole domain of elected representatives, bureaucrats and experts. They should also be inclusive of citizens and recognise the importance of different forms of knowledge. Citizens move from being simply users or choosers of public services and policies made by others, to becoming 'makers and shapers' of policies themselves (Gaventa, 2004; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000).

According to Gaventa (2004), there are several key elements when defining what constitutes 'good governance':

- Active and participatory forms of citizenship, where citizens engage in policies and in the delivery of services.
- A need for more inclusion, especially of racial and ethnic minorities, youth, older people, and others seen as previously excluded or marginalised.
- The involvement of multiple stakeholders in new forms of partnership, which in turn enable wider 'ownership' of decisions and projects.
- An emphasis on broader forms of accountability, which enable multiple partners to hold institutions and policy makers to account, and which involve social accountability as well as legal, fiscal and political forms.

Through this approach, participation should not only contribute to better governance and a more engaged citizenry, but also improve community development and service delivery.

Rights-based approach

The language of rights and rights-based approaches has entered the mainstream of development, taking on various meanings within the policies of development agencies. In essence, rights-based approaches can be understood as both a means and an end: if development is ultimately about making sure that everyone's basic human rights are met, development can also best be achieved by enabling people to better secure and fulfill their rights:

> *A rights-based approach to development is both a vision and a set of tools; human rights can be the means, the ends, the mechanism of evaluation, and the central focus of sustainable human development (Symington, 2002).*

Source: Pettit and Musyoki (2004).

Social accountability

Social accountability can be defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e. in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organisations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up.
Source: Malena et al. *(2004).*

Social audit

A social audit is a systematic, regular and objective accounting procedure that enables organisations to establish social values and criteria against which they can measure external and internal performance and plans. They are a practical way to plan, manage and evaluate activities and to create a system for communicating with stakeholders. It provides a framework for organisations to establish their own priorities, strategic plans and performance measurement criteria, and then monitor and make decisions about how to maintain or improve their operations.
Source:
www.locallivelihoods.com/SAOverview.htm

Youth

The continuing debate on who is a 'youth' in Africa has not resolved the confusion

surrounding this concept. The perception of youth varies historically and culturally. It also varies from one context to another and even within contexts (Chigunta, 2006; United Nations, 2003). In Africa, some countries have adopted the United Nations definition of youth of 15 to 24 years. Others use the Commonwealth definition of 15 to 29 years. For policy purposes, the age range can be even wider. For many, youth is better defined as a period of transition from dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood), the nature and length of which varies from one individual or society to another (Curtain, 2003). Here, we have adopted this transition model, in recognition of the varied national contexts discussed in the articles. *Source: McGee and Greenhalf (this issue).*

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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 Ablavi 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 Mwawashe
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 articles 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.

THEME SECTION

Young citizens: youth and participatory governance in Africa

Seeing like a young citizen: youth and participatory governance in Africa

1

by ROSEMARY McGEE and JESSICA GREENHALF

A tight circle of adults surrounds a girl, propelling her from one to the other, from pillar to post. She rebounds around the circle, looking increasingly dizzy and confused. Her mouth is sealed with masking tape...

A girl and boy lounge against a wall, their stares vacant, and their faces etched with boredom. Nails are filed, trainer laces played with, gum chewed. In the background, one adult types madly at a desk without ever looking up and another strides around, looking busy and efficient, but never looking in their direction...

An adult puppet-mistress pulls the strings of a young girl puppet, walking her up a conference hall to the stage. There the puppet curtsies and hands over a rolled-up speech to an adult dignitary, who pats her on the head before she is puppeted away...

Illustrations: Regina Faul-Doyle

Photo: Holly Ashley

Writeshop participants spent an afternoon presenting their articles to each other. The discussion helped to generate a better shared understanding of the issues.

The scenes shown in the cartoons were created by contributors to this special issue of *Participatory Learning and Action* on youth and participatory governance in Africa. At a writeshop held in Nairobi, the contributors were asked to show how young people commonly view governance processes and their scope for engagement in them. The scenes they presented spoke eloquently of the experiences of young people: being treated as a 'token' young person, condescended to by adults and not treated with respect; the frustration of being present but not being heard and having no real influence on decisions. It is these patterns of engagement that the contributors to this issue are working to change.

This issue is the result of a collaboration between Plan UK, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). From 2006–2011 Plan UK coordinated a DfID-funded youth and governance programme supporting projects in 16 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the UK.[1] During a learning event held in early 2010, staff expressed an interest in sharing their experiences more widely and learning from the experiences of others. They also highlighted a number of challenges that often prevented them from generating good project documentation which could be shared for learning purposes. These included a lack of time and, for some, limited self-confidence in writing for an external audience.

Prompted by these discussions, in mid-2010 Plan UK proposed to the *PLA* team at IIED an issue focusing on the rapidly growing field of youth and participatory governance. Building on previous collaboration, Plan UK also approached the Participation, Power and Social Change team at IDS. The process of developing the issue included a week-long writeshop in Nairobi, Kenya, which gave contributors the opportunity to develop and share ideas and build writing confidence (see Box 1 and later in this article for details of how the issue was developed).

This overview article is written by the two guest editors/co-facilitators of the writing and publication process. From our

[1] The UK Government's Department for International Development (DfID).

Photo: Holly Ashley

An intensive afternoon spent working on articles. From left to right: Sallieu Kamara and behind him, Abdul Swarray (Sierra Leone), Bedo Traore (Mali), translator Sophie Bide (UK) and Rosemary McGee (UK).

particular perspectives as a British IDS-based 'scholar-activist' (Rosie) and a British Plan UK-based programme officer (Jessica), we have each been engaged for some time with youth and participatory governance work, including previous work together. Our NGO programme experience spurred us to support shared learning amongst practitioners. Our academic training and experience provided us with some tools and outlets through which our practitioner peers could analyse critically and share insights from their own practice.

To set the scene, we begin by introduc-

Box 1: Developing this special issue of *PLA*

A call for submissions generated 90 abstracts. Eighteen were selected, 13 as full-length articles and five as shorter, 'tips for trainers' articles. We took into account:

- the quality, originality and transformative potential of the initiative discussed;
- the sex, age and origins of the author(s) to ensure a mixture of male and female, younger and older, southern and northern perspectives;
- the sectors and issues covered, to capture as far as possible a representative spread of contemporary governance and accountability work.

We gave preference to practitioner contributors and to practitioner-scholar collaborative work, and encouraged some shortlisted contributors to co-author their contributions with young participants or other actors involved in the design, funding or implementation of the initiative. The selected articles describe work carried out in Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Somalia and Somaliland. They cover transparency, accountability and anti-corruption in service delivery; local planning and budgeting; political and social empowerment of youth and especially girls and young women; HIV/AIDS; pastoralism; and the application of participatory video and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to address governance challenges.

The issue's content was developed in three stages:

- Starting in December 2010, each contributor developed an outline and two successive drafts, with support from the guest editors.
- All main article contributors, guest editors and IIED *PLA* co-editor Holly Ashley participated in a week-long writeshop in Nairobi in March 2011, at which contributors refined their second drafts.
- Contributors then finalised their articles in response to feedback from the IIED editorial board.

Some details of the writeshop process are included in this overview – see particularly the section 'Reflecting critically on our experience'.

Photo: Holly Ashley

A crucial early stage in the writeshop was getting to know one another and the work that participants are involved in.

ing the idea of participatory governance – what it is and why it is needed. We then explain why we have chosen to focus on youth and participatory governance in sub-Saharan Africa. After this, we present a framework for thinking about citizen engagement in governance, and comment on this from the particular perspectives of young citizens. At the writeshop, contributors used this framework to explore the initiatives they were writing about. Four broad themes emerged, all familiar ones in participatory governance and citizen engagement. However, here we tease out their particular implications and dimensions for young people's participation in governance. We then reflect briefly on the process of producing this publication. We end not with a conclusion but with an opening into the substance of the special issue.

What is participatory governance and why is it needed?

It is increasingly evident today that states are not built nor run through institutions alone. Organised citizens play vital roles by articulating concerns, mobilising pressure for change and monitoring government fulfilment and performance of services (Gaventa and McGee, 2010). All over the world we are seeing experiments in 'participatory governance'. People and organisations are grasping the opportunities provided by decentralisation and other reform processes and demanding more of a say in public policy and budget processes.

Box 2: Formal and social accountability approaches

Formal accountability: formal, established institutions e.g. electoral systems, state commissions, ombudsmen's offices. In many parts of the world these institutions are under-resourced, suffer from poorly defined roles and weak mandates, and are not accessible to those groups who need them most.

Social accountability: 'Social accountability can be defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement i.e. in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organisations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up' (Malena *et al.,* 2004). Examples include participatory budgeting, monitoring electoral processes using online and mobile technology and citizen evaluation of public services.

Citizens have begun to demand and enforce accountability from those in power. As existing, formal institutions of accountability often fail them, a growing range of citizen-led mobilisation, activism and demands, known as social accountability, is developing (see Box 2). These forms of citizen engagement and social accountability are particularly promising for those whose voices are not easily heard in formal policy and governance processes, including young people.

Why focus on youth in Africa?

Exciting as these new social accountability approaches are, we need to look harder at them. Experience so far suggests that some voices, including those of young people, often get left out, just as they do from formal, electoral, political representation processes. We need to know more about why this is and how it can be overcome.

In sub-Saharan Africa, as in other parts of the world, shortcomings in formal accountability mechanisms have generated a range of social accountability responses (Claasen and Alpin-Lardiés, 2010; McNeil and Malena, 2010). However, there is limited analysis of these innovations, except for the two works just cited. Hardly any documentation focuses on young people's perspectives and roles in relation to accountability. Yet, in Africa, as in many southern countries, youth constitute more than half of the population (see Box 3 for definitions of 'youth').[2]

Established channels of political accountability are not felt to be an effective way to engage, as demonstrated by Afrobarometer's analysis of young people's mistrust of formal politics (Chikwanha and Masunungure, 2007). Young people in Africa are more likely to belong to a youth organisation, school council, neighbourhood association or social movement than to a political party or organisation. They have often found their emerging interest in electoral and party politics manipulated to serve the interests of (often elder) others. Young people consider African states to have done little for them and to owe them much. Social accountability offers them new openings. There is much to learn from the ways that young people are challenging norms and structures that exclude them, engaging with the state and demanding accountability. The articles in this issue capture some of these experiences.

Box 3: Definitions of 'youth'

Definitions of who is considered a 'youth' in Africa vary historically and culturally, as well as from one context to another and even within contexts (Chigunta, 2006; United Nations, 2003). In Africa, some countries have adopted the United Nation's definition of youth of 15 to 24 years. Others use the Commonwealth definition of 15 to 29 years. For policy purposes, the age range can be even wider. For many, 'youth' is better defined as a period of transition from dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood), the nature and length of which varies from one individual or society to another (Curtain, 2003). In compiling this special issue we have broadly adopted this transition model, in recognition of the varied national contexts discussed in the articles.

Understanding citizen engagement in governance: a framework

Governance can be thought of as the processes by which a state exercises power and the nature of relations between the state and its citizens (see Box 4 for definitions of 'citizen', 'citizenship' and 'organised citizens'). Visually, we can represent the connections between the state and organised citizens, as in Figure 1. The figure shows organised citizens interacting with the state at the local and national levels. These interactions are affected by the social, cultural, economic and political context within which they take place, as well as by the history of the country concerned.

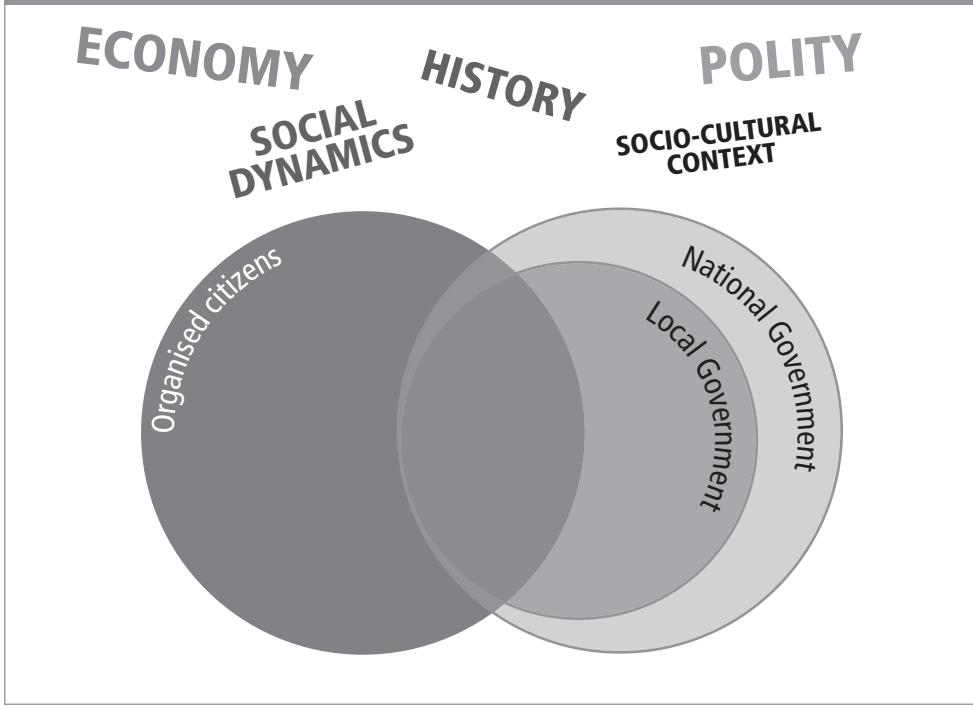
[2] The 2007 World Development Report *Development and the next generation* puts figures to this 'youth bulge': '1.5 billion people are aged 12–24 worldwide, 1.3 billion of them in developing countries, the most ever in history' (World Bank, 2007).

Box 4: Citizens, citizenship and organised citizens

How to define '**citizens**' and '**citizenship**' is the subject of much intellectual and legal debate. We define it here not in terms of voting rights, birthplace or country of residence, but as people with rights – all those covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ensuing treaties and conventions. These universal rights extend from global North to South; from local to global; from cradle to grave; from individual and private to collective, public and institutional.[3]

We prefer the term '**organised citizens**' to the more common '**civil society**' since the latter, like so many development terms and concepts, has become such a buzzword that it tends to obscure understandings of this sphere rather than elucidating them (see Chandhoke, 2007).

Figure 1: Understanding governance



Source: adapted from McGee *et al.* (2003).

Young citizens and their organisations, or those working with them, fall within the organised citizens' circle. They are increasingly significant as populations become younger. As we have noted, youth is a transitional stage in the life-cycle. As young people move from childhood to adulthood, their places and roles undergo re-definition and re-negotiation. This has implications for the ways young people's needs and interests are represented and pursued. It also affects the opportunities they have to exercise citizenship and realise their rights.

As advocates and practitioners of participation in governance, we are interested in the interfaces (meeting points) between citizens and government in local and national governance processes. These are represented in Figure 1 by the area where the organised citizen and government circles overlap. We are also interested in what goes on in the organised citizens' circle because activities there often help people to move into, or use more effectively, the interfaces they have with government.

The context – historical, political,

[3] See www.drc-citizenship.org for more discussion.

Photo: George Cobbinah Yorke

A session exploring the nature of relationships between the state and its citizens in governance work – often messy, complicated, unpredictable and in flux. For youth and governance work, what goes on within these overlapping spheres – and how can we use these interfaces in a constructive way?

economic, societal, cultural factors and so on (shown outside the circles in Figure 1) – shapes how citizens and government interact. For example, if civil conflict has occurred and relationships between government and citizens have broken down, the governance prospects are not good. On the other hand, in a situation where NGOs and social movements have helped to oust a military dictator and many of their members have taken up roles in a new democratically elected government, the prospects might be much better.

Besides 'external' context, the interactions between organised citizens and government are also shaped by the composition of the different groups interacting, and the relationships between people within each group (these are the 'social dynamics' referred to in Figure 1).

Promoting young people's participation in governance – seeing like a young citizen

The question that really interests advocates of participatory governance is: how can interfaces between citizens and the state be fostered and deepened? Three types of strategies are often suggested:

- Increase citizen representation in the government arena – enhancing citizen voice and influence.
- Bring more government representatives, or higher-level representatives, into contact with citizens, enhancing government responsiveness.
- Focus on what actually happens at the interfaces that are created between citizens and government when they interact, and work out how to support and facilitate productive and high-quality engagement.

Recent research offers insights into how we can understand and exploit the scope for fostering and deepening the interfaces. It shows the importance of complementing our considerable contemporary knowledge of the state and its workings, by 'seeing like a citizen' (our emphasis) (Eyben and Ladbury, 2006; DRCCPA, 2011) or taking an 'upside-down view of governance' (Centre for the Future State, 2010).

Seeing like a citizen helps shed light on the obstacles, flaws, disincentives and complications that adults must overcome if they are to engage effectively with governance processes that affect their lives.

Illustrations: Regina Faul-Doyle

Contributors to this issue take this one step further. Children and young people, despite their demographic weight, are traditionally, culturally, legally and structurally marginalised from decision-making processes. Seeing like a **young** citizen is therefore crucial to our task as advocates of young people's participation in governance. This is what we were aiming to do at the beginning of our writeshop in Nairobi when we asked contributors to act out scenes of youth engagement in governance processes, and how young people felt about them.

Using the governance framework

At the writeshop we used the governance framework shown in Figure 1 to help contributors analyse their work. We laid out the two-circles governance diagram on the floor using ropes, and invited contributors to position themselves according to the initiative they were writing about.

Some contributors placed themselves in the citizens' circle. They are working to construct citizenship among youth and enhance young citizens' voice and influence so that they can engage with the state. For example, confidence-building activities carried out with specific groups of young citizens who are marginalised and disempowered, such as girls in northern Ghana (Akapire *et al.*, this issue).

One contributor, a local government officer, placed himself in the government circle close to the interface. He is working to increase government responsiveness to youth concerns and trying to take colleagues with him. He spoke of the loneliness of championing youth engagement within a government where the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and relationships are lacking (see Ochieng and Anyango, this issue).

Many contributors placed themselves in the overlap between citizens and government. They are building or adapting the spaces where young people engage with state actors, thickening and deepening what goes on there. Some are even challenging the power relations that shape these interactions. They talked about the devices and processes they are using to get youth voices better heard in these spaces,

Photo: Holly Ashley

Writeshop participants during a snowball exercise to discuss the key messages and objectives for this special issue. Left to right: Fadekemi Akinfaderin-Agarau (Nigeria), Anderson Miamen (Liberia), Lipotso Musi (Lesotho), Linda Raftree (Cameroon), Edward Akapire, (Ghana) and George Cobbinah Yorke (Ghana).

including changing the nature of the spaces and the behaviour or range of the government actors in them.

From this exercise and others used for mutual learning at the writeshop, and from the articles themselves, four broad themes emerged:

- From youth presence, voice and visibility to youth influence and rights
- Rejuvenating spaces for engagement
- Learning citizenship young
- Power to young people

We use these as our four organising themes to introduce the issue's content here, and in the issue itself. The themes are interlinked and not all the 13 main articles and five 'tips for trainers' articles fit perfectly into one or another. We have placed each under the heading most related to its focus and key messages.

From youth presence, voice and visibility to youth influence and rights

Even when approached from the least political, most technocratic angle, there is a strong argument for involving young people in governance. If policies, plans and budgets are to be relevant to youth, they need to be informed by their realities, priorities and perspectives. However, many initiatives designed to involve young people have increased young voices in governance spaces, but not young people's **influence** over decision-making – so their participation may be tokenistic. The article by **the young people from Louga with Fall**, based on Plan Senegal's governance work, is a refreshing antidote to this tendency. There we read young people's own perceptions of their journey from being 'little helpers' to being partners in local development planning.

Voices can be carried away by the breeze, with no one held accountable for what has been demanded and promised. Images are different. Video has public appeal where television ownership is not widespread and it is also easily accessible online, e.g. via YouTube. It can amplify (make louder) and spread the voices of young people, as well as being an accountability tool. Used to make young people's concerns visible and hold local authorities to account, it can activate and empower

marginalised youth (**Miamen and Jaitner; Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola**), even to the point where they step into formal local political roles (**Kamara and Swarray**). Digital and social media are new avenues, but are not by definition channels of progressive social change. Spreading like wildfire and appealing particularly to younger generations, they can end up as little more than gimmicks, with no impact on development or governance. Like all social change tools, they are as transformative as the actors using them and the processes in which they are used. **Raftree and Nkie**'s account of digital mapping in Cameroon provides a healthy corrective to 'silver bullet' zeal, while also offering evidence of the transformative potential of such approaches.

Social categories and norms frequently stifle young people's voices or prevent them from having influence. In Africa, young people are often expected to offer their elders unquestioning respect and deference. Furthermore, 'youth' often means 'male youths'– entrenched gender inequality hinders young female citizens from even gaining access, let alone having influence, in public spaces. Contributors describe different approaches to countering negative opinions of youth (**Ndebele and Billing; Akapire *et al.*; Kamara and Swarray**) and to addressing the poor self-esteem or low expectations of youth in general and girls and young women in particular. **Mabala and Orowe** tell how negative stereotypes of Kenyan youth as originators of electoral violence were successfully challenged and overturned. One article (**Ndebele and Billing**) makes the point that not only young Zimbabwean women but also young Zimbabwean men face barriers to participation because of their sex.

However, contributions also show that age may combine with other characteristics typically associated with exclusion, such as disability or gender, to create unexpected advantages and interesting hybrids. **Nomdo and Henry** highlight how public sector support for disability access in South Africa accidentally trumped longstanding exclusion. Pastoralist communities, typically so little engaged in governance processes, have been afforded some visibility and legitimacy in Somaliland and Puntland through the commitment of pastoralist youth (**Kesa**). The stigma and denial of rights associated with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria have been exposed and translated into successful advocacy initiatives through youth-led university campus tours and other initiatives (**Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola**).

For voice to turn into influence, questioning the nature and quality of 'participation' or 'engagement' is key. One contributor (**Tang**) is concerned with how this is being assessed and by whom. Participation needs to be conceived of not as an end in itself but as a means to further, more concrete ends that constitute sustainable, progressive changes. Some of the articles cite increased youth access to government structures – such as through youth parliaments – as a sign of success (**Musi and Ntlama; Traore; Akapire *et al.***). Getting a foot in the door of a governance space can undoubtedly be a very significant achievement for young people in some of the contexts we are working in. But do these advances bring influence, or realise rights? Will they reshape governance spaces and government responses to address young people's concerns? For how long will they be sustained? **Ochieng and Anyango**'s reflections on the Jipange Youth Organisation in Nairobi offer room for optimism, although the future is uncertain now that external support is ending. Other activities, too, seem to have sown long-term transformative seeds. **Mvurya Mgala and Shutt** critically examine young people's participation via grounded power analysis. **Maita Mwawashe** (pers. comm.) describes self-critical exploration of what makes a youth group accountable and transparent to its own members as well as other stakeholders.

Rejuvenating spaces for engagement

This takes us to a more focused discussion of the spaces in which young people's engagement in governance happens. Various typologies of policy or governance spaces are on offer (e.g. Brock *et al.*, 2001; Cornwall, 2004; Gaventa, 2006), focusing on who creates the space and who can enter and act in it – see Box 5 for one example.

Applying such a typology to young people's participation requires attention to what or who gave rise to the space, as described in Box 5. But we also need to look at how the status of adults and young citizen actors within it differ, as well as differences in status between young citizens of different ages. Seeing like a young citizen reveals that there are some governance and accountability spaces that youth tend to be 'naturally' shut out of. In others they have little interest in participating. Then there are youth spaces, where older people are rare visitors, but which lack 'teeth' or influence. The question is: what kind of space is most promising for young people's participation? (see McGee, forthcoming). Should adult spaces be replicated, as with children's parliaments? Should parallel spaces be created, as with school councils? Or should efforts be focused on modifying existing spaces and state-citizen interfaces?

In many contributions to this issue, new structures or platforms have been established: in Ghana a Young Female Parliament (YFP) (**Akapire *et al.***); in Lesotho a Shadow Children's Parliament (SCP) sitting, in Zimbabwe Youth Village Assemblies (**Ndebele and Billing**), in Mali a Children's Parliament (**Traore**), in Liberia local Poverty Watch Councils (**Miamen and Jaitner**). Meanwhile, the Kenya initiative described by **Ochieng and Anyango** sought to strengthen existing government structures for youth.

If a new youth structure is established, how is it to be linked effectively to the adult structure? In Ghana, efforts to link the YFP to district authorities have failed so far. In Mali, **Traore** poses the dilemma of independence versus integration and influence. On the relative merits of creating parallel structures or integrating youth into existing ones, the debate clearly rumbles on.

What goes on outside these spaces is also important. The existence of legal and policy frameworks for citizen engagement and young people's rights, for example, are useful, but are insufficient on their own, as recognised and illustrated by **Traore, Musi and Ntlama, Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola** and **Tang**. The social, political, economic, cultural and historical context of a given country will also shape the strength of civil society and its relationship with the state.

Box 5: Types of governance spaces

Closed spaces: many decision-making spaces are closed. Elites (be they bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives) make decisions and provide services to 'the people', without the need for broader consultation or involvement. Many civil society efforts focus on opening up such spaces through greater public involvement, transparency or accountability.

Invited spaces: as efforts are made to widen participation, to move from closed spaces to more 'open' ones, new spaces are created which may be referred to as 'invited' spaces, i.e. those into which people (as users, citizens or beneficiaries) are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities (Cornwall, 2002). Invited spaces may be ongoing, or one-off forms of consultation. Increasingly, with the rise of participatory approaches to governance, these spaces are seen at every level, from local government, to national policy and even in global policy forums.

Claimed/created spaces: these are spaces claimed by less powerful actors from power holders. They emerge out of sets of common concerns or identifications and include spaces created by social movements and community associations, as well as spaces where people gather to debate, discuss and resist outside of 'official' spaces.

Whatever the terminology, what is critical is who creates the space – those who create it are more likely to have power within it to make it serve their interests and to determine the terms of engagement.

Adapted from Gaventa, J. (2006) 'Finding the spaces for change: a power analysis.' *IDS Bulletin* 37: 6.

If context shapes and complicates the spaces for interaction between states and citizens, it complicates further still the interfaces where young citizens can engage with the state. Even where there is no history of civil war or youth violence, a prevalent set of assumptions about youth as immature, unproductive and ignorant shapes public decision-making spaces and constrains youth's access to them. Where government officials have direct experience of working with young people, this often seems to alter their views, making them more open to involving young people in decision-making spaces (**Ochieng and Anyango; Musi and Ntlama; Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola**). This is important because young people have less scope for creating or claiming spaces than adults. They generally need to be invited into these spaces.

The power difference between citizens and state actors is recognised in 'space' typologies (e.g. Box 5 above) and power analysis frameworks, for example the power cube discussed in **Mvurya Mgala and Shutt**, which analyses the levels, spaces and forms of power and their interrelationships.[4] But power differences between young people and adults also need to be considered. Youthfulness – unlike, for example, gender – will always shift and evolve, from child to adolescent to young adult, and this adds yet another dimension to the analysis.

Recent research suggests that to make social accountability work better we need to know more about what goes on at state-citizen interfaces and how to foster and facilitate constructive interaction, to make social accountability work better (McGee and Gaventa, 2010). The same applies to interactions between young citizens and state actors – some of them youth themselves by local definitions. For instance, young service users will have perspectives and insights on the provision of those services. The concept and practice of transparency and freedom of information present particular issues when viewed through the lens of child-friendliness. As some contributions here remind us, the safety and protection of young people must be assessed when establishing and facilitating interfaces between children and their elders, and child protection codes followed.

We do not attempt an exhaustive exploration of the complexities and intricacies of youth-state interfaces here. However, the issue does make some contribution to exploring which methods of communication, appraisal, monitoring and research can be used by and with youth to support their engagement in governance processes. Similarly, it points to ways of reaching state actors disinclined to interact with young people. It also illustrates that self-critical attention to process and a sharp analysis of power relations are vital aspects of the 'citizenship learning' that these spaces can offer.

Learning citizenship young

The construction of citizenship is an important outcome of most experiences of citizen engagement, although it is often not the main intended outcome (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010). Policy and governance spaces are learning spaces. In them young people can acquire a set of expectations about their right to participate and their power to bring about change by doing so. They can also acquire the skills and experience required to operate effectively in these spaces, ensuring they are better placed to participate as adult citizens in the future.

Many of the experiences documented here are cases of 'learning by doing'. Groups of young people experiment with ways of engaging in and influencing decision making, and more formal or adult-dominated organisations support them and learn alongside them. While young people

[4] See also Gaventa (2006) and www.powercube.net

often need training to engage successfully, they also need to build confidence. Successful engagement can embolden them to engage further, as many of the articles show. Capacity strengthening must be carefully structured. For example, **Bani-Afudego *et al.*** refer to household budgets to explain government budgets. With these inputs, youth are capable of influencing what are often highly technical processes such as local and national budgeting (**Bani-Afudego *et al.*** in Ghana, **the young people from Louga with Fall** in Senegal, **Nomdo and Henry** in South Africa) and government procurement (**the young people from Louga with Fall; Ochieng and Anyango**).

It is not only young people who need to acquire new knowledge and skills. Many government officials lack the skills needed to engage citizens in governance. They also need to learn specifically how to engage young citizens and contribute to constructing their citizenship. While this is not a specific objective of any of the initiatives discussed in this issue, it is documented in some of the contributions (**Bani-Afudego et al.; the young people from Louga with Fall**).

There are ripple effects from youth participation in governance and policy processes. The changes realised through their engagement might only occur years after, in a totally different institutional or geographical setting. But, generally, changes in power relations come about through these kinds of gradual changes in people, in their attitudes and behaviours. As children and young people are at such a formative stage in their lives, there is rich potential for their early engagements with governance processes to shape and ensure continued participation as committed and active adult citizens in the future.

Power – to young people?

'If voice is about capacity for self-representation and self-expression', according to Jonathan Fox (2007), 'then power is about who listens'. Listening implies not only hearing but acting on what is heard. Fox's phrase is all the more poignant if we recall how often efforts to promote young people's participation entirely neglect the question of power, including failing to ensure that anyone is listening. The results of this neglect are evoked in the scenarios described at the beginning of this article.

All contributors here agree that social accountability is inherently political because it seeks to redress power imbalances. Even making services more accessible and their providers more accountable means a re-negotiation of power relations, which is a political act. However, the political context often poses serious challenges for social accountability work. One Kenyan participant in our writeshop, relating this issue to recent youth participation in electoral violence in his country, noted soberly, 'Some things you just can't control'. In the politically charged environments in much of Africa today, youth are continually co-opted by the politically powerful. It is a constant struggle to prevent governance work from becoming politicised in the party-political sense.

The processes of social activism and citizen engagement described by our contributors seem to suffer from political cycles, and particularly elections. The initiatives written about by **Musi and Ntlama** in Lesotho and by **Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola** in Nigeria came under great time pressure to secure legal and policy changes before impending elections. In other articles too, elections actually serve as **obstacles** to democracy, if democracy is understood as democratic practices of citizenship at the local, everyday level. This includes actions by young people, only some of whom are voters anyway.

Elections in Africa often seem to cause violence and distract attention from real political struggles, yet rarely deepen democracy, enhance development or strengthen citizenship. We hope that this

Photo: Holly Ashley

Cynthia Ochola Anyango and Charlotte Bani-Afudego giving peer review feedback on each other's articles. To us, this image captures an important element of the writeshop: here, two young women are working together to provide horizontal, non-threatening and respectful feedback on each other's work.

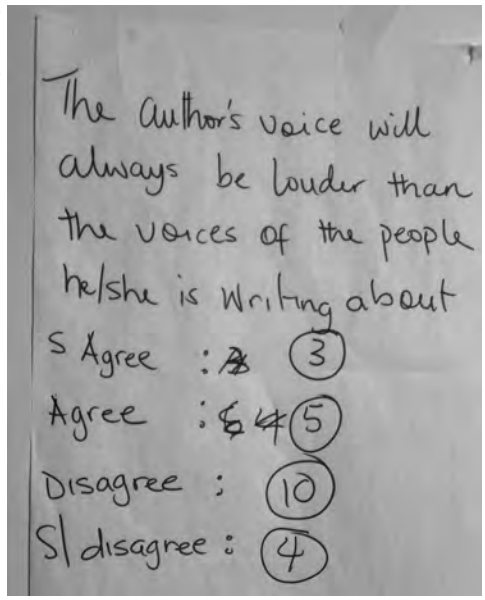
negative impression might be partly explained by our interest in contributions about social accountability initiatives, rather than initiatives that introduced young people to electoral politics. The latter would surely have revealed some more positive reflections on the learning of responsible political citizenship among youth in Africa.

As already touched on above, particular power issues shape young people's ability to participate in society, politics and governance. Some articles (**Ndebele and Billing; Mvurya Mgala and Shutt**) describe approaches which help unpack 'power'. This analysis helps to re-shape and re-orient initiatives that otherwise may not challenge existing power relations.

Power dynamics operate between young citizens as well as between them and state actors. Youth groups and movements are not necessarily egalitarian or democratic, nor will democratic representation flow of its own accord. Socio-economic differences works against internal democracy and equitable representation: the poorest are harder to reach and rarely engaged in initiatives such as these. Social accountability initiatives might make information accessible or routes to service improvement visible. Yet for these to be transformative, demand – **effective** demand, not just demand in principle – has to exist and be exercised. That requires the time of the time-poor.

Also, power corrupts. Once elected, youth leaders can forget their constituency. What checks and balances can be put in place? How to ensure local to national representative structures? Some of the contributions grapple directly with these questions, either in their substance (**Tang**; **Traore**) or in the participatory way they have been written (**the young people from Louga with Fall**). Other authors recognise a failure fully to address or overcome power issues in the processes they are documenting (**Raftree and Nkie; Musi and Ntlama; Ndebele and Billing**).

Photos: Holly Ashley



Is the author's voice always louder than the voices of the people s/he is writing about? Are we being representative and inclusive when we document issues affecting youth, whose voices are more often marginalised? The results show how complex these issues are and developed our shared critical thinking.

Participants Edwine Ochieng and Jennifer Tang discussing dissemination routes and audiences. Our key audiences include practitioners working with youth, youth groups and communities and duty bearers such as governments and community leaders, as well as donors, international NGOs, researchers and policy makers.

Reflecting critically on our experience

As co-editors, we were struck by the difficulty of supporting contributors to reflect critically on the experiences they were writing about. Since *PLA* gives high priority to critical reflection, we all worked hard on this. The writeshop programme included exercises such as structured reflections on how we react to criticism and what kind of feedback, delivered in what way, we find most helpful. It also included one-to-one in-depth peer review of each others' articles after several days together. We tried to create 'safe spaces' for pairs of participants working together, matching them carefully in terms of their backgrounds, first languages, nationalities, thematic focus of their contributions and other factors. Some contributors' final evaluations of the writeshop highlighted a new appreciation of critical reflection on practice as the single most important achievement.

We were also spurred to reflect self-critically on our own facilitation and practice at various points. For instance, ironically given the topic of this issue, we did not even think about age when matching the peer review pairs. It was impressed upon us after the exercise that this meant some of the younger participants had to provide in-depth critique to their elders, violating cultural norms. Likewise, we were brought up short by the youngest participant when she admitted at the end of the writeshop that at one point she would have liked to voice her views, but had not felt able to do so. The challenge of developing and practising self-critical awareness is clearly continuous.

Box 6: Capturing and reflecting the perspectives of young people

Serigne Malick Fall, Senegal
First of all, we visited the field to tell the young people about the writing project and to identify with them the exact experience to be reported on. Once this was done, I wrote the abstract that was submitted to the editors through the 'call for submissions'. When our 'paper' was accepted, we went back to see the young people and agreed with them on how the article would be produced.

Afterwards, I was able to set out 11 questions which would help the young people to write – this was the plan which was then sent to the editors. We held two writing workshops, one in each community, and filmed them. During these workshops, young people each chose the question that they wanted to respond to; worked individually to reply to their chosen question; worked in small groups, depending on the question; and reproduced, in plenary, their group work. Their writing was then aggregated into two documents by 'youth champions' acting on their behalf.

Using these two documents as a base, I produced the first draft which was sent to the editors. The first draft was also sent to the young people, and I will gather their reactions soon after the writeshop.

Leila Billing and Talita Ndebele, Zimbabwe
Parts of the article draw on the baseline and annual review, both mentioned in the article, which were both participatory processes. Before starting writing, we held a consultation with the youth groups, telling them about the topic of the article and asking what they wanted included. The young people selected some images that they wanted us to use and we made the final selection from their shortlist. We produced a first draft and had it translated into Ndebele.[5] We took it to the community youth group and held a focus group discussion about it at which they gave their reactions. Now that we've finished an almost-final draft, we'll have it translated again and take it to them for their sign-off.

Fadekemi Akinfaderin-Agarau and Temitope Fashola, Nigeria
The writers of this article are both young people. We base this on the Nigeria national youth policy and the Africa youth charter which states that young people are people between ages 18 and 35. In addition, the Youth Advocacy Group (YAG) members also contributed to the article by reviewing the second draft prior to submission. They also provided feedback based on the comments made by the editors for the third drafts. They suggested all the quotes used in the article.

The other major challenge we faced as co-editors and contributors was how to adequately and faithfully reflect and represent youth perspectives. Having deliberately ensured in advance that the writeshop group included some youth, we were surprised to find once there that over half those present were 'youth', when defined according to the loose category of under-30 years old. But these 'youthful' contributors, because of their social and organisational positions, had experiences of seeing and engaging like young citizens which were substantially more positive than those of most young people written about in their articles. So the challenge remained.

A range of approaches were adopted by contributors to developing and writing their articles in order to capture and reflect the perspectives of the young people about whom they were writing (Box 6). Enabling participation and co-generation in the production of knowledge and the analysis of experience is time- and resource-intensive, much more so than non-participatory exercises or papers produced by solitary academics or practitioners. Yet they are essential to our claim to represent youth and participatory governance initiatives. How worthwhile these painstaking efforts have been can only be judged later, on the basis of how widely this issue is disseminated, read, and its contents taken up and used.

Concluding the introduction, opening the issue

Participating in governance and policy processes is re-shaping the way young people perceive and exercise citizenship in powerful ways. This includes how youth

[5] Ndebele is a Nguni language of southern Africa spoken in Zimbabwe.

relate to other youth, and to government. In the ActionAid Zimbabwe initiative, youth from different political parties are recognising common interests (**Ndebele and Billing**). In the Senegal case children are beginning to 'feel like citizens' (**the young people from Louga with Fall**). Jipange youth in Kenya are increasingly viewing government not as an oppressor but a partner (**Ochieng and Anyango**). In Nigeria, youth have made links with their senators and demanded that they support the HIV/AIDS anti-stigma bill. Through this, they are beginning to recognise their power as citizens (**Akinfaderin-Agarau and Fashola**). The way young people relate to – and are related to – by 'their' international and local NGOs is also changing, as young people become participants and stakeholders in development processes rather than just beneficiaries.

A sad aspect of the writeshop was to hear repeatedly from practitioners across Africa how youth (implicitly, male youth) are seen as, and see themselves as, a 'lost generation'. They appear disaffected and bored, corruptible and corrupted, often drawn unwillingly into the power struggles of their elders. While youth are certainly ill-served by tokenism, these forms of co-option are infinitely worse. They add urgency to efforts across the continent to explore and support young people's political and social agency. Lack of gainful employment, particularly in contexts of post-conflict economic and social unrest, is seen by many to underpin youth disaffection and marginalisation. While we are committed to presenting a different perspective on young people in Africa than this pessimistic 'lost generation' discourse, we are also anxious to avoid editing out unsavoury realities.

The upside, revealed strongly in this collection of articles, is the vibrancy, energy, persistence, passion and enthusiasm of youth. This can drive change in creative and unexpected ways. It is particularly valuable in governance work, where the context is often rapidly evolving. Opportunities can open up and/or close without warning; alert young people can be well-positioned to respond quickly and innovatively. This energy and passion can of course also be used for less constructive means. At the time of writing, events in the Middle East are leaving no doubt that the gerontocracies and autocracies of the region have for decades – even generations – been ignoring and silencing youth at their peril.[6] [7]

A leading text on citizenship aims to deal with 'the different mechanics of exclusion which consign certain groups within a society to the status of lesser citizens or of non-citizens, and on the struggles by such groups to redefine, extend and transform "given" ideas about rights, duties and citizenship' (Kabeer, 2005). We hope this issue will fulfil a similar purpose, focusing on young citizens in Africa and their struggles. We hope also that participatory practitioners – both young and old – can learn from the experiences shared here, and that this helps them in their own efforts to ensure young people's voices are heard and are influential in governance and policy processes across the world.

[6] Gerontocracies are governments by old people.
[7] An autocracy is government by one person holding all the power.

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NOTES

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During the design, planning and implementation of the *PLA* writeshop Jessica was a member of Plan UK's governance team overseeing Plan UK's DfID-funded youth and governance programme. The programme supported participatory governance initiatives involving youth in 16 countries around the world. Jessica has since moved to Jinja, Uganda to work with Restless Development Uganda, a youth-led development NGO focusing on civic participation, livelihoods, and sexual and reproductive health.

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PART I

From youth voice to youth influence

Digital mapping: a silver bullet for enhancing youth participation in governance?

2

by LINDA RAFTREE and JUDITH NKIE

Introduction

In 2008, Plan International began work on the Youth Empowerment through Technology, Arts and Media (YETAM) Programme in Mozambique, Kenya and Cameroon with funding from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs via Plan Finland. The authors were involved as the overall programme coordinator (Linda) and the Cameroon coordinator (Judith).[1]

YETAM uses a participatory approach, creating an environment where youth, aged 12–21, can take centre stage in identifying resources, raising issues that affect them, suggesting solutions and acting on them. They use new technology, arts and media as tools to gather information about their key themes. Creating arts and media (videos, paintings, songs, cartoons, photographs and maps) serves as an opportunity for youth to learn, reflect, build confidence and strengthen communication skills. The 'products' youth make are a starting point for involving the broader community, local councils and divisional authorities in dialogue and support for resolving issues that youth identify. Piloting new **information and communication technologies** (**ICTs**) to better understand their potential to engage youth in community development and governance work is a cross-cutting theme in the initiative. Several ICT tools are used in YETAM, including Flip video cameras, mobile phones for video and photography, the Internet, social media and digital mapping.

ICTs for digital mapping in YETAM

This article is a reflection on the usefulness of digital mapping in particular for engag-

[1] The authors of the article support the implementation of YETAM at the national and international level. Judith Nkie is the YETAM national programme coordinator in Cameroon. She works with local partners, youth and communities, accompanying and guiding the work in the project's three council areas. Linda Raftree is the overall programme coordinator for the three-country initiative and serves as Plan's advisor for ICT4D (information and communications technology for development). She works to support innovations and share good practices around the use of appropriate ICTs in Plan's programme work.

Photo: Judith Nkie

Youth and staff in Bamessing, Cameroon using a Garmin GPS unit to create a digital map of their community.

ing youth in governance work in Cameroon. It is not intended as a detailed step-by-step description of the mapping methodology or other participatory processes used in the project.[2] [3] Rather, it pulls together thoughts on the usefulness of digital mapping, initial concerns about the technology, incorporating digital mapping into the broader project, digital mapping's influence on local governance – and enabling factors that help make digital mapping effective in youth and participatory governance work.

Youth and participation in Cameroon

Youth make up over 60% of the total population in Cameroon. Between 2005 and 2007, youth unemployment increased from 76% to 82%, with most unemployed youth living in rural areas. In July 2004, a decentralisation policy gave municipal councils the mandate and responsibility for local development and service delivery in the council areas. Municipal mayors, however, often do not have enough information to make good decisions on resource allocation and service delivery to ensure balanced and sustainable development.

Despite the enactment and promulgation of a youth development policy and the institution of youth municipal councils, youth participation in decision-making in Cameroon is still weak, especially amongst the rural population. Most adults do not appreciate young people's views. In the areas where Plan works in Cameroon, youth have restricted access to both formal and informal channels for participation. Initially, we struggled to engage youth in community development processes because the youth had no interest in the adults' agendas and meetings, and were not generally asked for views or allowed to voice opinions.

With the YETAM project, we have seen youth's capacities and confidence grow. They have become more aware of their rights and how to claim them from duty bearers. They develop a high level of interest in using arts, media and new technology for local development planning and to demand and secure their rights from the State. Within the framework of the project, local governments are considering youth as part of civil society and as reliable development partners. Youth now

[2] For detailed information on the digital mapping process, see Kunbega (2011).
[3] For information on the other participatory tools and overall methodology used in the YETAM project, see Raftree (2010).

participate in the decision-making process, budget allocations and development activities and are creating accountability mechanisms with their local traditional councils and the municipal councils of Ndop, Okola and Pitoa. Community leaders, district and national level authorities and Plan are more aware of issues that the participating young people are most concerned about.

Why digital mapping?

For centuries, maps of Africa have been made by outsiders to stake claims and territories. As the Internet becomes a primary source of information, we see a similar digital scramble for Africa. Corporations compete to market their products and services to the 'base of the pyramid.'[4] Large technology companies and donors want to be the ones to stamp their logos on digital maps, mapping software and mapping platforms in Africa, a continent that is still yet to be fully mapped digitally. One could argue that a community has a right to be included 'on the map' and a right to map itself, in the same way that youth and communities have the right to tell their own stories in their own voices, rather than having an external, often foreign or urban outsider, telling a story about them and owning the rights to it afterwards.[5] A community has the right to decide what it wants to map. Open digital mapping can offer a new kind of voice and ownership to traditionally excluded groups.

Hand drawn community mapping has a long history in the field of participatory development as a way to gather the community to discuss priorities, enhance ownership and plan actions.[6] Digital maps can complement hand drawn maps and are easily shared at wider levels. Small rural communities in the US and Europe appear in online maps in great detail. Most rural communities in African countries, however, are simple dots on a map in the middle of a blank screen, with no information or detail. Digital maps from rural communities could contribute to the growing body of global geographical information.

Digital mapping can offer youth a tool to collect and process information, and to advocate for their concerns with their local governments. It can provide youth with a means to:

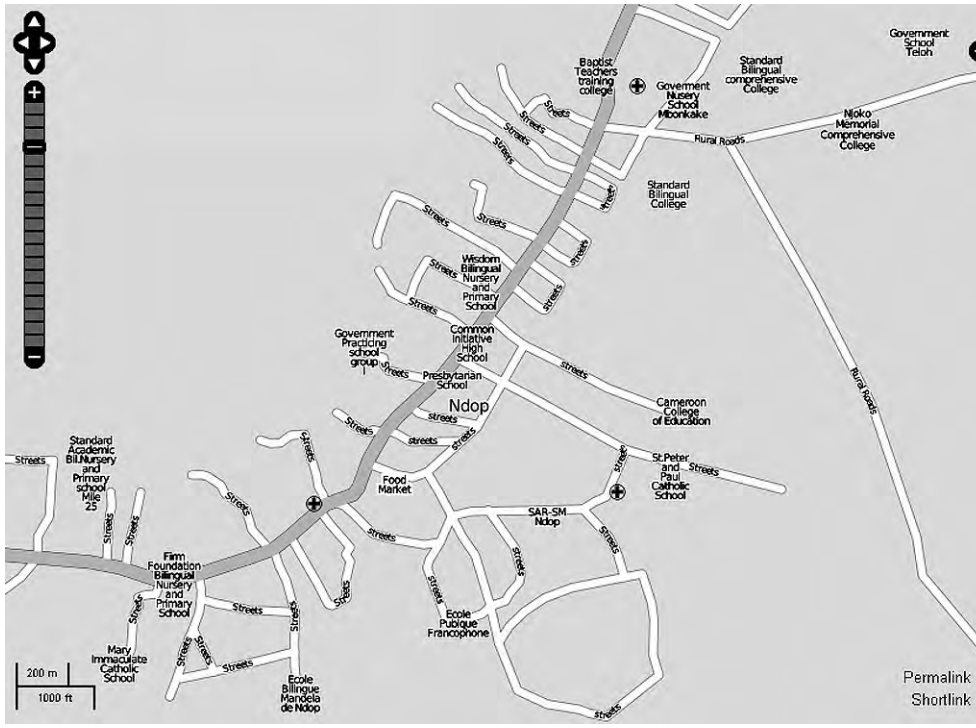
- research, analyse and own their community information;
- map their communities in ways that make the most sense to them;
- decide what deserves to be mapped and what doesn't and what should remain unmapped; and
- engage communities and authorities in discussions around resources and risks.

Digital maps reach far beyond the community. They help make those who are often excluded visible to the broader world via the growing online population. There is a wealth of information that exists offline – consider all the hand drawn maps that exist in communities worldwide – which could be of great interest to the wider world if digitally shareable. Digital maps could support work in disaster and risk reduction, crisis and conflict management and help achieve more equitable resource allocation and support from governments and external agencies. Digitising hand drawn community maps could make them easier to update on a regular basis and allow local maps to be joined up online to create a clearer picture of the world. Coupling geographical information with data offers a more objective way of looking at population and resources. Youth and communities can use that information to,

[4] According to Wikipedia, 'in economics, the bottom of the pyramid is the largest, but poorest socio-economic group. In global terms, this is the 2.5 billion people who live on less than $2.50 per day. The phrase "bottom of the pyramid" is used in particular by people developing new models of doing business that deliberately target that demographic, often using new technology. This field is also often referred to as the "base of the pyramid" or just the "BoP".'

[5] Also see Rambaldi *et al.* (2006).

[6] Also see Mascarenhas and Prem Kumar (1991).



Above: Ndop after mapping (Source: OpenStreetMap.org).
Right: Ndop before mapping (Source: Google Maps).

for example, challenge a politician's politically motivated intention to build infrastructure in one area versus another.

Proceeding with caution

It's easy, however, to get caught up and excited about innovations, to think that technology is a silver bullet that will magically resolve things.[7] There is a risk that we lose sight of the bigger goals – youth engagement and improved governance. So we needed to consider a few things before proceeding.

Purpose and motivation

Do we have a clear enough purpose for making a digital map? Will this just be an interesting exercise for our organisation and for people interested in innovations and ICT4D? Will the maps end up being something potentially fun, novel and exciting for the youth, but without real impact in the end?

Information

Is this information already accessible through existing channels? Is availability of information the issue or is it something completely different? Will information in this format be useful for the youth and communities? Is it different or better than information they've had access to before?

Mandate

Whose mandate it is to collect this kind of information? Why should communities,

[7] For a discussion of some of the questions revolving around participatory digital mapping versus hand drawn mapping, see 'Is this map better than that map?' Linda Raftree (2009).

NGOs, technology volunteers or specialists collect it? Are we replacing government functions?

Access

Will digital mapping be useful in communities without regular Internet access? How will we ensure that the information is accessible to communities for decision-making?

Sustainability

Will it be a one-off exercise? Will youth be able to build necessary skills to create maps and keep them updated? What type of support will they need in the long term?

Risks

Will there be questions and concerns about why the youth are engaging in digital mapping? Will political leaders welcome the youth's possession of this information or could it be threatening to them? Will we raise any expectations that cannot be fulfilled later? Who are we excluding from the process?

Doing our research

In order to think things through, we read lots of blogs and discussed with other groups and individuals to see what they had accomplished.[8] We learnt more about possible tools and methods. We liked the principles behind Open Street Map (see Box 1) – free, open source tools and a global map platform that anyone can contribute to, that is not 'owned' by anyone, which could give communities power to put their own information out to the world.[9]

Box 1: What is OpenStreetMap?

OpenStreetMap is a free editable map of the whole world. It is made by people like you. OpenStreetMap allows you to view, edit and use geographical data in a collaborative way from anywhere on Earth.

There are no restrictions on **who** can use the data. Individuals, clubs, societies, charities, academe, government, commercial companies. When we say everyone, we mean everyone.

There are no restrictions on **where** you can use the data. Privately or publicly. Commercially or non-commercially. Paper maps, electronic maps, books, newspapers, TV, gazeteers, search systems, routing, games... or indeed anything you can think of that will surprise us.

Source: www.openstreetmap.org

Box 2: How does a global positioning system (GPS) work?

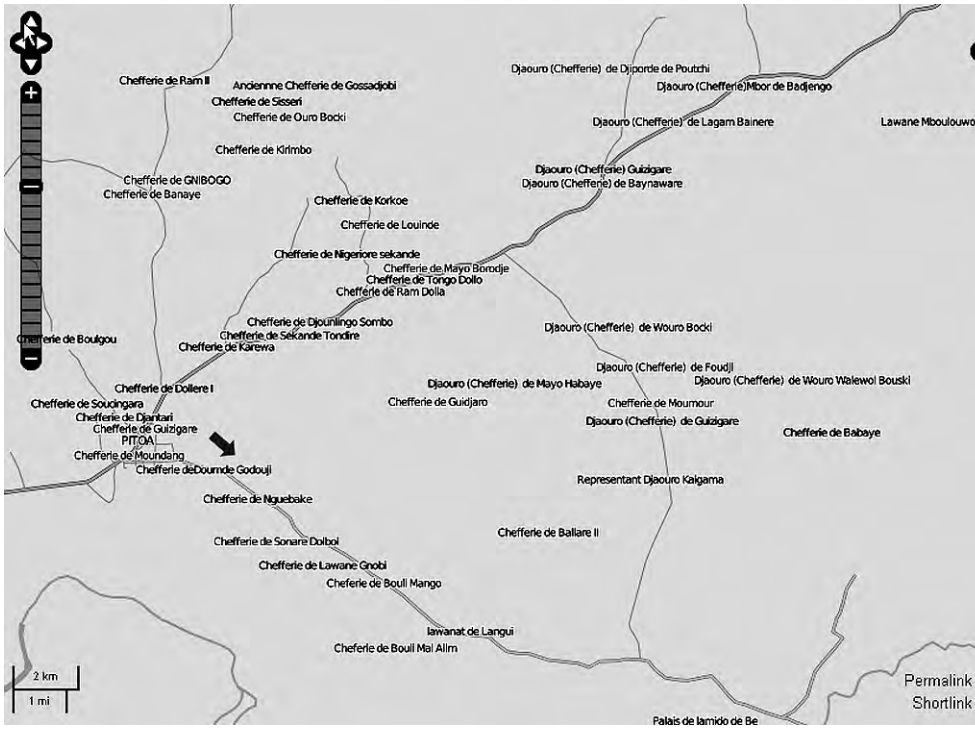
A GPS unit allows a person to geographically track their movements. A person carrying a GPS unit and walking the border of a community would be able to '**trace**' an outline of the community. The person could also trace roads and mark other types of features of the community using the GPS unit. These are called '**tracks**'. This information is used to create a **base map** including village boundaries, roads and footpaths, rivers and streams etc.

In addition, '**waypoints**' are collected, meaning that a person stops at a particular location and presses a button on the GPS unit to mark the exact location: e.g. a school, mosque, hospital, well, or other important feature. All these 'traces' and 'waypoints' are stored on the GPS in the same way that photos are stored on a digital camera, and then, like one does with the photos on a digital camera, they are downloaded onto a computer for further processing.

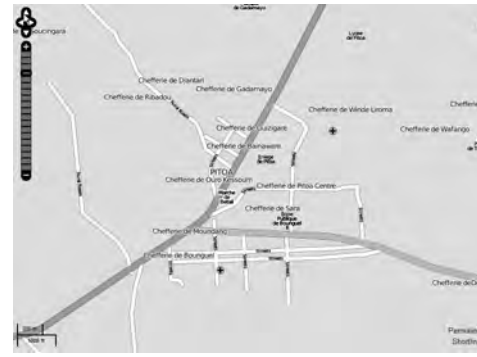
Additional **data** (e.g. number of boys and girls at a school) can be collected and attached to waypoints, and thereby '**geo-located**'.

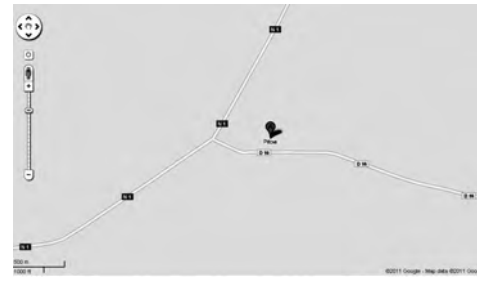
[8] We acknowledge Anthony Njoroge, Sammy Musyoki and Salim Mvurya from Plan Kenya; Pedro Miambo from Plan Mozambique; Mikel Maron, Erica Hagen, Jamie Lundine and Primoz Kocovic from Map Kibera and Ground Truth Initiative; youth and community councils from Ndop, Pitoa and Okola; PAVIS (Partner Vision), IRONDEL and STA (Solutions Technologiques Alternatives), our partners in Cameroon; Jeff Warren from Grass Roots Mapping and Leo Burd at MIT's Department of Play; Erik Hersman, Juliana Rotich and Patrick Meier at Ushahidi; Ken Banks and Laura Hudson Walker at FrontlineSMS and Josh Nesbit at Medic Mobile; and Ernest Kunbega for helping us to think through the idea of mapping. For more information and discussion on digital mapping, see the resources at the end of this article.

[9] Open source software (OSS) can be defined as computer software for which the source code is made available under a copyright license (or arrangement such as the public domain) that meets the Open Source Definition. This permits users to use, change and improve the software and to redistribute it in modified or unmodified form. It is very often developed in a public, collaborative manner. OSS are typically free-to-use. Often, open source is an expression where it simply means that a system is available to all who wish to work on it. Source: Wikipedia.



Above: Pitoa area and the local chefferies (local chief's palaces) mapped by youth. Source: OpenStreetMap.org.
Below right: Pitoa before mapping. Source: Google Maps.
Right: Pitoa after mapping by local youth. Source: OpenStreetMap.org.





After a long thought process about the pros and cons of digital mapping in the context where we are working, we decided to pilot OpenStreetMap to see if it was a useful tool in the broader toolkit of participatory methodologies with youth.

Incorporating mapping

We purchased some GPS (global positioning system) units and hired Ernest Kunbega, a local expert on geographical information systems (GIS), to do three four-day theory and practice workshops with youth, partners and the communities to produce digital maps for Ndop, Okola and Pitoa in Cameroon.

During the theory sessions, the groups discussed what information would be useful for mapping their key concerns: violence and gender-based discrimination. These two themes had emerged strongly from youth in the three participating countries over the past two years during different prioritisation exercises, and were the primary topics the YETAM programme

Photo: Judith Nkie

During training in Okola, Cameroon, youth learn how to use GPS units to trace roads and boundaries and pinpoint structures such as schools and wells to create a community base map with geographical features.

aimed to address. After learning more about what mapping could do, the youth also decided to collect information around existing resources so that they could bring the maps to the local service providers, municipal councils and traditional authorities and discuss allocation of resources.

They created a worksheet outlining all the information they wished to collect, such as primary and secondary schools enrolment, number of boys and girls at school, number of school benches, teachers, student/bench ratio, student/teacher ratio, grades, health facilities, number of doctors and nurses available, beds, malaria and HIV rates, facilities such as pharmacies, number of consultations at health centres per month and local recreational facilities.

An authorisation letter was obtained from the divisional officer for youth to collect waypoints and tracks. This allowed the youth to explain to the officer what they were doing and gave them a letter to show anyone who mistrusted their motives or those who requested a bribe to give the youth information. Based on the hand drawn maps from earlier in the process, the youth created a work plan and divided the work. Each group had a codification sheet and waypoint form indicating the information they would collect. The data collection was done by the youth under supervision of Plan staff, a consultant and partner for one week covering all the communities of the council area. Only 10 GPS units were available so just 20 youth per council area were able to collect field data. The youth were shared in five groups of four with two GPS units each. The youth tracked roads and categorised them, collected waypoints of socio-economic infrastructure and built a database using the information.

After all the information was collected, the youth worked in small groups with the consultant to download their information onto computers using Garmin Map Source (an application that makes the GPS information usable on the computer) and to upload it onto the OpenStreetMap website.

Photo: Judith Nkie

Okola youth using a codification sheet and waypoint form to record geographical information. Additional data can also be collected and attached to these 'waypoints' and thereby 'geo-located'.

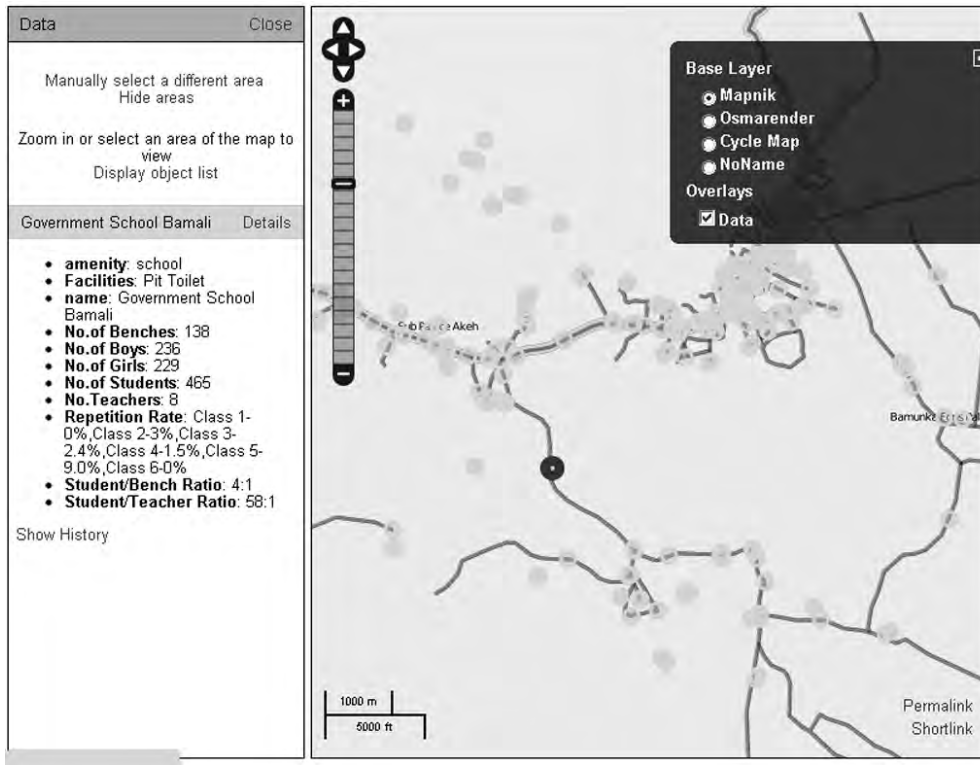
Once the maps were completed and available online with their associated database, the youth of Ndop and Pitoa presented them to councillors and local leaders, who were amazed at the information. Councillors acknowledged a bias – that they have been allocating resources to more accessible communities and where there are influential leaders.

As a result of the exchange with decision makers, youth were invited to the annual budgetary sessions at the development union level, where stakeholders deliberate projects and vote on budgets. The councils also invited the youth to join discussions on the overall council budget. Two of the youth community action projects were funded, along with a large water project for which the youth had advocated.

Did digital maps influence decisions of community authorities, councils and local government?

The digital maps produced clearly show the social amenities and socio-economic infrastructure (schools, hospitals, water points, administrative buildings) that are found in the respective council areas and communities. They have generated useful socio-economic data that the council can use in strategic planning. In the course of producing the digital maps, youth are exposed to the realities of their council areas and build relationships with local council members who have begun to see youth as having worthwhile ideas, skills and opinions.

The mayors of municipal councils like the idea of making the maps and visualising resource allocation. It is their mandate to collect data and produce monographic studies of their respective council areas, yet in the past they have not done this digitally. They feel the absence of updated information (specifically 'digital maps') affects their planning and allocation of resources,



The youth collected waypoints which are geographically linked to corresponding data. Here the information shown on the left-hand side is about the government school in Bameli. Source: Open Street Map.

resulting in some communities having little or no social amenities whereas others are overdeveloped. The community council and local governments are now working closely with the youth during the planning process and budgetary sessions to prioritise children's and youth's rights. They now allocate projects and resources to particular communities based on the information analysed from the digital maps to ensure balance and sustainable development. The councils are ready to support the youth financially to use their expertise to continue updating the information on the digital maps.

Community councils and local governments are also using the digital maps to share information about their area with other leaders, stakeholders and international bodies via the web. The database presented on the digital maps by the youth has facts and figures which are used by the community council, local government and youth themselves to analyse issues with regards to children's and youth's rights. Youth feel that the digital maps help to connect the community with the rest of the world in a modern and 'civilized' way. They feel that hand drawn maps are indeed important, but have several limitations – they do not provide facts and figures attached to geography – to 'place' – that the youth can use during the planning process. Information on hand drawn maps cannot be updated, meaning new maps have to be drawn to show changes in the community.

If digital mapping is to be effective…

Digital mapping cannot be seen as a standalone activity. It sits within a broader methodology of youth involvement and engagement with community adults and local leaders. Simply having a map does not accomplish anything on its own. To help build support for the map at local and

municipal level, there needs to be an ongoing process of dialogue and relationship building, and youth need time to build their own skills in various areas. Youth need to be present as representatives and their voices heard in all the forums of community councils and local government for dialogue and to pass on their message. Youth also need to be given the chance to take leadership positions or frontline roles in activities which concern children and youth.

The results so far achieved can be related back to the digital mapping exercise. But they also have much to do with the solid foundation of relationships that were built during the first phase of the project and the work with the other participatory elements of the programme, including:

- hand drawn mapping;
- prioritisation exercises;
- youth-led research through community interviews and participatory video; and
- community engagement through schools and local traditional councils.

The youth and community councils worked side-by-side on the other programme activities, even before the digital mapping exercise began. Adults were well aware of why the youth were making the maps and supported the youths' involvement.

If Plan continues with mapping, we need to consider several aspects. Although half the youth say they feel confident using digital maps, the other half report having only theoretical ideas on digital mapping because they have not been exposed to facilities (computers and the Internet) that would enable them to use digital maps. Having too few computers and GPS units and irregular and slow Internet connections make it difficult for youth to visualise the digital maps and extract the necessary information needed. The youth have said that they do not have adequate knowledge to keep the information updated on the maps without outside support.

In addition, students with lower education levels have a harder time mapping. The 10 out-of-school youth who participated felt their role was limited due to their education level (however six of them were motivated to enrol in school again to catch up with their peers). Programme coordinators need to insist that equipment is shared equally among the group, who are mixed in age and gender. Over time, as girls and younger youth have become more adept and secure, they have started to demand to use the equipment. Language and literacy can also be limiting factors as the software is only available in main languages like English, French and Portuguese. In addition, mapping requires a certain amount of conceptual spatial thinking and some children, youth and less educated adults can be left behind in the process.

We also need to ensure that the information collected gets back to those who provided it, especially the remote communities that have already been left out by the councils. This means that mechanisms to share it in easily understandable formats need to be identified. Sustainability also needs to be considered so that maps remain updated and so that the promises of the authorities are followed up on and they are held accountable for them.

What's next?

We will work to add another mapping software to the process so that the information gathered can be better visualised on the maps that the youth created. We will also work with the youth on using digital maps to track and report cases of violence against children and gender-based discrimination – and to use the maps to advocate for responses to these problems. We also plan to work toward overcoming some of the challenges mentioned above to ensure that the maps are continually updated, useful and accessible to the youth and communities and so that decision makers are held accountable for keeping their promises.

Once we feel certain that the methodology is useful, we hope it can be integrated into our working methodology with youth and communities across all the areas where we work and into Plan's global community development planning methodologies. Although the youth in school find this technology very exciting and innovative, the community component of the YETAM methodology needs to be boosted to give more opportunity to non-schooling youth to contribute, and ways of involving remote communities need to be found.

Conclusions

Digital mapping was an exciting element for youth, communities, staff and local governments. The tool attracted attention and interest, and served to gather and provide detailed information on development indicators in a new format, which brought positive initial results and outcomes. However, the success of digital mapping as a tool was closely tied to the other elements in the programme: skill building, effective communication, community organising, trust-building among youth and decision makers and using participatory methods to rank and prioritise issues of importance to youth.

Digital mapping would not have come far without these other programme elements. Continued success will rest on the longer-term engagement of the youth in the process. Follow-up by youth, staff and partners needs to continue to hold governments accountable for the initial actions and decisions they have made.

The advent of the Internet coupled with the ubiquity of mobile phones and other lower-cost technologies has created the idea in the minds of some that if only people at the 'base of the pyramid' had access to a technological solution, development would magically happen. There is the notion that people just need a mobile phone and they will access the market. Youth just need a computer centre and they will be able to find jobs. Children just need a laptop and learning will take place. As attractive as these ideas are, they are generally false. Underneath successful information and communication technology for development initiatives are other, deeper core processes such as behaviour change, community engagement, skills training and community organising. It is easy to get swept away with exciting new tools and technologies rather than stepping back to see what is actually to be accomplished and considering all the possible ways of doing it. A multitude of tools, methodologies and 'solutions' can be used to achieve a goal, but the critical thing is to find the right combination of tools and solutions for the complex contexts in which we work.

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Kenema youth change lives and perceptions with participatory video in Sierra Leone

3

by SALLIEU KAMARA and ABDUL SWARRAY

Introduction

Imagine a group of illiterate youth in the remote town of Boajibu in Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone, standing on the banks of the Sewa River holding a sophisticated digital video camera, doing a number of shots.

In another part of the district, some youth are conducting interviews with market women, health workers, local council officials and chiefdom authorities on camera. Later they will all meet to carefully select and edit the footage to produce a video telling their own stories about some of the many problems that make life particularly hard for them.

This article describes how the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) and the Kenema District Youth Coalition (KYDC) are using participatory video (PV) as an advocacy tool and to engage in dialogue with local government, helping to build the youth's capacity to engage in governance processes.

The shaded areas show the districts of the country in which NMJD is working.

Background

Despite making up 55% of the country's almost six million people, the youth of Sierra Leone are the most neglected and socially-excluded (Dizo-Conteh, 2009).[1] The political cliché that youth are the leaders of tomorrow holds little meaning for them.

[1] Sierra Leone's national youth policy describes youth as young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

Photo: Boajibu PV video screenshot

Children wait to cross the Sewa river on a dugout canoe beside the broken ferry in Boajibu.

Box 1: What is PV?

Participatory video is a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own film. It is a great way of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply be creative and tell stories. This process can be empowering, enabling a group or community to act to solve their own problems and also to communicate their needs and ideas… As such, PV can be a highly effective tool to engage and mobilise marginalised people and to help them implement their own forms of sustainable development based on local needs.

Source: *Insights into participatory video: a handbook for the field* (Lunch and Lunch, 2006).

Several factors have contributed to this: poor budgeting and planning, a weak economic base, pervasive poverty, corruption and a lack of good governance. These are issues affecting everyone, but youth have been affected disproportionately. Moreover, youth lack the capacity to mobilise and organise themselves into strong groups that can hold duty bearers accountable.[2]

In 2007 in Boajibu and Kenema, the youth needed this kind of engagement.[3] The ferry that links Boajibu to Gendema had broken down, with a lot of hardship as a result. Children paid two thousand Leones (about US 50 cents) daily to get to school on dug-out canoes.[4] The price of food had also risen because farmers could not get to local markets. And in Kenema, piles of unattended rubbish were an eyesore and a serious health hazard. The Kenema City Council whose responsibility it is to keep the city clean paid little attention to this unsightly situation.

It is because of problems like this that the youth are concerned. Their stories are rarely reported in the mainstream media. They are desperate to tell their stories to their young colleagues, elders and policy makers. They want to tell them that if provided with skills and training they can contribute to the development of their communities and demonstrate their capabilities and leadership qualities. They want society to see them from that perspective.

Perceptions of youth in Sierra Leone

During the 11-year civil war, the youth were both victims and perpetrators. Some young men were conscripted against their will. Others saw in the war an opportunity to register, in the most violent manner, their accumulated disillusionment with society. Young girls have been equally socially excluded. Many were forcefully conscripted, sexually abused, or forced into prostitution.

Sierra Leonean society has come to associate youth with violence. And as the saying goes, give a dog a bad name to kill it. In political terms 'youth' is often understood as young, 'idle' men or 'the lost generation', referring predominantly to men who are excluded, unable to provide for a family and/or perceived as a potential security threat.[5]

[2] For a definition of duty bearers, see the glossary, this issue.
[3] Boajibu is the headquarters of Simbaru chiefdom in Kenema district. It was once a thriving diamond mining community, but comprehensively destroyed, looted and abandoned during the war. The youth of Boajibu are members of the Kenema District Youth Coalition.
[4] Per capita income in Sierra Leone is less than US $1 a day.
[5] Statement made by the Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Youth and Sports, Dr Algassimu Jah, at the commissioning of the youth centre in Kenema in July 2010.

Photo: Boajibu PV video screenshot

Video screenshots of youth and community members creating their video storyboard in Boajibu.

Changing these perceptions about youth and helping them to realise their potential is no small challenge. But it is one that the youth of Kenema and Boajibu are now addressing using PV. This is truly revolutionary in Sierra Leone in the sense that youth – as well as those of the communities they are filming with – can now communicate their ideas, concerns and aspirations directly with duty bearers.

NMJD and CAFOD UK

The Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD)'s PV project was launched in November 2007. Funded by Cafod, the project aimed to enhance the skills of youth in the east and southern regions of Sierra Leone and to use PV to engage with duty bearers.[6] NMJD invited the Kenema District Youth Coalition to work on the project with them. They had been working with the coalition on youth empowerment for many years, and saw PV as another opportunity to continue this partnership. Together with Cafod UK, NMJD contracted Insightshare to work with NMJD staff and youth groups on the PV youth empowerment project (see Box 2).[7]

Box 2: Who is NMJD?

The Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) is a national civil society organisation. It was established in 1988 in Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone. It works towards building a just and self-reliant Sierra Leone, helping to equip the marginalised and exploited with the necessary skills and knowledge to take control of their own lives.

NMJD works in four programming areas: governance and accountability, peace and security, mining and extractives and youth empowerment. Youth empowerment started in 1999 against the background of youth's lack of access to employment, education, training opportunities and a voice in decision-making processes.[8]

NMJD and Insightshare developed a two-year strategic plan and a proposal. The goal was to:

- improve the quality of PV and make it a more valid advocacy tool for the community as a whole;
- encourage broad participation, local ownership and empowerment; and
- enhance the effectiveness of communication with the community at every level from planning to implementation, advocacy to organisational development.

[6] Cafod is the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales. It works with partners in more than 40 countries across the world to end poverty and injustice. Cafod's office in Sierra Leone has funded the PV project since 2007. Cafod also appointed its advocacy capacity support officer as the PV focal person.
[7] Insightshare is a UK/France-based company that focuses on developing PV methodology.
[8] See: www.nmjd.org

Photo: Foya PV film screenshot

Residents in Foya are advocating for the construction of a new bridge. Community members use a problem tree to analyse problems caused by the dangerous bridge.

Photo: Insightshare

Young participants in Foya Village, Sierra Leone, during a PV training facilitated by Insightshare in November 2007.

Box 3: Kenema District Youth Coalition

The Kenema District Youth Coalition (KDYC) has a membership of 60 groups across the district with a membership ranging between 20–45 members per group. Eight are predominantly female groups. Some members of the coalition are ex-combatants that fought with various factions during the war. The executive committee of the coalition comprises 25 members: 10 are females, 15 are males. Kenema is the operational headquarters of the coalition.

Training of trainers

Insightshare flew to Sierra Leone to meet with NMJD, Cafod, KDYC and other local communities in Kono and Bo districts. At these meetings they identified youth for the training of trainers. Selecting participants for the training of trainers was done in three phases. The first involved identifying organisations and groups to invite to participate. We then distributed questionnaires to youth who wished to participate in the training. Next we invited everyone to an orientation meeting organised by NMJD and Insightshare. This was to introduce the purpose of the PV project and to allow NMJD trainers and Insightshare to get to know those they would be working with directly in the first phase of the project.

The number of youth we could train was limited by the available trainers and video equipment. The final selection of 15 youth was based on information generated during the previous stages, as well as their time availability, interest, commitment and recommendations from the heads of the groups they were representing.

The 15 youth participated in the PV training in Kenema in December 2007. The initial reaction of youth to PV was awe and disbelief. They had believed that uneducated people like them could never use a video camera and produce a film. But all were curious to learn and to be the first to produce their own films. They were trained in community-level facilitation, the use of video equipment and other participatory tools. The training was divided into two phases of seven days each. Insightshare further trained five youth in basic video editing for five days.

At the end of the first training, the trainees divided into three teams to visit communities in NMJD's operational districts. The purpose was to assess the level of knowledge, skills and confidence that the trainees had acquired in facilitating PV, and introduce PV to those communities. Each team was accompanied by one of the international trainers Paul Higgith (Cafod) and Nick and Chris Lunch (Insightshare). They coached and mentored the process and helped to edit the initial films with the youth groups. The youths then trained other youth and community members in Boajibu, Koidu, Foya and Kenema in the use of PV.

Photos: Kono PV film screenshots

Residents of Kono making a PV film about the negative impacts of mining on their community.

Working with the communities

It was important to create good relationships with local communities first. To ensure this, the groups paid courtesy calls to the community leaders and explained the concept of PV and their mission to them. This helped them to better understand and support the PV project and was critical to its success.

On the third day of the training in Boajibu and Kenema, it was the youths' turn to tell their own stories using the skills they had acquired. In Boajibu, the village town crier went around the village inviting people to go to the *barray* in the morning after prayers.[9]

The youth from the first training facilitated the process of identifying problems facing the community – lack of decent school facilities, domestic violence, poor roads, housing and poverty. Using simple ranking and consensus, the community prioritised its poor road network and housing as issues they wanted to make a film about – and have the relevant authorities address.

Once the problems were prioritised, the youth began working with the community to develop the video storyboard. The groups in Koidu, Kenema and Foya followed the same processes. This involved the full participation of the community. They assigned roles and responsibilities such as who would narrate, who would do the filming and in what location. The storyboard also served as a checklist when groups then went to the field to take shots. After each filming session, they converged, mostly in the evening, to watch the footage and ensure that it represented the general consensus (see Box 4).

Box 4: Participatory video editing

Editing PV is an ongoing process. It starts from the moment the first shot is taken. Each filming is followed by a playback session, in which everyone watches and discusses the footage. The playback sessions are also used to review filming plans, draw lessons and further plan.

In our case, this back and forth continued until everyone was satisfied that the right shots had been taken and the message fully captured. Having taken the shots and conducted the interviews, the youth trained in video editing then worked with NMJD's information, communication and technology (ICT) officer to do the final editing. This helped to ensure the film was produced within an appreciable time frame. Where necessary, translations and sub-titles were also added.

Telling their stories

It was now time to tell their stories. The Boajibu and Kenema youth wanted someone to **listen** and take **action**. Their stories were about desperate situations. So they wanted to show the films to the authori-

[9] *Barrays* are places where community meetings and other events are held. They are also used for local court sittings.

Photo: Insightshare

Community screening of PV in the paramount chief's compound in Boajibu, Sierra Leone, in November 2007.

ties concerned. They wanted to show the film about the ferry to the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA).[10] The other, about the rubbish situation, they wanted to show to the mayor of Kenema city and his councillors. But would these authorities be persuaded to attend a screening?

In Boajibu the youth first met with the paramount chief to discuss their PV work and gained her support and approval.[11] Hundreds of residents and chiefs were then invited to watch the public screening at her home. Gaining the chief's support was crucial. 'I believe there are people out there who are willing to help, but they have never heard about a place called Boajibu,' she said. The chief urged the youth to show the film to the SLRA in Kenema and the reaction of SLRA was immediate. They repaired the ferry and got it working.

Photo: Shirley Sia Simbo, NMJD

Rubbish collection site at Fornikoh in Kenema, Sierra Leone, constructed by the Kenema City Council.

In Kenema, the youth first met with the mayor and some councillors to assure them of their genuine desire to work with the council in addressing problems such as the rubbish which affected the city. This initial meeting set the tone of subsequent meetings in which other actors in the municipality attended.

[10] The Sierra Leone Roads Authority is responsible for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads and ferries across the country. They can outsource where the technical expertise is not available.

[11] Paramount chiefs are traditional rulers that are elected to rule over chiefdoms. They are not elected by universal suffrage, but by Tribal Authorities (TA) who represent tax payers in the chiefdom. To be elected paramount chief, one must belong to a ruling house. Once elected, they rule for life. Chiefdoms are political units in the governance of the State. There are 149 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone.

Photos: Boajibu PV film screenshots

Participants mapping the locations for filming in Boajibu.

A youth videos participants while they create their video storyboard in Boajibu.

The youth screened the film about the piles of rubbish to the mayor, councillors and other council staff. While the screening initially generated heated discussions as to who was to blame, this soon gave way to constructive dialogue, in which representatives of the Sierra Leone police, youth-serving NGOs, Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports, Commercial Bike Riders Association and a trading association participated. A series of meetings then followed, between the council, youth and other concerned citizens and institutions.

The Kenema youth played an important part in raising awareness about waste management and the need for residents to collaborate with the council in this. The council has now constructed permanent garbage sites all over the city as a long-term measure to keep the city clean at all times.

Impacts

The inclusion of youths into decision-making processes and other aspects of governance show that young people are now not only taken seriously, but can also influence decisions on issues that affect them and their communities.
Councillor Amidu Bah, aged 34,
Chairman, Education and Sports
Committee, Kenema City Council.

These films have helped to improve relationships and change people's perceptions about youth in a relatively short time. Some youths have since been elected to decision-making positions in local governance. Nine youth were elected councillors in the district and municipal council elections of 2007. Three are heading standing committees. The health and sanitation, youth and sports committees of both Kenema city and Kenema district councils are now chaired by youth. More communities have also elected youth as section chiefs and village headmen.[12]

This cannot be attributed exclusively to their participation in the PV project but the project probably helped make it possible. These communities now have greater trust and confidence in the youth, who have demonstrated leadership qualities and skills and have, in turn, become duty bearers for their communities.

Reflections on the process

Because of our involvement in decision-making processes in recent times, youth are experiencing significant development in different areas in Kenema district. For some of us that have been elected to the local councils, younger youth are today looking at us as role models.
Councillor Alicious Vibbie, aged 30,

[12] Section chiefs and headmen are appointed by paramount chiefs to preside over sections and villages.

Photo: NMJD

NMJD animators during PV training at the pastoral centre in Kenema, Sierra Leone, December 2008.

Chairman, Transport and Communication Committee, Kenema City Council.

The relationship between youth and state functionaries in Sierra Leone is now gradually changing. The impact of the PV project in Boajibu and Kenema indicates that with regular engagement and constructive dialogue, youth and their leaders can form strong partnerships that are helping to anchor meaningful development in their communities.

Setting up a meeting with members of the political class in Sierra Leone is a difficult task. Suspicion always exists between civil society organisations and State functionaries. The task is still harder when it involves youth. But community leaders were impressed with how the youth of Boajibu and Kenema were engaging with their communities using PV. They saw them as an emerging cadre of youth who had both earned and deserved their support. This contributed to the willingness of the chiefs in Boajibu to support them, which also influenced officials of the SLRA in Kenema to watch the films that the youth themselves had produced. This was a key step in engaging with the SLRA and advocating for the ferry repairs.

PV is a catalyst for us youth in Kenema to draw attention to our unfortunate situations. It is evidential. It helps us to think critically and dialogue creatively. But we the female youth are still not using PV effectively to highlight our peculiarities.
Victoria Vanday Bernard, aged 25, Vice Chairperson, Kenema District Youth Coalition.

Youth are now being entrusted with leadership positions in local councils and communities. But the focus seems to be more on young boys, leaving out young girls. The nine youths that were elected to councils in 2007 are all males. Either the girls lack the confidence to compete with their male counterparts, or there are still cultural barriers that prevent young girls from holding governance positions.

Further, youth are in a transitional phase of their lives. This means there should be ongoing PV training to replace those moving out of the project, to ensure that the skills and capacity-building needed to continue using PV remain within the youth groups involved. To do this, further funding is needed to support the project. Also, we have found that the most appropriate cameras for PV are those that use tapes. But with the rapid advancement in technology, these cameras are fast disappearing from the market and being replaced by those that use memory cards. These are currently too sophisticated for the participating communities use.

Ways forward

NMJD has since facilitated and supported other communities, including youth groups such as the Bike Riders Association and the Affected Property Owners Association in Kono district.[13] [14] The Foya Youth Association in Bo district has also established local PV groups. These groups were trained, supported and PV equipment made available to them by NMJD. To ensure that they have access to the equipment, NMJD and the youth have drawn up checklists to ensure the equipment is used for constructive PV e.g. the purpose of the film, who will participate in the process, who are the target audiences and why and how will it be used.

NMJD has also trained all its staff in PV, who work directly with these communities. With an understanding of PV, they will find it easier to provide supportive supervision to the local PV groups.

Also, although the youth of Sierra Leone have achieved much in changing perceptions and increasing their participation in governance, they still have a long way to go. They will need to work together to make their dreams of engaging in governance a reality. This involves scaling up PV activities by increasing the number of youth groups involved in PV, as well as the number of activities that these groups undertake and the diversity and relevance of issues they engage in. Once the use of PV has been strengthened in the project communities, NMJD plans to work with other CSOs outside the project area to set up PV groups there. And one way to start the ball rolling in this direction will be to hold a mini film festival for all youth groups presently using PV in their work.

Conclusion

> *PV allows young people's voice to be heard. Now that we have started realising how important PV is, we will try to increase our use of it in our activities, particularly in knowledge-sharing and advocacy.*
> Emmanuel Farma, aged 33 years, Chairman, Kenema District Youth Coalition.

PV may be a relatively new tool in development communication in Sierra Leone, but it has proven to be a powerful one that can compel leaders to listen and act. Youth are using PV to advocate for change. They believe, and rightly so, that pictures tell very powerful stories, and are accessible to the literate and illiterate alike. PV is helping to restore their lost voices and provide them with more confidence so that they can continue to engage in governance processes in the future.

PV is not just for youth. It is for everyone who has a story to tell. It can be used in research, project planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We believe that PV can help to bring about the change that youth are yearning for. That someone, somewhere is waiting to listen to them – and that with PV, they can start to make their dreams a reality.

[13] Commercial bike riders in Kenema; some of them are ex-combatants. The association is a member of the KDYC.
[14] Communities affected by Kimberlite diamond mining in Kono district, eastern Sierra Leone.

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Our time to be heard: youth, poverty forums and participatory video

4

by ANDERSON D. MIAMEN with ANNETTE JAITNER

Poverty and corruption in Liberia

Since the end of its devastating thirteen-year civil war in 2003, Liberia has been focused on rebuilding and establishing institutions with increased transparency and accountability as important targets for reform. President Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf acted swiftly to support anti-corruption legislation, illustrating her strong determination to fight corruption. The public, however, remains skeptical about the commitment of other high level officials.

In this article we highlight how the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), a local non-governmental organisation and Transparency International's national chapter in Liberia, is supporting youth to demand accountability from government and service providers in local planning, budgeting and service delivery. We show how participatory processes like participatory video (PV) and dialogue forums can support youth to build skills required to voice their concerns and also serve to amplify these concerns, leading to improvements in the country's development and in the daily lives of the poor.

Box 1: What are accountability and transparency?

Accountability refers to individuals and organisations (public, private and civil society) being held responsible for executing their powers properly. **Transparency** is the characteristic of government, companies, organisations and individuals being open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions. As a principle, public officials, managers, civil servants, directors and board trustees of companies and organisations have a duty to act visibly, predictably and understandably to promote participation and accountability.

Source: *The anti-corruption plain language guide.* Transparency International (2009).

When the elephants dance the grass suffers

Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) *Lift Liberia* aims to improve the overall living standard of the country's citizens. As part of this strategy, the Liberian govern-

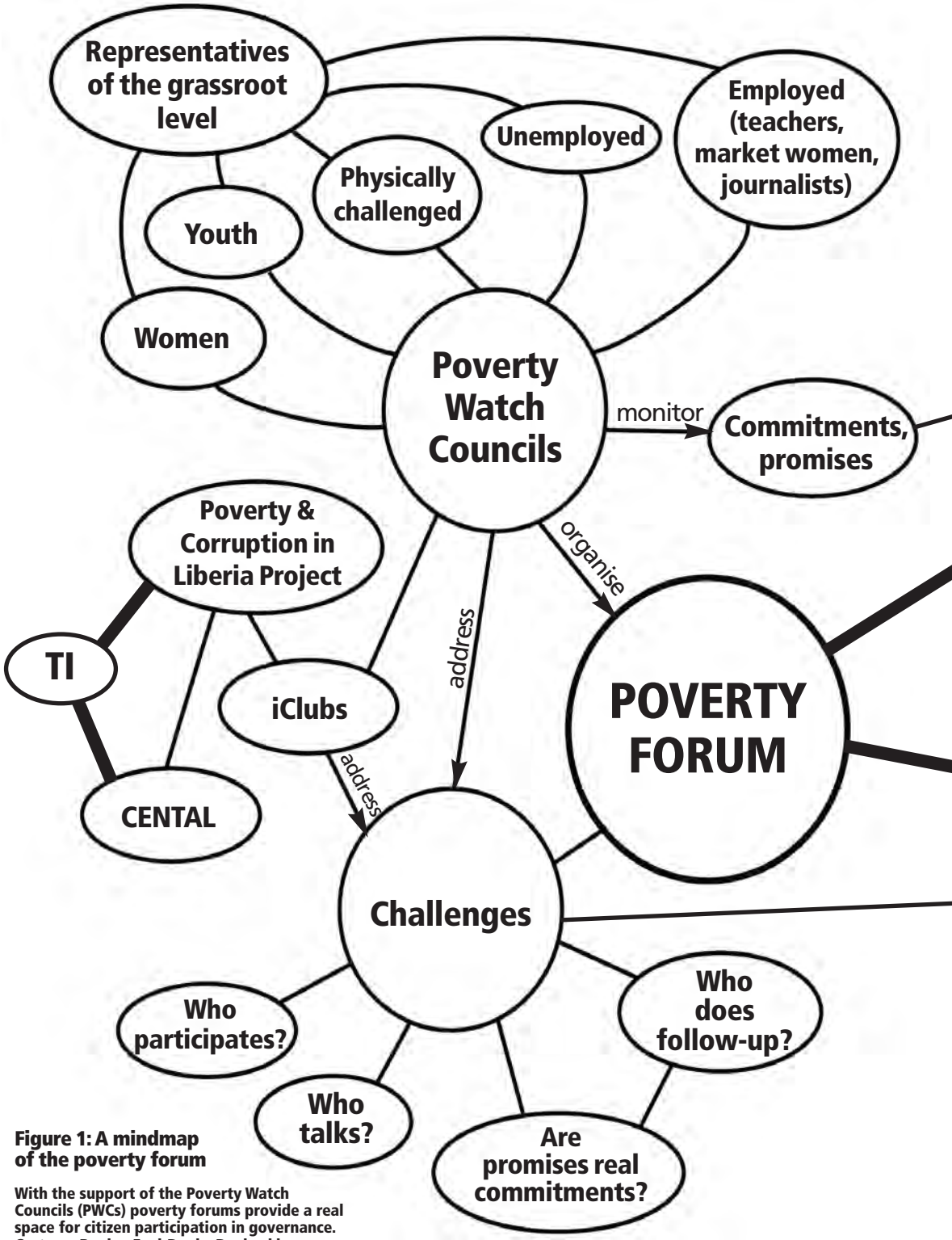
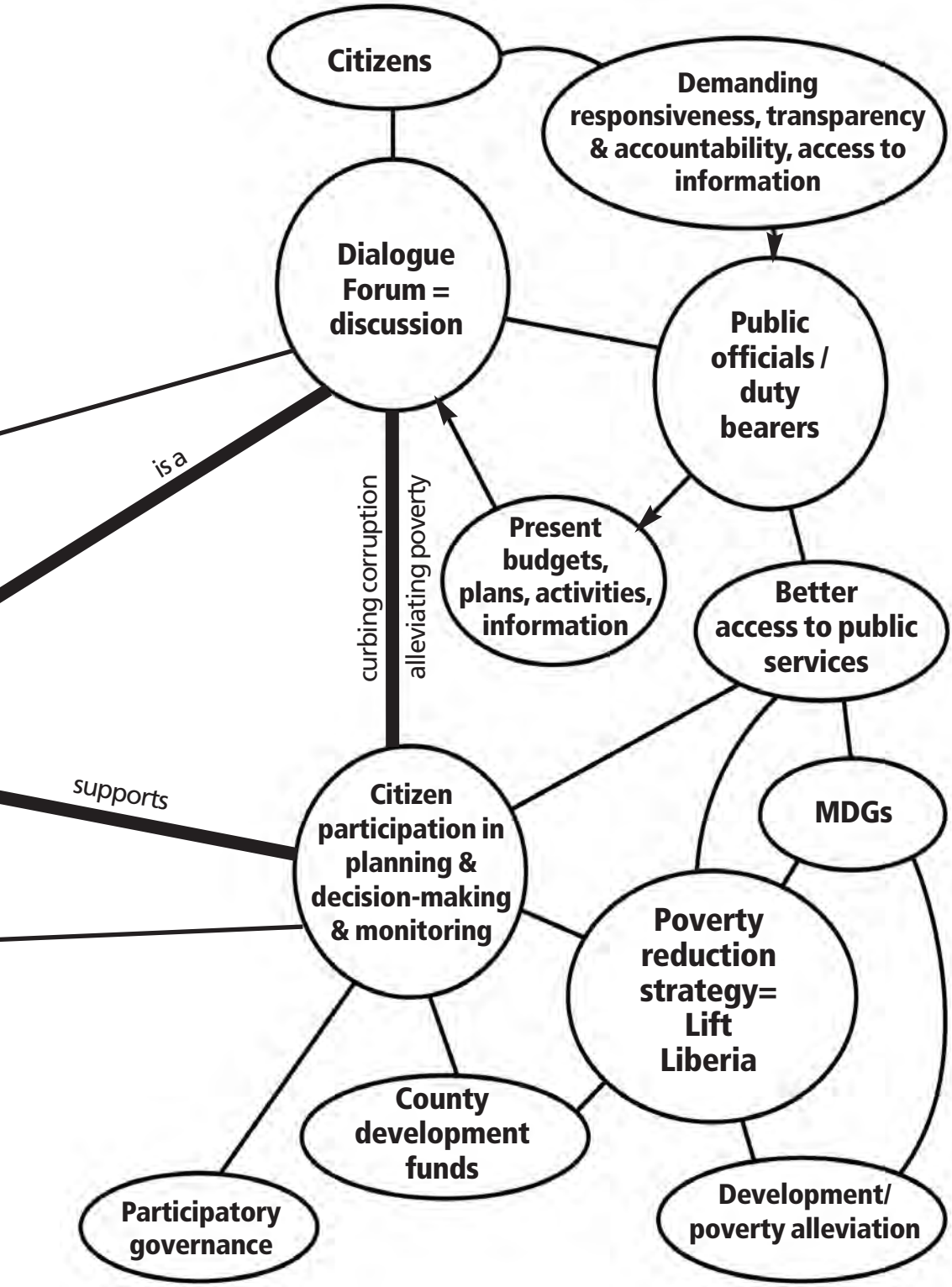


Figure 1: A mindmap of the poverty forum

With the support of the Poverty Watch Councils (PWCs) poverty forums provide a real space for citizen participation in governance. Cartoon: Regina Faul-Doyle. Devised by Annette Jaitner and Anderson Miamen


Citizens
Demanding responsiveness, transparency & accountability, access to information
Dialogue Forum = discussion
Public officials / duty bearers
is a
curbing corruption
alleviating poverty
Present budgets, plans, activities, information
Better access to public services
supports
Citizen participation in planning & decision-making & monitoring
MDGs
Poverty reduction strategy= Lift Liberia
County development funds
Participatory governance
Development/ poverty alleviation

ment allocates at least US$200,000 every year to implement development programmes in each county. County development funds (CDFs) are used for activities such as renovating and building schools and hospitals and improving roads. Planning and budgeting is supposed to be done in partnership with civil society. However, some people – including the very poor and youth – remain excluded. Many are highly critical of the PRS, identifying the exclusion of its main targets from its design and implementation as one of the key reasons for its limited effectiveness. Corruption is also cited as one major challenge and is compelling communities to stand up and demand inclusion.

CENTAL's Poverty and Corruption in Liberia project (PCL) aims to empower citizens through awareness-raising and the use of participatory approaches like PV. It seeks to engage citizens with local government and service providers to ensure the needs of poor citizens are addressed in local planning, budgeting and service delivery. The project is being delivered through CENTAL's network of local groups called 'iClubs' (Integrity Clubs) which consist mainly of young community representatives.

Creating space for dialogue between citizens and government

Through the PCL, iClub members have helped to build Poverty Watch Councils (PWCs). Members are community-mandated representatives from various marginalised social groups, including youth, women, the unemployed and the physically challenged. PWCs also include teachers and journalists. iClubs and PWCs facilitate poverty forums – regular meetings at which youth and other citizens can engage in constructive dialogue with local government to ensure that district development plans and activities respond to their needs.

Poverty forums are structured so that all participants can freely express themselves in a responsible and constructive way. Detailed presentations are given by the authorities responsible for basic services such as health, water and education. These presentations focus on activities they have carried out and those they plan to implement. There are no predetermined groups or individuals to speak on behalf of citizens. Anyone is allowed to voice their ideas and concerns. Once you signal your intention to speak by raising your hand before others, you are given the opportunity to voice your concerns.

Photo: CENTAL

Woman speaking out at a poverty forum in Nimba County.

After a poverty forum, iClubs and PWCs verify information provided at the gathering and follow up on the commitments made. For instance, following a forum in one community where the construction of a school annex was discussed, the PWC and iClub did a site visit. They found that the contractors were working as indicated at the forum. Had this been otherwise, the PWC would have taken up issue with the contractors.

Cross-checking information sometimes can be a challenge. For example, in another community a health official was seen transporting huge quantities of charcoal in his government assigned vehicle. This is a gross misuse of a government asset. When confronted at a poverty forum, the official argued that the charcoal was meant for his own use and not commercial purposes. The issue could not be followed up further as it had happened months before the meeting.

Photo: Neville Meyer, InsightShare Durban

Community having fun at the PV footage playback in Gbanchu.

Photo: CENTAL

The PV team discusses and decides on the storyboard for their film.

Despite these challenges, it is clear that citizens are beginning to demand explanations from their leaders, especially where public interest is concerned.

Youth take the lead through participatory video

Gbanchu is one community where citizens are beginning to make demands on government. Gbanchu is a rural community with a youthful population located on the outskirts of Gbarnga, the capital city of Bong County. As Gbanchu has no school, students have to walk many miles to other communities, crossing a highly frequented tar road.[1]

> *It is very risky for children to cross the coal tar while cars and motorcycles are moving all around. They sometimes get hit in the process. I am convinced about this video making a difference in our community, in terms of getting our leaders to respond to our appeals for a school.*
> Comment from a youth leader.

CENTAL supported youth in Gbanchu to use participatory video (PV) to make their voices heard by local officials. PV is an intensive and iterative process owned by the community.[2] Knowledge acquired during training is used instantaneously to produce a film that can then serve as an advocacy tool (see diagram on page 6 for further detail on the process).

To encourage the participation of everyone in the PV process, an all-community meeting involving men, women and youth was convened. Using participatory tools like problem trees and participatory ranking, community members identified and prioritised the community's problems. Many of the illustrations produced were of school-related materials like pens and pencils, copybooks and chalkboards. It was clear that the absence of a school was the priority. Having decided to focus on this issue, the community resolved to give the youth a leading role in the PV process.

During discussions, the community in Gbanchu agreed to take action to begin to address the problem of the lack of a school. Community leaders allocated land and youth manufactured bricks. The community filmed this process both as a way of collecting evidence and to advocate for change. Should the school be built, the film will also offer a useful record of the history of their advocacy campaign. The community also felt that the film could be used as a motivation for others.

A community screening of the film was held and local officials were invited. The county education officer (CEO) of Bong

[1] 'Coal tar' is a local term for a paved road.
[2] See also Kamara and Swarray (this issue).

Figure 2: Participatory video as an iterative process

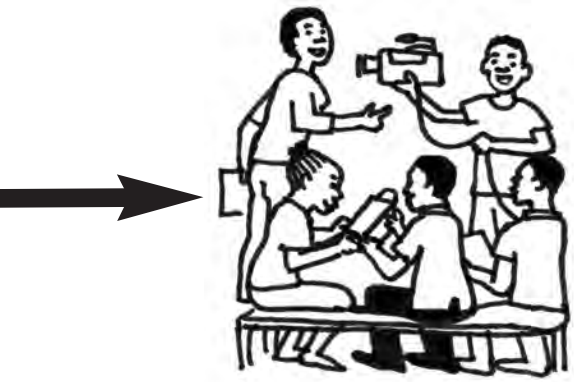
Cartoon: Regina Faul-Doyle. Devised by Annette Jaitner and Anderson Miamen.

1. Community discusses and decides on which issues to focus with their film. The problem tree analyses/explains causes and effects and impacts. Core PV team is assigned.

8. Gbanchu community also plans to use the PV film for future advocacy. In the next cycle, the community can use PV to monitor the commitments made and progress in establishing the school.

7. Screening the PV film to Gbanchu community and county education officer (CEO). CEO commits to supporting the community in building a new school.

6. Editing footage following feedback from the community – creating the final PV film.

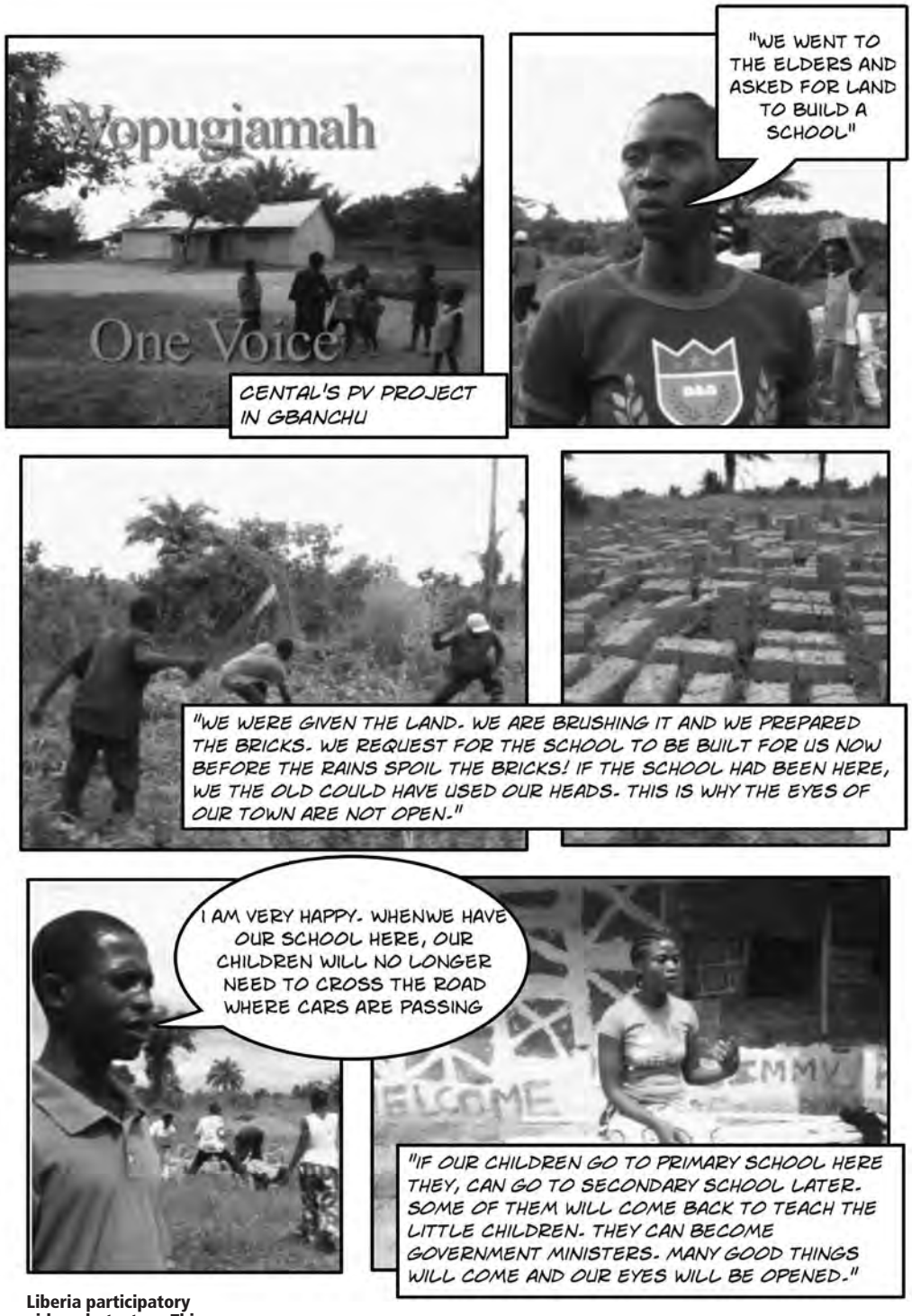


2. Core PV team receives training in filmmaking and how to use the video equipment.

3. Core PV team discusses and decides on the film production process, distribution of roles and storyboard.

4. PV film captures footage/raw film material.

5. Playback of footage to the whole community. Participatory editing: everybody has a say in what should be in the final film. Community also decides how to use the PV film. Gbanchu community gave consent to show their film to any interested audiences.



Liberia participatory video photostory. This photostory shows the context of the PV film the youth of Gbanchu community made about access to education in their village.

Photos: Gbanchu community

Photos: CENTAL

The PV team plans the production of their film.

The PV team learning how to use the video camera.

County visited Gbanchu for the first time in three years. For most of the community members, this was their first opportunity to meet and interact with local officials. This created a sense of purpose and relevance. For the local officials, it was an opportunity to develop a better understanding of how development projects were sometimes being awarded to communities – i.e. often selectively and uninformed. After seeing the film and discussing with the community, the CEO was so moved that he committed to ensuring the construction of a local school in Gbanchu.

Achievements and challenges in bringing citizens and government together

The most significant achievement recognised by communities is that the poverty forums and PV processes have enabled youth – a constituency neglected for many years – to bring their concerns to the attention of local officials and access information. For example, in one community disabled youth explained at a poverty forum how a number of public buildings were difficult to access. Local authorities used this information to make buildings more disability-friendly. In another community, the poverty forum was used as a space to share information on services being provided at a local medical centre. Following this, demand for appropriate services from community members has increased.

Poverty forums and PV have not only created opportunities for dialogue but also, often through this engagement, enabled youth and other community members to build new skills and knowledge. Through PV youth and their communities have learnt how to use different participatory tools to identify collective problems and work together to solve these problems. Relationships within the community have also been strengthened. As part of the process, and for the first time in several years, the entire community assembled to discuss their concerns. Youth in Gbanchu have organised themselves and set up a leadership structure to collaborate with elders in advocating for better access to education and engage in local governance.

While they are separate activities, both the poverty forums and participatory video projects feed into one another. Poverty forums are ideal venues to screen participatory videos to a wide audience, as community representatives, other stakeholders and citizens' groups are present at the gatherings. In addition, poverty forums can be used to highlight issues that communities want to present to policy makers, which can then be used in future participatory video projects.

However, there have also been a number of challenges. Firstly, limited access to information has presented a significant barrier. Despite the poverty forums, key pieces of information are often

Photo: CENTAL

Bong County education officer at community PV screening ceremony in Gbanchu, interacting with community members.

withheld from citizens. Local officials sometimes conceal sensitive information because they are afraid of retaliatory actions from above or criticism from the public. Lack of self confidence amongst community members often prevents them from expressing themselves at poverty forums. Some citizens were apprehensive about being openly critical of individuals in power. Language barriers can also present challenges. For example, during the PV process the fact that CENTAL staff did not understand the local vernacular prolonged the process and highlighted the staff as outsiders.

The greatest challenge has been, and remains, following up on the commitments made by local officials. Officials at times make promises that don't come to pass or take a very long time to be fulfilled. iClubs and PWCs are meant to empower citizens so that they feel capable of following up on government commitments. Overall, we have learnt that participatory processes require long-term, continuous and iterative support to create an environment in which marginalised citizens and youth build trust and confidence to demand and claim more space in governance processes.

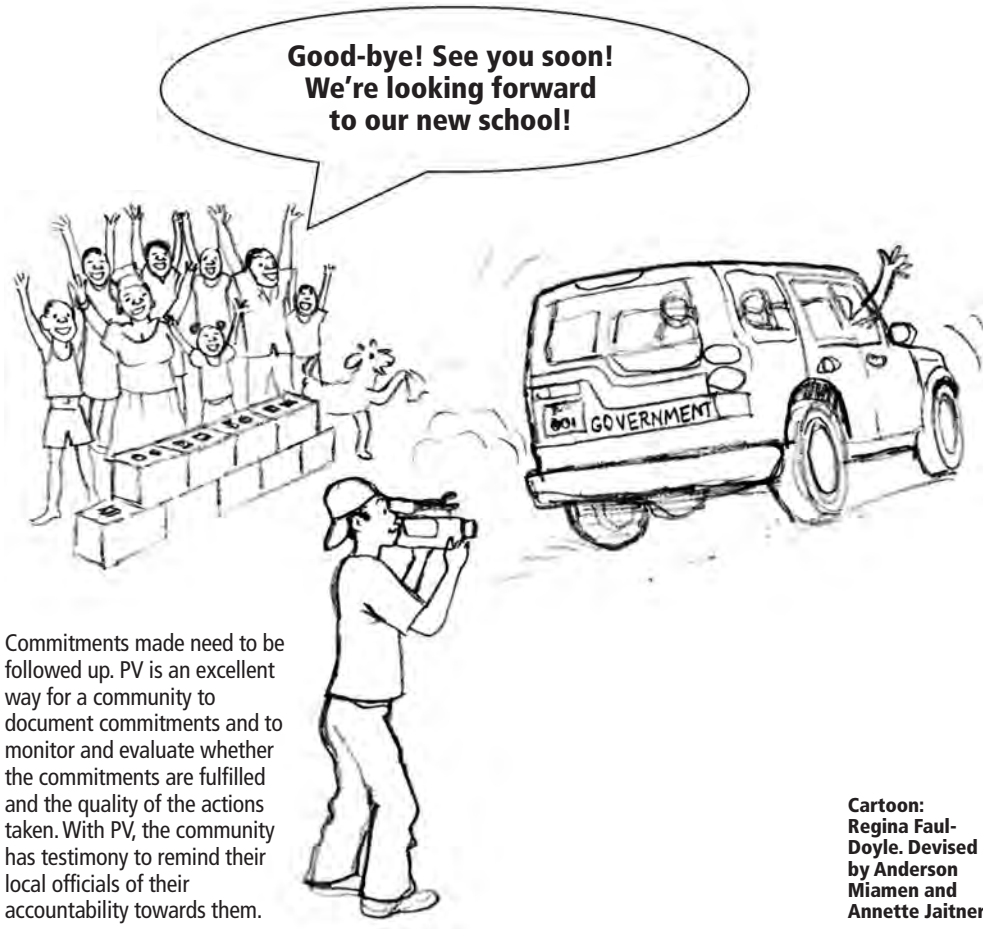
Time to learn: lessons from piloting poverty forums and PV

CENTAL has learnt a great deal about what is useful and necessary for youth and the wider community to amplify their voices and demand a response from government and service providers through participatory processes.

• Access to information is extremely essential. In some of the poverty forums, basic information on health and education services was made public to citizens for the very first time. This information is allowing communities to monitor and track government activities. Therefore, some local officials have become more mindful of their actions.

• Organisations supporting initiatives like poverty forums and PV projects with communities must establish close ties with government and service providers. Good relations between CENTAL's local chapter, the Bong Integrity Club, and local authorities meant officials stayed as late as 8pm in Gbanchu during the PV screening process. At the national level, CENTAL's relationship with key officials, such as staff of the Ministry of Education, helped to get the film screened and ensure follow-up action.

... And what comes next?



Commitments made need to be followed up. PV is an excellent way for a community to document commitments and to monitor and evaluate whether the commitments are fulfilled and the quality of the actions taken. With PV, the community has testimony to remind their local officials of their accountability towards them.

Cartoon: Regina Faul-Doyle. Devised by Anderson Miamen and Annette Jaitner

• Processes like PV and poverty forums build capacity. PV in particular is an ideal tool for making young voices heard. Young people were very welcoming and receptive to this new approach. The marginalised Gbanchu community made their difficulties known to service providers and government instead of expecting others to plead on their behalf. The predominately youthful population of Gbanchu was resilient in their advocacy for a school and for inclusion in national decision-making processes.

• A monitoring strategy needs to be in place to follow up on commitments made by government. This can perhaps happen through continued engagement in poverty forums. PV can also be used as a method to monitor the fulfilment – or not – of promises. PV films can be used as powerful evidence triggering further dialogue and response to concerns raised in poverty forums.

Conclusion

Local authorities and other public service providers are more likely to feel the need to be transparent and accountable to citizens when citizens have full knowledge of available resources for local development, and have the skills and confidence to make demands. Citizens also need the opportunity to engage and make these demands. Poverty forums and PV have provided platforms for youth and other community

members to access information, build confidence and participate in decision-making. Poverty forums in particular are spaces of information exchange and constructive dialogue. From our experiences it seems that when youth and other community members are able to occupy and enlarge spaces for citizen participation in decision-making it improves governance and contributes to positive changes in community development and the livelihoods of the poor.

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Youth participation in capturing pastoralist knowledge for policy processes

5

by CHARLES KESA

Introduction

I am programme manager of the Pastoral Youth Leadership (PYL) project, supported by Horn Relief . As such I have the overall responsibility of managing and providing technical advice to the PYL team. The project is being implemented in Sanaag Region, a territory disputed between Somaliland and Puntland governments.[1] This semi-arid area is mainly inhabited by pastoralists. Their livelihoods are on the decline due to pressure on grazing land caused by multiple factors such as prolonged drought and charcoal burning.

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. They conducted a pastoral community survey through a unique, innovative and participatory 'camel caravan' process. 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.

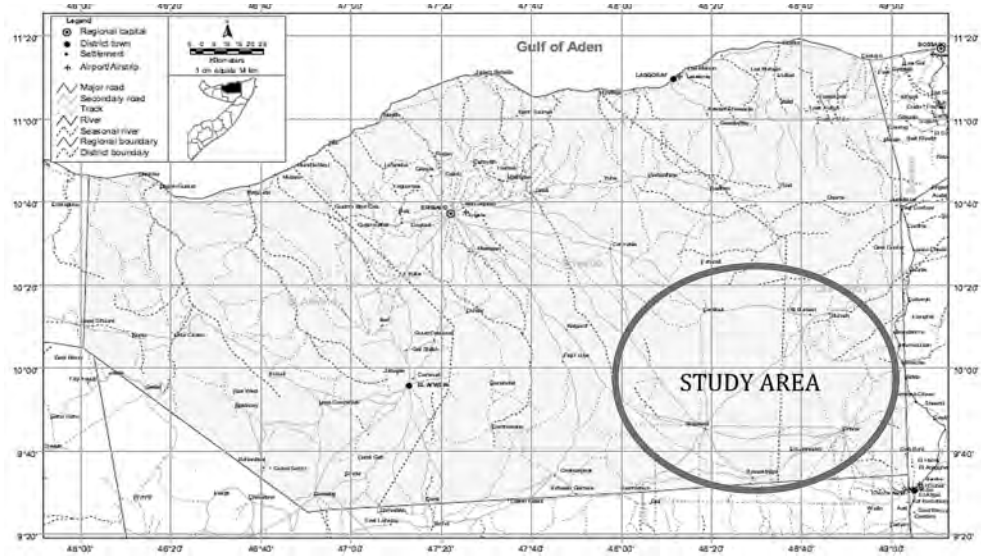
Photo: Horn Relief

Prolonged drought has led to much loss of livestock.

The Pastoral Youth Leadership (PYL) project

PYL is a non-formal education project which started in 2002. It targets pastoral

[1] Puntland and South Central Somalia are part of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu, whereas Somaliland is autonomously governed.



Map of study area, Sanaag Region. Source: (FSAU, 2005a)

youth aged between 15 and 25 years in six villages (Badhan, Lasqoray, Baragaha Qol, Hingalol, Elbuh and Dhahar) in Sanaag Region. These are mainly youth who would otherwise have never had an opportunity to access education and livelihood opportunities. They include internally displaced persons (IDPs) displaced from other regions of Somalia by civil strife and feuding among families and clans, and also pastoralists who have lost livestock and livelihood opportunities due to successive droughts. They also include pastoralist youth who have moved from purely pastoral areas to semi-urban areas in search of education and training, or alternative livelihood opportunities. Some are males who are expected to fend for their families; some are girls seeking educational opportunities or refuge and safety when their families had to disperse due to prolonged drought (this is a common coping mechanism in times of drought and hunger). Some are orphans and vulnerable. The project has so far made a difference in the lives of over 1000 youth (Horn Relief, 2011).

The project's curriculum focuses on four thematic areas:

- natural resource management, on which pastoralism is dependent;
- human health, to address the pastoralists' poor access to modern health services;
- animal husbandry, the core mainstay of pastoralism; and
- leadership and governance.

The last of these is critical in an environment where there are scarce resources and where a formal central government is in effect replaced with informal pastoral governance (see Box 1).

Through PYL's experience gained over the years, the youth involved in informal pastoral governance have been at the forefront of community-driven initiatives that address local challenges. These initiatives include dissemination of health messages, improved animal husbandry and safeguarding the environment. They have also been central in continuous assessment of the needs of those communities during times of crisis and providing plausible solutions. In particular, the youth tend to take leadership roles in community peacebuilding initiatives and are often called upon to facilitate community dialogue, or to mediate between parties in conflict with each other.

Box 1: Pastoral governance

The livelihoods of pastoralists depend mainly on livestock and their products. However, today the pastoral way of life is under constant threat thanks to a long history of clan conflict, war, recurring drought and environmental degradation, which exacerbates conflict over pasture and water for livestock.

The sustained absence of a strong central government has affirmed the importance, survival and continuity of pastoral governance. This is a lightly structured indigenous system of decentralised self-governance based on indigenous Somali cultural governance practices. Its aim is to address issues of internal and cross-boundary conflict affecting pastoralists. These include safeguarding the environment which is key to their survival and that of their livestock, ensuring access to meagre resources for their animals and control over their land.

Consensus is often reached through inter- and intra-clan dialogue among clan leaders and community members, with the ultimate aim of sustaining peace, pursuing reconciliation, resolving conflict and nurturing clan stability among pastoralists.

PYL curriculum materials were developed through a highly participatory process involving pastoralists over an eight-year period. The participatory action research approach used by the project enables the youth involved to be as appropriate and responsive as possible as they engage local community members and implement development initiatives. The learning process emphasises the practical over the theoretical and seeks to empower the youth and foster awareness among them and community members. The youth, who are mostly born and raised as pastoralists but now live in semi-urban areas, get an opportunity to go back to their communities to share information about what they have learnt, and to gather relevant data and information through the camel caravan.

The camel caravan process

The camel caravan, funded by UNICEF, is one of the main activities of the PYL project. It is a unique pastoral community survey that provides an opportunity for youth to engage with pastoralists as both facilitators and learners. The youth use research skills learnt under the PYL to gather information on indigenous knowledge that is important to pastoralists and pastoral livelihoods, and to government, aid and development actors. Over the years it has been conducted annually in Sanaag Region among pastoralists who are often marginalised culturally, socially, economically and politically, and where access to basic services, including education, has been denied.

Preparations for the camel caravan

The latest camel caravan was conducted in January 2010 over a period of 10 days. For the youth who participated, it was an opportunity for them to share information and to learn more about the life, challenges and opportunities faced by pastoralists in their day-to-day lives. Pastoralists are not often willing to share with strangers, nor are they open to answering questions because similar surveys over many years have made no significant contribution to improving their lives or developing their areas. The camel caravan process is deliberately devised to ensure that close rapport, relationships and trust can develop between the youth and pastoralists in their natural environment, as opposed to suspicion which has hindered other studies on pastoralists.

Photo: Horn Relief

Evening time: PYL youth during the camel caravan.

Photo: Horn Relief

The camel caravan.

The 18 youth who participated in the survey were selected from all the villages where PYL works, based on expressed interest. They took part in a one-day briefing by PYL staff and other youth who had participated in previous camel caravans. The briefing shared with them the aims of the camel caravan and what was expected of them.

Subsequently, for five days, the youth were trained by PYL project staff, themselves pastoralists, on data collection, interview techniques and how to conduct focus group discussions (FGDs). Upon completion of the training, under the direct supervision of the training officers, the youth participated in piloting data collection tools, which were later refined as appropriate. They also practised how to totally immerse themselves in communities.

Immersion in the communities

With all preparations ready, the youth travelled to the pastoral areas. When the youth encountered the pastoralists they were to enumerate they stayed with them, joined them in their work, lived with them and ate what they ate. For 10 days, using camels as the main mode of transport, the youth travelled with the community members, walking as part of a caravan every day and recording information and using digital cameras where possible.

The youth were divided into four groups and given a different topic to focus on each day. Each group was assigned a pre-determined area which it crisscrossed, sharing experiences and gathering information and data. The focus on the same topic by four groups working in parallel in different areas was intended to allow cross-referencing and triangulation to increase the completeness, validity and reliability of the findings. The youth researchers used conventional data collection tools such as questionnaires, interview guides and FGDs to gather information, but skilfully distanced themselves from conventional 'pure', 'cold' survey enumeration by totally immersing themselves into the pastoral way of life. For instance, they always started with greetings and sharing of general informa-

Photo: Horn Relief

Learning from pastoralists during the camel caravan. A young woman interviews a pastoralist and her children.

The four groups working in different areas later cross-reference and triangulate responses to validate findings.

The youth travel with the community as part of a caravan, recording information and using digital cameras where possible.

tion based on the Somali saying *'War war baa laga ceshaa'* ('If you get news you should respond with news').

During this period the youth reached 634 heads of households through interviews, household surveys and FGDs. In total, 11 FGDs were conducted, with each of the four groups carrying out FGDs related to three thematic areas. The youth conducted error checks on all the data collection instruments. They also checked the instruments for completeness in readiness for quantitative and qualitative analysis by a consultant who focused on specific predetermined themes. Further analysis would be done later as needed. Indeed, this would unearth interesting themes.

Box 2: Experiences and insights from the camel caravan

Amal Duale
The experience of participating in a camel caravan excursion, especially for me as a pastoralist, fills me with a special feeling. What touched me most was when I came across a sick and frail-looking old woman. From where she stayed and the physical health of the children, it was evident this was a family in dire need of support.

After an experience like the camel caravan my one wish would be for the government and civil society to make a bigger effort in the provision of education for pastoral communities in order to improve their livelihoods. Maybe this can be done through providing mobile schools and training of mobile teachers. I would be glad to be one such teacher.

Abdulaziz Warsame Mohamoud
During the survey I spoke to a teenager… He was part of a family of eight we were interviewing. He told me that it made things easier using mobile phones especially when one family member became sick or if their livestock suffered. They would inform relatives so that they could ask for social support or help with getting access to medicine if traditional medicinal methods failed.

Reflections on the process

I realised that this approach of interacting with pastoralists and the immersion of youth in the pastoralists' natural environment was a positive way to share knowledge, learn from experiences and gather data. It created rapport, built confidence and created an environment of openness. The youth who participated gained much experience and insight (see Box 2). The process was very different from formal surveys carried out by government or consultants, where information is often provided unwillingly, in a climate of suspicion and sometimes out context.

Feeding the camel caravan findings into governance and aid circles

Once analysed, the findings from the camel caravan brought out many pertinent issues regarding education, perceptions of children's economic activities, livelihoods, pastoral traditional methods of communication, coping mechanisms, medicine and human and animal health. Some findings were unsurprising, e.g. that there has been a limited or no access to formal education opportunities for pastoralists over generations. Other findings were unknown, e.g. use of traditional medicines such as sheep fat as treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (see Box 3 for more findings).

What was significant about the survey was that this was the first time this sort of information had been systematically gathered and shared widely with various stakeholders for reference when planning for the future. This sharing was done by the PYL project, led by myself, through a conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. Among the participants were regional government actors including the Minister of Education from Puntland, the Honourable Abdi Farah Juxa, the Director General from the same ministry and representatives from the Ministries of Livestock (MoL) and Environment Water and Tourism (EWAT). International NGOs and civil society organisations working with pastoralist communities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Puntland, Somaliland also attended, as well as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The two-day conference included presentations, sharing of experiences and discussions. Despite the willingness of governments to support the development of pastoralists, they have limited resources, including human and financial resources, and are unable to provide quality and relevant education and other services to

Box 3: Some key findings from the survey

- 79.4% of pastoralists had never received any form of education due to their pastoral way of life.
- 56% indicated that nobody within their family was literate and only 8.6% of children currently attended school or had ever attended to school.
- 81% of pack camels had been lost due to the long drought and over 70% of pastoralists owned no pack camel.
- 94.7% of the pastoralists indicated that they migrated from one area to another as a coping mechanism during times of disaster.

Box 4: Conference recommendations

- PYL to approach the Education Sector Committee of the Somali Support Secretariat to constitute a Pastoral Education Taskforce for improved interagency coordination.
- PYL to conduct a comprehensive survey and analysis of the status and needs of pastoralists in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia. The findings of the survey to be shared and serve as reference for governments, stakeholders and development partners.
- Provision of support by development partners to the governments in Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia to develop and implement an education policy framework to guide the education of pastoralist communities.
- PYL and stakeholders to carry out advocacy campaigns among pastoralist stakeholders on the use of relevant, flexible, friendly and participatory teaching and learning approaches taking account of the pastoral way of life.

pastoral communities. There is a need for the support of international development organisations, which normally have resources but have limited knowledge regarding pastoralists. This constrains their ability to work closely with pastoralists and with organisations that have greater understanding of pastoralists' needs and of the innovative approaches best suited to engaging with them.

Based on the policy knowledge arising from the camel caravan, and drawing on the experiences and lessons shared by different regional actors, recommendations for improving the education of pastoralists in Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia were agreed upon (Box 4).

Ways forward and scaling up

Dissemination of the camel caravan process and findings on the pastoralists' situation is bearing fruit. Other Horn Relief projects such as Social Safety Nets (SSN) and the Somali Emergency Response Project (SERP), following the experience gathered through the camel caravan, are working with PYL youth participants to collect data and conduct community mobilisations.

UNICEF has committed to funding a comprehensive baseline survey focusing on pastoralists in Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia with Horn Relief as the lead agency. *Eureka!* It is foreseen that the survey will use the lessons learnt from the camel caravan with the enumerators immersed among pastoralist communities – as opposed to the conventional way of data collection.

The themes of the baseline will include education, health, animal husbandry, nutrition and livelihoods. UNICEF has also committed to providing additional funding to enable PYL to reach out to more school-age children through mobile schools in three nomadic/pastoralist communities and five new semi-pastoralist areas. This should provide more opportunity for pastoralist children to access and participate in formal primary education programmes.

The Ministry of Education and other stakeholders have also called for the expansion of the participatory PYL project activities to other areas outside Sanaag Region to enable more pastoralist youth to participate in non-formal education and be active and useful members of the pastoral and emerging sedentary urban society. Horn Relief hopes to be involved in these efforts.

Conclusion

In Somalia and elsewhere, youth are often subject to negative stereotypes which associate them with armed militancy and piracy. The camel caravan presents a very different, positive, image of youth contributing to improved service delivery and governance. It has also empowered pastoralist youth by providing them with the skills to act as responsible members of their community and help shape the future and citizenship of their fellow pastoralists.

The evidence collected through the camel caravan has also highlighted the dire status of pastoralists. The indigenous information and evidence gathered and disseminated in the form of policy-relevant

knowledge will, we hope, continue to serve as a reference point in designing essential development initiatives for pastoralists, whether led by regional government or development partners. While these development initiatives for now aim at improving basic service provision to this marginalised population, pastoralists will one day evolve from being users of services to participating in public decision-making. The role they have played in the camel caravan has enabled them, for now, to participate in constructing the policy information on which decisions about service provision to their region are based.

I would like to end by thanking the PYL youth involved in this project. They have shed new light on the situation of pastoralists, as well as the urgent need to address and support development initiatives that seek to bring about positive change for both pastoralists and pastoralism.

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What business do youth have making HIV and AIDS laws in Nigeria?

6

by FADEKEMI AKINFADERIN-AGARAU and TEMITOPE FASHOLA

I was denied admission after passing all the admission requirements into a Nigerian university because I tested positive to HIV. They said I was a threat to other students and so my admission was withdrawn. The only thought I had at that point was to commit suicide.
Gloria, aged 24, young person living with HIV/AIDS and a YAG member.

Introduction

In Nigeria youth aged 10–24 account for 60% of new HIV infections (United Nations, 2004). As Gloria's experience highlights, they face significant stigma and discrimination. HIV prevalence among young people age 15–24 is 4.1% which is as high as the national prevalence.[1] So it is essential that any policy on HIV and AIDS fully recognises and addresses the needs of young people. This requires engaging young people in the policy-making process to hear their views. However in Nigeria, nearly thirty years of military rule has created a culture in which both old and young believe that they do not have a say in public policy and laws.

Education as a Vaccine (EVA) is a national, non-profit organisation in Nigeria. It aims to strengthen the capacities of children, young people and other stakeholders to facilitate and sustain social change on health and education through direct service delivery and advocacy/policy influencing. Our advocacy work on sexual and reproductive health is coordinated by a group of ten young Nigerians aged 18–24 years who attend school or reside in Abuja, Nigeria's capital.

This article highlights how EVA's Youth Advocacy Group (YAG) managed to participate in and influence the development of Nigeria's national HIV and AIDS anti-stigma and discrimination legislation so that it better meets the needs of young people in the country. Using different participatory tools and approaches, the

[1] 2010 Nigerian National Sero-prevalence Sentinel Survey.

YAG educated other young people about the impact of HIV and AIDS stigma and encouraged them to take action on the draft HIV/AIDS Anti-Discrimination Bill 2009. Key lessons learnt about supporting young people's participation in policy-making processes are also shared.

Setting the stage

With over three million people living with HIV and AIDS, Nigeria has the second largest population of people infected with the virus in the world after South Africa. The growth of the epidemic has lead to widespread stigma and discrimination. HIV and AIDS stigma can have devastating effects, preventing individuals infected from seeking care and increasing vulnerability to violence amongst both individuals and their caregivers. The fact that Nigeria does not have a national law to protect those affected by the epidemic therefore places many people at risk.

The 2009 draft HIV/AIDS anti-discrimination bill and the 2009 Discrimination of Persons Living With HIV/AIDS prohibition bill addressed some key aspects of discrimination faced by people living with HIV and AIDS.[2] The bill was first introduced in 2006. However, due to a lack of political will the bill didn't proceed beyond the second reading and had to be reintroduced in 2009.[3] The bill's reintroduction was made possible because the newly elected legislators had a better understanding of HIV and AIDS issues and demonstrated increased support by establishing a separate committee for HIV and AIDS in the Nigerian Parliament's House of Representatives.

But while civil society groups were involved in drafting the bill, young people were not part of the process. It was generally assumed that only individuals with legal expertise could make a meaningful contribution. It also demonstrated a lack of information about the bill amongst young people. The absence of young people was clearly reflected by the fact that the draft bill did not recognise the impact of HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination within the education system. This was despite documented cases of young people being required to take a mandatory HIV test for school admission and being refused because of their HIV status.

International youth speak out

Initially, EVA's programmes primarily focused on delivering services. However, in 2008 we were selected as the coordinating body in Nigeria for a multi-country project called 'International youth speak out' (IYSO).[4] IYSO operates in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Jamaica and aims to influence international and national policies and programmes on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.

One of the core pillars of the project is youth participation. Recognising this, a Youth Advocacy Group was formed to implement in-country advocacy activities and to provide real experiences to feed into international level advocacy.

EVA provides daily technical support to the YAG. The first set of YAG members were selected by EVA staff using an agreed set of guiding principles (see Box 1). The current YAG consists of six girls and four boys. Members represent each of the six geopolitical zones of the country, although all reside in the capital, Abuja. It is also representative of the diverse ethnicity in Nigeria.

The group has a formal meeting twice a month. Temitope Fashola, EVA's advocacy and campaigns programme coordinator, provides YAG members with technical

[2] The bill was introduced by the Federal Ministry of Labour, the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, the Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS and the Civil Society Network on HIV and AIDS in Nigeria.
[3] Informal discussion with a representative of the National Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (pers comms., 16th March 2011).
[4] The project is funded by Advocates for Youth, Washington, DC.

Box 1: Guiding principles for selecting YAG members

- Member must demonstrate their commitment to speak publicly on youth sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Membership reflects different ethnic and religious groups from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.
- At least one member must be a young person living with HIV and AIDS.
- Members must be aged 15–24 years.
- Membership includes young people both in and out of school.
- There is a good gender balance among members.

support in terms of planning and implementing activities at these meetings. But beyond this support, the YAG members are treated as staff members.

Over the past three years, some members of the group have changed. Existing members are responsible for selecting new members, based on criteria in Box 1, which the group itself has chosen. They advertise new posts and also invite friends who fit their criteria to apply. The group conducts interviews for all applicants and jointly decides on new members.

The YAG has three main objectives:

- Increase national budgetary allocation to the Ministries of Health, Education and Youth as well as the National Agency for Control of AIDS to support the implementation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) policies and programmes for adolescents and young people.
- Increase the participation of young people in the development and implementation of sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes.
- Facilitate the creation and strengthening of dedicated structures to coordinate the implementation of adolescent and young people's sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes at State and local government levels.

To achieve these objectives, the YAG use communication and advocacy strategies to educate their peers, adult gatekeepers and policy makers to take actions to improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people.

Out of sight, out of mind?

In October 2009, the draft HIV/AIDS anti-discrimination bill had progressed to the second reading stage. A formal public hearing was called and various stakeholders were invited to participate. At this point, no youth group had been invited. The YAG happened to receive a formal invitation directly from the chairperson of the House Committee rather than the committee office which usually issues invitations. This was because of our personal relationship

Table 1: Timeline for EVA's YAG advocacy process

November 2009	December 2009	January – February 2010	March 2010	March – October 2010	October 2010
Gathering information about HIV and AIDS and SRH policies Reviewing and analysing the House of Representative's draft bill Presenting recommendations at the House of Representative's draft bill public hearing Developing a video based on Gloria's experiences	Discussion with legislators about the video	Campus tours organised to screen the video and to collect signatures for a petition	Submitting signed petitions to House Committee	Follow-up (formal and informal) with House Committee and legislators	House version of the bill approved

Photo: EVA

Co-author Temitope (far left) with Gloria and other YAG members during the making of their advocacy video 'My experience'.

with the chair, developed over time through consistent lobbying on the issue of funding for youth HIV prevention programmes.

Exhibit A: gathering evidence

In preparation for the meeting the YAG, with support from EVA, reviewed the draft bill to determine how the issues of young people were presented and identified gaps. The review revealed that the bill focused extensively on HIV stigma and discrimination within the workplace and inadequately addressed stigma in school, where young people spend most of their time. The only reference to young people in the bill was: 'refusal to admit into school or not allowing them to continue in an educational institution'. We felt that this statement represented a narrow view of the issues of stigma and discrimination faced by young people as learners.

This gap and key recommendations were documented in a **formal position paper** and presented by a YAG representative at the public hearing (see Box 2). The YAG was the only youth group present at the public hearing and was invited to make an oral presentation of its position in addition to the written paper.

Box: 2 Youth-specific recommendations for the anti-stigma bill

Compulsory HIV testing
No educational institutions should require HIV testing as a prerequisite for school admission and graduation.

Disclosure of HIV status
No educational institution should require applicants or current students to disclose their HIV status whether orally or in writing, as it has no bearing on their academic performance.

Differential treatment based on disclosed HIV status
No learner should be treated differently based on their HIV status within all school settings such as classroom, eating or dormitory facilities.

Even a pebble can make ripples in an ocean

The submission of a position paper alone would be inadequate to ensure that the bill was passed with our recommendations. Realising this, the YAG felt it was necessary to get support from other young people. To make sure that they could constructively participate in the policy process, youth were not only educated

Photo: EVA

A YAG member with a student union representative elaborates on her perspectives during one of the university campus tours.

about the policy but also about how stigma and discrimination can negatively affect access to education. The YAG developed a video called 'My Experience'. The film showcased the story of a member of their group. The group decided to create this video because it brought a human face to the issue rather than just presenting statistics.

The whole process of making the video made me feel like I was making myself relevant and at the same time helping young people like me and Gloria amplify our voices.
Kikelomo, aged 23 years, EVA YAG member.

Working in partnership with the Student Unions of the target schools, the YAG organised campus education events.[5] These took place in the three states with the highest HIV prevalence rate in Nigeria (Federal Capital Territory, Benue and Nassarawa states). These tours featured screenings of the video, group discussions on the policy led by a YAG member and signing a petition calling for the inclusion of the YAG recommendations in the draft bill. The combination of personal experiences shared through the video and opportunities for open discussions had a great impact on the young people.

The ignorance that exists about stigma is more dangerous than the disease itself and that is why through these signed petitions we hope the Parliament will take an accelerated action as proposed already by the YAG in the anti-stigma bill.
Yakubu, aged 24 years, Federal Polythenic Nassarawa.

The YAG did not relent with the submission of the petitions. They continued to have formal and informal follow-up meetings with the chairperson and members of the House Committee on HIV and AIDS. After a year-long process, the HIV and AIDS anti-discrimination bill was passed by the House of Representatives in October 2010 – with our recommendations included.

[5] Campus tours took place at the University of Abuja, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa and Benue State University.

Photo: EVA

A student reacting to the issue during discussions at a campus tour.

Here comes the Red Card…

Nigeria operates a bi-camera legislative arm of government. For a bill to become law, it must be passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate. So although the bill was passed by the House, it was not yet actually law. Building on their success, the YAG launched the Red Card campaign to facilitate the passage of the Senate companion bill.[6] The campaign ran for three weeks (8th November to 1st December 2010) and targeted individuals and groups representing the States and constituencies of the members of the Senate Committee on Health.

Youth were asked exercise their electoral power by completing a template red post card with messages and stories about the effect of HIV stigma and discrimination. The cards were sent to the Senate, calling on senators to pass the bill. We consciously targeted young people above the age of 18 years – and therefore eligible to vote in the upcoming 2011 elections – as a means of getting the attention of their representatives.

To popularise the Red Card campaign, young people were encouraged to share the campaign message with their friends verbally and through social media channels. This included changing their Facebook profile picture to the red card and updating their profile status with campaign messages. As a result, young

[6] In football, misconduct may result in the player either receiving a caution from the referee (indicated by a yellow card) or being dismissed from the field (indicated by a red card). The YAG Red Card campaign represents a call to end HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination within schools by enacting the anti-discrimination bill with the inclusion of youth-specific recommendations.

Photo: EVA

A young woman participating in the discussion during the campus tour at University of Abuja.

people outside our immediate networks were able to contact the YAG to request cards to participate in the campaign. We set a target of getting 2,010 post cards to symbolically tell the senators that in the year 2010 they could make a real difference to the lives of young people in relation to HIV and AIDS.

The YAG members presented the cards to the House Committee and its members on the 1st December 2010, World AIDS Day. This focused the attention of the Senate on the anti-stigma bill and has hopefully laid the foundation for the bill's passage in the Senate.

Small numbers can make a big impact

Despite its small number of members, the YAG managed to mobilise over 1,500 young people to support the passage of the House bill with youth specific recommendations. Following this, a further 2,172 young people have given a 'red card' to HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination in Nigeria. Several young people acknowledged that the process was empowering and the first time they had actually participated in the law making process.

l am so happy with the opportunity the Red campaign gave me as an advocate to mobilise my peers and call our policy makers to action. You can imagine the kind of reaction l got from even youth in some northern states the moment they realised that the postcard talked about issues related to HIV. This is important and people must know the implications.
Aliyu, aged 21 years, EVA YAG member.

Watch out for the bumps…

These achievements were not without a few challenges. First, the YAG faced difficulty in getting the attention of some members of the National Assembly.[7] Generally, Nigerian culture does not encourage young people to speak out

[7] The National Assembly is Nigeria's bicameral legislature and the highest elective law-making body of the country. It consists of 109 Senate members and 360 House of Representatives members. Source: www.nassnig.org

Photo: EVA

YAG members received a formal invitation from the chairperson of the House Committee to attend the public hearing.

because they are perceived as immature and lacking the knowledge and expertise required to make a meaningful contribution in governance.

Accessing information on the Senate bill has also been difficult, particularly as Nigeria does not currently have a Freedom of Information Act. This is makes planning our advocacy work difficult.

Since the bill had a national outlook we wanted to ensure national representation of young people in the process. However, this was difficult because all YAG members are located in Abuja and so we needed to partner with other youth groups. Coordinating these groups presented additional challenges because of the number of partner groups, geographic spread and inconsistency in communication channels. For example, some youth groups did not have regular access to the Internet so we had to rely heavily on phone calls which cost a lot more than anticipated.

Finally, the amount of funds available for carrying out the advocacy work was limited. As a result, the YAG had to significantly scale-down their youth education and engagement activities. For example, the campus events were limited to only one school per state. On the positive side, we were forced to think of other, low cost activities. This led us to use Facebook to compliment our face-to-face strategies.

What have we learnt?

Reflecting on our experiences, there are a number of lessons we have gained from the process. We hope these lessons, bearing in mind the importance of local context, will help others working with young people or young people themselves who want to influence policies and laws.

• Educating young people about their rights and how to exercise these rights is a critical part of supporting them to engage with policy issues. By strengthening their knowledge, awareness-raising activities can build confidence among young people

Photo: EVA

YAG members at the public hearing about the draft HIV/AIDS antidiscrimination bill.

and encourage them to take action.

• In settings where access to public information is limited, it is important to build relationships with government and policy makers. Through these relationships, campaigners can get information about potential events and activities where advocacy messages can be directed.

• Combining formal strategies such as public hearings and lobbying meetings with informal strategies like the Red Card campaign can make successfully influencing government policy more likely.

• Getting involved in law or policy-making might sound uninteresting to adults, let alone young people. However, these processes can be fun and engaging if the right tools and methods (e.g. campus tours and videos) are used. Simple 'take action' activities such as petitions and letter writing are very effective with young people. As they do not require a lot of time or additional financial commitment, young people realise that it can be easier than they think to participate in policy processes.

• The benefits of social media, as a complimentary strategy, in increasing young people's awareness of the issues featured strongly in the Red Card campaign. Social media works best for mobilising and motivating young people to take action when combined with more conventional, face-to-face approaches.

Where do we go from here?

For a bill to become a law, both arms of the federal legislators must approve the bill and harmonise differences. There still needs to be additional follow-up on the Senate Committee to urge the passage of their counterpart bill and to track the harmonisation process to ensure that the youth-specific language is retained in the final law. At the time of writing, Nigeria is preparing for a general election and the majority of the incumbent legislators are not standing for re-election. This presents

both a challenge and an opportunity. The YAG is educating young people on development issues and encouraging them to select legislative candidates that are committed to addressing HIV and AIDS issues and so more likely to support the bill.

So: what business do youth have making laws?

We acknowledge the fact that our small group of young people are not legislators and do not have formal legal expertise. As a matter of fact, the majority of our members are undergraduates or out-of-school. But the reality is that advocacy by the group has shaped a bill that will – if passed – better protect young people and others from the stigma and discrimination often faced when living with HIV and AIDS. Drawing on experiences to date, the YAG and EVA are in a strong position to push for the Senate companion bill to be passed and, eventually, a harmonised national HIV and AIDS anti-stigma and discrimination bill.

Being a YAG member has made me better appreciate the challenges that youth face in my country and my ability to make a difference. The opportunity to express myself has enhanced my capacity to be responsible not just for myself but for others. I believe this whole experience will be instrumental in preparing me for the future. It means a great deal to me.
Blessing, aged 22 years, EVA YAG member.

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How far have we come with youth in governance?

7

by JENNIFER TANG

Introduction

Children have agency.[1] Recognising this, those promoting children's rights advocate for their participation in the governance of their communities. How children and youth are engaged in governance activities takes different forms – with various degrees of success. Programmes and projects that promote children's and youth's engagement in governance (or CYEG) often come from a commitment to enact children's rights to participate, and the conviction that duty bearers (especially governments) must use governance structures, systems and processes that best respond to the needs and challenges of all citizens. An analytical framework that draws out the many integrated and – in some cases – mutually reinforcing factors that promote children's participation and good governance would be useful for ensuring that commitments are implemented thoroughly.[2] My aim is to develop such a framework.

Frameworks for analysing the quality of children's participation exist, as do frameworks for analysing the quality of governance systems. An analytical framework that addresses the interaction of these is lacking. How do we assess, in terms of extent and quality, the way participatory governance models or experiences involve and address the perspectives of children and young people? Recognising this gap, I am interested in developing a framework that can be used by children, youth, governance officials and facilitators of CYEG activities to critically reflect on their work.

The framework I present in this article is in the early stages of its development. I first give some background to this work

[1] 'Agency' refers to an individual's capacity to make his or her own choices and to act independently, according to his or her own will. Agency is set against structural factors such as class, religion and customs, which externally influence an individual's choices and opportunities (Milligan and Wilson, 2011).

[2] The concept of good governance is complex and dynamically debated. I draw on the definitions used by the UNDP and the World Bank with their emphasis on participation, transparency, accountability and process, as summarised in Taylor (2000).

Photos: Child Friendly Cities Initiative Sudan

Community members using the CFCCI community assessment tool to assess the child-friendliness of their communities.

and how I have approached its development so far. The writeshop – and the youth and participatory governance practitioners who have contributed to this issue of *PLA* – offered an opportunity to discuss with them which elements they considered crucial in such a framework. I finish by sharing how I will proceed in completing, piloting and refining the analytical framework. I invite those who share my interests and/or have experience in analysing CYEG to provide feedback on my framework-in-progress.

Background

My interest in analysing children and youth engagement in governance came from my work with the Children's Environments Research Group, an academic organisation in the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. We were invited by the Innocenti Research Center of UNICEF to develop a research project that would facilitate deeper analysis and implementation of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities initiative (CFCCI).

The CFCCI is a voluntary coalition of cities and communities committed to implementing policies and services that respect the rights of children, and sustaining governance structures that uphold these systems. Aiming to support the transformation of these commitments into real changes in children's lives, the Children's Environments Research Group developed tools to look critically at these issues.

As a research associate assisting in the

development of these tools I became interested in the area of CYEG. I noticed that the tools asked governance officials and community-based organisations if children participated in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies, plans and services for children. But they did not examine the quality of their engagement. Some communities had begun to engage children and youth in governance, each employing a different model of engagement, adapted to the context and needs of that community. This aroused my curiosity as to how far such initiatives enabled children's rights to participation while promoting good governance.

Developing the framework

In the introduction of *PLA*'s first special issue on children's participation (*PLA Notes* 25, 1996), editor Vicky Johnson expressed the hope that it would be just the beginning of a continuing process of sharing and exchange. Since then, *PLA Notes* 42 (Chawla, 2001) and many other *PLA* articles have touched upon this subject. In fact, *PLA Notes* 42 lays out one of the bases for my area of inquiry. It discusses the linkages between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the assessment of projects and programmes that would provide evidence that children's participation rights were being upheld.[3] As Chawla makes clear, various scholars have highlighted the difficulty in generating universal criteria while making room for local indicators. These change depending on the context of each project or programme under evaluation. This requires balanced negotiations. Chawla advocates that we foster participation across formal and informal settings and apply this line of thinking to the issue of children's participation in governance. How can we both build upon experience in other areas where children's participation is more longstanding – and at the same time shape and strengthen institutions so that they are better able to integrate children as actors?

With these challenges in mind, I reviewed literature on children's participation, drawing heavily on the children-focused work of Hart and Lansdown, Chawla and Driskell's ecological and spatial approaches to participation, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) documents on responsive, accountable and democratic local governance, and the participatory governance work of Fung and Wright, and Gaventa. This helped me begin to identify factors relevant to analysing CYEG.

The framework I am developing is intended to be applied to any activity that engages children and youth in the governance of their communities. It is likely to be used by project implementers working on CYEG programmes. But it may be particularly useful if it can be applied repeatedly over time, to monitor developments over the medium to long term. The format needs to be people-friendly and child-friendly. It should also be used in the context of a participatory approach that brings together different types of actors (such as children, youth, community members and governance officials) who have different roles and perspectives to critically reflect upon their activities. It needs to stimulate critical reflection around key parameters by raising a series of questions. Participatory reflection and collective acknowledgement of gaps between intention and implementation will ideally help to stimulate changes in existing practice. The framework is not intended as some kind of 'gold standard' for purportedly objective or independent assessment of youth and participatory governance practitioners and their work, but as a set of prompts to reflection.

[3] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally binding international instrument. The CRC recognises the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. See: www.unicef.org/crc

Parameters for analysis

What are the fields in which children and young people tend to engage with governance? Key among them are policy formulation, community planning and local and national budgeting, which are covered in several articles in this issue of *PLA*. In what kinds of activity do they tend to participate – what are children and youth doing when they engage in governance? The key ones seem to be advocacy activities, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and budgets as well as programmes and projects. This applies across a wide range of issues and sectors such as social services, education, environmental health, public health, public works, public awareness, juvenile justice, transportation, play and recreation.

The framework

Indicators and criteria for assessing children's participation in development or community programmes and common participatory governance indicators seem to fall into three categories or components:

- assessing spaces, structures and systems;
- assessing processes; and
- assessing resources and support.

I discuss each of these in turn, defining them and beginning to reflect on them from a CYEG perspective.

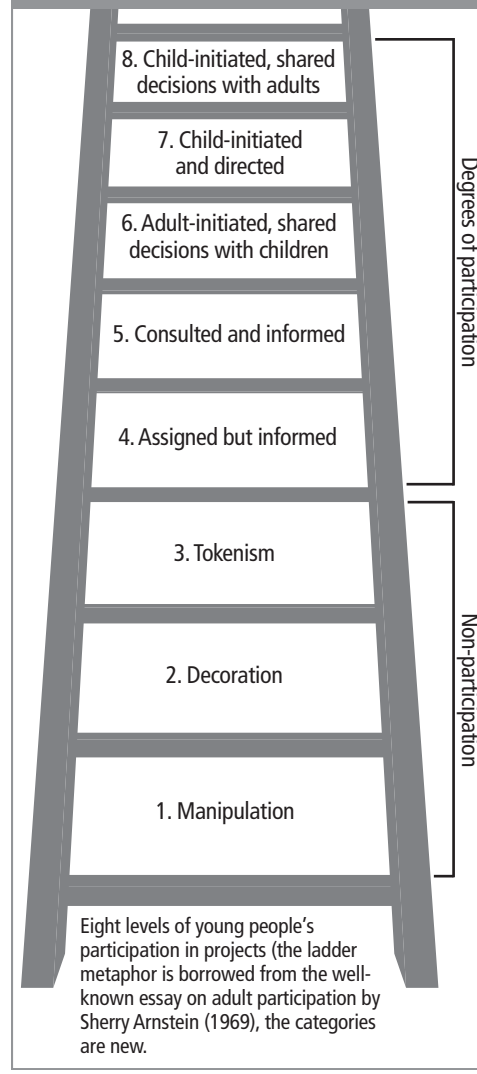
Assessing spaces, structures and systems

The focus here is on the frames or channels by which children become engaged. Of interest are:

- spaces, structures and systems that are institutionalised and those that are not;
- the 'invited' spaces and 'claimed' spaces (Gaventa, 2006) and the dynamics that can change one into the other;
- how spaces or systems are set-up, reshaped or dismantled;
- how they work with other spaces, structures and systems of youth participation; and
- other institutions of governance.

Two elements seem important here.

Figure 1: The ladder of participation



Hart's ladder of participation showing eight levels of children's participation – from non-participation to increasing degrees of participation.
Source: Hart (1992).

First, the level of engagement and the degree of children's participation: whether it is consultative, collaborative or child-managed, child-initiated or child-led. One existing way of analysing degrees of children's participation is Hart's ladder above. I need to give consideration to whether and how Hart's ladder or other existing frameworks could be best adapted to the specific issues of CYEG.

Box 1: Recognition of children's participation as a right

- Does the CYEG activity explicitly or implicitly draw on child rights principles?
- Does it recognise children's participation as a right?
- Does it recognise children's participation in governance as a child's right?
- Does it recognise children's right to participation as inalienable and indivisible?

The other important element is the degree of institutionalisation: to what extent do the organisations or bodies engaged in governance activities institutionalise the rights of children to participate? Some relevant factors to consider are:

- Is children's participation recognised as a right or is it granted as a perk?
- Is it representative or does it involve direct engagement?
- Is it *ad hoc* or integrated?
- Is it short term or sustained?
- Is it systematically documented?

I aim to develop a set of questions on each. Box 1 gives an example of such a set of questions relating to 'the recognition of children's participation as a right'. If governance activities fail to view and recognise children's participation as a right explicitly, their participation is precarious and can be cut off at any point with no justification given. Checking that children's and youths' participation is being treated as a right helps to safeguard it.

Assessing processes

The second component examines the quality of the process of engagement, by both children and youth and their counterparts in government. Once the stage is set and the space made or claimed, what happens there? Is it truly participatory? Does it promote children's participation? Does it improve the quality of governance or help embed the principles of a governance accountable to children? Are the processes:

- Responsive?
- Transparent?
- Accountable?

Box 2: Motivating, educating and promoting child and youth participation in governance

- Does the CYEG activity recognise the knowledge, skills and tools needed for effective engagement?
- Do children and youth understand the structures, systems and processes of governance and how they relate to each other?
- Do children and youth understand their role within the structures, systems and processes of governance?
- Are children and youth encouraged to analyse and constructively criticise how they are engaged in aspects of governance?
- Are children and youth engaged in governance activities supported to reach out to other children and youth?

- Effective?
- Respectful of local context?
- Sustainable?
- Self-reflective and critical?
- Participatory within? (i.e. non-discriminatory, inclusive of marginalised groups, egalitarian)
- Motivating, educating and promoting child and youth participation and governance?
- Ethical?

And in addition:

- Do they take place within a child-sensitive and enabling environment?
- Is it a safe and respectful environment?
- Is their participation both voluntary and relevant?

In Box 2, we see an attempt to apply a child-focused lens to a component featured in analyses of adult citizens' participation literature and practice (e.g. Gaventa and Barrett, 2010). One hypothesis is that low levels of youth and adult civic engagement may be because they have not **learnt** how to engage as citizens – or rather, have not had the opportunity to **practice** being an engaged citizen (Taylor and Percy-Smith, 2008). We need to critically reflect on the value of CYEG. By actively promoting children's rights to participation, CYEG can be an important way to actively learn how to become more engaged citizens.

Photo: Child Friendly Cities Initiative Sudan.

The research team in Sudan adapted the CFCCI community assessment tool to facilitate participatory assessment and analysis.

Resources and support for children and youth engagement in governance

The third component highlights the fact that CYEG requires resources and support in ways that are adapted to the needs of the participants in the context in which they work. Just as children need to be trained in working in governance activities, those already engaged in governance need to be trained on how to work with children.

This is a critical factor that is not currently being analysed with the frameworks that we have. These activities cannot take place in isolation. They must be linked to the community, the work of other professionals and the families that support each individual child and adult. With this in mind, aspects that need consideration include:

- Staff are trained, committed and sensitive.
- There is training and support for children.
- There are community, professional and family links.
- There is a commitment of resources (including financial resources, physical space, time, and prioritisation of activities).

In order for CYEG activities to maintain their quality, the spaces, structures, systems and processes must be supported within a committed network that recognises the integral role of CYEG activities.

Some initial feedback

Practitioners implementing youth and participatory governance initiatives are obviously some of the best-placed actors

Box 3: Commitment of resources

- Have sufficient financial resources been committed to CYEG activities, including out-reach, training, planning, liaison, data collection, reporting, and evaluation?
- Are physical spaces set aside for children and youth to meet and conduct CYEG related activities?
- Do children feel welcome in their spaces (i.e. are these accessible, child-friendly, inclusive)?
- Is adequate time set aside by all the relevant actors and adequate priority assigned to CYEG related activities?
- Have resources been committed over multiple cycles (years) so as to ensure the continuity of CYEG activities?
- Have mechanisms been built in to review the commitment of resources?

to give feedback on the beginnings of this analytical framework. The *PLA* writeshop offered the ideal opportunity. Semi-structured individual interviews with several participants showed that the preliminary steps I had taken on the basis of my literature review resonated with their own experience and challenges from practice. They also generated additional factors that should be taken account of in the framework. Here is a sample of what they said:

- Is the activity child-friendly (as even sometimes child-initiated activities are not)? Is the activity aligned with international instruments? Were children and youth informed throughout the process? (Lipotso Musi, World Vision Lesotho).
- Consistency: when something is planned, do people respect this planning? Realism: are the planned actions achievable? (Serigne Malick Fall, Senegal).
- Do governance officials see youth as valuable partners in change? Are both youth as well as authorities equally and deeply committed in time, energy and work? How does the community at large perceive the activity? (Cynthia Ochola-Anyango, Jipange Youth Organisation, Nairobi, Kenya).
- What are the cultural contexts that both support and limit participation? What is the youth understanding of the governance environment, avenues and frameworks for change? (Kenyatta Maita, Plan, Kenya).

I now see that further practitioner inputs and feedback are indispensable for taking the framework forward and I am thinking about how best to continue gathering them and using them.

Conclusion

What has been presented is a snapshot of my thinking to date. This is a framework in development, a framework for analysing children's participation in governance. It will not be a set of guidelines for governance structures within which children's participation can occur. Instead, it is a series of questions for governments, communities and children to closely examine the degree and manners to which their structures, systems, spaces and processes promote elements of good governance and children's rights to participation.

As yet, the framework is in its early stages – and this article is a call for further inputs by experts in the field. By sharing this process and my work so far, I hope to foster discussion around the analysis of CYEG – and then to revise the framework to take account of new ideas and suggestions.

My next steps would be to validate this framework by 'field testing': with children and young people and their partners in governance work, among others. I then plan to refine it further and share with those interested in analysing their own work or others' on children's and youth's engagement in governance.

I welcome your input – including any suggestions you might have about relevant frameworks regarding children's participation, democratic governance and community decision–making – as well as raising any issues, areas and elements not yet considered in this draft framework. Please get in touch!

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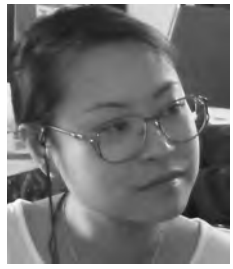

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PART II

Rejuvenating spaces for engagement

Lesotho's shadow children's parliament: voices that bridged the policy gap

8

by LIPOTSO MUSI and MASEISA NTLAMA

The long walk to parliament

African governments, like all governments, are the primary duty bearers for the protection of the rights of children. This mandate goes far beyond merely signing international and national treaties. Written commitments need to be translated into meaningful and appropriate implementation that benefits children. But the road to implementing such commitments is often long and cumbersome.

We (the co-authors) work in the child protection and advocacy department of World Vision Lesotho (WVL). We were frustrated by the inadequacy of existing child-focused legislation and the absence of a comprehensive legal framework to protect the rights and respond to the needs of the children of Lesotho. In 2010, the Lesotho Children's Protection and Welfare Bill had been in draft form since 2004. WVL felt 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, happened on 16th June 2010 in the national parliament buildings in Maseru, Lesotho 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 Children's Protection and Welfare Bill by the parliament of Lesotho, asking legislators to listen to their voices and intentionally plan and budget to address problems identified and prioritised by the children themselves.

Why a shadow children's parliament?

Working with communities and children in particular, WVL has come to appreciate the multi-faceted challenges facing children as individuals and as a collective. In close collaboration with the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGO-C) we decided to engage the national parliament – the legislators – to try to move the bill

forward.[1] World Vision and partners deliberated on the most appropriate approach to use and decided on the SCP model. The model seemed well-suited to our objective of calling adult parliamentarians to account from children's perspective, as well as giving children an opportunity for their voices to be heard directly. A parliamentary-style approach would introduce children and adults to alternative ways of democratically promoting citizens' voices and involving them in action to assess and advocate for change to address pressing social concerns.

While the idea of using the SCP approach was decided by World Vision and its partners, the concept and its roll out was discussed with the children during the district level consultations. Hart's ladder of participation shows eight degrees or 'rungs' of children's participation (Hart, 1992). To us, the SCP appeared to match the sixth 'rung', as an adult-initiated process which shared decisions with children.[2]

This adaptation of the SCP model was a first in Lesotho. Supported by World Vision Australia under their child advocacy project, the event was timed to coincide with the African Union's (AU) Day of the African Child.[3] The theme for 2010 was 'planning and budgeting for children – our collective responsibility'. The day was a high-profile opportunity to highlight why the Children's Protection and Welfare Bill was urgently needed in Lesotho, and for children to address high-level policymakers face-to-face under one roof – the roof of the parliament building, no less.

What was the Lesotho shadow children's parliament?

The 2010 Lesotho shadow children's parliament sitting was the culmination of ongoing participatory processes undertaken by WVL and a partner with children across the ten districts of the country.[4] Here we describe the preparatory process stage by stage, leading up to an account of the one-day event.

Starting at the top: senators and ministers

As the bill had been in draft form since 2004, we wondered whether the members of the national parliament fully understood the significance of enacting the bill. The preparatory process therefore began in April 2008 and culminated in February 2009 with a week-long awareness-raising and lobbying workshop for senators and members of the national assembly, organised by WVL. It included unpacking the contents of the proposed legal framework and the impact it would have on the lives of the children and youth of Lesotho. We invited child rights experts, policy analysts and academics to facilitate some of the sessions. This process not only helped to enlighten the legislators – it also helped to establish a relationship of mutual trust between parliament and World Vision Lesotho. The foundation for the SCP sitting was being laid, one parliamentarian at a time.

In addition, we conducted one-on-one consultations with relevant ministers such as the minister of health and social welfare, the minister of gender, youth, sports and recreation and the prime minister. The purpose of the consultations was to explain the purpose of the SCP sitting, to invite ministers to attend it and to seek permission to use the national parliament buildings for the event.

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[1] WVL is a Christian, child-focused and community-based development and humanitarian organisation that has been operating in Lesotho since 1989. WVL focuses on child sponsorship, health, education, advocacy, and child protection/rights and humanitarian relief.
[2] For an explanation of Hart's ladder of participation, see Tang (this issue).
[3] The International Day of the African Child is organised by the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) as an opportunity to reflect on progress towards decent living standards, equality and protection for all African children. It commemorates the 1976 Soweto protests and killings of school children.
[4] Lesotho coordinating body for child-focused organisations, the NGO-C was the key partner.

Working with the children

The next step was to work with district authorities to jointly mobilise children at community and district levels. Rather than assume we knew the problems facing children, in each of the ten districts we invited 200 children to respond to a survey aimed at identifying problems facing them. We asked 100 boys and 100 girls, aged between 10 and 18 – from urban and rural areas, including children both in and out of school. Interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted throughout May 2010.

The children voted for the issues which they felt were of the most pressing concern – for example, the lack of access to education and the violation of children's rights. Topics with the highest number of votes became the district-specific themes that the elected children would present during the SCP event (see Box 1). WVL also facilitated discussions with the children on the Day of the African Child theme. The children decided that the overarching theme for the SCP session should be 'the voices of children matter for their protection and welfare'.

The participating children in each district elected 10 SCP members. Those elected – half girls and half boys – needed to be willing and able to volunteer and participate, and confident to speak on behalf of others. WVL worked with the department of health and social welfare to obtain written parental/caregiver consent for the elected children to attend the SCP sitting.

Box 1: District-specific themes for the SCP

- Child sexual abuse.
- Child neglect and exploitation especially of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).
- Poor quality of education and health services.
- Welfare of children in detention.
- Human (child) trafficking.

The day before the big day

On 15th June 2010 – the eve of the SCP event – the elected children and their chaperones, World Vision staff and NGO-C representatives assembled in Maseru, our first time all together as a collective. Parliamentary staff were on hand to provide guidance for children on established parliamentary procedures.

During the SCP sitting every child would have a role to play (see Box 2). They elected key role players for the SCP session such as the speaker of the house and the prime minister. Others assumed the portfolios of respective members of parliament (MPs).

The children spent the evening discussing and rehearsing their presentations, getting into character for the big day ahead. Their presentations to the house focused on improving access to health, education and other kinds of services in districts and communities, sexual and other forms of abuse against children, teenage pregnancy, the welfare of children in detention, the exploitation and neglect of orphans and vulnerable children due to property grabbing and myriad violations of children's rights in general.[5]

The SCP in session

On the day, one hundred children – fifty boys and fifty girls – assembled in the national parliament building in Maseru. Each of the 10 districts in Lesotho was represented by 10 child parliamentarians, elected by their peers. In the public gallery sat several 'real' ministers, the deputy speaker of the house and representatives from UNICEF, Global Fund, World Vision, NGO-C and others. Their role was to listen as the child ministers presented their portfolios to the house and then

[5] Property grabbing: claims of intestate succession made by members of a deceased person's extended family. The practice deprives widows and children from owning their family home. It is particularly difficult for orphaned children, as it deprives them of their primary means of survival (K.K. Mwenda, 2005).

Photo: WVL

Children march to the parliament buildings on June 16th for the first-ever shadow children's parliamentary session.

debated whether to support the motion to enact the Children's Protection and Welfare Bill.

Proceedings replicated the workings of the national parliament. Once the sergeant at arms had opened the parliamentary session and the pastor had given the opening prayer, the speaker of the house introduced the SCP theme for the day. Following established parliamentary proceedings and processes, the child parliamentarians presented a short speech to the other SCP members of the issues they had chosen to debate. In addition to presenting daily real-life challenges faced by children, every speaker ensured s/he also provided the speaker of the house with a possible solution.

One issue debated was about children in detention. They are frequently sexually abused, exploited and emotionally traumatised by adult prisoners. As a result, many child offenders leave detention only to find themselves back in detention within a short space of time. One SCP member, the sole representative for this category of children, recommended to the ministers of health and social welfare that the bill should ensure that child offenders be separated from adult prisoners.

To wind up their session some of the SCP members presented a ten minutes role-play depicting the vulnerability of orphaned girl children in the hands of teachers. The girl is sometimes enticed to pay school fees in-kind by an unscrupulous teacher, in this case through sex, which results in unplanned pregnancy and her

Box 2: Children's roles in the Shadow Children's Parliament

- Speaker of the house: to facilitate and guide the discussions of the house while the SCP was in session.
- Clerks to speaker: to document and summarise parliamentary discussions for public records.
- Pastor: conducts prayers at the beginning and end of the parliamentary session.
- Sergeant at arms: announces the start of the session – without which parliamentary sessions cannot start.
- Prime minister: The leader of the ruling party in power.
- Leader of the opposition party, whose role was to ask questions of clarification on the issues tabled.
- Members of the opposition party.
- Ministers with different portfolios (ministry of health and social welfare; ministry of gender, youth, sports and recreation).
- The remaining child parliamentarians took the roles of members of parliament (MPs), each representing their individual constituencies.

Photo: WVL

A child parliamentarian addresses the house.

subsequent expulsion from school. After this, the other child MPs were invited to respond, ask questions and finally state whether the motions proposed should be included in the bill.

Finally, in response to the presentations, the adult ministers for health and social welfare assured the child parliamentarians that the SCP came at a time when the government of Lesotho had recently tabled a debate on the bill in the parliament. The ministry of gender, youth, sports and recreation echoed this, indicating that the government was working hard towards enacting the bill pending the necessary consultations. She assured the SCP that their submission would provide impetus to the process.

What did the SCP achieve?

Following the SCP event WVL, NGO-C and others continued to hold formal consultations with the legislative committee and the social cluster of the parliament. This was in an endeavour to influence revisions to the draft bill in the light of the SCP submissions, in preparation for its due presentation to the senate and then the king.

In late December 2010, the bill was passed by the senate with amendments. One amendment was the promotion of restorative justice in the case of child offenders, which aims to repair relations between the child and his/her family and the community prior to release from detention, thus minimising the chance of return to detention. This inclusion is probably a response to the SCP's emphasis on the need for special regimes for child offenders. The bill was then presented to the king, for endorsement, after which it would become law.

During the writeshop where this article was written, we learnt that the Children's Protection and Welfare Act was passed by parliament on 22nd March 2011.

A national children's committee (NCC) has now been created under WV's leadership. This body was a direct result of the SCP and was elected by the child parliamentarians on 16th June 2010, directly

Box 3: National children's committee terms of reference

- Coordinate children-focused initiatives and feedback from districts to WV Lesotho.
- Representation in national/world child participation forums.
- Support preparations for the next children's parliament.
- Promote child participation at district levels.
- Join and forge new networks.
- Raise awareness on child legislation.
- Make the SCP an annual event.

after the SCP. Made up of representatives from all the 10 districts the committee works to terms of reference set by the child parliamentarians (see Box 3). These include a recommendation to make the SCP an annual event.

Lessons learnt, critical reflection and analysis

Given that the bill has now become law, we believe that by working closely with both senators and members of the national assembly during the process, the SCP has been a contributing factor to the enactment of the bill.

While we can argue that 'success' was realised in that the bill became law, how much credit was due to the shadow children's parliament event or preparatory process? Face-to-face sessions with relevant ministers contributed to some degree to the passing of the bill. We also recognise the valuable contributions by many other players, some of whom are government officials. However, a number of key lessons can be drawn from this SCP experience.

Organising an SCP takes time and perseverance

Building good relationships and advocating for the SCP process with both the relevant government departments and strategically positioned individuals is crucial. This helped to ensure that they were receptive to the children's voices. We achieved this through the lobbying sessions and the one-on-one meetings with relevant

Photo: WVL

WVL national director Martin Silutongwe (middle), the WV's child protection and advocacy officer (extreme left) and the HEA director meet the prime minister (second right) and the minister in the prime minister's office Dr Phooko to lobby for the shadow children's parliament.

ministers and with district child protection committees prior to the event. We were also blessed with confident and charismatic WVL staff members who negotiated this process with high-ranking government officials, including the prime minister of Lesotho. But it took time and perseverance.

Strategic collaboration with other organisations

No one organisation can effectively organise an initiative of this magnitude alone. Strategic collaboration with other like-minded organisations is key to achieving greater impact. WVL was on good terms with the collaborating NGOs which made this aspect of the project relatively easy for us. However, we still need to foster more collaboration with community-based organisations that are in more constant contact with children. The issues presented by the children at the SCP – and many others – must continue to be discussed and addressed at the community level.

Replicating the SCP event

Raising awareness and mobilising citizens – including children – is pivotal to the call for and promotion of good governance. This includes respecting the rights of citizens to effective service delivery and of holding government to account for ensuring these rights are upheld, and their rights to 'express their views on matters that affect them'.[6]

Photo: WVL

Minister of health and social welfare addressing the SCP on 16th June. To the extreme right is the speaker for the SCP.

We hope to replicate the SCP approach in other World Vision programmes in southern Africa. In Lesotho the existence of a draft bill was a key underpinning for the initiative. Success elsewhere would depend on a range of contextual factors, including the existence of similar dormant legislation or precedents, the willingness of the governments concerned and the perceived relevance of the issues at hand.

Clarity of purpose

For us it was clear that we needed to push the enactment of the bill, which gave us and the event a clear focus. Clarity was vital too about the roles to be played by both children and adults and about which decision makers to target. These clarities meant that after the event we are clear too about what to monitor and follow up on.

Better inclusion of vulnerable children

It is important to include children from the most vulnerable groups in such initiatives, to ensure their voices are not excluded. Children with disabilities, those in detention and shepherds represent some of the most vulnerable categories of children in Lesotho. For example, efforts to include children in detention proved futile in nine of the districts. One representative of these was allowed to participate from Maseru district, but other district authorities refused to allow others to participate, citing security concerns. In future, we need to make more deliberate efforts to include these children.

Post SCP... then what?

With the act now in place, the next steps will include persuading government to continue to engage with NGOs and civil society in the process of amending the bill (if necessary). World Vision will continue endeavouring to partner with government and other child-focused organisations to address the simplification, dissemination and translation of the act into a child-friendly version. There is also a need to provide training and capacity-building to the new national children's committee.

[6] Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). See: www.unicef.org/crc

Conclusion

Our experiences highlight some necessary building blocks for promoting effective adult-initiated and child-led advocacy. The child parliamentarians were given the opportunity to voice their concerns at the national level with a well consulted and agreed-upon mandate from their peers. Their performance demonstrated that engaging the children previously in community dialogue can build the skills and confidence required to engage with government and policy makers at all levels.

Using the SCP approach, our strategic intention was to target parliamentarians. The SCP enabled children – with the support and guidance of adults – to effectively influence and persuade policy makers to enact in law a comprehensive, child-focused national policy.

Duty bearers must acknowledge their responsibilities and obligations to uphold the inherent rights of all citizens, including children. So we would like to end with a call to governments – at all levels – to ensure that they provide opportunities for children to voice their 'views in matters that concern them'.

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Catch them young: the young female parliament in northern Ghana

9

by EDWARD A.J. AKAPIRE, ALHASSAN MOHAMMED AWAL and RAHINATU FUSEINI

In Ghana women constitute over half of the population and play a significant role in the country's economy, yet their visibility in key decision-making positions continues to be low. This results in policies and programmes that do not adequately address the specific needs of women and girls. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right of every person to be involved in the government of his or her country. Equal access of men and women to decision-making and leadership at all levels is a necessary precondition for the proper functioning of democracy. ActionAid Ghana (AAG) has long been working with partners, duty bearers and right holders (see Box 1 for definitions), employing a variety of interventions to ensure a fairer representation of women in local governance processes.

More recently, the organisation has begun to consider how it can support young women to develop the skills and confidence needed to engage in public decision-making. One approach adopted by ActionAid Ghana with its partner Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre (NORSAAC) has been to create a platform for young women to meet and debate issues that concern them. The young female parliament (YFP) was established in 2009 and regularly brings together young women from across the northern region.

Box 1: Duty bearers and rights holders

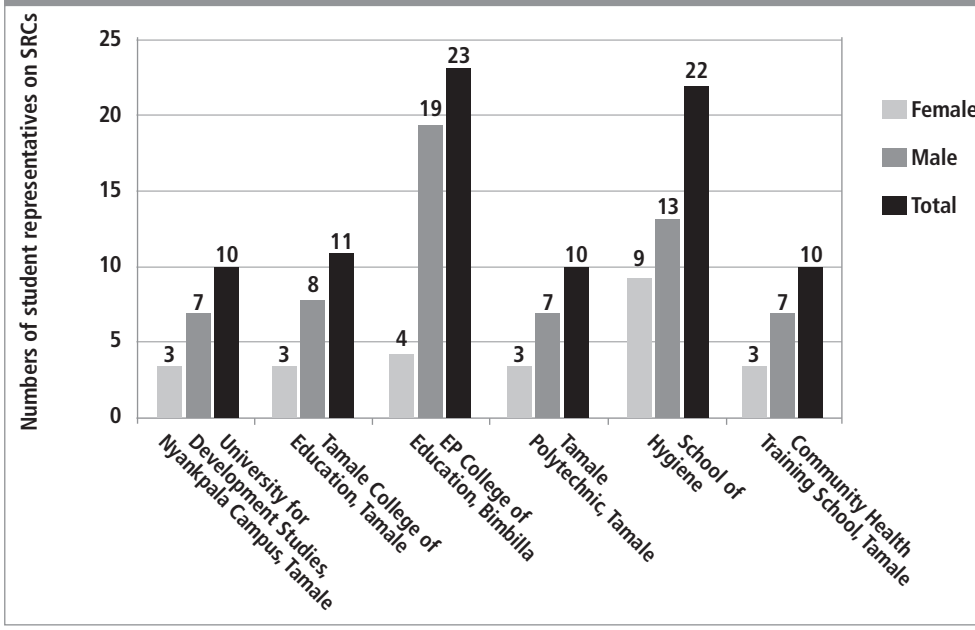
A **duty bearer** is an individual or institution with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil a right.

Rights holders are a person or group of people who, by virtue of being born, are entitled to the enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights – not as a favour or act of charity but as a right.

Limited political participation of women

Ghana is widely seen internationally as a beacon of hope in politically fragile sub-Saharan Africa for its stable politics, good governance and democratic credentials. However the country has no specific legislation taking affirmative action to secure spaces for women's participation in decision-making.

Figure 1: Young women in student representative councils in the northern region



Source: Administrations of respective schools.

Currently, there are only 19 female legislators in Ghana's parliament, which is made up of 230 parliamentarians (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). Women constitute 32% of the entire civil service and 24% of those in local government, with most being in the secretarial and clerical classes. Only 12% of the decision-influencing category – the administrative class – is female. The Ghana 2000 census report quotes 9543 women, representing 0.2% of women, as being in managerial and administrative positions in Ghana. In the recently dissolved district assemblies (DAs) at local government level, elected female assembly members made up only 10%. Additionally, until January 2010, no woman had ever assumed the position of chairperson or general secretary of any political party in Ghana. In the northern region women are particularly under-represented, largely due to the region's patriarchal cultural systems. The region had a woeful 38 out of 573 female district assembly members.

Representation and participation in public decision-making is particularly limited among young women. The country has no legislation that deliberately provides space for youth, including young females, to participate in governance at local and national levels. Even in youth organisations such as student representative councils (SRCs) at tertiary institutions (universities, colleges, polytechnics), young women are under-represented (see Figure 1).

Making the link between girls' education and women's political participation

During our reflection processes in 2008, AAG and partners realised that young women were being left out of our work to promote the rights of girls and women. While our support to girls' education focused on girls in 'basic' schools (pre-schools, primary and middle schools covering ages 3 to 14 years), our support to women in leadership and decision-making focused on adults (mostly above 28 years). Young women from 15 years to 27 years in secondary and tertiary institutions were not targeted. Yet these young women are

Photo: Alhassan Mohammed Awal

YFP members on their feet for the closure of the parliamentary session.

an important group to engage in working for change.

AAG's work to support women to engage in local and national governance processes highlighted inadequate skills and lack of confidence as key barriers. Other barriers included cultural conceptions that positioned the man as the household head and therefore the one who makes decisions for and on behalf of the whole family. In some communities in the northern region, for example, women do not sit with men during community meetings. They are isolated, always sitting behind the men.

Meanwhile, AAG's work to promote girls' education revealed that while more girls than boys were enrolled in basic schools in 2006, only about 14% of girls were staying in school beyond the basic level (Amu, no date). In promoting girl child education, AAG and partners adopted strategies like annual girls' camps to provide modelling and motivation to help strengthen the ability of girls to demand their right to education. Girls' clubs were also formed in schools to strengthen girls' skills to work with boys, school authorities, community leaders and religious heads in decision-making processes.

AAG and partners realised the need to better link these two bodies of work. We decided to develop a model similar to the girls' camps and clubs, which had proved useful in promoting girls education at the basic level. We introduced them at higher levels, particularly in senior high schools, universities, colleges and polytechnics. As a complement, the young female parliament (YFP) was set up, to help ensure girls stayed in school longer and also to provide a platform for empowering more girls to participate in local decision-making. It was hoped that the YFP would provide them

with a platform to develop and practice the skills required to challenge and engage actively in governance. It would also establish a bridge between our work to promote girls' education and to increase women's participation in decision-making. Girls would be supported and encouraged by the girls' camps and clubs. Their training and skill development would then be sustained through participation in the YFP, which would support them to overcome current barriers to young women's participation in governance.

Being a marginalised group, young women first required a safe space to develop skills, exercise these skills and build confidence if they were to effectively engage in governance, leadership and decision-making. This was to avoid the usually male dominance when common platforms are provided. The safe space created should also bear a resemblance to the political stage they would, we hoped, go on to engage in at national and local levels. Catching young women and empowering them now would build their confidence and skills to actively participate in decision-making. A female-only structure would also be useful since the young women have common concerns and challenges. There would be a stronger solidarity among them and shared understanding.

Establishing the YFP

The YFP model was first conceived by AAG and NORSAAC in July 2008, during our annual participatory review and reflection process. At a second meeting in August 2008, AAG and NORSAAC further developed the model.

At a subsequent meeting in October 2008, other stakeholders such as the National Youth Council (NYC), the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), the National Population Council and Grameen Ghana (an AAG partner) were involved.[1] [2] The process also included discussions with the district assemblies (DAs) to introduce the model and to facilitate their eventual ownership of it. This was a very important requirement as the YFP was being shaped to contribute to and influence policies and governance, especially at the local level. It was also important because DAs were expected to provide financial support to the administration of the parliament, finance the participation of representatives of schools in their districts and assist in the execution of special projects adopted.

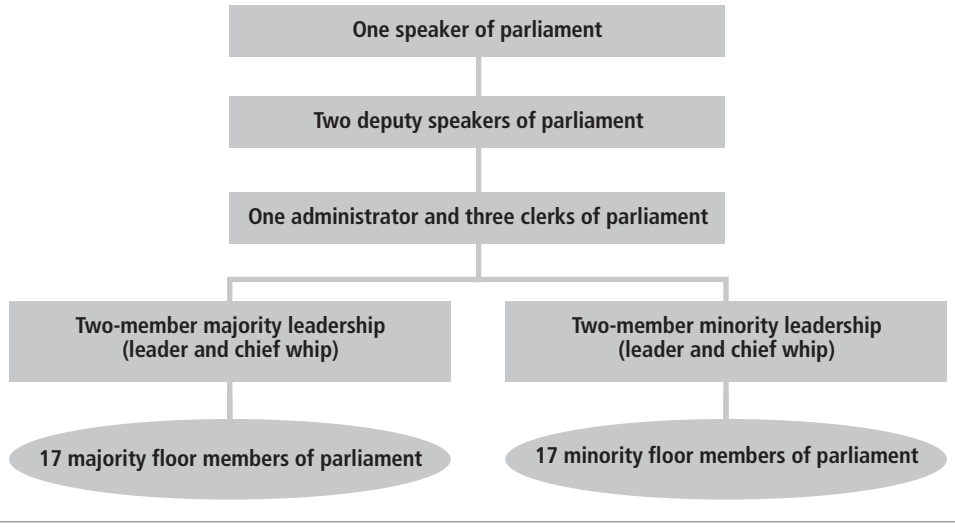
The next stage was to discuss the model with the school authorities (senior house masters/mistresses), SRCs and student leadership. The girls and the school authorities accepted the model and agreed to the election of representatives from their respective schools to the YFP. Since the election period in schools had already elapsed, it was agreed that the first set of parliamentarians should be chosen from existing female leaders (girls' prefects at senior high schools and women commissioners at tertiary institutions). The girls, supervised by the school authorities, selected the first set of female parliamentarians through school-based consultations and elections. The process involved 15 senior high schools and eight tertiary institutions. Finally, with the selection of the first set of female parliamentarians, the YFP was inaugurated in 2009.

Structure of the young female parliament

The YFP has 40 members: one representative each from 15 high schools in 15 of the 20 districts in the northern region, and three representatives each from seven of the eight tertiary institutions. The eighth, Tamale Polytechnic, has four representatives because it has the highest female

[1] The National Youth Council (NYC) is the state agency responsible for implementing youth policy and programmes.
[2] The Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) is the highest political administrative body in the region, responsible for the governance of the region.

Figure 2: Structure of the YFP



population among all the institutions. Female students vote their representatives into the parliament with a varying number of seats per institution/school depending on the overall number of females in the respective institution. Since the aim of the YFP is to provide the opportunity for as many young females as possible to develop their leadership skills and abilities, each member serves only one term, lasting two years.

The parliament has a well defined leadership structure (see Figure 2) with standing orders for members and requirements for affiliation and membership, as well as an outlined schedule for sittings/proceedings.

The leadership is made up of a speaker, two deputy speakers, a majority leader and chief whip, a minority leader and chief whip, a parliamentary administrator and three clerks of parliament. The speaker is elected by parliament. The first speaker was elected from amongst women commissioners of tertiary institutions but subsequent ones must be past female parliamentarians. For the first deputy speaker position, the majority presents a candidate for the approval by the parliament, whilst for the second deputy speaker the minority presents a candidate for approval. The administrator and three clerks, who are not members of parliament, are appointed by the leadership, upon approval by a majority of parliamentarians. The minority and majority leaders, as well as the chief whips for both sides, are elected by their respective sides.

There are no permanent minority and majority sides as usually found in political legislative/parliamentary systems. These sides are constituted on the basis of issues/motions tabled for discussions (members are randomly selected through balloting to form both sides). This unique structure has eliminated tendencies to develop polarised or entrenched debates/positions and has provided an opportunity for deep and rich debate. The approach was taken after drawing lessons from adult political parliaments where debates are highly polarised based on political inclinations of permanent majority and minority sides.

Debating issues through the YFP

The YFP debates topical national issues such as local and national government development projects, interventions, policies and programmes, among others.

Photo: Alhassan Mohammed Awal

A cross section of YFP members engage in a group exercise.

There are also debates on specific issues related to women and girls, especially violence, harassment and discrimination, the gender gap in leadership positions in the region and institutional/cultural issues relating to the development of young females.

Topics or motions are tabled for debate with the clerk of parliament two weeks ahead of sitting. They can be tabled by:
• individual parliamentarians;
• groups (minority or majority sides); or
• institutions (NGOs, CSOs, state institutions, local government, etc.)

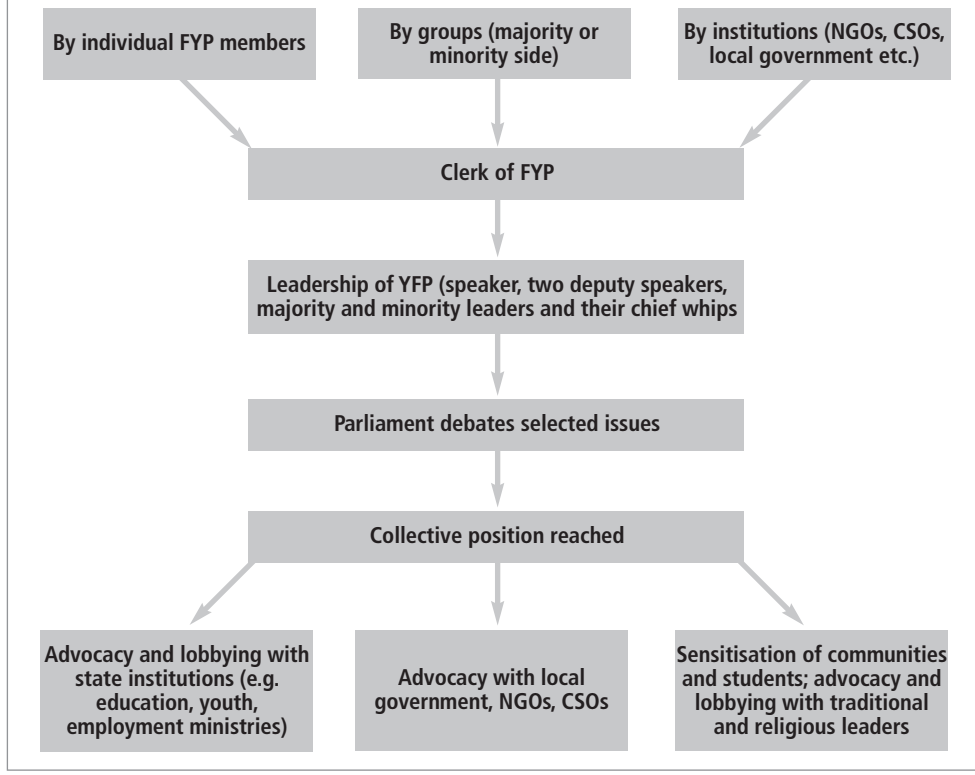
This enables the leadership to assess the motion for inclusion in the next sitting. The leadership, through the clerks of the parliament, then conducts research to gather information on the respective topics for parliamentarians to study, to enable a well-informed and fruitful debate. Individual parliamentarians can and do however conduct their own research on issues.

Following these debates, a collective position of the YFP is reached and disseminated by the leadership through a communiqué or brief. It may also be used as the basis for advocacy to engage relevant duty bearers with respect to the issue in question. Figure 3 illustrates the process of selecting, debating and advocating on issues.

Change as a result of the YFP

AAG and NORSAAC organises trainings, at least once every three months, for parliamentarians based on training needs assessments. These trainings have so far included:
• leadership and conflict management;
• debating (debating skills and how to present a good debate); and
• advocacy and lobbying with duty bearers.

Figure 3: Process of selecting, debating and carrying issues forward



These activities are empowering participants to engage effectively in governance and decision-making. Individual members of the YFP have now developed the courage and confidence to contest leadership and political positions. For example, in last year's local government elections, two members of the YFP contested elections to represent their electoral areas in the district assembly. As one contestant in the West Mamprusi district assembly elections, Rabiatu reflected:

> *... for me, the parliament has taught me two big things: that I have the right to participate in decision-making and that I can be whatever I want to be in the future. Though I was not successful in the last year's elections, I will never give up and I'm working hard to come back.*

Last year, the YFP debated the impact of the low representation of women in DAs and how to bridge the gap. A communiqué was issued by the young women calling on government to allocate 50% of the 30% DA seats which are appointed (rather than elected) to women. This call contributed to government issuing a circular to DAs to allocate 40% of appointments to women.

Linkages have also been established between the YFP, schools and DAs. Schools have agreed to include the selection of parliamentarians in their student leadership elections, along with representatives to student representation councils. The schools, through their representatives, can communicate their particular challenges and situation on issues such as quality of education delivery, infrastructure and education financing. These concerns can then reach relevant state institutions, such as the Ghana Education Service. The involvement of the DAs from

Photo: Alhassan Mohammed Awal

YFP members rising for the opening of the parliamentary sitting.

the inception stage of the YFP to its operational stage, and the gradual establishment of strong linkages between the activities of the parliament will hopefully make the YFP a sustainable intervention.

Challenges and possible ways forward

The operation of YFP has not been without some challenges. Principal among these is the slow pace of full ownership of the system by the RCCs and DAs, with financial constraints being the reason for the slow progress. The high time and resource demands of research needed to feed into the debates is another challenge currently confronting the parliamentarians.

In carrying these processes forward, a number of proposals to enrich the operation of the YFP have been identified. This includes expanding the representation to include females from all twenty districts of the northern region to achieve a regional perspective. Another idea is to facilitate exposure visits for the parliamentarians to witness and learn from proceedings of the national parliament and other DA sessions and improve their knowledge of processes leading to decisions in these institutions. It would also be good to facilitate the establishment of a library, well furnished with relevant literature, books and other facilities to support the research of female parliamentarians and other students, including male students.

Our reflections also reveal that, if girls will eventually be engaging and competing with boys in common spaces, it is

important to gradually enable girls to exercise the skills and confidence they have built in common spaces with boys. Opportunities are being explored towards getting DAs to recognise the YFP as a contributor to issues at DA level relating to women and girls and for DAs to adopt parliamentarians as *ex-officio* members of the assemblies. This would enable them to witness and make contributions during assembly sessions, providing an opportunity for them to further boost their confidence, knowledge of proceedings and other dynamics in DAs.

Finally, getting all schools and institutions to fully institutionalise the YFP into their regular student elections and leadership structure and DAs and RCC to own and fully finance the operation of the YFP would make it a sustainable intervention.

Conclusion

The YFP is only one approach to increasing female participation in leadership and governance. Processes leading to the development and adoption of the YFP, by their participatory nature, have highlighted learning that could enrich the current model. Most critical is the point that the YFP, though gradually ensuring effective participation of women and girls, requires the support of local government, civil society and communities. Local government needs to work with and finance this model, civil society needs to empower girls, and communities need to provide the space for girls to exercise their skills. Only then will young females be attracted into participatory governance and remain there.

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Young, but capable: youth lead the struggle against violence in Mali

10

by BEDO TRAORE

In Africa, and particularly Mali, children are exposed to the worst kinds of violence, in many different forms: physical, emotional and spiritual. This violence takes place in all kinds of places – within the family, on the streets, at school, in detention centres and in work. The causes behind this violence are varied. They range from poverty and social inequality to harmful beliefs and traditions, and the ignorance and impunity of the perpetrators.

In schools, violence is sadly often used as an educational 'tool' or method. In 2010 Plan Mali partnered with Save the Children to conduct a study on violence against children in schools. The study found that 83.5% of adults and 82.5% of children cited corporal punishment as one of the main forms of violence perpetrated in schools (Antonowicz, 2010).

As part of the ongoing struggle to end violence against children, a regional project was launched in 2008 across West Africa by Plan in partnership with Save the Children. The project is guided by the recommendations set out by the United Nations in its 2001 study on violence against children in Africa. The main objective is to strengthen the capacity of child and youth organisations so that they can tackle violence by disseminating information, raising awareness, and advocating to duty bearers.[1] [2] The children's parliament in Mali is a key partner.

This article will concentrate on the work that members of the child parliament are doing to advocate to duty bearers for better child protection. It aims to support children and young people to enable them to mobilise and engage with duty bearers and government. But has it increased their protection from violence?

How did the project come about?

The first phase of the project (2008–2010) was implemented in seven countries

[1] Children are individuals aged under 18 years and young people from 18 to 25 years. Where there is overlap (ages 15-18) they are still children but known as young people.
[2] For a definition of duty bearers, see the glossary, this issue.

Box 1: What is the children's parliament?

The children's parliament is a platform for youth participation and freedom of expression which is open to all Malian children. Its aim is to support the authorities in upholding the four main child rights: children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation in decisions that affect them. Its role is to support the Malian government to implement national policies or initiatives which promote and uphold children's rights. It consists of 41 children aged 12 to 17 years old, with 21 girls and 20 boys.

Plan Mali was instrumental in implementing the children's parliament as a way of providing policy support to the government with regards to child protection and participation. It has signed an agreement with the ministry for the promotion of women, children and the family to this effect. The agreement sets out a series of activities which promote women's and children's rights. It gives particular emphasis to children's participation as agents of change, which the children's parliament is designed to facilitate.

including Mali. The second phase (2011–2013), which has just begun, has widened the project's reach to include three further countries. The project provides support to children and young people's organisations and builds their advocacy capacities. The other stakeholders include teaching professionals, parents, community-based organisations and decision makers at local, national and regional levels.

Ending violence against children was already an area that the children's parliament in Mali was working on, as explained here by Boncana, president of the children's parliament:

The struggle to end violence against children is one of the principal concerns of the Mali children's parliament. We have created a group especially to address this issue. I'd like to invite the people and the authorities to work hand in hand to put a stop to this practice.

As well as the children's parliament, various youth groups and structures are participating in the project. These include the Association for the Promotion of Youth and Child Communication (APJEC) and school councils.[3]

There are child parliaments in each of the country's eight regional capitals. The national children's parliament consists of children from the different regions and the capital Bamako. It is housed at the centre

Box 2: Project activities and impacts

What activities were carried out?

- Conferences and debates held in four primary schools and four community discussion centres in Bamako.
- Awareness-raising and advocacy tour of Koulikoro.[4]
- A concert in Bamako with the theme 'Children have the right to participate'.[5]
- Televised debates in Bamako, shown on national television.
- Radio shows produced in eight primary schools in the towns of Kati, Kangaba, Kita and Baroueli.
- Advocacy awareness-raising in all of the eight regional capitals.
- Radio programmes broadcast on 12 local radio stations and the national radio station.

What were the results?

- Children and young people's capacities to implement child protection as a dimension of good governance have been strengthened.
- Violence against children is becoming less taboo: children are now aware of violence as a phenomenon and starting to break the silence surrounding it.
- Duty bearers are now willing to discuss questions of violence with children.
- Corporal punishment in schools (one of the most prevalent forms of violence against children) is decreasing.

[3] *Association pour la Promotion des Jeunes et Enfants Communicateurs* (APJEC) is an association of former members of the children's parliament. It promotes the rights of the child, primarily through their newspaper *Regards des Enfants (Children's views).*

[4] Koulikoro is a city in Mali, about 40 miles from Bamako. Koulikoro is the regional capital of the Koulikoro Region.

[5] Organised by Plan and regional rap network United Artists for African Rap (AURA). Young rappers portrayed children living in difficult circumstances in their rap opera *Poto Poto*. Children and youth also debated issues that affect them. Other events showcased young people's own initiatives to improve youth participation and informed adults and peers about their rights.

Photo: Plan Mali

Participant Balkissa draws a cartoon depicting scenarios of violence against children.

of a 'children's city' in Bamako. It is equipped and supervised by the ministry for the promotion of women, children and the family. Plan has signed a collaboration protocol with this ministry and provides support to the national and regional children's parliaments on this basis.

The children's parliament has a change of office every two years. The last change of office was in 2010. Every child who presents her/himself as a candidate has to put forward a programme of activities to convince their peers of their suitability, and to prove their communication and leadership skills. Children attending school and those out of school can elect members of parliament. Following the last elections, 41 members (boys and girls) aged from 12 to 17 years took up positions. The president of the national children's parliament is elected from amongst the candidates based in Bamako, for reasons of practicality. This is one of the weaknesses of the system because it effectively discriminates against children from the regions.

Each new mandate begins with a child rights assessment from which the parliamentary members create an action plan. They implement, monitor and evaluate their action plan with support from the government and partners. The children's parliament organises awareness-raising and advocacy sessions with duty bearers at regional and national levels. This includes discussions with members of the adult parliament (MPs). These discussions allow them to share their concerns with MPs who then present them in parliamentary sessions.

Photo: Plan Mali

During training participant Allassane learns how to use a computer.

What approaches did the children and young people use?

Tackling violence against children is complex as the root causes are very deep. Wherever one encounters children, there is also abuse. Because of this complexity, the project focused on building the capacity of children and young people and working in a collaborative, participatory way. The children and young people identified what they wanted to learn which then formed the basis of a series of training workshops (see Box 3).

As a result of the training sessions, children and young people have become aware of the phenomenon of violence. Previously, they might have played dangerous games or bullied each other, not realising that this constituted abuse. Such behaviour had gone on for many years. The children have also learnt new advocacy strategies. Balkhissa, a child participant, tells us more:

I am very upset by the fact that young children are victims of violence all over the world. The only contribution I can make is to raise people's awareness of this through the cartoons we have created during this workshop. I hope that they will give people

Box 3: What training was provided?

Four training sessions were organised between July 2009 and September 2010, with around 20–25 children and young people taking part in each. The participants chose which sessions they wanted to attend according to their different training needs.

- The first training session, on advocacy and violence against children in the school environment, took place in July 2009. Participants discussed the different forms of violence against children and were introduced to the UN study on violence against children and its recommendations. They also learnt about advocacy and how to campaign.
- Social media and new technology formed the basis of the second training session in July 2010 which involved a group of 20 children. They learnt about SMS text messages, blogging, the Internet and Skype. This training was intended to support children to develop the skills required to network with each other at local, national and regional levels.
- The third session, also in July 2010, taught children how to draw and use cartoons to raise awareness about the types of violence most commonly experienced by children (e.g. bullying, corporal punishment, female genital mutilation/cutting, child labour and sexual harassment).
- The final training session, in September 2010, looked at gender-based violence. It raised awareness amongst children about the difference between sex and gender, as well as examining gender stereotypes, gender-based discrimination, and how to bring a gender-equality lens to their work.

Photo: Plan Mali

Youth Caravan on violence against children.

a wake-up call and they will pass the message on.

However, this training omitted one important aspect: training duty bearers. Although it was not part of this project, this could be included in similar projects, such as the Learn Without Fear project launched in 2008.[6] Children have encountered a certain amount of resistance from decision makers which could have perhaps been avoided if they too had received training. The results achieved could have been even more conclusive and far-reaching. However, this should not detract from what the children themselves have so far achieved.

What have the children achieved?

The silence which has always surrounded violence, partly out of fear and partly because of harmful beliefs and traditions, is now being broken through the young people's awareness-raising and advocacy efforts. These efforts are directed both at decision makers and the general population. Stories denouncing violence have been published by APJEC in their newspaper. For example, when APJEC learnt that a girl had been raped and the rapist was known but had not been reported, they immediately published an article about the case. Diaffra, age 22, explains:

We arranged for all the people working on this area of child protection to have a copy of the newspaper. Our work bore fruit... and today, the perpetrator is in prison.

Nowadays, more decision makers are discussing violence with children. This is not an inconsiderable achievement. Although children may not yet receive their desired level of protection, they do benefit from this favourable environment. The relationship between the children's parliament and the ministry gives the child parliamentarians a way of facilitating contact with the highest levels of authority, such as the national assembly. This means that they have been able to make themselves heard and contribute to decisions.

Corporal punishment in schools is decreasing. School rules are now made available in schools and everyone is aware of them. The whip is not used as frequently, and teachers say that they have stopped hitting children. According to a teacher from the Bankoumana Primary School, in a village 60km west of Bamako:

Because of the awareness raising done by children, we understand the consequences of corporal punishment for children. I used to do it, but as of today, I'll never use the whip

[6] Learn Without Fear is organised by Plan Mali in partnership with Save the Children, and supported by the ministry for basic education.

Photos: Plan Mali

A group of children learning how to use a computer.

During group work, the child participants use participatory tools to record their discussion on gender inequalities.

A girl participant is fascinated by what she has learnt through the Internet.

*again. I would describe the whip (*fouet *in French) in the following way:* 'fou' *(makes children mad), 'e' for* 'étourdir' *(stuns children) and 't' for* 'lui traumatise' *(traumatises them).*

Children themselves agree that corporal punishment has declined in some schools, as Ibrahim, 13, testifies:

The teachers used to hit us a lot, but now they no longer do… because we went round all the classrooms… to say that it's not good to hit the pupils.

However, just because pupils at Ibrahim's school were able to educate their teachers on why they should not use violence does not mean that this is possible in every school. The teachers who are willing to discuss the issue with children and young people may change their behaviour, but there are many more reticent teachers who will never accept it.

Photo: Plan Mali

At the end of the computer training course, the children express their enthusiasm for what they have learnt.

What obstacles have been overcome and what lessons can we learn?

When we analyse these results, it becomes apparent that two main strategies allowed us to achieve them. The first was to build the capacity of children and young people to campaign for their own protection. The second was the creation of a network of children and young people which gave them more power when facing duty bearers, because *'L'union fait la force'* or 'there's strength in numbers'. The project has meant that children and young people can get to know each other and share their experiences of tackling violence.

However, we must recognise that there are still some obstacles to be overcome. Despite the amount of advocacy work carried out with decision makers, there has been very little progress in terms of better governance. There is still no adequate legal protection for children against, for example, female genital mutilation (FGM). This is despite multiple advocacy campaigns by different parties. The prejudices and stereotypes that contribute to this type of violence are so well rooted that any steps taken are fragile. As a result, children and young people continue to struggle to ensure their protection.

Another obstacle is the fact the children's parliament is under the supervision of the ministry for the promotion of women, children and the family. This is not a bad thing in itself. It means that the ministry can provide the necessary framework for the children's parliament to carry out its advocacy work. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that in order to effectively participate in decision-making, children and young people must have a certain amount of independence vis-à-vis the State and other authorities such as their parents.

This initiative is certainly good, but it could be improved if certain limitations were removed. Practically speaking, the main limitation was the lack of foresight with regards to the need to strengthen the duty bearers' capacities at the same time as the children's. It is by no means clear that the duty bearers have the necessary knowledge of child protection, child rights, good governance principles or, above all, understanding of their roles and responsibilities as guarantors of children's rights.

Next steps

The children and young people have certainly led the struggle against violence themselves, and have proved their capability. However, their engagement must be analysed. For the next phase of the project, which has just begun, we need to further develop the two strategies highlighted above and to complement them with others, such as informing, training and building the capacity of the duty bearers as well as the children and young people.

A further possible complement would be to extend the reach of the children's parliament beyond the regional level to the commune level. It is at the commune level that children's rights tend to be least respected, due to poverty and illiteracy. If the authorities were able to create a children's parliament in every commune in the country, more children could be involved in advocacy for good governance, and the concerns of those most in need could be analysed and brought to the attention of the national assembly via the national children's parliament.

In taking these steps we hope to consolidate and strengthen the results that children and young people are achieving through their advocacy. As explained by Sidy, aged 14:

...I will never again stand by without intervening when a child falls victim to violence.

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PART III

Learning citizenship young

As of now, we are stakeholders in local governance

11

by THE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOUGA, SENEGAL
with SERIGNE MALICK FALL

Introduction

We are young people from the Louga region in northern Senegal.[1] In 2009, we benefited from a project which gave us the opportunity to organise ourselves and gain the necessary skills to effectively participate in local governance. As a result, and with some effective advocacy work carried out with duty bearers, we now participate in our communities' annual investment planning sessions.[2] Prior to these meetings, we carry out a thorough analysis of our priorities. These are then validated by our peers, who have designated us as their representatives.

This is a real revolution because, before, we were not a part of anything. Everything was done without us, even when the problems directly concerned us: such as child protection, education, health and sport.

Today, we are successfully integrated in a world which, until now, was reserved exclusively for adults. The new skills we have gained mean that we get more approval and more consideration. The most important thing is that we, ourselves, have been qualitatively transformed by this change.

Now that we have earned our place, we intend to continue the fight to sustain and strengthen it. We have got the determination and the skills to do this, and, at the moment, the duty bearers' attitudes are favourable. Now all we need to do is maintain and develop what we have learnt. We rely on our partners and duty bearers to help us.

Who are we?

We are 37 young Senegalese citizens (14 girls and 23 boys) from the Louga region in northern Senegal which is 70 km from St Louis, the former capital. We live and study in two rural communities called Niomré and Kelle Guèye.[3] We represent all the young people who belong to child-centred

[1] See notes at the end of this article.
[2] For a definition of duty bearers, see glossary (this issue).
[3] A 'rural community', in Senegal, is a collection of several villages situated in the same eco-geographic area.

Box 1: How did we write this article?

This article was written in collaboration with 37 young people from the Louga region in Senegal. Their co-author, Serigne Malick Fall, a consultant for Plan Senegal, coordinated a two-year governance project which gave young people the opportunity to actively participate in local governance in their different communities.

The article for this special issue of *PLA* on youth and participatory governance in Africa was produced in several phases. Following a call for papers by IIED, Plan and IDS in late 2009, I (Serigne Malick Fall) visited the field to tell the young people about the writing project and to identify with them the exact experience they wanted to write about. Once this was done, I wrote the abstract that was then submitted to the editors. When the abstracted was accepted, I went back to the young people and agreed with them on how the article would be produced. Following this, I set out eleven questions which would help the young people to write – this was the outline for the article which was then sent to the editors.

We held two writing workshops with the young people, one in each community – Kelle Guèye and Niomré – and filmed them. During these workshops, the young people:

- each chose the question that they wanted to respond to;
- worked individually to reply to their chosen question;
- worked in small groups, depending on the question; and
- reproduced, in plenary, their group work.

Their writing was then aggregated into two documents by 'youth champions' acting on their behalf. Using these two documents as a base, I produced the first draft which was sent to the editors. The first draft was also sent to the young people. I also gathered their feedback on the next draft soon after the writeshop.

As the adult who accompanied the process, at the end of this article I offer some critical reflections on the changes brought about as well as the sustainability of the project.

Planning our priorities during the workshop.

Prioritising what we want to write about in our article.

Photos: Plan Senegal

Photos: Plan Senegal

Our first session of the Plan Senegal school and local governance project that we re-christened Project *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp* – or, in Wolof, 'To work for oneself'.

community organisations in 88 villages. Every community has a federation of child-centred community organisations and we are members of the Niomré and Guèye federations.

Between 2009 and 2010, we benefited from a Plan Senegal school and local governance project, the Governance Programme Partnership Agreement, which we have re-christened *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp*. In Wolof, this means 'To work for oneself' – because of the central position we were given in its implementation.[4]

This project has helped us to participate effectively in the management of our schools and local governance through our participation in community development planning.

How are we organised, and why?

We have formed groups of children/young people. We have divided each of our rural communities into zones, each with a board of children/young people. Our presence on these structures has allowed us to educate our parents on the protection of the rights of the child and to participate in making policies which concern us.[5]

The *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp* project emphasised the need 'to increase the participation of young citizens, and their organisations, in the process of evaluation, planning, implementation and control of resources and services'.[6] Without a doubt, this project's greatest innovation has been the creation of school councils, which provide a space for training, meeting and action. They provide a framework for us to take responsibility and launch independent initiatives to serve our schools. With the school councils, our associative system has been considerably strengthened. Now we have a space exclusively reserved for us in the school framework – under the gaze of the Head of the establishment and the teachers, who, until now, had exclusive control of school management.

The school council is lead by an executive office of six young people (three boys and three girls) democratically elected by the class delegates (of which there are four to five per class) in a general assembly. It also contains at least three separate committees which are responsible for different tasks within the day-to-day running and management of the school,

[4] Wolof is one of Senegal's national languages.
[5] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally binding international instrument that Senegal ratified in 1998. The CRC recognises the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. For more information see the glossary (this issue) and: www.unicef.org/crc
[6] Objective 3 from the *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp* project.

Photo: Plan Senegal

Making an action plan for our school.

such as asset management, health, environment, hygiene and sanitation, sports and culture etc.

School councils have been crucial both in strengthening our participation in school management and our involvement in our local planning development committees. They provide a framework for us to be trained in planning, management and the control of goods and services delivered to schools. Because of these new skills, we now manage all our school assets as well as a part of the financial support granted to school projects. We also formulate action plans to improve our environment and learning conditions.

These are welcome and unexpected changes for children/young people, which previously we had never dared to hope for, because of adults' deep-rooted habits that effectively marginalised young people.

From marginalisation to participation: how was change brought about?

Previously, although we were organised into child/youth groups, we didn't know what took place at the Rural Council, or how things worked there.[7] In effect, although our rights had been promoted and protected for several years, our right to participation was relegated to the background. For a long time, our parents had limited it to activities that didn't compromise their power: for example, helping to vaccinate our little brothers or registering them for school, obtaining birth certificates for them etc.

It took the launch of the *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp* project for us to really benefit from our right to participate. This change was achieved through a combination of factors:

- successfully raising the awareness of our parents and duty bearers; and
- building our capacity as young people in

[7] On its administrative map, Senegal is subdivided into 14 regions, 45 departments, 117 arrondissements (administrative divisions), 150 communes (the lowest level of administrative division) and 353 rural communities.

areas such as planning our priorities, managing goods and services, holding meetings and monitoring our action plans.

How did we build our capacity to participate?

We needed several training sessions to gain confidence and to feel capable of competing with adults in domains that, previously, they occupied exclusively. Modules developed for us by youth champions (teachers and young people who had already received training) focused on the following skills:

- planning priorities, translating them into activities and correctly budgeting for them;
- managing and controlling the quality of goods and services;
- managing and generating financial resources;
- conducting meetings; and
- producing a newspaper.

Once we had acquired these skills, we were able to hold our own community planning workshops. This work allowed us to be officially recognised by, and participate in, operational planning workshops organised by our respective rural councils.

How do our planning workshops work?

The first stage of preparation for our planning workshops is always to inform the President of the Rural Council. Once we have his approval and commitment to the workshop, we begin our basic activity by planning at the 'zone' level: each of the four zones discussed above sets out its priorities and chooses a delegation to represent it at the community workshop. These delegates are then called to the Rural Council headquarters for the planning workshop. We hold the meetings in the Rural Council's discussion chamber, which gives our work the official 'seal of approval'.

We begin a meeting by introducing ourselves, and then setting out some rules to ensure a productive meeting, after which we rigorously follow twelve stages (see Box 2).

Photo: Plan Senegal

Continuing our discussions outside under a tree.

How have we ensured that our priorities are included in the community annual investment plan?

The children/young people's action plan is presented at the annual rural community investment planning workshop, which is a decision-making space for adults. This meeting is convened by the President of the Rural Council, in the presence of the administrative authority, technical partners and NGOs. During this meeting, the children's priorities are integrated with the adults', according to their relevance to the programme objectives. Acceptance of the children/young people's priorities is generally easy, because, in the almost unanimous opinion of the participants:

> *The children/young people plan for everybody: women, children and men.*[8]

What activities have we carried out, and how?

The results recorded to date are extremely encouraging. As well as the activities we previously carried out (raising environmental awareness, advocating for birth

[8] Quote from the President of the Niomré Rural Council, at the annual investment planning workshop, Louga, August 2009, with the participation of a large delegation of children/young people and in the presence of all the rural council presidents of the department, the Prefect and technical representatives of the Senegalese State.

Box 2: Planning workshops

Stage 1: Every participant tells a story that has affected them.

Stage 2: Individually, we try to identify the problems one by one that have emerged from the different stories.

Stage 3: Using drawings, we try to identify all the different problems affecting us, whether these are at school or in the community.

Stage 4: Consolidation of the problems:
- Drawings are put up and commented on.
- We group ideas that go together, even if they are depicted slightly differently.
- Two volunteers (one girl and one boy) try to classify the pictures.
- The problems are named, based on the drawings.
- We then choose by consensus the problems which are our priority, using a preference ranking method.

To take into account the age of the participants, we often use a role-play activity to establish our priorities. This means that everyone is able to offer their perspectives and preferences without feeling manipulated.

Stage 5: In small working groups, we try to present solutions to each problem using pictures.

Stage 6: The proposed solutions are rewritten on flipchart paper and stuck on the wall.

Stage 7: For every solution found, we set out the activities that would allow us to implement it, including the actors, the timeframe and the budget.

Solutions	Activities	Actors	Timeframe	Budget

The budget section is only filled in after retrieving information from the relevant actors.

Stage 8: We put monitoring mechanisms in place, using the following question: what proves to us that the activity has been carried out?

Activity	Proof that it has been carried out (indicators)

Stage 9: We collect the budgetary information, which means retrieving information from people about how much each part of the activity will cost.

Stage 10: We process the data we have gathered: a small group of four children/young people (two girls and two boys) is in charge of adding the budgetary information to the activity table.

Stage 11: We vote on the budget like this:
- The solutions are set out on different coloured pieces of paper.
- Two volunteers are designated to count the votes.
- The solutions are classified according to the number of votes they receive.

Stage 12: We put in place a monitoring committee: four children/young people (two girls and two boys) are voted to represent us on the Rural Council. Their role is to:
- monitor the implementation of our action plan;
- with the Rural Council, verify the execution of the activities including quality control; and
- report back on the project to the group.

After monitoring the project for three months, the monitoring committee has to answer the following questions:
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- What should we improve next time?

To do this, they have to fill out the table below:

Activities	Proof that the activity has been carried out	What worked?	What didn't work?	What needs to be improved?

Photo: Plan Senegal

Children in Senegal raising a flag that they helped to restore.

registration, school enrolment etc.), we are now working in new areas such as:
• making inventories of school property;
• requesting access to information (including prices) on the supplies and materials destined for use in our schools;
• ordering, receiving and managing the supply of goods and services necessary in our schools;
• budget management for varied and complex activities such as school fairs, sports/cultural competitions, the purchase of school supplies; and
• implementing community action plans alongside other youth associations in our communities.

What impact have the activities had on children/young people and the community?

Due to the increased capacities we have demonstrated, adults now perceive us much more positively. We are considered just as capable as them of identifying solutions to the issues faced in our community, especially issues related to the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights.

We are now accepted, and even actively invited, into decision-making spaces that were previously exclusively occupied by adults. We are participating in the development of different sectors of our communities, expressing ourselves and giving our opinions on everything.

Our participation in activities which develop our communities at grassroots level makes us feel more responsible, confident and trusted. The skills we have acquired and our achievements have empowered us and given us confidence. We express ourselves better in public and feel as though we are better trusted in different situations. We now have skills and knowledge of subjects where adults often lack understanding. Moreover, by organising our own planning workshops, we have acquired life skills which are essential for our society. Presenting our action plans allows us to communicate with adults and help people of different ages to work well together in community decision-making

Box 3: Learning by doing and the African child

In *L'Enfant Noir,* Camara Laye (2000) brings 'learning by doing' to life by describing the relationship between a son and his blacksmith father. Pierre Erny (1990) in *L'enfant et son milieu en Afrique Noire,* also aims to illustrate how, throughout his life, the African child learns alongside his elders whose responsibility is to 'pass on the heritage of past generations'. Historically, the African child developed by following his parents and working alongside them. The presence of young people alongside adults was an invaluable way to learn to face their individual and collective social responsibility. These values have faded over time but we hope that they will be revived by activities like these.

spaces, which, before, were exclusively occupied by adults. We are also well integrated within the teams which monitor and evaluate these planned activities. This gives us the opportunity to develop good governance skills from an early age.

In fact, our everyday behaviour has already changed. As a community representative testified:

The pupils' demonstrations (strikes, sit-ins, marches) were, until now, bordering on vandalism, but since young people have participated in local governance processes, we haven't seen any damage or destruction of public property on their part.

What impact has this had on duty bearers?

For duty bearers – for local authorities, parents, representatives of State services and community structures – this experience has been an opportunity for them to gain more credibility in the eyes of children and young people. By working with young citizens in decision-making spaces, duty-bearers want to be seen as more credible and transparent in managing community development activities. Adults are now learning to pass on their knowledge and skills to young people, using educational and training methodologies that, as in the past in Africa, focus on 'learning by doing' (see Box 3).

What about tomorrow (perspectives)?

We know that it's easier to create change than to sustain it. We could say that the hardest is yet to come. However, we have now learnt the essentials: we know how to organise ourselves and form networks with other children/young people. We have acquired technical skills which, despite our age, put us at the same level as adults. This means that we are now perceived as 'partners' that local authorities can call on to ensure that local planning is done according to our social and economic needs, using a rights-based approach.[9] Better yet, we know what we want and how to get it. We want to improve the quality of our education. We need libraries and leisure facilities in schools so that we can spend more time there doing extra-curricular activities, rather than at home where we (especially girls) are inundated with domestic work.

Finally, we want to continue to benefit from projects at our level, so that we can use our newfound skills and gain further skills in our work alongside adults.

We are going to share and transfer our new skills so that our non-school attending peers, or those whose schools were not part of this project, will also benefit from *Liggèèyal Sa Bopp.*

Comment by Serigne Malick Fall, process facilitator

Some fragility is evident in the young people's writing here. We must remember that as they increase their capacity, they develop expectations. However, they also believe they owe everything to the NGO which helped them to realise their right to participate in local governance. This includes, for example, the way Plan's influence worked in their favour with adults in charge.

Nevertheless, in believing this, they are underestimating their own assets, and

[9] For a definition of a rights-based approach, see glossary (this issue).

forgetting that they did, in fact, believe in themselves. They are also forgetting that there have always been adults who are receptive to their participation, either because of their ideological convictions or because they have first-hand experience of young people's maturity and a sense of responsibility towards them (in e.g. cultural, sporting or environmental activities). These 'youth allies' constantly remind others of the wise Wolof adage which says: 'Truth is a needle, fallen in the sand. The young person, just like the adult, can pick it up'.

Moreover, the history of development in our country reminds us constantly that training, however well-formulated, will not suffice to bring about qualitative changes. The gap between trial and transformation is often very wide, which is further proof of the merit of the young people from Niomré and Kelle Guèye.

However, the project's outcomes are still fragile, because young people haven't yet developed their own income-generating initiatives. This would reinforce their autonomy and help them find endogenous solutions to their problems. They also have not yet realised that they are largely dependent on external funds (which come from the community or from NGOs such as Plan). This makes it absolutely vital that outputs are monitored and supported until they reach a critical mass which will guarantee their sustainability.

To do this, young people can rely on local duty bearers who are now willing to **capitalise** on what the project has already achieved. Not only do most of the rural community presidents now have the necessary skills and knowledge, but several other community groups are appropriating the approaches used by the project in collaboration with young people. This is the case in Saint-Louis, Louga and Thiès in particular. The young people at the heart of these important changes have, in themselves, definitively changed. In changing, they have **transformed** the context in which they act and completely transformed the way they are **perceived** by the adults they have **collaborated** with. In this respect, we may be sure that nothing will remain the same as before, because children/young people have acquired the means to participate fully in local governance.

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NOTES
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Seeing from our perspectives: youth budget advocacy in Ghana

12

by CHARLOTTE BANI-AFUDEGO, GEORGE COBBINAH YORKE and ANASTASIE ABLAVI KOUDOH

Introduction

Budgets are extremely important documents. They act as instruments for implementing the provisions in the international, regional and national conventions leading to achieving the promotion of the welfare of children.[1] Better outcomes in any sector, for instance in education, health, water or rural development depend not just on allocations but also on actual execution and proper use of those allocations. The execution and proper use of budgeted funds can be improved through social accountability.[2] Citizens, including young citizens, can involve themselves in participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring public service delivery, lobbying and embarking on advocacy campaigns.

Poor investments on child welfare, protection and gender equity reflect the low priority many governments attach to these issues when it comes to budget planning and implementation. The neglect of vulnerable children and youth – street children and youth, orphans, migrant children and youth, those trafficked and/or sexually abused – in our policy and budgeting could become a thing of the past, as youth gradually become part of planning and budgeting processes.

In Ghana, the idea of budgeting at the national level was seen as very technical and remained in the domain of the economists and financial experts. National budget processes were seen to have little to do with youth and children. The National Youth Policy of Ghana (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010) defines youth as persons aged between 18 and 35 whilst the 1992 Constitution also defines children as those below the age of 18.

Recently, Plan Ghana has sought to enhance youth participation in budget

[1] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children and the 1992 Constitution of Ghana are just some documents which have been approved by Government and make provisions regarding children's welfare.
[2] For a definition of social accountability see the glossary, this issue.

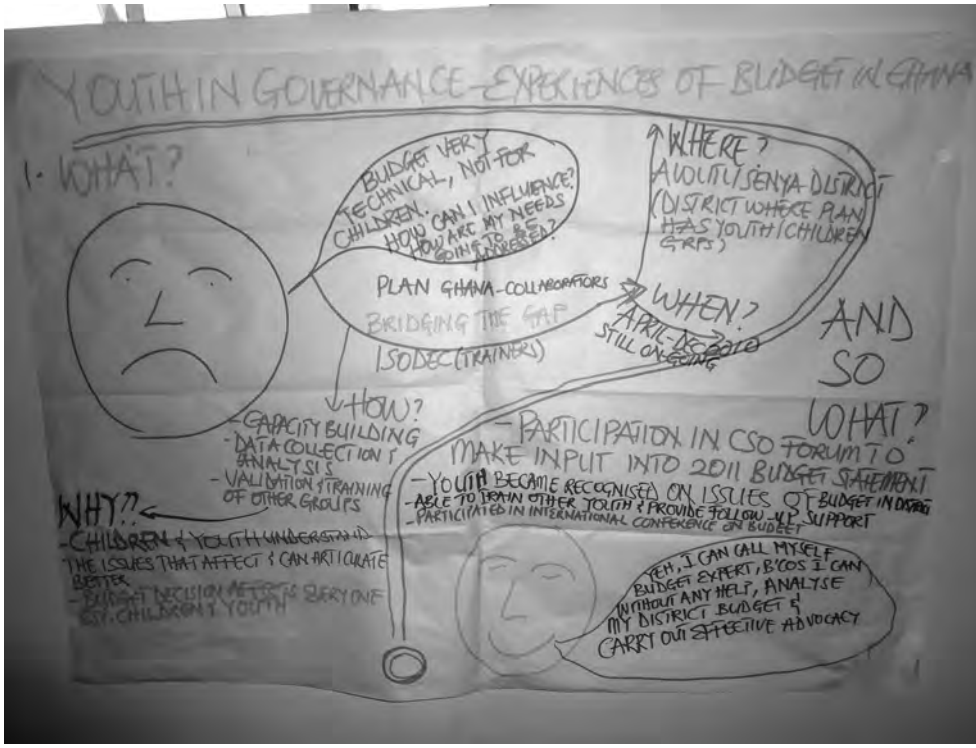


Photo: George Yorke

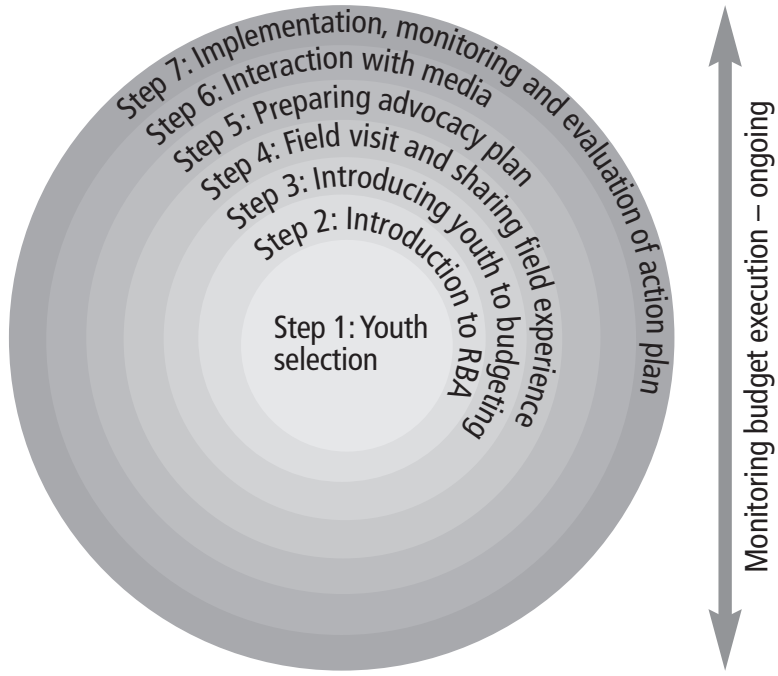
A mindmap presented to writeshop participants by Charlotte Bani-Afudego and George Yorke on youth and budget advocacy issues in Ghana.

preparation and tracking. Being concerned about children and young people's rights, the organisation is concerned with whether and how rights-fulfilment is budgeted and planned for. In collaboration with the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) it began a youth budget advocacy project in January 2010, as a pilot for replication in other West African countries. It has proven a fulfilling experience for ISODEC and Plan and the youth involved.

The project trained young people in budget advocacy, giving rise to a group christened the Youth Budget Advocacy Group of Awutu-Senya District (Y-BAGAS). We the authors of this article have been closely involved in the training programme and the preceding activities of the youth group. Charlotte Bani-Afudego and two other trainers from ISODEC trained the youths. Charlotte and George Yorke (from Plan Ghana) have monitored and coordinated the activities of these youth since the training. Some other Plan staff, including Anastasie Koudoh, have also made input.

In this article we outline first the need for more youth participation in budgeting. We then go on to describe a participatory youth budgeting training process, and how the youth went on to apply what they learnt in the training. Finally, we explore the possible impacts of this process. The article offers the opportunity to learn from the experiences of these youth groups and their evidence-based budget advocacy, as well as explore the best strategies to widen the horizon and increase opportunities for youth engagement with policy makers. It points to the need to monitor consistently the impact of youth participation in budgeting for their communities. It also demonstrates that in order to become active citizens, children and young people need to learn in ways that promote their own sense of empowerment by being

Figure 1: Budget advocacy training process



proactive and initiating their own activities – so that the learning process itself becomes a form of active citizenship.

Learning new skills for effective budget advocacy

As a prelude to the start of the project, a stakeholders' meeting was organised in the Awutu-Senya district. This was intended to introduce the local authorities, traditional heads and community members to the project concept and help the authorities understand our objectives and the need to involve youth in their budgeting processes.

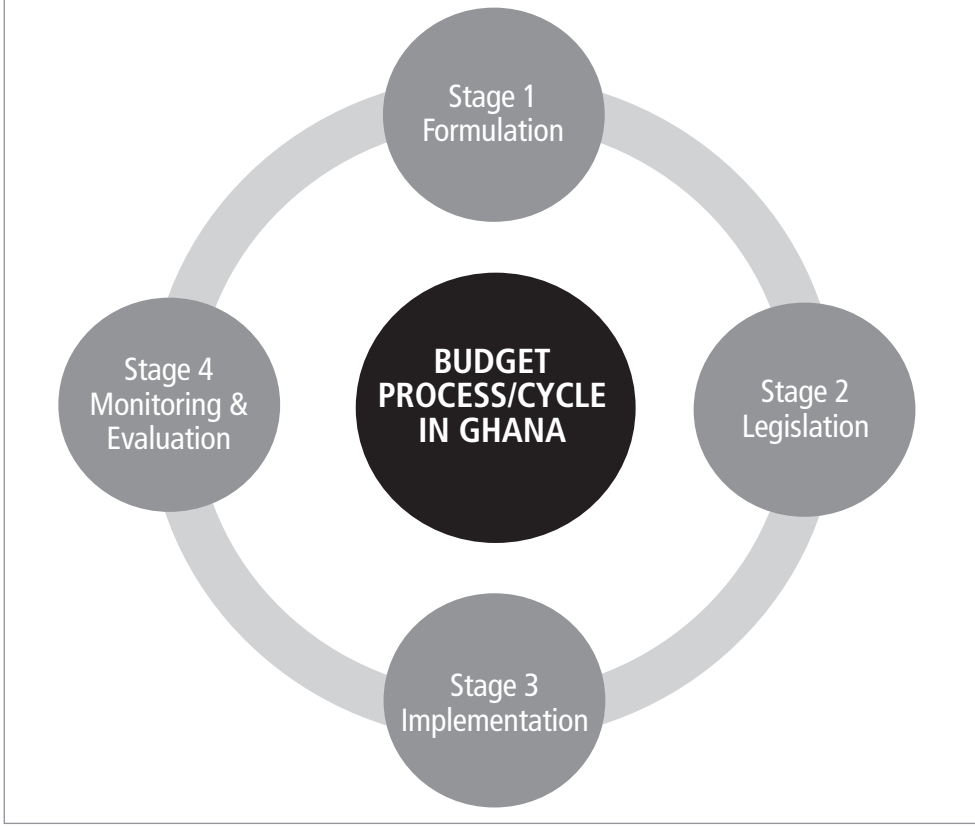
The proposed methodology hinged on a training of trainers (ToT) (see Figure 1). So we wanted to identify as training participants those with the best starting level knowledge on budgeting. We applied a selection process based on a questionnaire sent to twenty youths. Five young women and five young men, aged between 12 and 30 were selected. The training was hosted in a different district so that activities could be piloted there and replicated by the youth later in their own district. Charlotte and ISODEC colleagues developed a training manual and a toolkit for budget advocacy training.

Training of trainers

The week-long ToT workshop was practical and participatory. Its main aim was to build the youth's capacity to advocate for key changes in their communities for development to be achieved. We first introduced the participants to the rights-based approach (RBA) as the basis for budget advocacy.[3] International, regional and national legal instruments were explored as the justification for budgeting for children's rights. We then exposed them to the essence of family budgeting and the relevance of considering everyone's needs in

[3] For a definition of a rights-based approach, see glossary (this issue).

Figure 2: Budget process



the family before making any plans or budgets. We introduced them to the budget cycle (see Figure 2) and budget documents at the local and national level and how these can be influenced at each stage. Participants also learnt some calculations of growth rates and how to make trend analysis of budget figures. Brainstorming and group exercises highlighted the implications of budgets for vulnerable groups especially women and children.

After interviewing the local authorities in the host districts, the participants felt equipped to design questions to ascertain the needs and problems affecting children, as well as how much community members participate in planning and budgeting. They interviewed children, especially those selling on the streets, as well as adult men and women. Returning from familiarisation visits, they shared findings which reflected how children and youth were not given opportunities in developmental programmes and activities in their district.

After the training of trainers, the youth participants who exhibited the greatest confidence and knowledge replicated their skills during the five-day training workshop with 15 other youths. Youth participants were fascinated to have the opportunity to use the training manual and workshop contents to train other youth participants. Five out of the ten who became trainers admitted that it was the first time they had stood in front of their peers to engage them in participatory learning approach. Ellen A., a 22-year-old participant who became a trainer, said:

> *When you first informed us that we were going to train other groups after our training, I doubted the possibility of having to*

explain issues of budgeting for my peers to understand, but the participatory approach helped to realised how I can contribute and allow others to also contribute to discussions to enhance their understanding.

Involving the media

Plan Ghana also invited host district media personnel to the training for a simulation exercise. The youth groups presented their familiarisation visit findings and advocacy statements in the form of a press statement or press conference. The invited media actors reacted with the best strategies for engaging with media and decision makers. The media actors broadcast the youths' activities and findings during a morning radio show which received several commendations from listeners during a phone-in session.

Putting budget training into action

On returning to their own districts, the engagement of the 25 trained young people was at the local level. It was based on a budget advocacy plan establishing objectives and timelines, which they developed at the end of the training workshop.

Their first activity was to embark on field trips to various communities to gather empirical data to ascertain the issues affecting children. This enabled them to set a baseline and situational analysis that could be periodically monitored in relation to budget allocations and execution. The first of its kind for most of the youth, this experience proved very interesting and revealing. Youths from different communities divided themselves into council areas of their district, to interview children, male and female adults about issues affecting the welfare of children, like education, health, water and social protection. This enabled them to make grounded assessments of the adequacy of specific budget allocations and executions relating to these essential services

Having confirmed through the field survey the importance of these sectors to children, the youth analysed the respective District Assembly budget allocations. We helped them to organise a validation meeting at which they shared initial findings of field survey work with some community members and the local authorities.

The theme for the 2010 African Union Day of the African Child – 'budgeting for children's rights' – happened to coincide with budget advocacy post-training activi-

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ACCA members schooled on Ghana's Tax Regimes

Accountants, finance and audit officers of corporate and government institutions were last week trained on Ghana's Changing tax policies and administration.
The training is part of the continuing professional development of members of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants and was on the topic, Essential Updates on Taxation.
George Kwatia, Tax Partner of Price Waterhouse Coopers who took participants through the contemporary history of Ghana's tax regime, noted that political undertones are critical in formulation of tax policies. Governments have introduced tax policies based on their political inclination. However there is need to no incentive to encourage tax

Budget advocacy group releases report on Children's right

Adnan M Adams

The Youth budget advocacy group of Upper Manya Krobo District in the Eastern Region has released a report on field survey conducted to identify issues and challenges fighting against children's right protection in the district.
The survey was conducted within the period of 3rd-30th January, 2011 in six selected communities in the district. The communities are Adwenso, Brepaw Kpeti, Assesewa Community 'A' and 'C', Fefe and Akatey.
During the survey, the group identified that, key issues that works against children's rights, and these includes: Child labor, Poor sanitation, Lack of enough boreholes, Negative peer pressure, and Teenage pregnancy is very high, and School drop-outs are on the increase.
Other issued identified by the group includes: Poor road network, Unhygienic food prepared at school canteens, Lack of enough textbooks, Child abuse was very common, Drug abuse and addictions, Low attitude of children towards education, Lack of adequate health center, Lack of professional and trained teachers and health workers, Lack of supervision of teachers and masters in schools to ensure provision quality tuition of school children, and Lack of vocational institutions or centers.
The work of the youth group was sponsored by Plan Ghana, as part of it youth in governance and advocacy programs on the Right of the Child (ROC) protection in the district.
Meanwhile, in the course of the findings, it was realized that nothing was being done to mitigate these negative challenges.

UN forms partnership to train Women on computer use

GRA advises traders to keep record of receipts

The Western Regional Head of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Francis Sapathy, has advised business operators to keep their VAT receipts for at least six years before destroying them.
He said VAT officers would intermittently undertake visits to businesses to perform cross auditing and that if the business operators destroy their receipts before such visits there would be dire consequences.
Sapathy was speaking at a one-day's workshop organized by the GRA for traders in Axim in the Western Region to educate them on the VAT Amendment Act 810.

News article by Adnan M. Adams in Ghana's *Economy and Times*. 'Budget advocacy group releases report on children's rights.'

Photo: ISODEC/Plan Ghana

Youth groups conducting research in their communities to ascertain issues that affect the welfare of children.

ties. This provided an opportunity to engage with local host-district decision makers. An advocacy statement was presented by the group at a mini-*durbar*, which is an official gathering hosted by a local chief. This was organised by Plan Ghana in a local district and brought together school children, District Assembly officials and parents as well as some traditional leaders. The youth groups put on a role-play activity depicting how their District Assembly budget could address the basic needs of children especially in education, health and water. All these activities were interpreted in the local language, thereby reaching more participants. This activity generated a lot of interest and questions, and the youth responded with practical examples using preliminary findings from their field survey.

Some of the youth groups were also invited to participate in a forum of civil

society organisations (CSOs) to make inputs into the 2011 Ghana budget statement. They strongly supported the continuation of the Youth in Agriculture programme, which was approved, although we have no way of knowing how much this was due to the youths' advocacy.

The youth have continued to hold meetings as necessary and conduct periodic monitoring to track changes on government spending and programmes in their communities. Some of them had to travel long distances to remote communities where children lack basic social services. But visiting such places helped them to understand and analyse the inequitable distribution of scarce resources. Philomena H., an 18-year-old girl, said:

> *I am very glad I took part in this survey because it helped me to be more conscious about how some children are denied access to basic educational facilities, although government and local authorities are mandated to meet these needs. This situation boosted my morale to advocate more for these voiceless children to be heard.*

In order not to forget the knowledge they acquired, these youth groups voluntarily conduct workshops on budget advocacy for other groups. So far, 70 children and youth (31 females and 39 males) from central and eastern regions have participated.

Reflecting critically and learning from the experience

In terms of the process, we feel that the training was imperative not only for the youth but for the coordinators too, since it tested and validated the manual designed for the process. After the first training we made a lot of revisions to the manual, in particular including more exercises to enhance knowledge and practicality of the training, since we observed that the participants were well capable of absorbing more than we had anticipated.

Initially, the participants were not comfortable with the participatory approach. They felt they knew nothing of the subject and expected the usual teacher-pupil methodology. Their contributions during discussions made them see that they had a lot to offer to the learning process. For instance, participants embarked on familiarisation visits during the training to some local assemblies within the purview of the host district. They interviewed planning officers and budget officers and raised concerns about the medium term development plans and objectives of the district which inform the budget. The budget officials took account of some of the concerns they raised and invited them to the next meeting about the medium term development plan.

We were struck by the way participants in the replica training workshops responded to their peer trainers, who were creative and innovative in their approaches. Charlotte and colleagues provided guidelines, monitored the replica workshops and made some interventions. They also met with the youth trainers after each day's training to evaluate their presentations and methods.

The participatory approach adopted for the training clearly helped the youth to understand the concept more than they would have from a less participatory methodology. It boosted their confidence to share their ideas and contribute to discussions.

The youth groups undertook continual follow-up with the communities they visited, which helped them to track changes that had occurred since their initial survey.

Most of the youth have articles and stories which they want to project to policy makers to prompt them to act. Providing them with better access to avenues like the media would increase their sense of fulfilment and encourage them more to take up initiatives. Facilitators have therefore planned with youth groups to visit radio

Photo: ISODEC/Plan Ghana

A young girl that the children interviewed, who was selling goods during school hours.

stations to discuss findings from the budget analysis. Some youth groups have been encouraged to write more articles to be published in news journals.

Critiquing ourselves, we think we left these youth groups to operate independently a bit too early, without providing them with the necessary reinforcement to arm them for the task ahead. Providing refresher training would help them stay focused on their objectives, as well as addressing already-noted challenges, such as difficulty in accessing information at district level and in generating media interest in their advocacy work. Also, we still have a major guiding role to play by monitoring the youths' activities. We therefore plan to organise another major training on budgeting for all beneficiaries of the first training, to identify any weaknesses, enhance their knowledge and support their multiplication of the training activities.

In terms of emerging impact, the introduction of these youth to budget advocacy has brought about some remarkable changes in the youth themselves, their communities, and to some extent the nation as a whole. Hitherto, the youth were oblivious of what informed their district's medium term plan and budget. They knew they were not considered important stakeholders when it came to district planning. The knowledge they acquired in this short time was immediately put into action, and the rights-based approach they used in their budget analysis made the local authorities attach greater importance to their findings and recommendations.

The participatory learning process used in the training (and later on in the training of trainers) has been very effective in empowering these young people to engage in local budgetary processes. These youth groups now carry out their own initiatives like visiting schools, organising debating competitions and participating in community *durbars* to use the opportunity to call on local government to address the needs of children and youth in their communities. These youth are now consulted occasionally by the District Assembly on issues concerning them. As the programme is extended from this initial district into other districts, the prospects for impact are increasing.

These achievements have happened not because adult child rights activists published journal articles on issues that affect children, but because those who were most concerned and affected by the situation provided evidence and demanded that their economic, social and cultural rights be met by duty bearers, and were empowered by the process of doing so.

At the initial stages of engagement with the local assembly during the validation meeting, the district Chief Executive – the political head of the district – did express interest in engaging more with the youth, but also offered some resistance. He pointed out anomalies in data presented, contested some advocacy statements in the report, and asked the youth to contact his unit so that they could update their report with some current data. He then tasked all the department heads in the district to prepare their outstanding annual reports and present them to the youth to use in their analysis.

Photo: ISODEC/Plan Ghana

The trainees surveying other youth and children. For most of the youth, this experience proved very interesting and revealing.

Beyond this, the impact of these activities on the districts' budget allocation remains to be seen since – as we write – the analysis was done six months ago and the next budget is only due in eighteen months' time. Moreover, allocation is not the same as actual budget implementation. The onus lies on the ISODEC trainers and Plan Ghana project initiators to keep supporting these youth to continue monitoring and analysing their budgets yearly. This will enable them to weigh up the impact of their budget advocacy and to learn and overcome challenges in advocating for developmental changes in their district.

Conclusion

Budget advocacy training, exposure and experience has not only built the youth's intellectual capacities but has also increased their confidence level. They now feel part of the development process, worthy of being invited to participate in the District Assembly meetings or consulted on issues concerning children and youth in the district. Mohammed A., aged 21 and a member of Y-BAGAS, evaluates himself:

Ever since I was exposed to the concept of budgeting, I am able to write articles and contribute to some policy discussions. I am proud to call myself a budget expert,

because I can without any help analyse my district budget and carry out effective advocacy for children's issues to be considered in budgeting.

In future, as well as more systematic monitoring of budget execution, it will be critical to involve youth in national as well as local budget processes. We have visions of youth participating during national budget planning and hearings and even taking part in international debates. Some of the youth groups are now part of some national budget platforms, which may provide these opportunities. Youth groups could also lobby on children and youth through the relevant parliamentary select committees, which are very influential. This scale-up of youth empowerment via budget advocacy would breed a specialist youth budget network, and go a long way to increase budget accountability to children and youth at all levels.

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Local champions: towards transparent, accountable governance in Embakasi, Kenya

13

by EDWINE OCHIENG and CYNTHIA OCHOLA ANYANGO

Introduction

Effective community participation can contribute to generating practical ideas and developing these ideas into high quality sustainable action plans. Resisting social injustice is easier when you have strength in numbers, the right information and appropriate tools for engagement.

In Kenya, the limited progress in governance and development is related to citizen's minimal participation in shaping them. Our political arena is not responsive to the needs of the majority, who include the youth, women, children and marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS. Strong civic activism among them is rare, capacity for engagement is low and awareness of ongoing governance agendas is scant. Even given strong publicity about current affairs, they may be unable to participate in governance if decision-making processes are closed to them. Young citizens particularly, emergent and vibrant as they seem, engage little with State organs. This limits their voice, choice and consequently their fundamental human freedom.

This article is about a counter example. Embakasi is a district in Kenya with a population of 619,390 (KNBS, 2009). It was one of the districts severely hurt by the post election violence of 2008. Youths were involved in crimes such as rape, killings and property destruction in the slum areas. Embakasi is characterised by low levels of political awareness, apathy, high unemployment rates, poor sanitation, numerous informal settlements and high prevalence rates of HIV/ AIDS. The district is home to many illegal gangs which extort money from the transport industry and create havoc when confronted by the police. Since many youths are jobless, they are attracted into these gangs by the prospect of quick money.

In November 2009, a governance programme was introduced by Plan Kenya. This article illustrates how this responded to the governance and exclusion problems outlined above. The article is co-authored by Edwine Ochieng, a government official

from the district office for gender and social development and Cynthia Ochola, a member of the Embakasi Youth Organisation and secretary of Jipange Youth Organisation.

We will show via the Embakasi experience that young people's organisations engaging in social accountability around service provision and other governance issues need to collaborate instead of competing.[1] The capacity of these organisations needs to be promoted and strengthened, via training in leadership, governance and monitoring and evaluation. In these ways, coalitions of youth organisations can be enabled to play a role in implementing a coordinated response through a participatory governance process.

We each wrote different sections from our distinct viewpoints. We first describe the establishment of the governance programme, and go on to discuss in more detail aspects of the programme related to engagement with government, accountability, networking, social auditing, transparency and information and communication technologies (ICTs). We then reflect on the challenges we have faced, and draw out lessons from our experience.

Photo: Peter Nderitu

Edwine Ochieng facilitating during a governance workshop.

The governance programme

Training events

EDWINE: Through the district gender and social development office in Embakasi, Plan Kenya mobilised a group of 22 (9 male and 13 female) young citizens drawn from registered youth organisations for training on governance. This was to help the youth develop an understanding of how to engage with the local administration. My role as a government official in the training was to help them understand the operations, policies and programmes undertaken by the government, so as to enable their informed and constructive engagement. My experience as a project and development consultant was useful in guiding them to programme their initiatives in areas of constitution-making and strategic planning.

CYNTHIA: During our third training workshop other participants and I decided to form a coalition of youth groups to provide a platform for engaging in the governance programme. We came up with the name *Jipange*, a Swahili word meaning 'self-plan'. The Jipange Youth Organisation consists of sixteen youth groups involved in various projects within the community in areas such as reproductive health, rubbish collection, construction, theatre and HIV/AIDs awareness. Many resources have been allocated to institutions and committees at grassroots level and our concern was whether they are used for the intended beneficiaries, mainly the vulnerable people

[1] For a definition of social accountability, see the glossary (this issue).

Box 1: Jipange Youth Organisation

Our vision as a coalition youth group: a well-governed society and an empowered youth participating in decision-making processes.

Our aims: improved development and democratic outcomes, through the active engagement of young citizens in policy, planning, resource mobilisation and programme implementation in sectors including youth and governance, reproductive health and life skills, economic empowerment, environmental management and information and communication technology (ICTs).

in the community. We identified and started to engage with governance processes, institutions and structures that manage devolved funds in areas such as education, health and the environment.

Once Plan Kenya had organised the capacity building workshop, we young people took the lead. Government officials attending the trainings shared with us their concerns and the activities undertaken by their various offices. The constituency development committee quizzed us on how information given to us would help the community. We explained to them how we intended to increase accountability and transparency in grassroots governance and development processes.

The organisation later became a household name in the district. The district commissioner, attending a ceremony for the youth enterprise development fund, advised the youth in attendance to 'emulate the Jipange Youth Organisation in their consistent approach in demanding transparency and accountability from grassroots development committees'.

Young citizen engagement with the local administration

EDWINE: I became a key link person between the young people and the government officials, making it easier for a collaborative working relationship to develop between these two key parties. Initially neither found it easy to relate to each other. Gradually, this attitude changed and government officials embraced the youth. Among other things, they openly provided the information they sought.

When Jipange participants decided to identify policy issues affecting young people in Embakasi, they visited various government offices to request information on how youth involvement was supported in programmes and policy areas such as environment, health, unemployment, ICTs and insecurity. Security issues in Kenya are considered sensitive by the police. However, in his willingness to support the efforts by Jipange, the officer commanding Kayole police division gave out statistics on the rate of crime in Embakasi. He challenged the youth to be proactive in advocating for community policing.

Similar interactions occurred in all government offices they visited. With this information they compiled a report called the 'Embakasi youth agenda for governance and development', and shared it with all who participated in the exercise through a forum presided over by the district commissioner.

Holding local institutions accountable

CYNTHIA: *Barazas* are grassroots policy meetings held at village levels and organised by chiefs, district officers and the local administration to explain government programmes and policies to the people. We attended several *barazas* to encourage young people to take up the opportunities offered by government, such as those in Box 2.

Box 2: Key government programmes

- Youth enterprise development fund – loans advanced to young people to promote their income generating activities.
- Constituency development fund (CDF) – funds for improving infrastructure at grassroots level.
- Local authority service delivery action plan (LASDAP) – means by which municipalities can initiate projects at grassroots levels.
- Local authority transfer fund (LATF) – to support street lighting and road repairs.

A public district forum was held in November 2010, attended by all district departmental heads and civil society organisations. At the forum, entitled 'Embakasi youth agenda for governance and development' we highlighted key policy issues that we wanted the local administration to address, revolving around our aims (see Box 1). In attendance was the district commissioner, who commended the youths and promised to work with his team to take up the concerns we raised. Discussion on how to make every duty bearer responsible ensued, and a consensus emerged that grassroots governance structures must be made transparent and accountable to the public.

The departmental heads committed to incorporating our concerns into their respective work plans. Months later, the Ministry of Agriculture invited the chairman of Jipange Youth Organisation to represent young people in the district agricultural stakeholders planning committee, responsible for organising farmer's field days in the district, among other agricultural activities.

Networking: shared learning

CYNTHIA: Jipange members, Plan governance staff and the district youth officer visited Plan Kenya governance programmes in Machakos, Kwale and Tharaka districts. The purpose of these visits was to share and reflect on achievements, experiences and challenges and to borrow from best practices elsewhere. In other districts, the young people had minimal ideas on how to engage with the local administration. In Tharaka, for instance, it transpired that the local administration had not shared with the youth information on LASDAP and its possible benefit to them. From these tours we learnt that there was value in a collaborative approach when working with the government and civil society. This prompted us to register a national youth and governance consortium in June 2010, with membership from seven districts in Kenya, to provide a platform for advocating on policy issues and good governance at regional and national levels.

Youths monitor government performance: social audits

EDWINE: A social audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organisation's social and ethical performance. It helps to narrow gaps between vision and reality, efficiency and effectiveness. It is a technique to understand, measure, verify, report on and improve the social performance of the organisation (FAO, 2003).

In February 2010, with support from Plan Kenya, the Embakasi youth conducted social audits on government-funded projects at grassroots level. The projects audited were those funded by the CDF and the local authority transfer fund (LATF). The aim of this exercise was as stated in Box 3.

In one school visited, worries were expressed about dubious contractors who use political connections to get tenders and later fail to fulfil them as specified. We generated a report on the outcome of the social audit, observing that projects were designed without community involvement, some were incomplete due to delays in government funds, and community members needed knowledge on project cycles and basic management skills. Completed projects were generating bene-

Box 3: The aims of the social audit

- Assessing the physical and financial gaps between needs and resources available for local development.
- Creating awareness among beneficiaries and providers of local social and productive services.
- Increasing efficacy and effectiveness of local development programmes.
- Scrutiny of various policy decisions, keeping in view stakeholder interests and priorities, particularly of marginalised groups.
- Estimating the opportunity costs to stakeholders when not getting timely access to public services.

fits, such as access to affordable social services. The report was shared with the district development officer, district commissioner and grassroots development committees.

E-governance

CYNTHIA: Plan Kenya supported our organisation by installing an ICT resource centre. As members we established its purpose as providing the public with access to information, and promoting economic empowerment and e-governance.

E-governance refers to the use by government agencies of ICTs that can transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government. These technologies can help improve the delivery of government services to citizens, their interactions with business and industry, their empowerment through access to information and more efficient government management. Ultimately they can help reduce corruption and costs and increase transparency and revenue. By narrowing the distance between service providers and clients, our resource centre has become central in helping community members access government services online.

Box 4: Government online services

- Completing tax returns.
- Tracking applications for identity cards and passports.
- E-learning for Kenya certificate of primary education curriculum.
- Government advertised jobs.
- Applying for devolved funds.

Will transparency lead to accountability in Embakasi?

CYNTHIA: Many questions have arisen on how transparent and accountable grassroots governance processes are to the community. Information on the use of public funds was never made available to the public before, making it difficult to know the status of the many government-initiated programmes. Plan Kenya proposed supporting the construction of public accountability boards – notice boards used to display information on community activities supported by the government for the benefit of the people. They are used to enhance transparency and accountability on resource use.

Photo: Peter Nderitu

The Jipange Youth Organisation: a youth-friendly resource centre.

The district commissioner accepted the idea and proposed that they be put in key district offices including his own. Our role was to help coordinate the information posted on the boards and create awareness, leading to their use to promote transparency and accountability. However, it has not been easy to assess (yet) whether accessing this information is changing service delivery or access to government services.

Box 5: Information provided on public accountability boards

- Government departmental service charters.
- Devolved funds project details.
- Government tenders.
- Reports on use of public funds such as the youth fund.
- Women's enterprise development fund and emergency contacts.

Photo: Peter Nderitu

Public accountability boards: set up in a partnership between Jipange Youth Organisation and Plan Kenya.

Challenges and lessons learnt

CYNTHIA AND EDWINE: Raising the voice and participation of young people in development and governance processes in Embakasi has had its challenges.

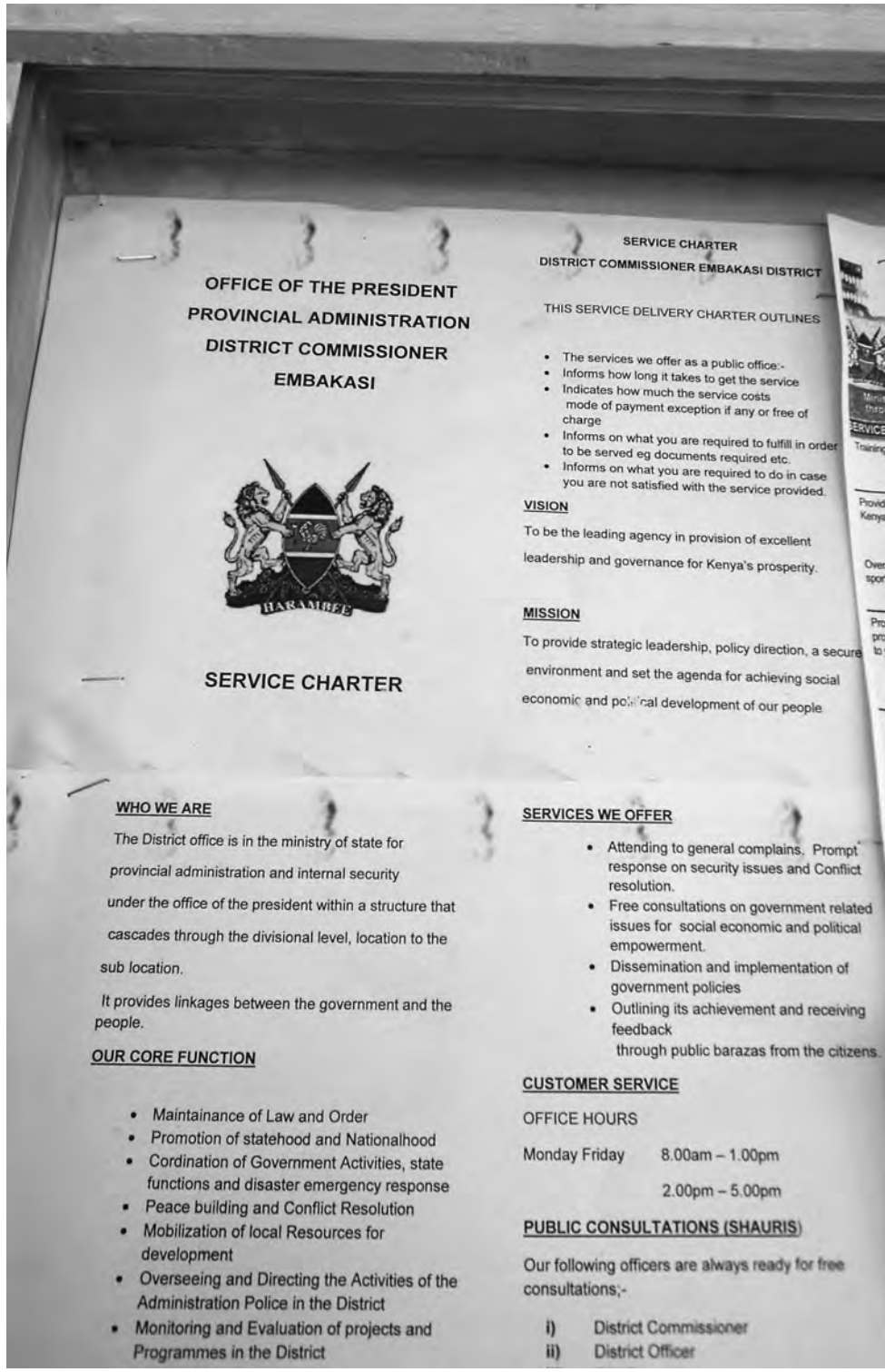
Awareness levels on accountability among most community people, including other youths, was very low. This meant limited understanding and take-up of our initiatives. Government officials themselves had no idea, for example, about the purpose of public accountability boards.

As a group, we lacked adequate support for tracking our impact. There were instances where Plan Kenya was slow in responding to our needs, leading to activities falling behind the scheduled timeframe. For example, the public accountability boards, which may have a significant impact on local accountability, were put in place almost towards the end of the project in October 2010, so we didn't have a way to systematically track that impact over time.

For Plan this was a development process in which beneficiaries made their contributions through participation and needed only transport costs. Out-of-pocket allowances were not refunded. But many youth felt they should be granted allowances for time spent in the workshops, since many Jipange members were jobless and faced other economic challenges. As a result, many deserted and stopped engaging in our activities.

The most challenging aspect of this programme was the perception held by a few government officials and community members that our involvement in the governance programme was motivated by money sub-granted to us by Plan Kenya, which was not the case. This obstructed our efforts to convince government officials to participate in certain activities and embrace us as young people and provide the support we needed. Their failure to do so did not deter us from implementing our activities, and working closely with them as partners.

Photo: Peter Nderitu



Public accountability boards. The Embakasi district service charter outlining the office's role and core functions as well as its vision, mission and services.

Photo: Peter Nderitu

A public accountability board displaying information on community activities supported by the government. They are used to enhance transparency and accountability.

Creating a broader collaborative network among key champions is necessary for governance programmes to succeed. So too is communities' involvement in creating organisations which will shape and effectively implement the governance agendas. The Jipange governance initiative succeeded due to the involvement of sixteen individual youth groups that were beginning to gain a voice in the community. Through our joint collaboration, we were able to boldly undertake the governance programme and increase our participation in decision-making processes.

EDWINE: Building a partnership with young people is not an easy or obvious task. Governments and youths rarely find common working ground and even when they do, there is normally suspicion to be overcome. The collaborative working relationship between the Jipange Youth Organisation and me was helped by the fact that when Plan Kenya first introduced the programme in Embakasi, they did so through my office, which also registered the organisation. This was the beginning of an

Photo: Peter Nderitu

The Jipange Youth Organisation and visitors at the Plan regional youth and governance forum held at the Panafric Hotel.

interesting journey. Throughout the programme I facilitated almost all the capacity building workshops and forums organised by the youth group. In all the activities undertaken by the group, we consulted extensively and refined our approaches before implementation with technical assistance from the Plan Kenya Nairobi Urban Development Programme. The youths proved to be very organised and dedicated to the governance programme, which encouraged government officials to see them as partners in their daily activities.

Communication and information sharing was also key in strengthening the partnership and enhancing the quality of decisions taken to promote governance at the grassroots.

We found that with success, communities' expectations are raised and the demand for scaling up increases. Therefore, 'supply' has to be ready to meet 'demand' and an inclusive approach is needed, bringing key stakeholders on board and linking programme monitoring to eventual policy-influencing.

Conclusion

Perhaps our most important conclusion relates to which actors were involved and how. We understood from the start that governance and development processes cannot be delinked from the political processes that exist at the grassroots level. Nor can they survive without the good will of both the political players and opinion leaders who hold sway in decision-making. Plan Kenya took a risk in giving the youth such a lead role, which proved well justified. The partnership between us – Edwine and Cynthia – and other Jipange members was crucial. Edwine opened the door to local government and held it open, and Cynthia and her peers came in and made things start happening in a way that is more accountable to youth and other citizens.

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PART IV

Power to young people

Silent voices, unrealised rights – championing youth participation in Zimbabwe

14

by TALITA NDEBELE and LEILA BILLING

Our leaders don't care about us. Our views are not considered. We are treated as if we do not exist.
Cynthia (aged 16), Nkayi District, Zimbabwe.[1]

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.[2] 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.

Youth participation and violence in Zimbabwe

Engaging with young people to promote their participation in decision-making in Zimbabwe is problematic. Over the past 30 years, youths have periodically been recruited into quasi-military groups or 'youth wings' of political parties, often to

[1] Cynthia's name has been changed to protect her identity.
[2] This initiative targeted young people aged 15–30 years old, in accordance with BUIYSAP's analysis of those young people most affected by social exclusion and marginalisation in the project area.

perpetrate politically motivated acts of violence. During the 1980s, politically affiliated militarised youth brigades were responsible for large-scale violence that led to the deaths of thousands of people in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces. More recently, in 2008, renewed violence affected most of Zimbabwe's 57 districts. This violence has had a lasting legacy. The public and state actors tend to perceive any form of institution with links to young people as serving political agendas. This makes it difficult for young people to meaningfully participate in governance, democracy and development work, and for NGOs to support them to do so.

Young people, know your place!

Youths living in the rural areas of Nkayi District, Matabeleland Province, where the learning outlined in this article was generated, face substantial barriers to meaningful involvement in local decision-making. Traditional patriarchal power arrangements across Nkayi's 156 villages result in older male domination of power structures, resources and most decision-making platforms. Participatory consultation – including of marginalised groups such as women, the disabled and the young – is rarely practised. Much of this exclusion of young people is conscious, reflecting strong adult mistrust of youth capabilities. According to a participatory baseline study carried out by BUIYSAP and AAIZ in 2010, 90% of traditional leaders believe that the main barrier to youth engagement lies in age itself, rather than the nature of the patriarchal system.

In Zimbabwe's precarious socio-political landscape, it is also difficult to establish where true power lies in the community. Nkayi is no exception. It is common for political parties to place 'shadow' traditional leaders in a village to compete with another leader who is perceived to be politically partisan. This politicisation of decision-making posts by external actors leads to much confusion over who has true legitimacy as a leader and contributes to the division of communities, restricting **who** participates and **how**. These 'shadow' leaders have a history of influencing youths to perpetrate acts of violence, known locally as *Ukumkhambi ndlela* (bringing your opponents back on track). Memories of youths beating and raping in Nkayi are still fresh.

As a result of co-option, manipulation and exclusion, youths themselves have either become entirely disillusioned with political processes or divided along political lines. This prevents cohesive, non-confrontational youth actions. Intergenerational relationships are strained and characterised by mutual mistrust. Many youths choose to 'self-exclude' from local governance, believing they have no role or power to influence the process. There is also evidence that young people – especially young women – have internalised their own 'inferior' positions within society. They report low levels of confidence in participating in decision-making processes, linked to their inability to articulate appropriate 'governance language'.

Methodologies employed

Since the beginning of 2010, BUIYSAP and AAIZ have been implementing a participatory project that aims to increase young men and women's capacity to engage in governance processes and decision-making structures in Nkayi District, Zimbabwe. Using a range of participatory methodologies, and a gender-sensitive approach, the project aimed to build young people's ability to mobilise and constructively engage with duty bearers.

Work carried out by BUIYSAP and AAIZ in Nkayi was informed by ActionAid's human rights-based approach (ActionAid, 2010). This draws upon influential thinker Paulo Freire's work on raising 'critical consciousness'. This is a process that helps oppressed groups understand and respond to their oppression.[3] Action-

[3] The ideas behind this approach can also be traced back to other sources such as Veneklasen with Miller (2002) and Rowlands (1997).

Box 1: Unpacking power

- 'Power within' involves working with poor and excluded rights holders and their communities to make them aware of their rights and to strengthen their ability to undertake collective analysis of the ways in which their rights are being denied.
- 'Power with' focuses on building solidarity among rights holders through alliance and platform building, mobilising supporters and networking.
- 'Power to' aims to enhance the ability of rights holders to effectively campaign and advocate for changes in policies and practices.

Source: ActionAid, 2010

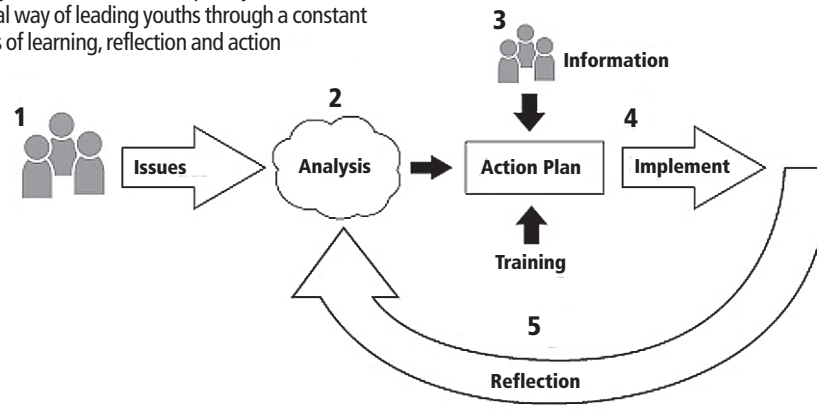
Aid's approach focuses on the three kinds of power described in Box 1. This approach was applied flexibly to respond to the specific needs of the local context. It was sometimes necessary to focus upon more than one step at the same time, or to purposefully emphasise one stage earlier than another.

Building 'power within' – raising consciousness

The baseline study mentioned above highlighted the ways in which many youths – especially young women – internalised and accepted their own subordinate positions. They were unaccustomed to reflecting critically about their societal positions and the reasons underlying gender inequalities. In order to awaken their minds to existing hierarchies and start to foster interest in organising themselves to become agents of change, young people received leadership training. This initially focused on enhancing self-understanding and self-worth, before goal setting. During weekly participatory group meetings, a study cycle approach was introduced to 492 youths (205 male, 271 female) by BUIYSAP (see Box 2). Intensive self-reflection processes prepared youths to move on to the next stage, which involved greater constituency building and action.

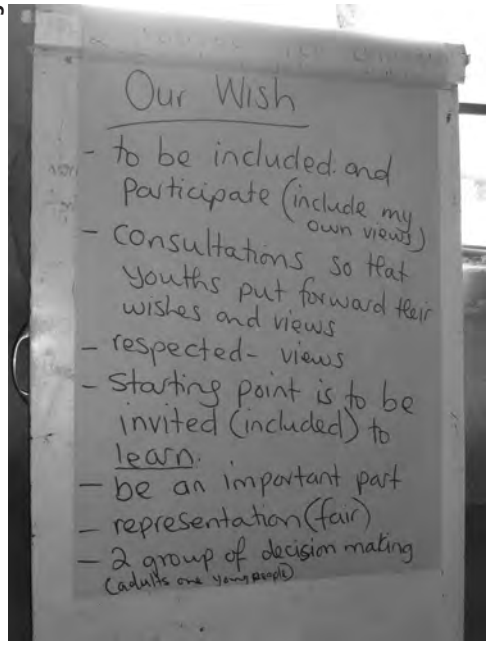
Box 2: The study cycle approach, used with youths involved in the project

Study cycles have been developed by BUIYSAP as a practical way of leading youths through a constant process of learning, reflection and action



1. Youths meet, identify and prioritise key issues affecting them and their community.
2. Youths analyse how these issues affect themselves and the community; consider their implications; and identify community members with an interest in and influence over these issues.
3. Youths gather more information about the issue at the community level through consultations with community stakeholders. They also receive practical, theoretical or conceptual training on the issue at hand from BUIYSAP before developing an action plan.
4. The action plan is implemented.
5. Reflection on outcomes, analysis of new issues, further planning for implementing follow-up actions.

Photo: Leila Billing



After being exposed to study cycle approaches, young people began to see the benefits of youth participation.

Building 'power with' – taking collective action

Once study cycles had created the conditions for increased solidarity among youths in Nkayi, 32 villages across the project site were supported to form their own youth village assemblies (YVA). These are platforms where they could gather, practise their negotiation, dialogue and debating skills, and take collective action to claim their rights. In YVAs, youths discuss and agree upon shared visions of good community governance, and start to develop recommendations that they wish to put to the wider community through inter-village debates and public feedback meetings. It is in YVAs where steps 5 onwards in the study cycle approach take place. This underlines how the reflection and consciousness-raising described above overlapped with and continuously fed into the 'building power with' project component, forming a continuous cycle for the youths involved.

Much deliberation took place over whether the creation of a new space for young people was the best method of increasing youth influence in the district. High levels of youth mistrust of local leaders meant that a specific space exclusively led by young people was a strong incentive for igniting youth interest in the project. Consultation with young people suggested that YVAs would better allow young people to hone their leadership skills in a safe environment where there was no threat of political co-option and where they could determine their own courses of action. This could act as a springboard for engaging with other governance structures that had previously been off-limits to them.

Youths were also excited about joining a platform where the wider social inequalities they perceived as common to other governance structures would not be reproduced. They were the ones who decided how the YVA should operate. Each YVA is run by a committee comprising two young men and two young women. All village youths are entitled to be YVA members, and youths themselves elect the committee.

BUIYSAP took a pre-emptive approach to counter local opposition to YVAs. Long before the idea of youth platforms was even suggested to the youths themselves, traditional leaders received training in community governance from a team comprising BUIYSAP, local youths and powerful authority figures such as the district administrator. The leaders were impressed and surprised by the skills their young constituents displayed and this helped to secure their buy-in for the establishment of youth structures in the project area. The backing of the influential district administrator also persuaded many leaders who might have been sceptical about endorsing a youth platform.

However, there remained isolated cases of traditional leaders (notably those with a history of manipulating youths for violent purposes) opposing youth engagement in activities such as peace-building. Stakeholder analysis of each project site helped

Photo: Leila Billing

BUIYSAP and youth members with local traditional leaders after a meeting to discuss school drop-out rates in Nkayi.

to mitigate these barriers. In one case, it was clear that the village headman had more power than the so-called 'shadow leaders' instigating the conflict, and through engagement with him, BUIYSAP could continue to work in that area.

Strengthening 'power to' – ability to influence and campaign

The project recognised from its earliest inception that processes of empowerment are problematic where the political climate is repressive. For this reason, it was essential that duty bearers with the potential to derail project objectives were included **from the outset**. This illustrates how the three project components were not always implemented in a linear fashion. It was sometimes necessary to focus upon strengthening 'power to' **before** building 'power with'. BUIYSAP and youths enrolled duty bearer support through the following activities:

- Local councillors were trained in leadership skills. This better equipped them to strengthen their responsiveness and willingness to engage with their constituents, including young people.
- School development committees (SDCs) received ongoing mentorship in leadership and governance. Later on, this made them receptive to including youths as committee members.
- Village heads who wished to tackle community apathy were supported with community mobilisation. This persuaded sceptical citizens, including youths, to start to engage with existing governance structures.

All trainings had action planning as an integral component, meaning YVAs had clearly defined accountabilities they could make reference to in future campaigning. For example, four SDCs promised to lobby the district education department for more money to address the issue of school drop-

out rates; another school promised to set up free evening classes for youths who had been forced to drop out before taking their exams.

Study cycle successes

This methodology has been extremely successful in bringing together young people from opposite sides of the political spectrum and reducing animosities. Youths focused upon their similarities rather than differences, and the importance of peer support in goal attainment. The 'information-gathering' part of the study cycle was particularly successful in challenging self-exclusion. It made young people realise – some for the first time – that community support and self-initiated action is essential in the attainment of personal goals (see step 3, Box 1). For example, in Magazi and Hompani villages, young people have set up a literacy group and managed to persuade a local teacher to support the group three times a week on a voluntary basis.

Leading the pack?

In an annual review of this project, conducted in December 2010, young people credited the study cycle approach with equipping them with skills for taking up leadership positions in the community. Sixteen young women have been successful in securing posts as committee members or secretaries on SDCs, village assemblies and child protection committees. They are now actively involved in campaigning for the rights of rural girls to access education, and on issues of child abuse. Many were invited to take up these posts by local leaders, who have been impressed by their performance on YVAs. Although these posts may be seen as falling squarely within traditional gender roles, this is a step change with the past. It is hoped that, just as youths have used the skills gained in the YVAs to enter other governance spaces, these young women can effect progressive changes in spaces that had previously been closed to them.

Interestingly, young men have been less successful in this regard. This is partly because they are a more mobile group than young women (young men regularly travel to neighbouring countries to seek economic employment), but also because girls have proven to be better at speaking fluent 'governance language'. This often means adopting a humble, deferential position in front of traditional leaders. Local leaders complain about the lack of humility and – in their view – inappropriate dress favoured by young men. Are young males refusing to 'play by the rules of the game' in a bid to assert their own power, autonomy and manhood over older generations? If so, this needs to be channelled in a more constructive way. The fact that relations between some older and younger men remain resistant to change suggests a more sophisticated analysis is needed as the project enters its second year.

Meanwhile, young women are managing to bridge the public-private divide by acknowledging that traditional gender roles and behaviour can sometimes gain them increased influence in a way that challenges discriminatory patriarchal structures. However, we must continue to monitor whether this behaviour reflects a continued internalised sense of inferiority among young women. Will this compromise their ability to hold their leaders to account and undertake the full spectrum of leadership responsibilities demanded by the posts they hold? It may be the case that further support is needed to consolidate and strengthen young women's leadership skills and that gender training is prioritised for traditional leaders themselves.

No YVA is an island

Fears that YVAs would prove to be isolated structures have been so far unfounded. One year into the project, there is already evidence that they are institutionally enmeshed and interlinked with other governance structures at the local level, and are providing youth with an opportunity to

engage with other community structures. For example, some are working closely with local child protection committees to address challenges faced by orphans and other vulnerable children. YVAs are also working with local clinics to advocate for youth-friendly services, as well as with the police in crime reduction and prevention.

However, there have been isolated cases of young men holding on to the idea that YVAs are 'youth' structures and that other community institutions belong to 'the others' – that is, the adults. This has been an unintended consequence of establishing a parallel platform for youth participation. Some males are injecting undemocratic characteristics into what was originally intended to be a democratic, open space by making the YVA unwelcoming to older generations. In hindsight, such attitudes are hardly surprising given the historical lack of examples of inclusive spaces led by local leaders who welcome youth input. In many ways, male youths are emulating the masculine leadership qualities they have been exposed to – namely, those that exclude, divide and are not participatory. Such attitudes may take longer to transform, as alternative leadership models emerge, develop and embed themselves in Nkayi.

Duty bearers come on board

Early investments in winning over duty bearers are paying off. According to the 2010 project review, 80% of the 50 youths sampled say that traditional leaders are inviting young people to community events more often than before. They also report that during village meetings, it is commonplace to ask for the 'youth perspective' on agenda items. There is now evidence of duty bearer willingness to work jointly with youths to improve service delivery. In Nkayi, the district administrator, education officer and representatives from the police and rural district council responded favourably to youth suggestions that they **jointly** form a district education monitoring team to provide progress updates on issues including teacher absenteeism and school drop-out rates to parents and relevant authorities. This youth-initiated endeavour shows how youths are already taking action with minimal support from BUIYSAP. This bodes well for the future sustainability of the project.

However, not all community members have been willing to engage with young people. Some villagers – in particular war veterans, a notoriously volatile group – have opposed youth involvement and traditional leaders have failed to respond to such conflicts for fear of a violent outcome. This highlights the need to provide further support and training to leaders in conflict resolution and risk analysis as the project progresses.

Upcoming challenges

The possibility of presidential elections in Zimbabwe in 2011 means Nkayi District will see political factions engaging in negative campaigning in a way that threatens to fragment YVAs. Voter education and conflict prevention with local communities must be prioritised. Traditional leaders will require more support than ever to implement local solutions to emerging conflict. Young people will need more in-depth support to deal with the enhanced complexity of manoeuvring their way through local power struggles during elections if they are to avoid co-option and make their participation meaningful.

Conclusion

Investing time in detailed power analysis has enabled successful navigation of a precarious political environment. Young Zimbabweans have become assets to their community and generators of solutions to local problems. **Flexible** application of the 'power within', 'power with' and 'power to' approach was necessary to respond directly to the local context. The different responses to the project by young men and young women mean that a deeper

gender analysis is essential as we go forward. Young women must continue to gain influence in governance structures, and self-exclusion among some young men must be combated to ensure that they, and the spaces they have created, operate in a democratically accountable way.

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PART V
Tips for trainers

Exploring expressions and forms of power in youth governance work

15

by SALIM MVURYA MGALA and CATHY SHUTT

Introduction

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. 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.

Box 1: Expressions of power[1]

Power over: domination or control e.g. through decision-making.
Power within: self-worth, confidence gained through awareness of capabilities or rights, or through participation.
Power to: individual ability to take action and participate.
Power with: produced through collective action. Can enhance power within.

How does power influence our theories of change, what we do and what we achieve in youth governance work?

Cathy's research illustrated the relevance of various **expressions of power** to theories of change/causal pathways underpinning the SSC programme.[2] The research found that SSC membership had enabled young

[1] See, among other sources: VeneKlasen, L. and V. Miller (2002), especially p 45.
[2] A theory of change defines all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks – interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions – is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process. Source: www.theoryofchange.org

people to overcome constraints to participation. They had gained confidence and found **power within** through discovering capabilities they never knew they had.

Members of the student steering committees (SSCs) in Sierra Leone facilitated decisions about how to use small grants that led to confidence or **power within**. One group who had chosen to buy badly needed desks had 'learnt how to be responsible and how to make certain decisions'. This inspired belief in their right and **power to** act and influence change in their schools:

> *Decision-making in school, I would say should not only be left to teachers because we the pupils, we know what we want and then we are the ones that go through the sufferings... We are the ones in the classrooms. We know what we go through every day so we think we can make better decisions concerning our schools.*

Most students associated the sense of empowerment with responsibility. They were keen to use their power for the good of the wider school community:

> *Well I have learnt a lot... most especially decision-making... I have learnt how to be a good leader and how to choose things that are more beneficial... Like during the time when we had the money. There were so many suggestions some were just saying anything so really it was a big task for us to choose what we think will be beneficial to everybody.*

There were opportunities to increase **power with** and scale up the impact of these changes to improve the governance of schools. In one school, pupils that had used the committee to successfully advocate against corporal punishment felt they had 'bridged a gap' between students and pupils. They were keen to scale up and create **power with** by linking with other schools in Sierra Leone as part of a broader campaign.

Box 2: Power and theories of change

- Get participants to explore the starting points and assumptions about how change is going to happen via youth participation in governance. What change do they want? How are they promoting or achieving that change? What are they assuming will happen along the way?
- Using pictures get participants to explore what power means to them.
- Use participants' examples to illustrate different expressions and forms of power discussed in this article.
- Ask buzz groups to identify how power might a) constrain youth participation and intended changes identified earlier and b) block causal pathways.
- Reflect on opportunities (such as using exercises or role plays below) to enhance power within, power to and power with to overcome constraints.

Cathy argued that in order to leverage the personal transformations and potential power of these young people, they needed to become more explicitly aware of how power affected their participation. Exercises suggested in Box 2 can be adapted to encourage practitioners and/or young people to think more about how power can both constrain and enhance desired change in planning and evaluation activities.

Reflecting on barriers to achieving power to influence governance decisions

Young people need to become more reflexively aware of how they experience the effects of **power relations** that either prevent or enable them to achieve their potential. This is an important part of personal transformation processes that enables the discovery of **power within**, such as those experienced by young people in Sierra Leone. For example, many young people are socialised in ways that act as **invisible power** leading them to think they lack the rights and/or capabilities to participate in spaces controlled by adults. Practitioners' theories of change need to include efforts to build **power within** in ways that go beyond a technical approach to capacity building e.g. one that merely

aims to increase knowledge about rights. Developing a sense of confidence and finding **power within** is important. But in Salim's experience it may not be sufficient to enable individual **power to** act.

Salim works with Kenyan youth groups wanting to participate in youth councils organised by the government. His experience illustrates how, even when **power with** has been generated through collective action, various operations of power still prevent young people having influence. Engaging the state in **invited spaces** organised and chaired by government actors posed challenges for Kenyan youth. Government actors set agendas and determined the rules of engagement making it difficult for youth to speak. So Salim facilitated practical activities to help young people reflect further on how power relations in the space affected their **power within** and **power to** participate.

The power cube

Salim drew on ideas represented in the power cube below. It is another way of unpacking power which focuses on its forms – visible, hidden and invisible – rather than on the expressions discussed about (power over, within, to, with).[3]

Although the power cube is a tool that can enable power analysis at multiple levels, Salim was fundamentally concerned with the local level and enabling youth to think about how different forms of power operated in different types of spaces for engagement with government actors.

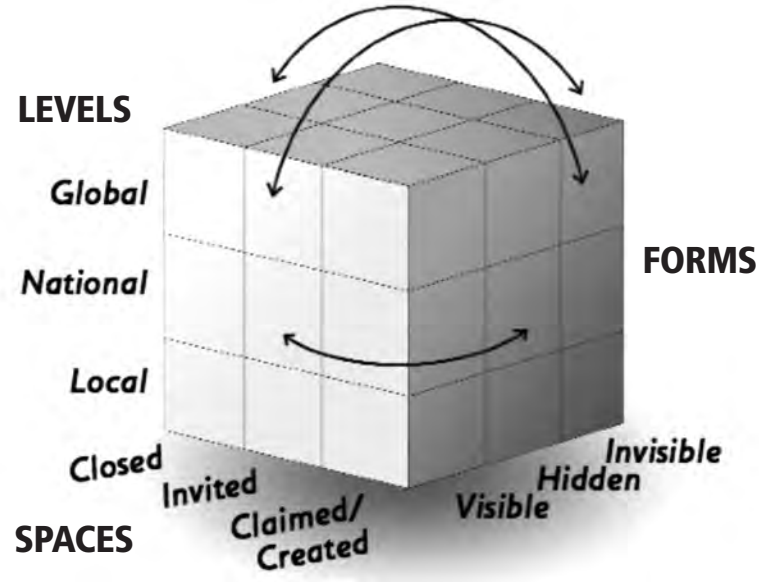
Explaining different expressions and forms of power can be done in very theoretical ways drawing on the concepts above. But ironically, efforts that emphasise theo-

Box 3: Spaces for participation

Closed: Where decisions are made by elite actors behind closed doors.
Invited: Opportunities for involvement and consultation, usually by 'invitation' from various authorities.
Created or claimed: Organic spaces which emerge out of sets of common concerns.

Box 4: Three forms of power

Visible power: formal decision-making.
Hidden power – mobilisation of bias: non decision-making, keeping issues off agendas.
Invisible power: social conditioning through e.g. cultural traditions that shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of what it is possible to think, believe and do.



[3] Source: Gaventa (2006).

retical input can be disempowering and ineffective. Practical exercises are more effective, in which facilitators draw on these theories, such as role play (see Box 5). They can enhance youth understanding about different forms of power that challenge youth participation, as well as tensions related to young people's engagement.

For example, youth councils in Kwale, Kenya were struggling to design strategies to engage local leaders in the management of constituency development funds, local authority transfer funds and the youth enterprise funds. The youth councils wanted to access these funds to finance their activities. However, the youth leaders were hesitant to engage in face-to-face discussions with the leaders for fear of reprisals. This dilemma came at a time when Salim was doing action research, and he thought a session on analysing power would be helpful to build their confidence to engage. He offered them theoretical inputs on the different forms of power in the power cube, the power of agency (power over, power with, power within), and **spaces** for citizen participation.

Even though they seemed to understand the concepts theoretically, he noted that this was not enough to inspire them to take action. It was not until he did a role play that they began opening up and associating the implications of the different forms of power with their experiences.

As a result of these practical exercises, young people soon recognised how **hidden power** – government control of agendas – affected their power to get their interests discussed and influence decisions. The presence of the commissioner, whom they feared might take action against them if they challenged his authority, acted as **invisible power** that silenced their voice. Internalised notions that as young people they are not citizens and don't know what is best for them, inhibited them from expressing their views.

Box 5: Facilitators' guide: enabling young people to analyse power in invited spaces

- Identify a topic for discussion beforehand, e.g. child marriage.
- Divide participants into several groups.
- Identify someone to be a government representative or figure of authority such as the district youth officer.
- Ask each group to choose an actor they wish to represent e.g. environmentalists, youth club.
- Let each group discuss and agree on a position they will defend in a government-led meeting.
- Get each group to nominate one representative who will attend the meeting.
- Conduct a role play of the meeting in which the person nominated to be the authority figure chairs and moderates the discussion with group representatives while others observe and analyse discussions.
- Facilitate reflections and discussions that encourage young people to think about power dynamics that affected their participation and outcomes. Guiding questions could include:

For the group representatives:

- With reference to Hart's ladder of participation (shown in Tang, this issue), what level of participation did you achieve? Why?
- Did you get your desired outcome or did you have to cede arguments? Why?
- Did women and girls speak up as much as men? Why?

For the government representative:

- Did you let young people speak? Why?
- Did you listen to them? Why?

Box 6: Enhancing direct forms of youth-state engagement using video or drama

- Organise a pre-meeting workshop to orient children and youth on the dialogue process and to identify issues affecting them.
- Prepare a script for drama or video to illustrate the issues. Shoot video if this is the chosen medium, ensuring that child protection protocols are strictly adhered to.
- Organise public meeting with a panel of different duty bearers e.g. community elders, district government officers or NGO leaders.
- Nominate a representative young person to facilitate the meeting.
- Show the video, drama or picture at the meeting.
- Facilitate discussions to encourage the audience i.e. members of the community, to verify/discuss the issues affecting them.
- Youths and children interact with the panel to clarify issues and request specific actions from duty bearers e.g. children ask specific representatives what their office or departments' roles should be in tackling issues and whether and how they will take action.

Box 7: Reflections on symbolic power

Photo: Ali Yusuf Mwatsahu

An intergenerational dialogue session between children, youth and community and the district commissioner on issues of birth registration. One more experience that we can draw from the photo and during the session (which Salim attended) is the 'symbolic power' that comes with official uniforms and protocol. In Kenya the district commissioners are powerful. They control the police and other security officers in the districts. They also chair all meetings to discuss development. During the dialogue session illustrated in the photo above, the children, youth and the community were not comfortable asking questions. On reflection, Salim thought the symbolic power of having uniforms and body guards inhibited fruitful dialogue even though the district commissioner was the one who encouraged the community to feel free to ask any questions or make any comments.

Salim's other experiences relate to the facilitation of intergenerational dialogue between children, youth, community elders, non-state actors and government representatives in more neutral, claimed spaces such as public meetings following steps described in Box 6. Plan Kenya is scaling up these forms of engagement in their areas of operations to profile the voices of young people.

Enabling young people to prepare before meetings in non-intimidating spaces of their own proved powerful. They prepared videos, dramas or pictures that explored local issues such as child marriage. They then took their concerns into government meetings – arguably more intimidating spaces.

The videos, drama or pictures enhanced young people's sense of power within as they had a more convincing means to communicate their experiences and concerns. This led to more 'power to' as they demanded government action in meetings.

Such approaches can produce tensions. But in Salim's experience in Kwale, direct forms of engagement through public dialogues on community- or local-level issues, grounded with real-life evidence, have prompted action for social change (see example in Box 8). These kinds of dialogues have had a positive impact in terms of influencing decisions. Children and youth have overcome power that frustrated them in invited government spaces and enhanced

Box 8: Well-prepared public dialogue + evidence = change

In one school that was notorious for child pregnancies, children prepared and showed a video depicting the various child rights violations in communities and schools. A debate ensued, in which it became clear that eight of the school girls were pregnant. The dialogue prompted immediate action from the district education officer and the district commissioner. They initiated investigations leading to prosecutions and the reprimanding and transfer of teachers suspected of involvement. They also created a local task force to conduct sensitisation on child rights and protection and guide those needing to report abuses.

their power to engage the government on issues that concerned them.

Encouraging young leaders to reflect on their own power and accountability

So far so good with expressions and forms of power. Beyond that, an issue arising in both our work is accountability of youth and child 'representatives' to their organisations and members. In Sierra Leone and Kenya we encountered youth 'representatives' selected by teachers and government youth officers. This tended to make young people more accountable to more powerful adults than the youth they were meant to represent and made it difficult for them to challenge their 'patrons'.

Even when young people are elected by their peers, they do not always use democratic mechanisms and processes to prioritise and promote the interests of those they claim to represent. Feedback mechanisms to youth members can be weak. Role play be might be adapted as a means to encourage youth representatives to reflect on their own power and accountability to their members. Another way might be to hold participatory reflection sessions to identify what makes a youth group accountable and transparent, and then use these criteria as the basis for (self)-monitoring the group and its activities. This has been piloted by Plan Kenya's governance programme elsewhere in Kenya.

Integrating power analysis in design and evaluation of governance theories of change

Theories of change underpinning youth governance work often assume causal pathways that look something like this. By discovering **power within** youth will be able to find **power with** and **power to** and act to influence governance decisions. But a number of operations of power mean these changes may not follow a smooth path. Practitioners must seek ways to identify operations of power that prevent youth participation influencing governance processes. Facilitating activities to help young people become aware of barriers to their participation and devise tactics to address them is an important part of the empowerment process. It has the potential to lead to greater social change.

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Youth as drivers of accountability: conducting a youth social audit

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by KENYATTA MAITA MWAWASHE

The demand for social accountability in the management of public resources has been gaining ground in Kenya over the last seven years. While the country's revenues have been on an upward trend during this period, budget accountability has been a major issue of concern. About KSh 170.2 million of the constituency development funds (CDF) was reported missing in 23 constituencies in the 2006/2007 financial year and KSh 500 million in 2008/2009, according to a report by the Kenya Taxpayers Association (NTA, 2009). Pressure from citizens has therefore increased for government to account for the use of public finances in public service delivery.

Photo: Lilian Indombera

A youth social audit team inside a classroom in one of the primary schools in Kwale County, Kenya. The team interviewed members of the project implementation committee during a social audit session.

Since 2009, Plan International's governance programme has been organising youth forums and workshops in Kenya 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 note shares our experience with other practitioners.

Social audit process

As carried out by the youth in Kwale, Nairobi and Kilifi, the participatory social audit process started by making informa-

tion accessible to the public on government resources allocated to community public projects and basic services. Perceived gaps, violations of public trust and inconsistencies in the information shared often raised questions and doubts about the integrity of the service delivery process. This was the justification for users and citizens to conduct a social audit.

The youth then mobilised their peers both informally through peer interactions and formally through registered youth organisations. Plan works with the district youth councils in Kwale and Kilifi, and Jipange Youth Organisation in Nairobi (with a membership of 32 legally-registered youth groups). These provided the enabling platform for effective peer-to-peer youth organising.

The youth then met to form social audit teams that were gender balanced and incorporated other marginalised social groups. Terms of reference (TOR) for the social audit were then drawn up, based on shared questions and concerns that could not be clarified without verification of how public projects or services were delivered.

Social audit teams then brainstormed on the appropriate methodology to use for the audit. They developed a scorecard capturing their individual and collective criteria for scoring according to their satisfaction levels (highly satisfied, satisfied, fairly satisfied, not satisfied or disappointed). They also developed rules for engaging with the duty bearers at the selected project sites.

Fund managers were then asked to provide project financial documents and bills of quantities for the social audit team to verify. Fund managers included government officers or public servants, mandated to manage government finances at the local level for community development projects. A date for a site visit was agreed with them, community beneficiaries and the relevant project committee.[1]

Box 1: Social audit process at a glance: tips for practitioners

- Organise communities into civic constituencies.
- Generate and share information on public funds and projects among existing organisations, to trigger public demand for action.
- Facilitate the setting up of inclusive civic action group (social audit team).
- Strengthen the team's capacity for multi-level engagement.
- Support team to generate appropriate customised action research tools e.g. scorecards.
- Let the team develop their own terms of reference and indicators for project assessment.
- Coordinate logistics for social audit team to visit project sites for assessment.
- Support joint team reflections at project sites.
- Coordinate feedback sessions between social audit team and project committees or public fund managers.
- Where answers do not satisfy expectations of social audit team, let them share information with state accountability watchdogs for further investigations and action.
- Facilitate the adoption of a social contract or citizen service improvement charter between the team and the project/fund managers if the team agrees that issues identified can be corrected at that level.
- Coordinate the process of negotiating for change, follow-up and reviewing commitments made.

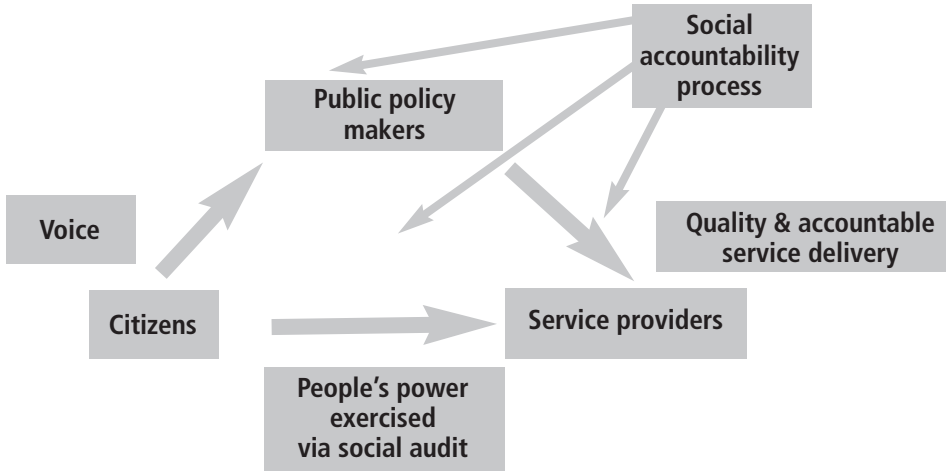
The team took to the field cameras, questionnaires, notebooks, pens, marker pens and flipcharts for capturing data. At the project sites, the social audit teams were received by the project implementation committee. The leader of the audit team shared the objectives of the visit. The youths generally identified themselves as students intending to learn more about the project rather than introducing themselves as social auditors. They did so because on a first encounter, 'social audit' is often assumed to be an attempt to politicise citizens against public servants or leaders. As the social audit process progresses, these misapprehensions are corrected and support from government actors is often forthcoming. Had the youth called them-

[1] Project committees are bodies that oversee a project's implementation on behalf of the community. A committee generally consists of representatives of various interest groups at local level (e.g. village elders, women's leaders, youth leaders, religious leaders).

Figure 1: A simple project social audit tool

Project type/name	Social audit team satisfaction rating			
	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Fairly unsatisfied/ unsure	Not satisfied/ disappointed
Amount allocated				
Community participation in the project cycle				
Management of project resources				
Relevance of the project to pressing community needs				
Cost effectiveness and efficiency of resource use				
Project's impact/potential impact on poverty alleviation				
Quality of workmanship				
Number of beneficiaries				
Integrity and competency of the project management team				
Project inputs procurement process				
Promotion of accountability and transparency in project				
Project outcomes/outputs				

Box 2: Citizen-state relationship framework for social accountability



The figure above shows how public accountability relies on strategic civic engagement, where ordinary citizens and/or their organisations participate directly or indirectly in demanding for quality service delivery. Social audits lead to greater social accountability and can either be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often it is demand-driven and operates from the bottom up.

Box 3: Questions most frequently asked by social auditors in interviews and focus groups

- How was the project conceived?
- Was the community involved?
- Does the community like the project?
- Who benefited from the project?
- Did the project give employment to the local community?
- Does the project provide a proper service to the target population?
- Did the project change the lives of the beneficiaries?
- Did the community get value for the money spent in the project?
- Did the project have any side effects? (e.g. a school feeding programme may increase dependency syndrome).
- Is there evidence of long-term project impacts? For instance, poverty reduction or improved standards of living.
- Are there mechanisms for the project to be sustained by the community?

selves social auditors from the start they would have risked being denied access immediately.

One team used focus group discussions (FGDs) to engage the project committee. They used a series of carefully thought-out, non-emotive questions while the others engaged with the community project beneficiaries in another focus group.

The team members then undertook project verification to determine the quality of workmanship in terms of whether it was implemented to required standards or specifications. Some members of the team also visited the public fund manager's offices to conduct key informant interviews with them, so as to capture additional information for triangulation and validation of facts.

The social audit teams gathered, reflected on and debated the key observations, messages and issues arising from the process. They prepared a report on the good practices they had observed and the aspects that needed more clarifications and improvements. A feedback meeting was held between the stakeholders and the beneficiary communities and youth. A

Photo: Lilian Indombera

A youth social audit team on the right giving feedback to a school teacher, parent representatives and school improvement project committee chairperson at Vanga Primary School, Kwale County, Kenya.

social contract, in the form of an action plan, was drawn up detailing how the service or facility would be improved, and the process of negotiating for change and action ensued.

One example is a classroom construction project at Moyeni secondary school in Kwale County. The work done was in contravention of the specifications. Even though a certificate of completion had been issued, the audit found cracks in the floor and poorly-fitted windows and doors. The exercise generated an action plan which required the contractor to repeat the entire exercise, and this was done.

Lessons learnt

Social audits can:

- help increase public access to information on key governance topics (e.g. various types and use of decentralised funds, relevant legislation);
- enhance citizens' knowledge about policy processes, public accountability and transformative leadership, thus enhancing the engagement between citizens and the state;
- help trigger public action towards securing citizen rights and responsibilities by participating in decentralised civic processes;
- catalyse the emergence of strong

community watchdog groups able to effectively participate in projects' prioritisation and monitoring the use of public funds under the stewardship of local leaders;
• improve citizens' inputs on key public finance management issues, especially prioritising and implementing pro-poor community projects, with equity and targeting implications; and
• strengthen implementation and accountability mechanisms of audited and non-audited projects at community level.

By way of critical reflection, however:
• It is vital to understand the local context, including factors that unite or trigger community divisions, particularly in fragile societies. This helps in managing emotions and tensions that can arise between communities and service providers during the sharing of social audit findings.
• The tool is as good as the process applied and the attitudes and credibility of the individuals involved. Mutual trust, confidence and buy-in among citizens and government are essential if it is to function as a public service quality improvement tool and a means for people to assert collective power and influence over service delivery practices. To overcome apprehension and suspicion, the young social auditors in Kwale obtained letters of introduction to junior officers written by their superiors, with instructions to cooperate as partners rather than engage as adversaries.
• While social audit processes foster youth participation, there are intra-youth power relations related to team members' contrasting ages, education levels and family socioeconomic circumstances. These can breed exclusion and affect the quality of participation at the same time. Young women and people with disabilities, particularly, may not have equitable and dignified space to assert their positions, within the team or to the service providers. Such dynamics can run counter to the potential of social audit processes as platforms for equalising power relations.
• A social audit is neither an event nor an end in itself, but a process that is perfected through continuous reflection and learning over time. For it to contribute to catalysing desired changes it must be applied with due transparency and in conjunction with other social accountability mechanisms by other actors, such as anti-corruption initiatives and human rights campaigns.

Conclusion

The Kwale, Kilfi and Nairobi youth have been using social audits to sharpen the management of public resources. Social audits can be flexible and inclusive both in terms of the approach and application. It is consensus-driven and can integrate the voices of diverse interest groups in public finance planning and management decisions, through both vertical and horizontal consultative processes. It also limits unequal power relationships that often lead to various forms of citizen exclusion in formal government-driven accountability processes. Through continuous self and group reflections, it allows young people to appreciate the power of masses in claiming public space, which is necessary for influencing shared public agendas while at the same time internalising a culture of probity. The youth get progressively socialised to the virtues of integrity and accountable citizenship as they grow up.

By mentoring youth to be drivers of social change, social audits prepare them to question and influence dominant value systems: within themselves, their communities and government. They also help to institutionalise the same practices of accountability in the organisations they serve. This culture of accountability under construction could provide the structural foundations of anti-corruption in Kenya's public and private life.

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The community scorecard process: methodology, use, successes, challenges and opportunities

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by JEPHTER MWANZA and NINA GHAMBI

Introduction

This article covers the use and basic functions of the community scorecard process. It draws 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.

Photo: CAVWOC

A cross section of participants in the scorecard process in Chikhwawa district.

What are community scorecards?

The community scorecard process is a social accountability mechanism.[1] It is used to exact social accountability from duty bearers vis-à-vis the state of services in various sectors. The process has several steps aimed at giving feedback to service providers based on experiences of service users which later feed into re-planning processes. All steps are led by a civil society organisation (CSO) that is independent of government in order to provide independent and objective judgement on the performance of facilities. It is only the institutionalisation stages that are led by service providers in collaboration with service users. The CSO intermediary takes a monitoring role in conjunction with stakeholders, depending on the level

[1] For a definition of social accountability, see the glossary (this issue).

Table 1:

Stage	What does it consist of?	Outputs
Preparatory groundwork.	Acquiring major national and international service standards and understanding socio-political contexts on the ground e.g. teacher to pupil ratios, maximum number of people who can use a water borehole, nurse to patient ratios etc.	Service standards and benchmarks.
Developing input tracking matrix.	Listing key inputs of the service or project, and the standards for assessors to adhere to e.g. the national pupil to teacher ratio. In the social audit, this will be compared to the reality on the ground (e.g. actual number of pupils being taught by each teacher).	Input tracking matrix.
Developing a facility performance scorecard (facilities may include e.g. schools, rural health centres, water points/boreholes etc.)	Discussing which factors affect delivery of services at a facility. Consolidating scores from various focus group discussions (FGDs) into one community score. For example, service users may score health workers on their adherence to working hours on a score of 1–5. The greater the score, the better. A score of 1 would mean no adherence to daily opening and closing hours. Concrete reasons backing the score are also provided.	Community-generated facility performance scorecard.
Developing a service provider self-evaluation scorecard.	Self-evaluation by service providers on how they think they deliver on services. For example, workers at a health centre may also score themselves on their performance in 'adhering to working hours' giving reasons to back the score they have chosen.	Service provider scorecard.
Interface meeting between service providers and service users.	Plenary to present community and service provider scorecards and agree ways forward.	Joint action plan.
Follow-up and institutionalisation	Interfaces at district and national levels to present results and advocate for changes. The plan of action is the means through which institutionalisation of the process takes place. It is led by either the government workers or community members depending on the nature of activity in the agreed plan.	Plan of action influences change in service provision.

at which implementation is taking place. Table 1 (above) summarises the steps.

The scorecard process, as used in Malawi, is an alternative tool to budget tracking methodologies such as public expenditure tracking studies (PETS).[2] [3] 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 scorecard approach.

[2] Budget tracking usually refers to monitoring expenditure. It can be looked at vertically (i.e. how does money flow through a system from national to district to local level?) or horizontally (how are disbursements made at one point in the system, are they regular and spent as planned?). The focus is on whether the money is spent as detailed in the plan. Budget tracking can also link to an evaluation of the impact of a particular budget. Source: www.right-to-education.org/node/20

[3] Public expenditure tracking studies (PETS) can help to identify and address weaknesses in budget execution. They can also indicate where a current policy is not effective, and feed into discussions of how to improve value for money. Source: www.opml.co.uk/issues/budget-execution.

Table 2: A sample scorecard from Takhiwa

No	Indicator	Scores	Comments
1	Fairness in beneficiary selection	3	Not all needy people are selected due to limited number of coupons.
2	Timeliness in beneficiary selection	5	In good time before the rains (September).
3	Transparency in selection of beneficiaries	5	Selection is done by the people themselves at a public meeting called by the village headman together with the extension workers.
4	Access to inputs	3	Fertiliser and seeds come once and in very low quantities. We queue for the whole day and sometimes spend 2 days in the queue. All the people queue in one line regardless of sex, age, strength, physical abilities/disabilities, health etc.
5	Conduct of managing officials	2	They are corrupt – they need extra Mk 200–500. They open very late. They accept fake coupons and prioritise business people. They are stubborn as well.
6	Security of extension workers	3	Others are beaten by those who have not received coupons.
7	Fairness in coupon distribution	5	All registered beneficiaries receive coupons.
8	Follow-up by extension workers	4	He tries hard but his area of responsibility is too large. He has no transport so he must travel long distances on foot.

The action plans developed at a facility or point-of-service are used as a springboard for action to improve services. Some issues can be resolved via local actions manageable at community level such as providing clean toilets at a health centre. Other issues require the attention of local governments or changes in policy and therefore engagement with national stakeholders.

Relevance to rural communities

Rural communities are the least consulted when major resource allocation decisions are taken, including on the national budget. District development plans (DDPs) have a life span of several years. Yet factors that affect rural livelihoods seem to change every year. Over time, plans become less relevant and less aligned with the changing needs and aspirations of people.

Rural communities also have little or no access to radio, television and other means of communication to link up with authorities. In Malawi, this has been further compounded by the failure by government to hold local elections to elect councillors, who are the link between local communities and planners. Their absence deprives communities from a key means of providing constant feedback to planners.

The community scorecard process seems appropriate to these circumstances, since it empowers service users and service providers to start discussing issues affecting the services delivery, working from the bottom to the top through sectoral structures to effect change.

Methods, approaches and innovations

The community scorecard process collects disaggregated data from men, women,

Photo: CAVWOC

Women and girls at an interface meeting in Chikhwawa district.

boys, girls, disadvantaged groups, service providers and any other groups according to the need and function of the services. Involving multiple social groups helps to triangulate information so that data quality is enhanced. This information is collected essentially through focus group discussions. Other methods such as ranking or pair comparisons are used within the FGDs.

The major innovation in Malawi has been the use of radio programmes and DVDs to document issues that arise from the scorecard process and to disseminate actions agreed at interface meetings. This helps to document, enhance and share findings and results, as well as increase the flow of information from service users to planners.

Reflections and lessons learnt

Community scorecards provide an excellent alternative to budget tracking methodologies. For example, PETS lack the popular appeal of scorecards, especially in areas with low literacy levels. The PETS methodology requires specialised training, thereby reducing critical input from service users with limited education.

Moreover, 'following the money' is not as useful as looking at what the money has actually delivered. This is where the assessment of services at the point of access is arguably a more powerful approach. It involves both the supply and demand sides in analysing and challenging each other on critical issues affecting services. It also analyses the social interactions and physical factors that render the service available or unavailable to users. Picture symbols are used to facilitate recognition by illiterate people, symbolising their emotions and feelings about the service.

Successes and key outcomes

The major success of this initiative is the district administrators' acceptance that the

Photo: CAVWOC

A scene at an interface meeting in Chikhwawa.

process is a useful tool in planning. They recognise that it provides evidence on how services are delivered as well as giving a chance for planners and service providers to improve the relevance of life-changing interventions in rural communities.

More specific successes are:

• Stopping child labour practices rampant in some schools. These were raised in children's focus groups and raised at the plenary feedback. Local decisions at interface meetings abolished such practices and committed specific actors to monitoring the abolition.

• A combination of scorecard reports and a participatory expenditure tracking study (PETS) looking at salary administration in primary schools. These have helped provide evidence and contributed to the eventual change in payment of salaries to teachers. The scorecards project is the only platform that produced a report from a systematic study on inefficiencies associated with the existence of two teachers' salaries delivery systems and their effects on rural teaching services.

• Improved access of youths under the age of 17 to farm inputs under the farm input subsidy programme (FISP). Youth experienced problems registering and accessing inputs due to the requirement of voter cards as identification.

• Improved access to FISP inputs at markets where community-based monitoring activities took place. At these markets, congestion and scrambling for inputs has decreased, mainly due to increased collaboration between chiefs and their subjects – especially in organising procedures for access and beneficiary identification.

• Following the creation of market point vigilant committees, there has been a decrease in the use of fake coupons to access inputs. Also, no incidents of illicit sales were reported in mobilised areas.

• Daily newspapers and key radio stations have increased their reporting on issues raised by the project.

Photo: CAVWOC

Women fill in their scorecards during an assessment of education services.

• Information provided by the scorecard process has also been used to allocate health and educational resources, mainly in the allocation of staff in Mulanje and Karonga Districts. In fact, Mulanje deployed medical assistants to all health facilities following project advocacy activities.

All of the above were implemented during the follow-up and institutionalisation stage of the scorecard process. They are a testimony to the relevance of the community scorecard process to development and planning in Malawi.

Limitations of the process

The major limitation has been not a flaw of the methodology or process. There is a lack of formal and legitimised linkages between rural communities and the district assemblies due to the current lack of local councillors. This has greatly reduced the scope for systematic institutionalisation and follow-up in mainstream governance structures. To get around this, we have been working with local leaders and members of parliament as representatives of rural communities. They form part of the district executive committee, a body created to make decisions while councillors are not yet elected.

Other key limitations are:

• Uptake of action plans at both local and district levels is slow. Actors at both levels expect the project to provide additional funding to prop up the implementation of action plans.

• Initial assessments are met with resistance and scepticism by district administrators. They often see the tool as confrontational rather than an opportunity to get direct and constructive feedback from service users.

• The assessments raise high expectations which are sometimes difficult to manage by both CSOs facilitating the process and the district assemblies.

Photo: CSCD

Men discuss their appreciation of education sevices in Kasungu.

Photo: Plan Malawi

A facilitator leads a women's focus group discussion to assess agriculture services in Chikhwawa.

• The process relies heavily on the media for advocacy and follow-up on issues.

Points for future improvement

In future, all community scorecard assessments will be systematically backed up by audiovisual resources, either radio programmes (live or recorded) or DVDs. These will capture key feedback across genders, ages and classes. Live radio broadcasts of interface meetings at community level will also be trialled in 2011. Planners and policy makers respond well to media which include the voices of service users. It reduces resistance and enhances action.

Involving the media at all levels of the assessments is also key – and ensuring that the media convey the process and its outputs accurately and constructively. Since the process starts at the local level, using the media only at district and national levels is insufficient and inaccurate. Media involvement is coordinated by the NGO that facilitates the scorecard process. However, the media have freedom to write about whatever they feel is newsworthy. If the NGO facilitating the scorecard process identifies big gaps in the media's reporting of activities, they provide media outlets with supplementary documentaries to ensure better media coverage.

Likewise, it is important to use several approaches to disseminate key messages and action points to planners and policy makers. Radio and films can reach the eyes and ears of key stakeholders involved in service provision. This is the only practical way of reaching more people, since interface meetings only accommodate limited numbers.

Conclusions

While the community scorecard process is not a solution to all problems in rural development, it does offer access to a wealth of community knowledge and information important in service planning. The process allows different social groups to be aware of each others' problems regarding access and enjoyment of government services. Both the outputs and the process itself are ideal for evidence-based advocacy.

The process fosters unity and collective action within communities for engaging with service providers. One of its more unusual features, in terms of other community development approaches and also in terms of other contemporary social accountability approaches, is that it also fosters collective action **between** communities and service providers. What needs to be done to improve services? Who needs to take on which roles to do this? It is at these interfaces that accountable relationships need to be constructed, institutionalised and sustained.

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Government budget monitoring: as easy as child's play

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by CHRISTINA NOMDO and ALEXANDER HENRY

This 'tips for trainers' is slightly different to the usual training tips published in *PLA*. Here, we provide some insights and share experiences with other practitioners who may want to build children's capacity to engage in governance. We explain the different approaches we used to develop children's skills as peer facilitators; support them to understand and share information about governance; and build their confidence to do advocacy. We conclude with tips for adult facilitators and child advocates, and a discussion of some of the critical challenges faced in this type of work.

Children participating in governance project

From 2004 to 2006, the Children's Budget Unit (CBU) of Idasa implemented a capacity-building initiative with children in South Africa to support them to engage in government budget monitoring and advocacy. The project used learning through games to make difficult governance issues accessible to children. It showed that children, including those with disabilities, are able to share and learn knowledge and skills relating to governance.

Twenty-five children aged 12 to 18 years from four local and national organisations were selected for training as peer facilitators. These peer facilitators implemented activities with their own constituency groups, reaching a total of approximately 100 children.

The training included the following topics and sub-topics:

- **Linking budgets and rights**: understanding rights, progressive realisation of rights, household budgets, how government works;
- **Budget analysis as a monitoring tool**: the integrated development plan, organisational budgets, basic budget analysis tools, and personal experiences of rights and empowerment;
- **Developing a strategic budget advocacy campaign**: advocacy concepts and strategies, engaging in the budget presentation process in parliament, preparing responses to the budget, planning an advocacy campaign.

Photo: Shaamela Cassiem

Children depict the changes they would like to see in their communities.

Building young people's peer facilitation skills

> *We may move differently but inside we are all the same.*
> Alex, 7 March 2011.

The impact of integrating children with disabilities and those without as equal peers in a group of facilitators made an immediate and indelible impression on everyone. Children with disabilities were challenged to believe in their abilities to make equally valuable input to that of their peers. Children without disabilities were given the opportunity to engage on a very personal level with children with disabilities – learning firsthand about the prejudices they face from society. The level of camaraderie in some cases translated into meaningful friendships.

This ease of engagement amongst the children and with the adult facilitators meant that the children felt comfortable to raise their views and opinions at any stage. For example, the children were key contributors to the development of the materials, including the testing process. Games were devised cooperatively and then tested by peer facilitators with their constituency groups. An example of a unique contribution by the children to the activities was the use of an orange (having ten segments) to explain percentages. This activity created a bridge to understanding budget percentage share calculations. The adult facilitators were very open to the input and suggestions from the children.

We learnt that adult facilitators working with children need to critically interrogate their notions of power over children. It is the children – rather than the adults – who should set the learning outcomes, pace, and level of engagement.[1] The more adults let go of their notions of superiority, the more children will actively engage in and guide the initiative. In this project, adult facilitators, for example, trained the peer facilitators but then merely acted as a reference point during the trainings led by the youth facilitators – demonstrating confidence in the children's abilities.

Using games to support learning about governance

For a person with cerebral palsy to mentally challenge themselves with difficult abstract concepts and control their body at the same time, this is an out-of-body experience that can be compared with developing the ability to walk – a moment of triumph!
Alex, 7 March 2011.

Understanding how government works is potentially a very complicated topic to discuss with children. It was imperative that the adult facilitators used innovative, child-friendly and novel ways to communicate this to children. The content included socio-economic rights, the government budget process, gender and child rights budgeting, as well as advocacy techniques. These concepts were shared in three one-week workshops.[2]

The guiding principle during the workshops was to build on what children already knew. For example, when adult facilitators wanted children to understand government budgets they started by reflecting on pocket money or household budgets. Once there was a basic understanding of a concept, the adult facilitators built on this knowledge by changing the context. After children understood household budgets, opportunities were provided for them to visit community projects to interview staff to understand the budgets of their organisations. By using this step-by-step approach, understanding government budgets was a natural progression.

For some children with disabilities, even the concept of money was unfamiliar. Children with disabilities, many of whom are 'shut-ins' at home, are seldom allowed to manage their own money or even understand the role of money in society. We created a simple game, making purchases with pretend money at a 'shop'. This was an empowering experience for the children. Even if they were not able to go on to understand government budgets, their worldview had already altered significantly.

It was also a significant shift for children to learn through an outcomes-based, experiential manner. Instead of the dry and boring learning methods employed in most schools, children were acquiring knowledge and skills through play. Through the project, children took part in treasure hunts to learn about budget books, did puzzles to understand their constitutional rights, and played the game Jeopardy to learn about human rights instruments. Experiential learning tools included using a cake to demonstrate the levels of government. Instead of talking about stereotypes as 'labels', adult facilitators assigned labels to individuals who had to guess from the way people interacted with them who they were and what power they had in society. Through these simple experiences and games children understood power dynamics in society, which is useful for advocacy. Box 1 shows an example of an activity.

[1] For a discussion on notions of power, see also Shutt and Mvurya (this issue).
[2] See the peer facilitators' training manual *Children participating in governance: budget monitoring from a rights-based framework* produced by Idasa.

Box 1: Levels and functions of government

Purpose: To facilitate an activity on levels and functions of government that caters to varying learning styles

Activity plan:
1. Divide participants into competency groups.
2. Provide each group with picture puzzles that depict the functions of each level of government (e.g. parks as a local government function or schools as a provincial government function). The puzzles are cut according to the level of competency within the group, i.e. a greater number of smaller pieces for a more competent group. The backing board of each of the puzzles should be a different colour so as to distinguish easily the different levels of government.
3. The groups then do the puzzles.
4. The words for the different functions are written on the back of the puzzles. The words for each function are in the various languages used by the participants. This will contribute to their increased governance vocabulary.
5. Reflection: what was new information? Check that the concept of different levels of government is understood. Clarify unique government competencies for each level of government.

Photo: Shaamela Cassiem

Children piecing together their puzzle on different functions of government at local, provincial and national levels.

Source: Nomdo and Cassiem (2007).

Enhancing knowledge and confidence for advocacy

> *I just made a call (for invitations to the budget speech) and we were connected.*
> Alex, 7 March 2011.

Most children in the project were already involved in advocacy and were selected from organisations that had an advocacy mandate. This project merely enhanced knowledge and skills relating to policy and budget advocacy. However, the manual produced also includes sessions on understanding who has power in society and how to influence people. These more basic concepts, as well as building the self confidence of children to articulate their opinions, would need to be discussed if working with a group of children new to advocacy.

After the training process, children took opportunities to use their new knowledge and skills. The children with disabilities ironically had easier access to parliamentary processes. The South African government makes a special effort to include marginalised groups. For example, organisations focusing on children with disabilities receive invitations to the budget speech. Two children with disabilities were given the opportunity to attend the budget speech and also the subsequent public question and answer session. The children took the opportunity to lobby for accessible transport and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities. They also asked about the implementation plan for fee-free schools which was discussed in the project workshops. These issues were televised and broadcast nationally.

Other children watched the budget speech on television – this was no longer considered long, dreary and of no importance. Using their new understanding of inflation, the children eagerly listened to whether their predictions for increases in social grants, for example, the child support grant would be accurate. A group of chil-

Photo: Shaamela Cassiem

Children involved in a budget analysis exercise.

dren volunteered to read the budget books to find out what changes were anticipated that might affect children. The children then compiled a budget brief which was released on the Internet the same night that the budget speech was made. Public benefit organisations applauded this achievement.

A group of children, including two children with disabilities, participated in an exposure visit supported by Idasa to a children's budget project run by Cedeca (Centro de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente do Ceará – Ceará Children's and Youth Defence Centre), in Fortaleza, Brazil. This broadened their horizons even further, with the children exchanging experiences despite language differences.

Recommendations to adult facilitators and child advocates working on budget advocacy

Adult facilitators should:

• Be aware of the power dynamics between themselves and child advocates, and try to be approachable rather than forcing an adult culture (e.g. dancing was frequently enjoyed by all).

• Allow children to shape the path of the project rather than entering an engagement with preconceived ideas of learning outcomes and/or sticking rigidly to project plans.

• Use games and experiential learning to communicate complex concepts.

• Build knowledge and skills in budget advocacy from what is already understood by and familiar to children, e.g. starting with a spending plan for a child's allowance.

• Provide a space for children with disabilities to engage as equals which may mean having an open discussion at the outset about prejudices.

Child advocates should:

• Reach out to children from marginalised groups such as children with disabilities in order to learn about realities different from their own.

• Treat children who are different, such as children with disabilities, with respect.

• Build partnerships with adults that are based on mutual respect in order to achieve shared goals.
• Believe in their ability and capacity to understand and influence governance systems and the people working in them.

Critical challenges

The critical challenges in the project related to non-attainment of the ultimate project goal, working with children with disabilities, inequitable impact on individual children and child protection issues.

The goal of the project was to facilitate children's participation in governance in a structured manner that would result in systems change. Unfortunately, the project was prematurely terminated due to changes within Idasa and only the KwaZulu-Natal participants were able to implement their advocacy strategy in a structured manner. However, the system did not really shift permanently within this province or at the national level to accommodate children's participation in governance.

This was the first time that the Idasa facilitators worked on governance issues with children having disabilities. Therefore, there was a steep learning curve that was mitigated to some extent by having a child leader within the Disabled Children's Action Group who acted as a key resource to the adult facilitators. The impact of the project on individual children was also inequitable. Especially in relation to children with disabilities, some children were not able to be independent advocates on governance issues due to their limited experience of the world, resulting from being 'shut-ins' as well as their poorer socio-economic background.

Child protection issues are always paramount when conducting work with groups of children away from home where they are not under the supervision of their caregivers. The project included many adults who acted as caretakers of the children, but still the children were exposed to violations of their rights. For example, at one hotel the children were accused of stealing a phone and the accusing adults were quite intimidating towards the children and adults caretakers in the project. It remains challenging to balance children's protection and participation rights in practice.

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The authors would like to thank Shaamela Cassiem, co-facilitator of the project described here. She also took the beautiful photographs included in the article.

Drawing up a participatory youth situation analysis in Kenya

19

by EDWINAH OROWE and RICHARD MABALA

Introduction

TAMASHA (Taasisi ya Maendeleo Shirikishi Arusha, the Institute of Participatory Development Arusha) is a youth participatory centre which was founded in 2007. Its primary objective is to promote the participation of young people in society and enable them to realise their rights and their rightful place in their communities in order to promote their own development and that of their communities. TAMASHA is in the process of registration in Kenya – it also has a team of trained facilitators from Kenya, and the aim of TAMASHA is to be truly pan-African.

Why a national youth situation analysis?

The 2007 general election in Kenya and the violence that followed is a classic example of how young people have been caught up in destructive behaviour. In the aftermath, the government of Kenya was desperate to know why 'young people were involved in violence'. The ministry of youth and sports called a preliminary meeting of key stakeholders and the young people themselves, facilitated by TAMASHA, to discuss this issue and come up with recommendations on what should be done. However, the TAMASHA facilitator suggested that a different approach should be taken as only a small minority of young people were violent, and many young people were peace makers. The workshop participants were asked to first give examples of the positive roles played by young people during the violence. This was an important methodological strategy for breaking down negative stereotypes of young people on the part of the adults and strengthening the self belief of the young people, many of whom had been in the forefront of peace-making efforts.

As a result of this preliminary meeting, TAMASHA, working with the ministry of youth and sports and UNICEF, took advantage of the negative attention to young people to develop a highly participatory rights-based youth situation analysis. This enabled young people to break out of the negative and superficial

stereotypes imposed on them, and present the situation in which they found themselves in a holistic way, explaining why some of them had turned to violence. This in itself was a major achievement. In addition, the recommendations arising out of the situation analysis were to be taken up and implemented by the ministry of youth and other stakeholders at local, provincial and national level.

Process

Eight young facilitators (two for each of four age groups, see below) were chosen from each province on the basis of their active involvement in youth affairs. The facilitators were trained by TAMASHA facilitators in participatory research methodology, including a mixture of appreciative inquiry and participatory rural appraisal (PRA). They then agreed on the main issues to be researched and the tools which would be used for each issue.

With support from provincial youth officers, young facilitators working in pairs identified and researched youth groups in their localities, using the tools developed at the workshop. This enabled them to document the varying youth issues from the different parts of the province and also to identify strong participants for provincial workshops that would work together to produce a provincial situation analysis. They also collected existing materials from the groups. In selecting participants for the provincial workshops, emphasis was placed on inclusion. Thus participants were balanced according to gender, in four different age groups (ages 10–14, 15–19, 20–24 and 25-plus).

The purpose of the provincial workshops was to use the events, plus materials collated and issues collected from different parts of the province beforehand, to conduct an in-depth analysis of the situation of young people in general, and specific groups of young people in particular. The research tools were used to identify, probe and analyse in greater depth. The research methodology included:

- **Appreciative inquiry:** dreams for themselves, their communities and Kenya as a whole, encouraging them to tell their stories. Overall the emphasis was placed on the positive aspects of young people and the final exercise was what they needed to do to achieve their dreams.
- **PRA:** mapping of their communities and provinces, ranking of issues and creating diagrams of social services and other forms of support to young people.
- **Diagrammatic causality analysis:** why is the situation as it is?
- **Art:** drama, pictures, poetry, rap and song.

Box 1: Participants' views

Asked about their views on education, the group aged 20–24 emphasised the need for skills-based education:
We dream of a community whose education imparts practical skills that will make us competitive in the job market and prepare us adequately to meet the various challenges of life.

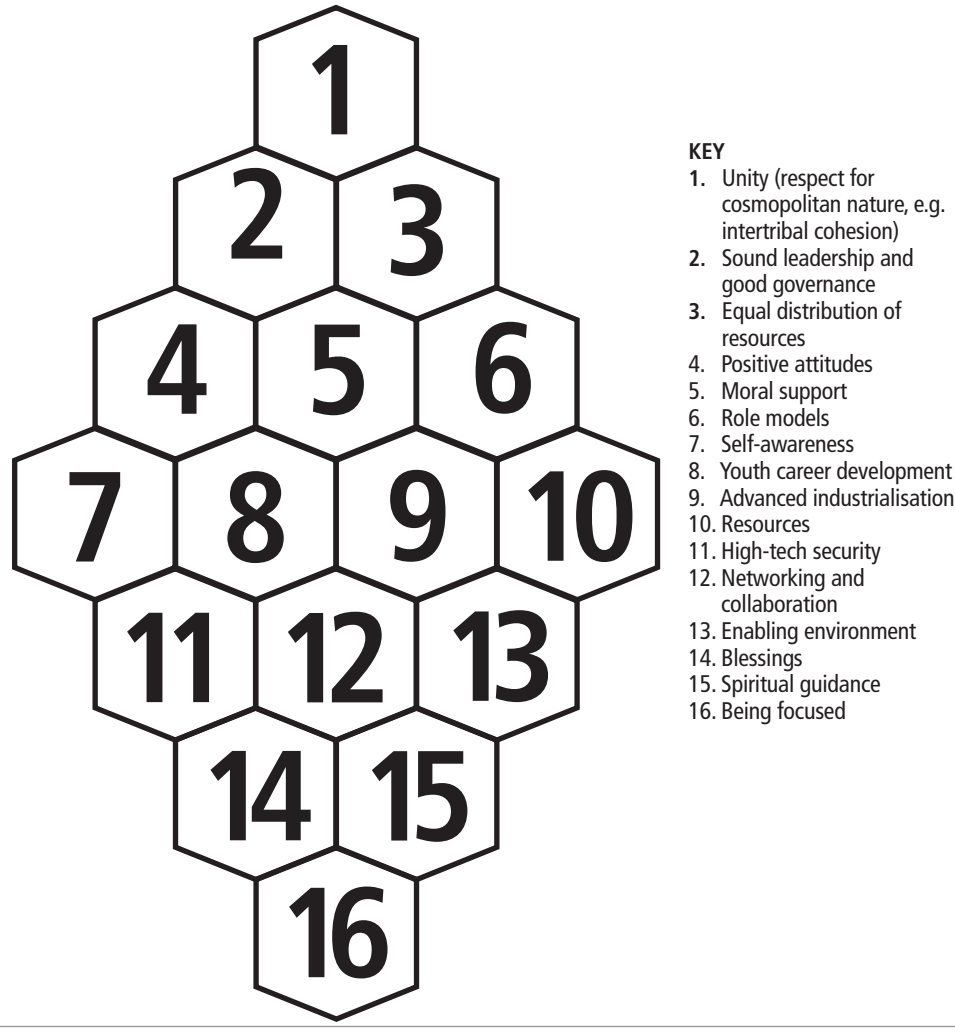
Wherever you go, you are told ten years' experience. OK, so they should open an 'experience school' where young people can attend before getting a job!

The group aged 10–14 expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of school life. Common among the boys were complaints about what they saw as teachers' preferential treatment of girls. One such comment was:
I was late to school with a girl. I was told to do punishment while the girl was told to go to class and teacher told me the girls are being given a lot of work at home.

On law enforcement agencies' attitudes towards young people, younger respondents talked about the police harassing them, whereas older youths (aged 25–29) associated law enforcement with systemic issues like corruption or the collusion of law enforcement agencies in drug trafficking:
Most officers in charge of different departments and ministries are there courtesy of the ruling party and the politicians they support. They do not consider merit…

Police are reluctant to deal with drug abusers, because they take bribes.

Figure 1: A diagram made of 16 diamonds showing elements that young people need to achieve their dreams. A creative way of prioritising what they consider important and why.



As a result of the above process and methodology, the situation analysis was successfully carried out and written up in each province. At the end, participants prioritised key issues to be taken forward to the national workshop from their provinces.

Each province elected delegates to attend the national workshop. Again the delegations emphasised gender balance, equal representation of age groups, and included one person from recognised vulnerable groups in each age group.

At the national workshop, each age group developed its national report before TAMASHA prepared the final report, which was published by the ministry of youth and sports. The findings and recommendations were very wide ranging, but above all showed a concern for equity of opportunity (geographically, educationally etc.). The report recommendations were as follows:

• Youth were very dissatisfied with the education system and wanted much greater attention paid to youth livelihoods.

Photo: TAMASHA

Some traditional cultures place huge barriers that prevent girls from accessing education.

Both issues leave them frustrated and angry and susceptible to joining gangs as their only outlet.

• They criticised the country for lack of leadership saying that tribalism and corruption had contributed to the violence. They revealed that politicians had bribed them to take part in the violence. Giving specific examples, they noted that in Kenya 'if you want to get attention you destroy property', a lesson they learnt from their elders.

• They were very critical of the negative attitudes of law enforcement agencies towards them, saying that they were treated like refugees in their own country.

• They noted the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence, which is fuelled by the impunity of the perpetrators. This was especially true during the election violence.

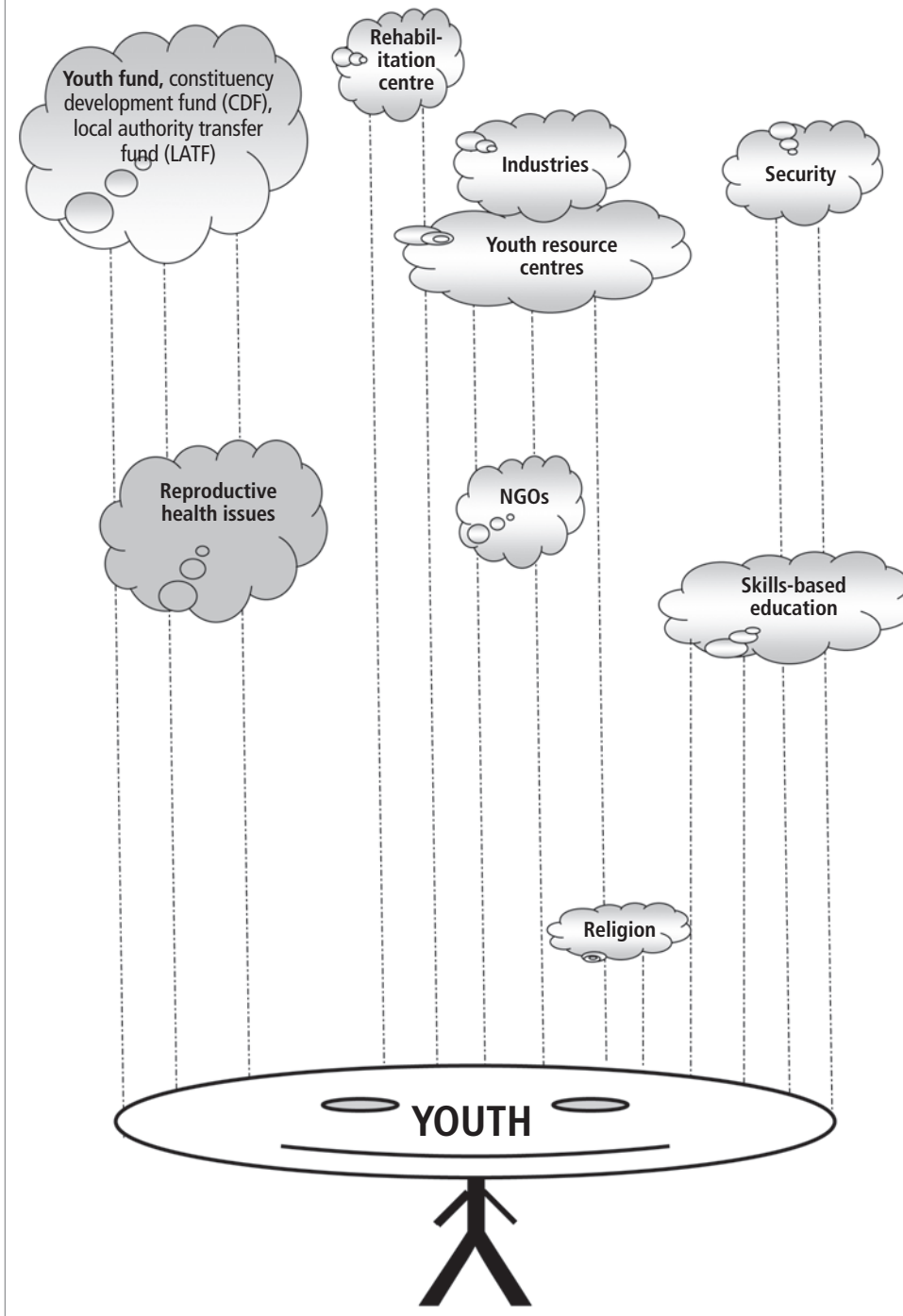
• Overall, there was a sense of hopelessness in many young people which they believed could easily be turned around once their issues were prioritised and they were able to participate fully in their own development.

Comments on the process and methodology

The choice of young activists/peer educators as researchers was a successful strategy as they already knew their communities and the issues facing them. They also knew how to identify and reach the more marginalised groups of young people. It was easier for young people to talk to their peers than to adult, external researchers, even using PRA methodologies.

However, when working with national partners, care should be taken to ensure that those who are chosen to do the research are those who are recognised as activists by their fellow youth, and are not the preferences of the ministry or national organisation. Those who had no experience in youth work had great difficulty in coping with the research. Some were rejected by their peers. Others did not have a grasp of the issues which would enable them to probe them in depth and revealed their ignorance on other issues. This was mostly experienced in urban settings, where young activists refused to be part of

Figure 2: A creative diagram of services and other forms of support to young people



the process because they felt ignored and betrayed by the ministry.

The youth-to-youth nature of the participatory research, facilitated by young people from the local areas, worked very well. They were already familiar with their areas and accepted by their fellow youth, who were therefore more open. The tools designed did not differ very much from those prepared by adults, as they were the product of training by TAMASHA facilitators. However, the nature of questions explored with the tools was significantly sharpened by the inputs from those who were experienced in working in their communities.

Where it was followed, the insistence on different age groups, gender balance and the inclusion of representatives from vulnerable groups worked very well. Even on specific issues such as education, the views of the younger youth were significantly different from those of the older youth. Young people with disabilities were able to input into the process, as well as adolescent mothers, sex workers and orphans. Without disaggregation these views would never have been heard.

The emphasis on the positive was also very effective. Young people were already tired of being stigmatised as 'violent' and being blamed for many of the problems in Kenya. The emphasis on their dreams and aspirations and how to achieve them was very well received and led to passionate discussions. At the end of the dream exercise at the national workshop, it was concluded:

> *Although there are many constraints, they should focus on the positives that will enable them to fulfil their dreams instead of concentrating on the negatives. Young people have a lot of potential to fulfil all these dreams.*

The variety of tools (including artistic methods) inspired a lot of creativity, with the young people adopting and presenting their feedback in different ways, through song, drama, dance and poetry. The diagrams of services did not provoke so much discussion, but the ranking and prioritisation exercises were very powerful. Once again, the age disaggregation worked well because the priorities of the different age groups were significantly different.

The emphasis on encouraging the participants to look at causal links between different issues enabled them to look for the connections between issues and the roots causes for each.

Conclusion

The situation analysis was launched nationally, and several commitments were made to young people on the strength of it. In terms of government actions taken as a result, it is hard to distinguish actions that resulted from the situation analysis from what would have happened anyway as a result of the government's fear of youth after the 2007 electoral violence. For instance, a national youth council was set up, but this may have happened without the situation analysis.

One related outcome is that UNICEF and the ministry of youth established a programme for promoting the talents and strengths of youth through their engagement with key figures in society, such as renowned artists. On another level, the young participants in the situation analysis formed their own groups to try to follow up on the promises made, and demanded that the ministry agreed parameters for future engagement, to ensure they did not become puppets in ministry-led processes.

Within this context, the participatory tools worked well to bring out the diversity of situations and viewpoints faced by young people in Kenya, which could then be included in the report. There were no complaints about the use of these tools from either government recipients of the report or the youth participants, and we witnessed very active engagement through-

Box 2: Tips to help facilitators manage adults in a participatory process with youth

Some issues for facilitators to raise and discuss with adults:

- Learn to 'hand over the stick', just as PRA researchers need to – appreciate the creativity and new thinking of young people.
- Practise 'enlarging your ears' and 'reducing your mouth'.
- See the engagement as a process in which they too have a stake, not a one-off event; and allow it to be grounded in the realities of the young people as the young people perceive them.
- Be ready to accommodate change – young people will not always think as they are expected to think.
- Believe in children and young people's capacities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child mentions children participating 'according to their evolving capacities'; adolescence is a stage of rapid evolution so should be a stage of rapidly increasing participation.
- Take a leap of faith. The results will be so positive that you will want to continue.

out. The national youth situation analysis was successful and presented a strong and holistic document to the ministry of youth and sports, which did not stop at simplistic solutions, but rather looked at the underlying and basic causes for the position of young people. The emphasis on the positive nature of young people also enabled them to present that side and show how much can be achieved if young people are not manipulated or silenced.

However, the quality of participation and the quality of the final report were compromised by the superficial and/or negative understanding of participation by some ministry officials and other adults. This meant that they did not follow the guidelines agreed upon, especially in the selection of facilitators and participants, nor did they allow participants the freedom to express themselves on any issue.

Independent researchers may not face these problems to such an extent, as they are more in control of their own research – though they may have to revisit their own commitment to participation and 'handing over the stick'. However, when working within institutional contexts where adults hold sway, much more work needs to be done with adults about the meaning and practice of participation. This includes addressing the stereotypes and prejudices of adults about youth (see Box 2). The process also has to be tightly overseen by people who are fully involved in and committed to participatory principles and the full participation of young people.

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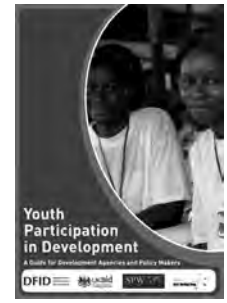
Young citizens: youth and participatory governance in Africa Related resources

Resources from Restless Development

Restless Development is a youth-led development agency with 25 years experience in placing young people at the forefront of change and development. Led by and with young people, Restless Development's innovative peer-to-peer approach focuses on the areas of youth sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth livelihoods and employment and youth civic participation. Restless Development's cost-effective approach has been cited as a model of best practice by UNAIDS, the World Bank, DfID and others. Worldwide, Restless Development currently employs over 250 staff and professionally trains 1,000 young volunteers who in turn directly reach over 500,000 of their peers every year.

Youth participation in development: a guide for development agencies and policy makers

A guide to support donors and policy



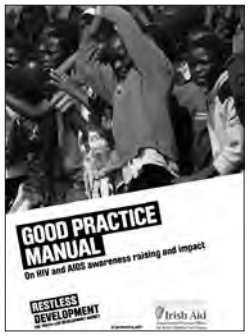
makers to effectively engage young people in development processes. The guide includes a range of good practice case studies and information on how to support young people's participation in development policy and programming, including highlighting useful tools and approaches.

■ Download online:
www.restlessdevelopment.org/file/youth-participation-in-development-pdf

Advocacy for action toolkit

A youth advocacy toolkit which aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills required to become powerful advocates, with a

focus on youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.
■ Download online:
www.restlessdevelopment.org/file/final-toolkit-pdf



Good practice guide on youth participation in HIV and AIDS awareness-raising

A good practice guide on youth-led HIV programming. This guide is the outcome of a project supported by Restless Development Zambia to highlight relevant civil society initiatives in the education sector in Zambia. The guide is based on the Southern African Development Community's HIV framework.
■ Download online:
www.restlessdevelopment.org/news/2011/09/05/good-practice-manual

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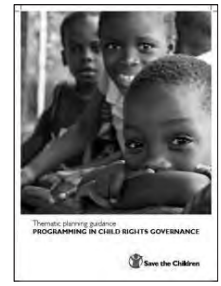
Resources from Save the Children's Child Rights Governance Initiative

This global initiative was set up to support the delivery of the Save the Children strategy in the area of child rights governance. The following are key CRG documents and are available to download online.



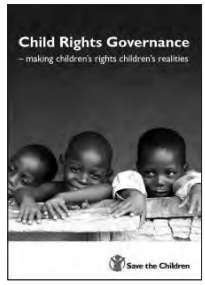
Thematic planning guidance: programming in child rights governance

● *Child Rights Governance Global Initiative, Save the Children*
This guide outlines the key areas of intervention as well as multiple examples of specific activities that are essential to achieving the realisation of all rights recognised by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3301

It's all about children: seven good examples and ten steps to meaningful children's participation in reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

● *Child Rights Governance Global Initiative, Save the Children, 2011*
This publication provides examples of good practices, different experiences and impacts of child-led and child-informed CRC reporting. The seven case studies here cover countries with very different historical and socio economic conditions where Save the Children either has supported networks and child rights coalitions in their reporting processes, or

directly helped children share their thoughts, experiences and concerns. It contains ten steps to meaningful children's participation in reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3961



Child rights governance – making children's rights children's realities

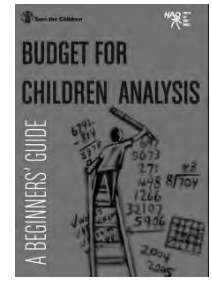
A brochure that presents the key features of the Child Rights Governance Global Initiative (CRGI), the latest of the six global initiatives included in the Save the Children Strategy 2010-2015, aimed at building societies that fulfill the rights for all children. It introduces SC's child rights governance work and briefly explains what it is and why it is so important for the sustainable improvement of the structures and systems that institutionalise children's rights.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3336

Child rights governance: making a reality of children's rights

This report tries to answer what kind of impacts work on child rights governance have by presenting case studies that show how work on CRG can hold governments to account, influence budgets, empower children and strengthen civil society and national legal systems.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3334

Universal periodic review toolkit: a guide for country programmes

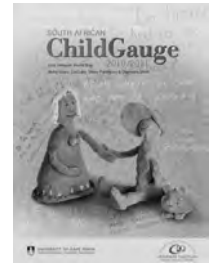
This toolkit shows how Save the Children and other children's rights organisations in a few steps can influence government policy and practice, and move children further up the political agenda.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3777



Budget for children analysis – a beginners guide

This toolkit provides steps for analysing state budget allocations to understand governments' commitments to child rights.
■ Download online:
http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/3134
For more information contact: Child Rights Governance Global Initiative, Save the Children, Rosenørns Allé 12, 1634 Copenhagen V, Denmark. Tel: +45 35 36 55 55; Email: ls@redbarnet.dk; Website: www.savethechildren.net

Children as citizens: participating in social dialogue



South African Child Gauge 2010/2011

● *Editors: Lucy Jamieson, Rachel Bray, André Viviers, Shirley Pendlebury, Lori Lake and Charmaine Smith, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.*
Through the notion of children as citizens, this new issue of the *South African Child Gauge* argues that children's participation in social dialogue has a crucial role to play in building a

democratic society. Nine essays set out children's participation rights and explore the benefits of children's participation in a range of settings, from one-to-one consultations with service providers to engagement in school governance, policy development and the news media.

The *South African Child Gauge* is an annual publication of the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. It aims to monitor South Africa's progress in realising children's rights. Key features include a series of essays to inform national dialogue on a particular area which impacts on South Africa's children; a summary of new legislative developments affecting children's rights; and quantitative data which track socio-economic statistics on children in the country.

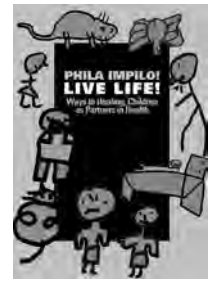
■ Download online or order hard copies: www.ci.org.za. For more information email: info@ci.org.za

Children's voices: learning from the child parliament experience in West Africa

● *Laetitia Antonowicz, Plan WARO, 2011*

With 40% of the population of West Africa under 15 years old, children constitute a group that decision-makers cannot afford to ignore. Research shows that the participation of children in local and national decision-making spaces has many benefits. This report focuses on a specific participation structure: national child parliaments. It explores the extent to which child parliaments in West Africa offer a meaningful mechanism for children to participate in democratic spaces and influence decision-making. Based on a regional study commissioned by Plan West Africa Regional Office, the report draws lessons from Liberia, Mali and Senegal. The report is aimed at government decision-makers, ministries that work directly or indirectly on children's issues, ministry officials who work with or for children, and professionals from UN agencies, development organisations and NGOs involved in child rights, child participation and governance.

■ For more information or to request a PDF of the report contact: Plan UK, Finsgate, 5–7 Cranwood Street, London, EC1V 9LH, UK. Tel: 0300 777 9777 / +44 (0)20 7608 1311; Email: caitlin.porter@plan-international.org; Website: www.plan-uk.org



Phila impilo! Live life! Ways to healing, children as partners in health: stakeholders strategy and policy workshop report of the round-table 2 discussion, May 2009.

● *Thea de Wet, Jill Kruger and Vanessa Black, Young Insights for Planning, 2009*

Children's voices have been largely absent from global discussions on how to treat and care for children with serious infections such as HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis (TB). But children are resourceful agents in their own spheres of life when consulted. The Phila Impilo project of Young Insights for Planning (YIP) facilitates ways of thinking about and planning medical and nursing care for children in terms of children's own perspectives. The purpose is to enable children, especially those with chronic illness such as HIV, AIDS and TB to become partners in their own healthcare, rather than mere recipients of treatment. This report collates and documents recommendations and insights arising from discussions regarding strategies for treatment and care as well as policy and planning for services for children. The Phila Impilo resources have served as a catalyst to awaken an appreciation amongst health professionals of the

peculiar vulnerability and specific needs of children, moving beyond survival towards the more holistic care of the children admitted to South African hospitals.

■ Download online: www.act.org.uk/news.asp?section=94&itemid=76

For more information contact: Jill Kruger, Young Insights for Planning (YIP), PO Box 701369, Overport 4067, South Africa. Fax: +27 86 693 4892; Email: yipsa75@yahoo.com.

Babiza's story

● *Siphelele Ndlovu. UNESCO-MOST's 'By children for children' series. UNESCO and HIVAN, 2004*

Babiza's story gave one young boy a chance to express his feelings and thoughts about his experiences in the face of HIV and AIDS. It has been widely used in research, intervention and training for best practice in child participation. *Babiza's story* is the first in a series which enables children to share their stories of courage, creativity and resilience with other children. It is inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children have the right to freedom of expression and a voice in matters that affect them. This series springs from the Growing Up In Cities (GUIC) project of UNESCO-MOST, which involves young people around the world in evaluating and improving the places where they live. For this book, GUIC teamed up with HIVAN (the Centre for HIV and AIDS Networking at the University of KwaZulu-Natal). Babiza willingly shared his story of courage and hope with Jill Kruger, Deputy Director of Social and Behavioural Sciences at HIVAN, who is also the South African Director of GUIC.

■ Download online: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141089mo.pdf

For more information on UNESCO's International Growing Up In Cities Project, please contact: Nadia Auriat, UNESCO-MOST Programme, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris CEDEX 15, France. Email: n.auriat@unesco.org

Creating space for child participation in local governance in Tanzania

● *Meda Counzens and Koshuma Mtengeti, Save the Children and Children's Councils*

Facilitating child participation is a national and international obligation for Tanzania. Research worldwide indicates the benefits of involving children and young people in decisions affecting them, and there is increasing recognition that children can participate successfully in decision-making not only in their immediate environments such as their families and schools, but also in their communities at local and national levels. This paper focuses on the model of community participation developed by Save the Children. The research targeted both children and adults with a view to obtaining insights in how best children can contribute to local governance.

■ Download online: http://tinyurl.com/repoa-children-governance. Full URL: www.repoa.or.tz/index.php/publications/creating_space_for_child_participation_in_local_governance_in_tanzania/

For more information contact: Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), PO Box 33223, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Email: repoa@repoa.or.tz; Website: www.repoa.or.tz

African Youth Report 2011

● *ARDYIS, 2011*

The enormous benefits young people can contribute are realised when investment is made in young people's education,

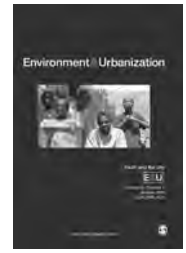
employment, healthcare, empowerment and effective civil participation. Several initiatives on youth education and employment have been undertaken in Africa, but these need to be deepened in order to exploit the full potential of young people in contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

This report seeks to promote new and deeper knowledge of the potential of African young people and the broad conditions that have an influence on this potential. It acknowledges the predicament of African young people today, noting that they share visions and aspirations that are seemingly beyond their reach, yet are essential elements of today's societies and the future which awaits coming generations.

Agriculture Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society (ARDYIS) aims to raise youth awareness and capacity on agricultural and rural development issues in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries through information and communication technologies (ICTs).
■ Download online: http://tinyurl.com/ardyis-youthreport. Full URL: http://ardyis.cta.int/en/resources/publications/item/104-african-youth-report-2011
For more information contact: Ken Lohento, ICT4D Programme Coordinator, The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), Agro Business Park 2, 6700 AJ Wageningen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 317 467100; Fax: +31 317 460067. Email: ardyis-project@cta.int; Website: http://ardyis.cta.int

Helpdesk research report: youth and governance

● *Oliver Walton, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*
GSDRC helpdesk reports are based on two days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and a summary of some of the best literature available. This report seeks to identify the key governance issues in relation to youth, and to examine how these may be shifting. It concludes by identifying a few emerging good practices in relation to youth and governance programming. The central challenge highlighted in the literature on youth and governance – that youth participation in governance should be enhanced at all levels – has been a prominent theme in donor literature since at least 2005. In the last few years, there has been a shift towards a growing emphasis on how this change can be made actionable. The report highlights nine key issues. Some have been prominent for several years (e.g. participation and empowerment, information and communication technologies (ICTs), unemployment, conflict and violence), while others have come to prominence more recently (e.g. climate change, urbanisation). The key issues relating to these nine areas are summarised here and explored in greater depth.
■ Download online: www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD760.pdf
For more information contact: Oliver Walton, GSDRC. Email: oliver@gsdrc.org



Responding to the perspectives of urban youth

● *Sheridan Bartlett. Briefing paper based on editorial in: Youth and the city: Environment and Urbanization Volume 22: 2, Sage Publications and IIED, 2010*
Youth make up around one-quarter of the world's population. But the challenges they face are given relatively little attention. They are often portrayed as the problem – the unemployed, disaffected, irresponsible generation, a 'ticking time bomb' likely to explode, spreading violence and chaos. Or they can be seen as victims – of HIV, violence and sexual

abuse, of discrimination, unemployment and exploitation. They can also be viewed as a repository of knowledge, energy and vision, which must be tapped to solve the world's problems. More effort is needed to go beyond these stereotypes, to listen to and support the efforts of young people to find opportunities, develop livelihoods, shape the settlements in which they live, and engage as citizens with adults and with local governments.

■ Download E&U 22:2 online: http://eau.sagepub.com/content/22/2/307
Download briefing paper online: http://pubs.iied.org/10594IIED.html
For more information contact: The Editors, *Environment and Urbanization* series, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8NH, UK. Tel: +44 20 3463 7399; Fax: +44 20 3514 9055; Email: humans@iied.org; Website: www.environmentandurbanization.org

GENERAL

Strengthening voices: how pastoralist communities and local government are shaping strategies for adaptive environmental management and poverty reduction in Tanzania's drylands

● *Helen de Jode and Ced Hesse, IIED, June 2011*

Pastoralism provides over 90% of the meat and milk products consumed nationally in Tanzania. The pastoralist production system successfully exploits and adapts to the disequilibrium in the dryland ecosystems, but pastoralist voices are frequently excluded from the decision-making and management of dryland resources. The marginalisation of pastoralists is resulting in falling production levels.

Since 2007, IIED, the Kimmage Development Studies Centre and the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum have been undertaking a project with their partners with the specific goal of generating more informed and equitable discussion and debate on pastoralism. Using local government reform processes, the Strengthening Voices project works at the community, local government and national levels – addressing the lack of knowledge and power imbalances within all three.

The central pillar of the project is a training course on the economic and ecological processes at the heart of pastoral systems – clarifying the rationale that underpins livelihood strategies. National politicians, local district officials and community participants have all benefited from the training.

At the end of its first three-year phase good progress has been made in designing and implementing tools and approaches that promote citizen access to decision-making. With their new evidence, training and advocacy skills, people are now better able to inform policy of the economic and environmental benefits of dryland livelihood systems.

This booklet and accompanying DVD explain the background to the project, its achievements, and how it plans to build on its successes to roll out the project to other districts in Tanzania, and elsewhere in East Africa.

■ Booklet available to download from: http://pubs.iied.org/G03105.html
To request a copy of the booklet and video contact Tanzania National Resources Forum: www.tnrf.org

Virtuous circles: values, systems and sustainability

● *Andy Jones, Michel Pimbert and Janice Jiggins, IIED, IUCN, November 2011, Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series*

Our current way of providing food and other basic needs involves industrialised systems that are linear, centralised and globalised. In the linear approach, it is assumed that at one end of a system there is an unlimited supply of energy and raw materials (which there isn't), while at the other the environment has an infinite capacity to absorb pollution and waste (which it hasn't). The inevitable result is resource shortages on the one hand and solid waste, climate change, biodiversity loss and air pollution problems on the other.

What if our production systems mimicked cycles in the natural world? By adopting a circular metabolism, external inputs, such as pollution and waste (as well as risk, dependency and costs) would be minimised. Natural systems are based on cycles, for example water, nitrogen and carbon. In addition, there is very little waste in natural systems. The 'waste' from one species is food for another, or is converted into a useful form by natural processes and cycles.

This book shows how these principles can be used to create systems and settlements that provide food, energy and water without consuming large quantities of fossil fuels and other finite resources. In the process, greenhouse gas emissions and environmental pollution are minimised whilst human well-being, food and livelihood security, and democratic control are enhanced.

■ Download online: http://pubs.iied.org/G03177.html

The sustainability transformation: how to accelerate positive change in challenging times

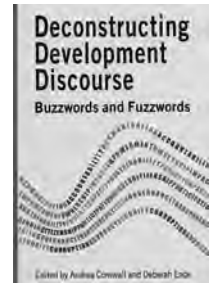
● *Alan AtKisson, Earthscan, 2011 (first published in hardback as* The ISIS Agreement *by Earthscan in 2009)*

This is a follow up to *Believing Cassandra*, published in 2010, by the same author. Again written in an informal and accessible style, *The sustainability transformation* shows how sustainability should be enjoyable as well as challenging.

At the heart of the book is the theory of 'sustainable development', condensed into a simple-to-learn formula called the 'ISIS Method'. ISIS stands for indicators, systems, innovation and strategy – a sequence for sustainability planning and learning.

The opening chapters provide background information about the structure of the current global systems that need changing, and about the scale of the problems endemic in these systems. The book will appeal to development professionals interested in learning about the tools and methods, as well as students and general readers looking for information and inspiration to enable them to become agents of change.

■ Available from Earthscan, Taylor & Francis Group Ltd, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxford, OX14 4RN, UK. Tel: +44 20 7017 6000; Fax: +44 20 7017 6699; Email: orders@earthscan.c.uk; Website: www.earthscan.co.uk



Deconstructing development discourse: buzzwords and fuzzwords

● *Edited by Andrea Cornwall and Deborah Eade. Practical Action in association with Oxfam GB, 2010*

'All things are subject to interpretation, whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not of truth.' Friedrich Nietzche

This compelling collection seeks to unravel the language of the development

world through the buzzwords which sustain its myths and its underlying power structures. Contributors analyse the meaning behind terms such as 'poverty reduction', 'capacity building', 'partnership', 'gender', 'empowerment' and 'participation', providing historical and political context and background. Words like 'poverty' are loaded with emotional and moral subjectivity – used and abused for political or commercial ends, giving them power and exclusivity. They become buzzwords, capturing the *zeitgeist* or speaking to political agendas. They cloud meaning and become overused 'fuzzwords', open to manipulation, misinterpretation and ambiguity. Leal analyses 'participation', which appeared in development discourse at the same time as structural adjustment programmes. In the process it lost its ideological meaning, serving the neo-liberal agenda. The book shows that language does matter – it shapes our perceived reality. The word 'development' itself justifies our intervention into people's lives, raising issues of ethics and power. As Samuel states: 'we need to become equal participants in social communication, rather than playing the role of highly paid experts travelling around with our ready-made toolkits and frameworks for prescribing the best communication medicine'.

■ Available from: Practical Action Publishing, Schumacher Centre for Technology and Development, Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9QZ, UK. Website: www.practicalactionpublishing.org

Events and training

Training from MOSIAC

Stakeholder participation workshop in planning, needs assessment and monitoring and evaluation

● *6th–11th February 2012, Tepoztlan, Mexico*

This year's stakeholder participation workshop will be held in collaboration with Sarar Transformacion. The workshop is based on a hands-on approach to participatory development that can be applied in the South, in both urban and rural community settings. Participants will be introduced to the concepts and tools behind participatory development. Practice assignments in the community will enable participants to master and improve the tools and approaches to participation.

The community practice assignments will be in one of five different communities in and around Tepoztlan, Mexico. Teams of participants will carry out a simulated participatory development exercise, using the tools learnt in the workshop. Where appropriate, links will be made to existing community groups and their issues. Evening meetings and on-going team-building exercises will be part of this process. All participants should have a basic knowledge of English and Spanish and be able to express themselves in both languages.

Registration fees: UN, international institutions and governments: US$1700.International NGOs, academics, private sector: US$1380. Local NGOs and private sector, full time students from the North: US$1100. Full time students from the South: US$795.00.

■ For more information contact: Françoise Coupal, Mosaic.net International, 705 Roosevelt Avenue, Ottawa, K2A 2A8, Canada. Email: wkshop05@mosaic-net-intl.ca. Full details are also available online: www.mosaic-net-intl.ca

Training at the Institute of Public Health, University of Heidelberg, Germany

Participatory learning and action: tools for community development

● *16th–20th July 2012*

This course will provide participants with the opportunity to develop skills in participatory learning and action methods and to understand and apply the theoretical foundations of PLA to primary healthcare. Topics include:

- Critical theory
- Action-oriented primary healthcare approaches
- PLA methods (e.g. ranking, community mapping, time lines, Venn diagrams, visioning and role plays)
- Cultural, gender and human rights aspects
- Conceptual management approaches

The course is aimed at graduate students at an advanced master level, doctoral students, TropEd students, junior and senior researchers and consultants actively engaged in research activities. The course is held in English. Fluency in English (reading, speaking and writing) is a prerequisite.

Registration fee: €750. The fee covers coursework, printed materials, coffee breaks and a pass for the Heidelberg public transportation system, but it does not include accommodation, insurance or other personal living costs during the stay. Registration deadline: 18th June 2012.

■ For more information and to register contact: Nandita Rothermund, Short Courses in International Health, Institute of Public Health, University of Heidelberg, Im Neuenheimer Feld 324, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany. Tel: + 49 62 21 56 46 48; Fax: + 49 62 21 56 49 18; Email: short.courses@urz.uni-heidelberg.de; Website: www.klinikum.uni-heidelberg.de/Participatory-Learning.8028.0.html

E-participation

Africa Technology and Transparency Initiative

www.africatti.org

The Africa Technology and Transparency Initiative (ATTI) is a joint initiative of Omidyar Network and Hivos. It seeks to support organisations in Africa that use technology and media platforms to empower citizens in their countries to hold their leaders accountable by providing access to credible public information, influence and stewardship of resources. The fund supports projects that use technology as an essential component for providing people with access to credible information about government actions and influence in Africa. ATTI aims to invest in the technology platforms that track government activities and money flows, provide citizens with the opportunity to engage on specific issues, and establish the public checks and balances that can help people hold government leaders more accountable.

AidInfo

www.aidinfo.org

AidInfo works to accelerate poverty reduction by making aid more transparent. AidInfo believes that aid will work better – and that poverty reduction will come about more quickly – when information about aid can be accessed quickly, easily and cheaply. Better aid will result from better information. AidInfo strives to enable governments, civil society and citizens greater and easier access to information on aid so that aid money can be tracked, adequate project feedback given and that government and donors can be held to account.

AidData

www.aiddata.org

AidData is an initiative that aims to increase the impact of development assistance by making aid information more transparent and accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. It also aims to improve the quality of research on aid allocation and aid effectiveness. AidData

provides a searchable database of nearly one million past and present aid activities around the world, aid information management services and tools, data visualisation technologies, and research designed to increase understanding of development finance. Currently, the AidData team is working with a wide range of development organisations. AidData also provides services for development organisations that require custom solutions for managing or analysing aid information.

The Children's Institute

www.ci.org.za

The Children's Institute is a leader in child policy research and advocacy in South Africa. Its activities focus on four areas that are critical to children's well-being: child rights, child poverty, child health services and care in the context of HIV/AIDS. The Children's Institute provides evidence to assist policy makers and practitioners to create policies, programmes and institutions that support the best interests of children in South Africa. Publications can be downloaded or free hard copies can be ordered from: csmith@rmh.uct.ac.za.

Child rights in practice: social networking site

www.childrightsinpractice.org

A social media site for child rights practitioners. The website brings together groups for people interested in similar issues, places to share resources and a way to meet other practitioners.
This site is for professionals, students, youth, child rights advocates and those interested in child rights issues around the globe.

Members can add videos, pictures and events or start and join groups based on interest areas. Members can join in or start new discussions under the forum tab or post items for general viewing by all members in the news section.

The Communication Initiative Network: Children, Equity and Development

www.comminit.com/children

The CI's new children, equity and development website is a collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund. Here, you can find information about children's equity issues in the context of communication and media development action.

Daraja

www.daraja.org

In rural Tanzania, local government has a responsibility to listen to communities and deliver public services that meet local needs. Daraja is a new organisation that aims to make positive changes to life in rural Tanzania by bringing people and government closer together. The name reflects Daraja's approach – Daraja comes from the Swahili word for bridge. The website includes a regular blog and information about Daraja's research.

Development Focus

www.developmentfocus.org.uk

Development Focus is an organisation led by Dr Robert Nurick and Dr Vicky Johnson working on international issues of social justice, public participation, and children and young people's rights. Publications on children and young people's rights can be downloaded here: www.developmentfocus.org.uk/Development_Focus/Rights.html

- *Rights through evaluation*
- *Gaining respect: children in conflict with the law*
- *Mainstreaming children's rights: a trainer's guide*
- 'Reflections from the ground.' In: *Children, politics and communication.*
- 'Rights through evaluation and understanding children's realities.' In: *A handbook of children and young people's participation.*
- *Stepping forward: children and young*

people's participation in the development process.

Frontline SMS: a resource for youth and participation

www.frontlinesms.com

FrontlineSMS is open source software that can be used to empower large groups of people, by harnessing the power and reach of mobile phones. At its core, FrontlineSMS software turns a laptop computer and a mobile phone or modem into a mass messaging platform. It works without the Internet, is easy to implement, simple to operate, and best of all, the software is free. Users only pay the standard text messaging charges through their regular mobile provider.

Using available technology – cheap laptops and basic mobile phones – FrontlineSMS helps grassroots community organisations to overcome communication barriers. In this short video, Ken Banks, FrontlineSMS Founder, explains the ethos behind the software, with examples of how it is used by human rights organisations: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yfPmfnXUew*

FrontlineSMS has been downloaded over 16,000 times and is being used in over 70 countries. It can be used to amplify otherwise unheard voices in governance processes, as shown by the many election processes which have been monitored using FrontlineSMS as a tool. FrontlineSMS is used to support many other projects relevant for youth participation – these are some examples.

Pamoja FM

A community radio station in Kibera, which helps local people – young and old – to share their views on many locally relevant issues, including politics and governance in Kenya. Learn more:
Video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nL6qNy0ylw
Post on FrontlineSMS radio's blog:
http://tinyurl.com/frontline-blog
Full URL:
http://radio.frontlinesms.com/2011/04/pamoja-fm-strengthening-social-networks-in-kibera

Plan UK

Plan UK's school linking project has used FrontlineSMS to help to connect school children in the UK, China, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Read more:
http://tinyurl.com/frontline-plan
Full URL:
www.frontlinesms.com/2011/03/07/global-learning-at-the-speed-of-a-text-message

Plan International

Plan International has used FrontlineSMS to help lower barriers for children to be able to report incidences of abuse and violence in Benin. Read more in this case study:
www.frontlinesms.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/FrontlineSMSPlan1.pdf

There is great potential for FrontlineSMS to help engage young people in policy, the media and wider civil society. Upon download many people and organisations stated their planned use of the software as relating to youth and governance issues. Here are some quotes from those seeking to use FrontlineSMS in this way:

We are looking to implement FrontlineSMS for [our work]... seeking to redefine the role and to enhance the visibility of young people in governance and public processes.

[Our planned use of FrontlineSMS is to] communicate with youth leaders, child rights activists and community volunteers.

■ For more information contact: Laura Walker Hudson, Director of Operations, FrontlineSMS.
Email: laura@frontlinesms.com

Open Government Partnership

www.opengovpartnership.org

The Open Government Partnership is a global effort to make governments better: more transparent, effective and accountable – by working with institutions that empower citizens and are responsive to their aspirations. The Open Government Partnership is a new multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, OGP is overseen by a steering committee of governments and civil society organisations.

Publish What You Pay

www.publishwhatyoupay.org

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a global network of civil society organisations that are united in their call for oil, gas and mining revenues to form the basis for development and improve the lives of ordinary citizens in resource-rich countries. PWYP undertakes public campaigns and policy advocacy to achieve disclosure of information about extractive industry revenues and contracts. The global network has over 600 member organisations across the world. PWYP members include human rights, development, environmental and faith-based organisations. In more than 30 countries, network members have joined forces by creating civil society coalitions for collective action. The priorities of these coalitions reflect the unique national context and the nature of the extractives sector in the country.

Restless Development

www.restlessdevelopment.org/resources

Restless Development is a youth-led development agency with 25 years experience in placing young people at the forefront of change and development. Led by and with young people, Restless Development's innovative peer-to-peer approach focuses on the areas of youth sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth livelihoods and employment and youth civic participation. Online resources include training manuals, toolkits and issues of their quarterly newsletter.

Technology for Transparency Network

http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org

The Technology for Transparency Network is a research and mapping project that aims to improve understanding of the current state of online technology projects that increase transparency and accountability in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia and the former Soviet Union.

There is growing enthusiasm about the use of social media as a powerful tool in promoting transparency and fighting against corruption. But how does the use of technology to promote transparency differ across regions, cultures and types of governance? What skills and expertise are missing from the current technology for transparency projects? What types of relationships have they formed with media, government and civil society organisations to increase their impact? This project aims to document in-depth technology for transparency projects to gain a better understanding of their current impact, obstacles and future potential.

Twaweza

www.twaweza.org

Twaweza means 'we can make it happen' in Swahili. It is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action and

seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account. Their website includes news and updates on e.g. budget transparency in East Africa and service delivery data, as well as policy briefings and reports. Also includes information on partners and projects that work with many youth partners e.g. Tamasha, a youth focused organisation in Tanzania and ShujazzFM, an interactive multimedia project in Kenya.

Ureport

http://ureport.ug

Ureport is a free SMS-based system that allows young Ugandans to speak out on what's happening in communities across the country, and work together with other community leaders for positive change. Ureport is supported by UNICEF and Brac, among others. Ureport is made up of:

- Weekly SMS messages and polls to and from a growing community of Ureporters
- Regular radio programmes that broadcast stories gathered by Ureport
- Newspaper articles that publish stories from the Ureport community.

The mission of Ureport is to inspire action within communities and from leaders and to share information that Ureport gathers through different mediums (radio, TV, community dialogue, websites and youth events).

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

www.unicef-irc.org

The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) Innocenti Research Centre has produced studies that explore neglected areas of child rights and well-being, informing policy and practice in numerous countries around the world. The website includes publications which focus on the latest critical thinking on socio-economic and human rights issues affecting the most vulnerable children and families. It also has research guides and tools and media materials.

Ushahidi

www.ushahidi.com

Ushahidi is a crowdsourcing citizen reporting tool first used in Kenya to map post-election violence. Ushahidi is a Kenyan company dedicated to democratising information and increasing transparency using flexible and robust open source technology.

Learn more about Ushahidi's latest projects, including Ushahidi Liberia which provides free customised mapping technology and ongoing technical support to humanitarian and development actors tracking conflict, peace building and the 2011 electoral process in Liberia. Ushahidi Liberia aims to connect people across civil society, government and the media using a common platform for information sharing.

War Child International

www.warchild.org

War Child International is a family of independent humanitarian organisations, working across the world to help children affected by war. War Child International currently consists of three implementing offices in Holland, North America and the UK. These offices operate as equal partners, share the same aims and goals and work together in the field, but are totally autonomous, with independent trustees and financial coordination. War Child International implements projects in Afghanistan, Burundi, Chechnya, Colombia, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, West Bank and Gaza.

RCPLA NETWORK

In this section, we update readers on activities of the **Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action Network (RCPLA) Network** (www.rcpla.org) and its members. RCPLA is a diverse, international network of national-level organisations, which brings together development practitioners from around the globe. It was formally established in 1997 to promote the use of participatory approaches to development. The network is dedicated to capturing and disseminating development perspectives from the South. For more information please contact the RCPLA Network Steering Group:

RCPLA Coordination and North Africa & Middle East Region: Passinte Isaak, Center for Development Services (CDS), 4 Ahmed Pasha Street, 10th Floor, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt.
Tel: +20 2 795 7558
Fax: +20 2 794 7278
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Website: www.cds-mena.org

Asia Region: Tom Thomas, Director, Institute for Participatory Practices (Praxis), S-75 South Extension, Part II, New Delhi, India 110 049.
Tel/Fax: +91 11 5164 2348 to 51
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Website: www.praxisindia.org
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Website: www.iedafrique.org

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Email: participation@ids.ac.uk
Website: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip

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East Africa Region: Eliud Wakwabubi, Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK), Jabavu Road, PCEA Jitegemea Flats, Flat No. D3, PO Box 2645, KNH Post Office, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel/Fax: +254 2 716609
Email: eliud.w@pamfork.or.ke

News from the Asia Region: update from Praxis

Praxis – Institute for Participatory Practices – works to promote participatory practices in all spheres of human development. It carries out research and consultancies and engages in several self-funded initiatives to further the use of participatory approaches. Praxis is committed to mainstreaming the voices of the poor and marginalised. It is based in New Delhi, with branches in Chennai, Patna, Hyderabad and London.

TheWorkshop2011

Praxis successfully hosted its annual international commune on participatory development from 12th–21st September 2011, in Siloam, in the north-eastern Indian state of Meghalaya. This was the landmark 15th year of TheWorkshop. Seventy-one participants from eleven countries spent ten days learning new skills and sharing their knowledge in participatory development. Four modules were on offer: participatory methods and approaches, community-led local level planning, community-led monitoring and evaluation and public accountability. TheWorkshop2012 is scheduled to be held in late September 2012.

■ Details will soon be available on: www.theworkshop.in
For videos of the recent workshop see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4l3lppysqs
To watch other films made by Praxis, see: www.youtube.com/user/PraxisIndia

Social Equity Watch

As mentioned in previous issues of *PLA*, Praxis, as the secretariat of Social Equity Watch (SEW), has been mapping exclusion based on religion, ethnicity and caste in the government's provision of village-level infrastructure in five states across India as part of the National Infrastructure Equity Audit (NIEA) exercise.

The learning from the NIEA study was shared through a consultation held in New Delhi on 12th–13th July 2012 with other members of SEW, development functionaries and the media. The consultation also laid the foundation for a way forward to ensure equity aspects are kept in consideration in any further infrastructure projects planned or executed by the government of India.

■ For further details, visit: http://socialequitywatch.org/

Other on-going work in the region

Praxis is currently engaged with several research initiatives in various sectors. They are in the process of developing a monitoring framework for anti-trafficking responses in India. They are also working on studies and campaign work on urban poverty focusing on powers vested with urban local bodies towards planning and implementation of pro-poor urban reform, as well as several other short-term needs assessments and project evaluations.

The Praxis Patna team has been included as one of the 16 sectoral committees (on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Institutions) working on preparing an approach paper as part of the formulation of the Bihar government's 'Growth With Justice' goal under the 12th five-year plan.

The Praxis team in Chennai recently organised an immersion for non-resident Indian children focused on the right to education, food security and child labour at Pooncholai, a home run by Malarchi Trust in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

■ For more information about Praxis and its work, visit: www.praxisindia.org

News from IIED

Participatory knowledge: how does this feed into development research? Special event to launch *PLA* 63

As mentioned in the editorial, IIED hosted a launch of *Participatory Learning and Action* 63: *How wide are the ripples? From local participation to international*

organisational learning. This was co-organised by the Organisational Learning Network (OLN), an informal forum of learning and development practitioners from the voluntary sector, of which several of the *PLA 63* authors are members.

The event was facilitated by Hannah Beardon, one of the *PLA 63* guest-editors. The other guest-editor, Kate Newman, had recently given birth to a baby girl, her third child. Many congratulations to Kate and her family!

Participants included members of the OLN and IIED staff. The event was opened by Camilla Toulmin, Director of IIED. Hannah gave a brief overview of the ripples research process, highlighting the four overarching themes which were identified for this special issue. See the overview article for *PLA 63*: http://pubs.iied.org/G03167.html

After brief introductions, participants were invited to discuss some of the issues in smaller groups and share experiences. Questions considered included: what information do you draw on when you are making decisions about projects, programmes, strategies or research? Whose knowledge and opinions feed into your knowledge construction process? Do you make use of information representing the voices and views of different stakeholders?

The session after the tea break saw IIED and OLN working in separate groups, which provided an opportunity to explore the institutional support needed to enable critical reflection of how and in which ways information and knowledge interrelate with power and development.

As reiterated during the meeting, *PLA 63* was not the end product of the ripples process, but rather the beginning of a new one, as well as a continuation of what had already been achieved. *PLA 63* is not a blueprint, but rather a guide to help other people and organisations continue their discussions.

We look forward to sharing more reflections from readers on the issues raised in *PLA 63*. Please send us your feedback!

Our new offices

IIED has settled well into the new offices in Gray's Inn Road. We have held several meetings and events and we are adjusting to a more open-plan style of working and new technologies. We will be sharing the lessons learnt in updating an existing 1950s building, with a view to significantly improving our carbon footprint. We are looking forward to launching the publication of this issue of *PLA* in our new meeting space, and to welcoming more visitors.

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Guidelines for contributors

For a full set of guidelines, visit our website www.planotes.org
A free guide to writing for the *PLA* series is also available online here: http://pubs.iied.org/G03143.html

Types of material accepted

- *Articles*: max. 2500 words plus illustrations – see below for guidelines.
- *Feedback*: letters to the editor, or longer pieces (max. 1500 words) which respond in more detail to articles.
- *Tips for trainers*: training exercises, tips on running workshops, reflections on behaviour and attitudes in training, etc., max. 1000 words.
- *In Touch*: short pieces on forthcoming workshops and events, publications, and online resources.

We welcome accounts of recent experiences in the field (or in workshops) and current thinking around participation, and particularly encourage contributions from practitioners in the South. Articles should be co-authored by all those engaged in the research, project, or programme.

In an era in which participatory approaches have often been viewed as a panacea to development problems or where acquiring funds for projects has depended on the use of such methodologies, it is vital to pay attention to the quality of the methods and process of participation. Whilst we will continue to publish experiences of innovation in the field, we would like to emphasise the need to analyse the limitations as well as the successes of participation. *Participatory Learning and Action* is still a series whose focus is methodological, but it is important to give more importance to issues of power in the process and to the impact of participation, asking ourselves who sets the agenda for participatory practice. It is only with critical analysis that we can further develop our thinking around participatory learning and action.

We particularly favour articles which contain one or more of the following elements:

- an **innovative** angle to the concepts of participatory approaches or their application;
- **critical reflections** on the lessons learnt from the author's experiences;
- an attempt to develop **new methods**, or innovative adaptations of existing ones;
- consideration of **the processes** involved in participatory approaches;
- an assessment of the **impacts** of a participatory process;
- potentials and limitations of **scaling up and institutionalising participatory approaches**; and,
- potentials and limitations of **participatory policy-making processes**.

Language and style

Please try to keep contributions clear and accessible. Sentences should be short and simple. Avoid jargon, theoretical terminology, and overly academic language. Explain any specialist terms that you do use and spell out acronyms in full.

Abstracts

Please include a brief abstract with your article (circa. 150-200 words).

References

If references are mentioned, please include details. *Participatory Learning and Action* is intended to be informal, rather than academic, so references should be kept to a minimum.

Photographs and drawings

Please ensure that photos/drawings are scanned at a high enough resolution for print (300 dpi) and include a short caption and credit(s).

Submitting your contribution

Contributions can be sent to: The Editors, *Participatory Learning and Action*, IIED, 80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK.
Fax: +44 20 7388 2826;
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Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network

Since June 2002, the IIED Resource Centre for Participatory Learning and Action has been housed by the Institute of Development Studies, UK. Practical information and support on participation in development is also available from the various members of the RCPLA Network.

This initiative is a global network of organisations, committed to information sharing and networking on participatory approaches.

More information, including regular updates on RCPLA activities, can be found in the In Touch section of *Participatory Learning and Action*, or by visiting www.rcpla.org, or contacting the network coordinator: Ali Mokhtar, CDS, Near East Foundation, 4 Ahmed Pasha Street, 10th Floor, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt.
Tel: +20 2 795 7558; Fax: +2 2 794 7278;
Email: amokhtar@nefdev.org

Participation at IDS

Participatory approaches and methodologies are also a focus for the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. This group of researchers and practitioners is involved in sharing knowledge, in strengthening capacity to support quality participatory approaches, and in deepening understanding of participatory methods, principles, and ethics. For further information please contact: Jane Stevens, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK.
Tel: +44 1273 678690; Fax: +44 1273 621202
Email: J.Stevens@ids.ac.uk
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participatory learning and action

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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 special issue describes how young people are exercising their right to participate and developing the knowledge, skills and confidence to affect to change. It explores 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 special issue 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.

Participatory Learning and Action is the world's leading informal journal on participatory approaches and methods. It draws on the expertise of guest editors to provide up-to-the minute accounts of participatory approaches in specific fields. Since 1987, *PLA* has provided a forum for participatory practitioners – community workers, activists and researchers – to share experiences, conceptual reflections and methodological innovations with others, providing a genuine 'voice from the field'. A vital resource for those working to enhance the participation of ordinary people in local, regional, national and international decision-making, in both South and North.

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