YOUTH POTENTIAL PAPER
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our programmes, we work with the same broad constituencies as ActionAid, but we place a primary focus on the role of Youth as change agents. Youth are often more likely to act in commitment to the vision of a shared future, against the consequences of a past formed by the generation that went before them. With youth we find the combination of a critical reflection on the generation that went before them and new alternative for the future, with the time, energy and hope to invest in working for a common future. We therefore work on empowering young change agents through relevant trainings and by creating networks and platforms for the exchange of experiences and communities for action. We work on developing effective, creative and activist campaigns and we support efforts to create sustainable, democratic alternatives that are relevant for and driven by Youth.

Within ActionsAids broader framework and Theory of Change, AADK will focus its support to ActionAids programmes and partnership on organizing and mobilization based on activism and volunteering, and the ability of ActionAid to connect local struggles to broader national and global campaigns and build collective power through broader peoples led movements, coalitions, networks and alliances around broader common alternatives.

ActionAid Denmark supports activists, volunteers and community leaders in organizing and campaigning within and across communities and linking them up with wider social movements. We focus especially on developing youth leadership for organising, mobilising and creative activism and campaigning.

Over the past years, AA DK has developed a number of strong components, approaches and concepts focusing (directly and indirectly) on youth, e.g. Global Platforms, P4C, Youth mainstreaming in thematic programmes, Beautiful Rising etc. In the future, we suggest a refined Global Platform Concept/set-up, which will play a key role in building the capacity of youth leaders and their ability of organizing around their own defined causes and in supporting youth to take the relevant political actions. The refined Global Platforms will work much closer with the youth and AA CO’s with regard to design of trainings and ‘post-training’ activities, so we ensure a more holistic and well-coordinated approach working with youth on their own struggles.

KEY YOUTH POTENTIALS

1. **Build capacity and leadership for organising:** Building effective voluntarism and activism requires leadership. We will work with ActionAid COs, within their constituencies, to build a rooted political leadership for mobilizing, organizing and coordinating action and connect struggles between local and national levels. We will develop leadership, especially among young activists. We support a new generation of community and social movement leaders with skill development, strategizing, experience sharing, coaching, tools and resources, networks and linkages. We work with young leaders to define a leadership approach that is different from traditional management courses, but rather focuses on leading social change in line a community organizing approach – providing spaces for others to act and adapt in uncertain times. Our focus is on learning by doing. We make strategic choices on who we work with and focus on supporting informal actors and social movements, not just traditional NGOs and community groups.

2. **To refine the Global Platform (GP) Concept / Set-up:** The GPs should play a key role in building the capacity and leadership for organizing as referred to above, but the GPs should be much more than ‘just’ youth training centers. We want the GPs to be political activism spaces and social laboratories, where young people convene, are innovative, testing new
ways of organizing and pursue youth political agendas. In order to achieve this, we need to ensure that the GPs, in close collaboration with AA COs and their youth constituencies, co-create relevant youth trainings, jointly identify the ‘right youth leaders’ and jointly design a series of ‘post-training’ activities, that are closely aligned to other AA DK supported modalities e.g. thematic programmes, policy campaigns and P4C. The GPs’ should not ‘just’ be a physical space in a given capital – it’s should also be a ‘mobile’ unit that can mobilize, empower and organize youth ‘under a mango tree’ or in a ‘secret location’, where ‘front-line’ activists and some social movements tend to operate. The GP should play a ‘connecting role’ in terms of locally rooted organizing and national initiatives.

As part of a refined GP, we wish to strengthen the presence and quality of digital learning - both as stand-alone learnings and as part of continuous learning journeys. An agile and mobile Global Platform set up thus also entails a strong digital component - eventually a Digital Global Platform with available learning content through different digital learning modalities.

In addition, we want to develop a GP growth strategy, since we believe there could be a big potential expanding the GP concept to other parts of the world incl. other European countries, Australia and the US. Therefore, we suggest to explore this further and design an actual growth strategy with focus on the potential (youth) political gains and some financial gains – incl. how would the best possible social enterprise model look like. In this regard, we suggest a GP set-up, which is not only owned by ActionAid, but also by other likeminded actors, whom share our vision empowering youth as change agents.

3. To become a key youth policy actor in DK and globally: To have qualified political opinions on relevant policy issues, it requires access to new and credible information concerning the issues being debated. Therefore, we suggest that we identify and partner with relevant Research- and Learning Institutions on this. We want AA DK to have strong opinions on key youth policy issues and to actively engage in relevant policy debates, and in this regard we want AA DK to identify and link-up with relevant youth alliances and networks e.g. Restless Development in order to influence relevant youth policy issues in the best possible manner.

4. To establish a ‘rapid political response mechanism’ for political and non-violent action: Politically, the world is changing very fast and as a credible youth actor, we need to be able to support young activist with regard to influencing emerging political situations around them. Therefore, we want AA DK to establish a flexible funding mechanism with a recognized level of risk willingness that (with a very short notice) can be allocated for mobilizing and organizing young people around a relevant emerging political situation, that could affect their lives negatively.

5. To establish a (youth) human rights defender set-up and ‘walk the talk’: Putting youth at the ‘forefront’ of political campaigns and demonstrations also brings a level of risk to the young ‘front liners’. As AA DK, we need to ‘walk the talk’ and stand-up for the youth that we work with on various political battle grounds. Therefore, we want AA DK to establish a kind of a human rights defender mechanism, where different types of support (e.g. political/moral, legal and financial) should be provided in situations where required.

6. To develop a strategy concerning youth employment: Youth unemployment is a massive problem in almost all countries, where we are working. Therefore, we want AA DK to develop a strategy on how best AA DK (given its governance expertise) can contribute on this important issue.
Following an internal ‘GIGA-SWOT’ exercise engaging AADK staff members, the Senior Leadership Team identified twelve potentials that could inform important parts of the new AA DK Strategy. One of these potentials is to increase the focus working with youth. The purpose with this Paper is to provide an input to the AA DK strategy discussions.

INTRODUCTION

A BIT OF CONTEXT

There are approximately 2 billion youth between the ages of 15 to 35 years, the majority of whom live in urban areas of developing countries. Too many of these young people see their potential hindered by inequality expressing itself in terms of extreme poverty, injustice, discrimination or lack of information and civic participation, lack of access to public services and employment. Young people are a specific category of the demography with different needs, aspirations and issues that are not recognized by government and civil society organizations.

Young women are specifically affected by societal norms around gender, which can prevent them from participating in political activity, limit their access to education, impose high levels of unpaid domestic work and truncate their efforts to claim and use their rights. Women still earn far less than men for comparable work, and women lack control over income and wealth. Systemic discrimination against women and girls is both a cause and result of the inequalities that drive poverty, and can be exacerbated by class, ethnicity and age.

New trends of organising and mobilising have intensified over the last decade and collective action has yet again shown its importance as both means and end - in the battle for a more just and democratic world. Much has been written about the role of young people in these political, social and economic changes; their potential role and their energetic attitudes in setting an alternative agenda.

The truth is that there is nothing new about the fact that young people lead societal changes. Martin Luther was among the founders of Southern Christian Leadership Conference and became their first president in 1957, at the age of 28. Nelson Mandela founded ANCs Youth League at the age of 26 and became the front figure of ANCs Defiance Campaign less than ten years later. Camila Vallejo and Malala Yousafzai are some of our most recent examples of young women taking a stand against injustice and expanding the political space for the greater society through courage and leadership. What might be new though, is the magnitude of these trends and thus the importance of the actions we take to both confront and embrace them.

In many parts of the world, rampant poverty continues to drive millions of young people towards cities in the hope of a better life. UN statistics forecast that by 2030, 60 percent of the world population will be living in cities and as many as 60 percent of urban residents will be under 18. As they gather in crowded informal settlements with insufficient infrastructure, at a critical stage in their lives, young people are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and politicisation. We strongly need to consider the youth “bulge” in these urban and peri-urban settings, many of whom are living in poverty and exclusion, but many of whom are also part of the young urban and educated middle class. We need to recognise that together they hold a tremendous potential for confronting the political status quo. And yet AA DK is not alone in grasping with these realities and seeing the potential of young people for political action. If AA DK doesn’t move on these, others will. Thus it leave us with a huge responsibility to provide an alternative platform whereby youth can advance and take part in transformative democratic narratives that fosters global citizenship, liberation and democratic participation.
The ability of young people to share, collaborate and act together is being dramatically improved by the social tools that are becoming increasingly available all over the world. This means that young people now have access to information that helps them mirror their realities and create a shared awareness of the global inequality and injustice. These new tools have also lowered the cost and increased the pace of mass mobilisation, the creation of networks and hereby changed the role of traditional organisations. Throughout the world we have seen social movements rising rapidly without participation of the NGO’s, but we have also seen how these tidal waves of protest can quickly evaporate before their deeper change objectives have been achieved.

We need to consider these new forms of organising and mobilising, both on- and offline and we need to adjust our approaches to fit their needs and demands. This means developing political courage and creativity within our own organisation in order for us to be relevant for young people outside of it. It also means taking a deeper look beyond our programme and campaign work to identify emerging initiatives, so we can support them at the crucial initial stages where strong organizing capacities can help secure the ability to maintain collective actions even after the first energy and attention wears off increasing the people power and thus the political impact of these youth led struggles.

**HOW DO WE DEFINE YOUTH?**

There is no universally agreed definition of youth. It is a social and cultural construction bound by a range of indicators including age, marital status, financial dependency, responsibility and emotional dependence on primary caregivers. These indicators vary considerably across cultures and contexts. The age-brackets used to define youth have expanded in recent years due to economic decline, rising levels of formal education and increasing barriers for young people to set up their own families. Kenya defines youth as anyone between the ages of 18 and 35, while in South Africa the bracket extends from 14 to 35, and Honduras defines youth as those between the ages of 12 and 30.

Action Aid DK mainly work with ‘youth’ as people between the ages of 18 and 30, while acknowledging that the category is more fluid than a fixed age group would suggest.

**WHICH CATEGORIES OF YOUTH SHOULD AADK WORK WITH?**

We need to differentiate between who we organize, mobilize and empower for which specific purposes. We need to be very clear about when we aim for a mass mobilisation for campaign hooks and when we wish to organise youth for long term collaboration and independent youth initiatives, be that in our campaigns or programmes. Urban and middle class young people are as instrumental to societal changes as poor and excluded, but under a different set of principles. Also we tend to forget the principle of the “critical mass”. Big numbers are not always crucial for success. Smaller, faster moving affinities can also do the trick. We also need to foster and bridge collaboration and partnerships between youth and adults.

Bearing in mind the needs and background of the individual youth category that we work with, we customize the design of our youth activities to provide the best suited support but common for all our activities is that our youth sympathize with the political vision and mission of AA DK.

**Rural poor and marginalized:**
To bring about radical political change, we need to build from below, but we should also acknowledge that our international youth work does not only involve and include the most marginalized. We work with young people that lives in poverty, whose rights are often defended but whose basic needs are covered and that has a surplus to fight for their own rights and the rights of the others in their local community.
Urban poor and marginalized:
It is fairly new for AAI to work systematically with the urban poor, but working with youth leaders at local and national level both from the growing middle class as well as the urban poor is strengthening our capacity to create linkages between the different levels and to give youth a strong voice in national, local and international arenas.

Urban middle class youth:
In conflicts between forces of change and forces of restoration, the middle class play a decisive role. As long as the established middle class sticks with the old elites, the status quo is upheld. If the middle classes make common cause with emerging classes, change will be inevitable. In the protests of “young unemployed graduates” from Tunis to London, from Wall Street to Madrid here, a precarious middle class protests for better life chances through economic and political change. The work of these people often bring them into close contact with people who currently live in economic disadvantages or socially marginalised circumstances.

How could we work with youth in the future?

With reference to AAI’s new strategy, AA DK is in the process of developing its new thematic programmes, which will contribute to addressing some of the key issues referred to in the above context section. The new thematic programmes are Deepening Democracy, Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) and Tax Justice. We work with the same broader constituencies as Action Aid, but we put a special emphasis on the role of youth as change agents. We believe that it will not be possible to successfully deliver on these thematic programmes without systematically engaging young people at all stages of program design and implementation. From our perspective, young people are instrumental in identifying solutions to the challenges of inequality and injustice. Today’s youth form the generation that has the best chance to end poverty, stop climate change and ensure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) become a reality.

It is important to stress that we do not suggest to develop a parallel youth program but a holistic approach that embraces the broader thematic programme elements with focus on some well-designed youth methodologies that builds on youth organizing trends and key principles such as active youth involvement and ownership, creativity and political activism. The way we suggest to work with youth should be integrated in the overall theory of change.

Our theory of change in ActionAid builds on empowerment, peoples lead analysis, campaigning and development of alternatives and solidarity as the means to connect local struggles for lives in dignity, to national and global struggles against injustice, and as a means to connect the struggles of those living in poverty, with those wishing to stand and act in solidarity.

Empowerment and organizing

We see empowerment as a way of supporting youth to organise and be able to hold the relevant authorities or others accountable. Through the Global Platforms, P4C personnel, digital spaces (e.g. Beautiful Rising and Global Change Lab) and in close collaboration with AA CO’s we can do this with conscientisation and training aimed at strengthening youth’s capacity to analyse and address unjust power relations and by enabling them to organize and take collective action to use their knowledge and demand their rights. We support a new generation of community and social movement leaders with skill development, strategizing, experience sharing, coaching, tools and resources, networks and linkages. We work with young leaders to define a leadership approach that is different from traditional management courses, but rather focuses on leading social change in line a community organizing approach – providing spaces for others to act and adapt in uncertain times.
Empowerment processes are crucial for effective mobilisation and the strengthening of social movements. Until now, AA DK has (e.g. through its GP’s) been strong in its youth empowerment work, but we need to strengthen our work in terms of creating and facilitating space for action for young people.

These core questions can be summoned in the strategic difference between organising and mobilising youth.

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\begin{align*}
\text{Organizing} & = \text{Building long term capacity and collective power} \\
\text{Mobilizing} & = \text{To take advantage of that capacity and power to take immediate action}
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There is a pressure from donors and members to create quick and measurable results. This can easily be an incentive to focus on boosting numbers through low-cost mobilizing, where it requires little effort to participate. However, to increase our people power it is crucial that we do not ignore the importance of developing skills and creating strong relationships among volunteers and activists. Recognising the power of relationships, encourage stability, motivation, creativity, and accountability – and use volunteer time, skills, and efforts effectively and with respect is what grows ownership and deepens organising.

Through a refined and more flexible Global Platform Concept, we wish to contribute to youth organize around their own political struggles, by building up their capacity to act in their own campaigns. Investing in long term capacity and movement building make ongoing activism much more likely, builds up civic and democratic leadership among activists and help them realize the power of working together rather than alone, thus strengthening our collective capacity.

The Reflection/Action framework and our Global Platforms are two good examples of how space and strategic capacities are provided towards the needs and demands of local and national/regional youth. Here youth develop a collective capacity by working interdependently and constantly reflect on their action and learn to navigate in the complex landscape of politics.

**CASE: ORGANIZING FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH**

Participants from a training in accountability at Global Platform Bangladesh went back to their community after the training and generated evidence to create awareness. They met with several local political authorities without success. Things first got started when they convinced some influential local youth about forming a “Youth Platform” – with the initial aim of mobilizing resources from the community to renovate a nearby roadside dustbin. They also arranged several meetings in the community about household solid waste management and the local community came to an agreement to take responsibility for the waste management. The Youth Platform made a community mechanism to collect voluntary contribution for regular cleaning up of dumping places and dustbins. They also lobbied the cantonment authority and managed to convince them to extend their support to transport of garbage/solid waste to the nearby city corporation dumping station and setting up of dustbins.
MOVING FORWARD WITH EMPOWERMENT AND ORGANIZING

- Refine the Global Platform Concept (and set-up) to be more agile and ‘mobile’ e.g. ensure joint planning and activity design processes with AA CO’s and that trainers can conduct trainings where needed, incl. outside of the formal setting and be responsive to whatever trends or needs that is identified in society and with specific initiatives - the Global Platform "on wheels".

- Maintain and strengthen the existing balance of the Global Platforms between having a solid organizational foundation within AAI and at the same time have a great deal of autonomy as part of being a vibrant innovative youth lead/driven concept with the ability to attract young participants from movements, other organisations, Activista and LRP’s.

- Further strengthen the youth hub concept of the Global Platforms by offering free and open spaces for youth initiated political initiatives.

- As part of the P4C modality identify new types of advisors and inspirators that are experts on organizing to provide support to both AA COs and relevant partners e.g. we would like to test a mentor role, e.g. an activist from another movement for a period of time supporting the strengthening of another movement either in country or at distance.

- Utilize the Reflection/Action so that it can be adopted by urban youth. Rethinking some of the tools assuring that the inherent qualities are made relevant for new target groups among youth.

PEOPLES LEAD ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

As the basis for building collective power and direction, we support activists, communities, movements and networks to document injustices, understand the connection between local, national and international causes and interlinkages, and to develop and formulate concrete alternatives as the basis for their action. Our research will be people-centered, and we will share the knowledge and alternatives we generate with others in the sector, so that it transforms policy and practice.

We focus especially on participatory documentation and use of digital tools and techniques. We will support learning grounded in the concrete experiences of communities and allies we work with, and connecting this with academics and practitioners. We will support the documentation of successes and failures as the basis of innovation. We will support the ability of broader networks and alliances to build on these alternatives and create broader transformative visions with national and global resonance.

MOVING FORWARD WITH PEOPLES LED ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES:

- Provide small scale funding to support collectives for context, problem analysis, action research.

- Global Platforms to organize Utopia camps, future workshops, social labs, visioning workshops to facilitate the development of alternatives/policy pieces.

- Thematic youth advisors and Inspirators to support analysis, documentation, action research, and the development processes of alternatives.

- Tools, methods available online for context, power and problem analysis, action research.
Global Platforms to engage with research institution on production of youth alternatives/policy pieces.
Document and share policy and other alternatives from other countries/successful struggles.

**CAMPAIGNING**

*It is good that thousands, perhaps millions of people devote their lives to campaigns, it is tragic if their efforts are mostly wasted, and a scandal if that could be avoided*.¹

A campaign that can attract youth activists is confronting and driven by a tension. By taking a stand on controversial political issue we might push a few people away but pull in many more. To be able to create the momentum and energy around campaign topics we need to be better at creating clear linkages between what we see as necessary policy changes and our mobilisation strategy.

Tactics should be guided by our strategy work, but we also need to be responsive in our strategy and adapt to ever changing circumstances. We need to establish clear political wins that we are working for, this implies political objectives, milestones that can be celebrated and a willingness to dare things and have a political edge.

Insider and outsider strategies should complement each other. It is important not only to be perceived as critical outsiders or to indulge in insider strategies, where to close ties are made with the power holders. Often different strategies are needed at different times and these strategies are not necessarily carried out by the same people.

**CASE: BRING BACK OUR GIRLS**

Since 2007, 276 schoolgirls were kidnapped from Government Secondary School in the Chibok province in northern part of Nigeria by Boko Haram - the Bring Back Our Girls campaign has been able to push the former and newly formed government into action. One of the specific “outsider” tactics used has been public sit-ins everyday since the kidnapping combined by media press releases making it visible that the “problem” has not gone away. One of the insider strategies has been to lobby with regional fora and institutions such as the AU, EU and even UN on putting pressure on the government to act. The girls are still missing to this day.

We need to bring the Reflection/Action methodology more into our campaign work. This will assure a bottom up approach, a participatory modus operandum will increase the ownership and ground the campaigns more at community level.

Bringing together youth from various communities and backgrounds applying R-A will assure that we come up with innovative solutions and that we don’t limit our scope to local level analysis and

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¹ Rose 2015
actions. It is paramount to the success that we don’t close off the circle, but invite actors from outside of our organization to feedback and collaborate.

We need to avoid moving too much into thinking that only professionals and specialists can influence the power holders. We are in risk of removing ourselves too far from the people and becoming too close to the power holders. Pragmatism can easily become a disguise for lack of vision.

Another key part of our campaigning work is how we can make clear linkages between local, national and global levels in our campaigns. We need to strategically identify locally rooted youth issues, which are of such an important relevance that they can be ‘elevated’ to the national policy agenda.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CAMPAIGNING:

• Support further Activista integration in our MCC’s, both on a national and international level and support youth initiated campaigns, Activista amongst other, e.g. strategy support, mentoring, small scale funding etc.

• Specify the relationship between the Global Platforms and our MCC and other campaign efforts.

• Celebrate and acknowledge volunteer efforts and support relation- and network building.

• Clear campaign framework allowing autonomy to campaign efforts locally and nationally.

• We should be better at defining our AA uniqueness in setting up and engaging in campaign coalitions and alliances.

• Daring to have more political edge in our campaign communication and ensure linkages between local and national campaign issues.

SOLIDARITY AND NETWORKS

"International solidarity is not an act of charity: it is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains towards the same objective. The foremost of these objectives is to assist in the development of humanity to the highest level possible” ²

We believe that solidarity is crucial in our efforts to organize and mobilise youth in the fight for a more equal world. But solidarity is more than a click on facebook or a small donation, solidarity is standing shoulder to shoulder in a conflict either because you are directly affected by it or because you feel the urge to act as part of a community. We need to revitalise our solidarity concept in our youth work. Solidarity goes beyond charity, the active citizenship and the action communities should be the fundamental pillar in our solidarity work.

This requires that the individual feel as an active citizen; that you feel you can act and be part of creating changes. But the active agency of individual citizens is not an end, rather the relational is crucial in building solidarity, thus we need to build and foster strong communities, alliances or networks enabling acts of solidarity but also strengthen our engagement and support to already existing ones. Networks are central to our vision of international solidarity among youth and to provide space for collective action.

² Peoples’s Action in Practice
CASE: “THE 17”

El Salvador has one of the most draconian abortion laws in the world, criminalizing abortion on all grounds, even when a woman’s life or health is in danger and in cases of rape. Hundreds of women have been sent to jail, including “Guadalupe” who was just 18-years-old when she was imprisoned in 2007. She received a 30 year sentence after being wrongly suspected of terminating her pregnancy. After years of legal battles local women’s rights groups launched a public campaign. By building networks of solidarity from within El Salvador through Activista and other movements, but also internationally with large INGOs and civil society organisations “The 17” achieved massive media coverage abroad sparking more than 300,000 signatures urging the president of El Salvador to release the remaining 15. The international solidarity and outcry not only helped put pressure on the politicians in charge, but have also opened many eyes throughout El Salvador to the fact that they are falling way behind the rest of the world on this issue.

We need to support Activistas efforts of balancing between maintaining close ties with AAI and coordinating efforts, while at the same time having enough autonomy to define own agendas and ways forward. It is currently a priority that Activista keeps some independence while at the same time securing the international solidarity, global space for action and that the network is part of a bigger political agenda. At the same time we need to recognise that Activista has its own autonomy to decide its future faith in or outside ActionAid. We should support that political process.

MOVING FORWARD WITH SOLIDARITY AND NETWORKS:

- Form alliances with two or three specific movements and specifically pilot movement support that would enable long term engagement and strategic work with these movements without taking over their agenda (links directly to work on social movements and shrinking political space). This could be a pilot comprised by mentorships (network and alliances), training support and small scale financial support and even physical spaces.

- Establish small scale action funding (e.g. Crisis Response Fund, CIVICUS - could also join this fund for youth initiatives and actions specifically). It is important that these funding opportunities are free from donor objectives and are as flexible as possible.

- Strategize how the Global Platforms can play a more strategic role towards Activista, Youth in Movements and other relevant networks.

- Enable online volunteering, allowing individuals to connect with and support Young people’s struggles through practical online support.

STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

We need to be honest in our approach. If we want to respond to young peoples political potential, allowing young people to set agendas and take ownership of AA’s vision and mission, and take part in action communities - we need to recognize that changes in our organisational culture is inevitably. Creating ownership is key and doing so requires that we allow room for failure and that we in some parts of our work dismantles usual organisational hierarchies. This is not a blueprint for restructuring our organisation, but merely creating spaces and laboratories for this culture to thrive.
and prosper. Allowing room for failure and accept mistakes might be the best lackmuss test for an organization’s ability to keep up innovations, learnings and critical thinking. Not everything can fit in color brushed communiques and talking points. Politics is conflict and conflict can be messy. If we want to allow room for innovation and leadership, we need to allow room for experiments and be ready to accept mistakes.

On the other hand we need to be very clear about in what effort we support them. It is not rocket science. Some of our most successful interventions thrives because there is very clear and defined space with transparent roles and responsibilities. This is also why we have failed to do other things, e.g. organizing around Activista in some cases where these roles haven’t been transparent or the space clearly defined. With that in mind we also need to recognise that we are an organisation and to some extent bound by our hierarchical structure and obligations. There is a limit to what we can do and which compromises we can make. If our structure does not allow a sometimes chaotic youth wing like Activista then maybe we shouldn't try organising it on these terms, nor disappoint young people in the believes that we are doing so. Taking straightforward and tough decisions is not the same as narrowing the space for engagement, its sometime the exact opposite. Lastly our structure and culture need to allow us being much more external facing and responsive. If we truly believe that young people are core drivers of political changes we continuously need to adapt to their needs - become relevant to their struggles and engage on their terrain.

Risks and politicised youth
When we work with youth as the forefront of political change and by encouraging people to confront the structural causes of poverty and inequality – we need to ask ourselves how far we are willing to go in supporting these efforts. Is our role merely to ignite the indignation and equip young people with knowledge, skills and attitude to take on power, or are we also capable and willing to support these initiatives when they roll out and maybe faces backlashes, repression etc. We need to define our role in the longer perspective and discuss if and how we can offer ongoing support in the middle of societal change. In this regard, we also need to develop a Human Rights Defenders framework to provide the required (legal, political, moral and financial) support to youth in the ‘frontlines’ facing all sorts of abuse from authorities in their fight for a more just and democratic society.

MOVING FORWARD WITH OUR STRUCTURE AND CULTURE:
- Make concrete efforts in allowing space for youth in our internal governance structures
- Make sure to utilize youth in all SO’s - youth mainstreaming
- Prioritize and advance transformative leadership within the federation - acknowledge that giving up power in delegation and collaboration doesn't mean less power, it means more collective power

CASE: NATIONAL YOUTH CONGRESS IN MYANMAR
Former GP participants from very different parts of the country met at the Global Platform in Myanmar to form a National Youth Congress. The National Youth Congress has representatives in all 14 state and divisions in Myanmar and their goal is to collect the different voices of youth in Myanmar. In 2016 they were invited to present their vision for Myanmar to Aung San Suu Kyi.
• Engage in a critical discussion with AA Federation concerning the governance set-up when it comes to youth e.g. YWG vs. IP vs delegation etc.

• Allowing the Global Platforms to nourish relationships with youths own initiatives and movements instead of adding bureaucratic hindrances to meet structural challenges we face in national and regional setups.

• Support the full uptake of the Duty Of Care guidelines for supporters and volunteers and establish a support function within the organisation that can help either through direct support (financially or legal), by linking to local legal support and human rights organisations or by documenting and supporting through solidarity interventions.
ANNEX 1:
YOUTH STOCK TAKING
The AADK activities and focus related to youth can be divided into three interconnected steams:

1. **Youth mainstreaming into governance programmes** in the partnership countries through programmes support as well as GP training linked to AA programmes (see most important results at the end of the document or under the country sections in the Danida Report Danida Framework Application: Strategic Plan 2017 + Results Report 2015)

2. **Influencing AAI to prioritize youth** (Support to Youth Working Group, youth pilots etc in order to strengthened the approach and ensure that youth are prioritised in the new AAI strategy)

3. **Youth as stand-alone** through four diverse but interconnected modalities, that contribute to the achievement of the overall goals working with youth. All four modalities are strategically ‘framed’ in relation to AA DKs three thematic programs – thus the modalities complement the youth program mainstreaming and each other.

The four specific youth modalities are:
- Global Platforms
- Youth & Movements
- Beautiful Rising
- People4Change

**OVERVIEW OF RESULTS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2012 – 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAINED</td>
<td>5,954 excl. Training DK</td>
<td>29,551 incl. Training DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16,991 with-out Global Contact participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF PEOPLE</td>
<td>116,332 (100,000 from El Salvador)</td>
<td>144,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH HUB ACTIVITIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP-DOWN TRAINING</td>
<td>37,386</td>
<td>183,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF COURSES</td>
<td>642</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RATING</td>
<td>The average rating of the trainings across the Platforms was 4.3 out of 5 in 2015.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERTIFICATES-AFTER-ACTION</td>
<td>El Salvador: 2 -3 from each training was reported to take concrete action. The figure will be higher after joint follow-up meeting with all former participants. Bangladesh: 32 took action after feminist leadership training. 16 after tax justice courses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH ADVISORS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH INSPIRATORS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNUPS AT GLOBAL CHANGLAB</td>
<td>1503 from 46 different countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER AT GP FACEBOOK</td>
<td>129,000 “likes” at the end of 2016. At the beginning of 2016 there were 4,000. 115.000 ”views” of the latest change story video.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VIDEO: ACTION MAMA**

The story about Salamatu M. Shiraz [ACTION MAMA] and her fight for young girl's right to education in Ghana.

Click on the “play” icon or find it at: www.facebook.com/globalplatforms.org
Response from surveys:
The survey from 2015 shows that 45.3% applied the skills/knowledge very much, while 50.5% applied the skills/knowledge to some degree. This is at the same level as in 2014.

Note: the respondent rate is low (20%). In some countries it’s close to zero mainly due to language issues (Bangladesh and Palestine). Testing of usage of SMS has been done in Ghana and Kenya, results and conclusions are awaiting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAVE USED MY SKILLS</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN MY WORK WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO EMPOWER OTHER PEOPLE</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO CREATE BETTER LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT OF CBOS</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ENHANCE MONITORING</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO INITIATE NEW PROJECTS OR PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO DESIGN OR IMPLEMENT CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN GOVERNANCE PROGRAMMES – RESULTS 2015:

- ActionAid and partners in Kenya have worked with to ensure that marginalized youth have access to public funds to start small businesses (UWEZO funds). AA has trained youth in four youth organizations, which has resulted in increased transparency in the distribution of funds. As a result, 100 marginalized youth have gained access to funds to start their own businesses. AA and Activista will replicate this in other countries.

- 129 youth in Uganda have gained access to public loan opportunities.

- Activista in Tanzania has worked with other youth organizations to ensure that the establishment of a national youth council is included in the draft constitution. When the constitution is adopted, youth will be able to participate in important decision-making processes.

- In Zambia, the Global Platform has been active in ensuring youth participation, where they, for example, organized a press conference with youth.

- In Uganda, youth have been trained on voting and 19 youth stood for election.

- A communications advisor in Uganda and Kenya has trained youth to demand their rights. The advisor has also established a local radio to advocate for and develop a business strategy, which has provided jobs to 60 marginalized youth.

- Youth from 10 villages in Myanmar have worked on establishing a disaster response committee. The youth’s perspectives and experiences have been included in the government’s disaster response plan. As part of the process, the youth have also ensured the establishment of a water supply project.

- Generally, in our governance work, we have involved many examples of how we have worked with youth to ensure access to education, where in Kenya we have won a campaign against illegal fees. In Jordan and Bangladesh, we have worked with success to ensure that the government includes these youth in the decision-making process.

- In the rest of the world, we have worked with many examples of how we have worked with youth to ensure access to education, where in Kenya we have been successful to ensure that the government includes these youth in the decision-making process.