



**People-powered decision making**  
*“Built on comparable, in-time stakeholder data”*



***A Study by Restless Development in Partnership with Accountable Now and CPC Analytics.***

## **1.0 Introduction**

Civil Society Organizations spend significant time or resources researching what their stakeholders value and need. Often however, these efforts fail to serve this purpose. It has been argued that there is need for more comparable, accessible and timely stakeholder information, data based decision making practice and ongoing two way dialogue to build trust.

We present our study to better understand what Youth Power Partners value and need to better execute the Youth Power campaign and hold decision makers to account. The study also aimed to enhance our knowledge of what the Youth Power partners need for better decision making in terms of the support offered to Partners.

## 1.1 Summary of this report

- I. The Accountable Now Pilot Study 3. Restless Development's participation (About the study and what we wanted to learn)
- II. Our Study (Objectives and Methodology)
- III. Stories of Impact
- IV. Scaling the pilot study
- V. Conclusion

## 2.0 The Accountable Now Pilot Study

[Accountable Now](#) led a pilot study with six civil society organisations (CSOs) to prototype ways in which they can be more stakeholder driven at no additional cost. They partnered with [CPC Analytics](#) who supported the six CSOs with establishing practices and tools to collect and analyse in time comparable data to inform their decisions.

The six CSOs focused their studies on the following:

|            | Stakeholder                      | The goal                             |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| TECHO      | Long-term volunteers             | Regular feedback to management       |
| BRAC       | Dairy milk producers             | Satisfaction and feedback f. farmers |
| CIVICUS    | Members Youth Action Team        | Fast feedback by Youth Action Teams  |
| Restless   | Youth Power Partners             | Improve RD's help & identify impact  |
| 350.org    | Strategic affiliate organisation | Quick & regular oper. exchange       |
| Greenpeace | Global volunteer change agents   | Co-creation of campaign stories      |

## 2.1 Restless Development's Participation

Youth Power is a campaign to achieve the Global Goals. 168 Youth Organisations are registered as Youth Partners in 41 countries. The organisations range from community based organisations, national NGOs, INGOS and Youth Networks. By registering, our partners confirm their commitment to implement Youth Power in their countries and joining the rest of the world to ensure the Global Goals are achieved. The Youth Power campaign is part of our strategic priority to build a global Youth Collective committed to youth-led change.

In this pilot study, we sampled 11 Youth Power Partners to better understand what the partner's value and need to better execute their Youth Power Campaigns, at the same time enabling Restless Development to make better decisions in terms of the support offered to Partners.

There is great opportunity to harness data from our Youth Partners and Youth leaders, through better stakeholder dialogues, to produce relevant and timely data to support our decision-making, as well as to support the decision-making of our Youth Governance team. Better data can help us understand the need and priorities of our stakeholders, and how we can better support them. It can also help us build up an evidence bank to understand what works, for whom and in what contexts, which we can disseminate to support better decision making of our stakeholders as well. Ultimately, there is the potential to use better decision-making in these arenas to lead to more effective campaigns to ensure that decision-makers are held to account regarding their action, or inaction, on the Global Goals.

This is part of our dynamic accountability approach, which enables us to be more accountable and transparent in our work with Partners, learning from their expertise to increase our impact. By turning our agency inside out and bringing more voices in, we believe this will lead to even greater impact for the young people, communities, partners and governments we work with. It will also increase the trust that others have in our agency and work, reinforcing the relationships and collaboration that drives our collective success.

### **3.0 Our study**

#### **3.1 Objectives**

- To assess Youth Power Partner organizational capacity, understand their structures and funding, and therefore determine the nature of support we offer to different types of partners
- To have better information on what the Youth Power Partners value and need through systematically listening, learning and co-creating improvements for our work
- To track key learning around coalition building, focusing on better partnership building, engagement and management
- To gather data to inform our decision making

#### **3.2 Methodology**

6 In-depth Interviews (IDIs) based on a structured interview guide were done over skype with 6 Youth Power Partners and an online survey was commissioned to an additional 5 partners. 6 partners sampled for IDIs were selected because they submitted Youth Power plans and are actively engaged with the campaign. The additional 5 have medium level participation with the campaign; join calls, online actions and regularly feedback on their local actions (with or without a plan in place). 11 Youth Power Partners responded out of 34 invited partners. The other 23 dropped out due citing internet challenges, conflicting priorities as prime reasons for non-participation.

Restless Development received technical support from CPC analytics in the concept development, questionnaire design and in conducting the IDIs. Interactions were through email and skype calls with them as well as through use of email. In addition, 3 calls were held with the other pilot members to share the broad objectives of the study, exchange ideas and learn from the other pilot study members.

## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 Structures and funding levels determine levels of participation in the campaign

**Finding:** Partners have varying structures and this determines their levels of participation and engagement with the campaign. There is a mix of local NGOs, National, Regional and International NGOs with varying funding mechanisms and size of staff. For smaller, volunteer led community based organisations, they indicated that they are better placed to conduct community based advocacy while national and regional NGOs have the scope to conduct national and regional level advocacy and campaigning. 70% of the respondents indicated that they operate with restricted funding and this limits the extent to which they can engage with the campaign and their level of involvement.

**Recommendation:** Engagement of the partners therefore needs to be determined by their size, scope and capacity (financial and staff). For example if a Youth Power Partner is a national level NGO, they are better placed to conduct national level advocacy such as lobbying mission capitals on inclusion of young people in the Voluntary National Review Process and on the other hand, community based NGOs are better placed conducting local level advocacy in their communities.

### 4.2 Knowledge of the theory of change and structure determines the partner's participation level.

**Finding:** Partners' responses indicated that they are aware of Youth Power's vision. There were varied levels of knowledge of the approaches that would lead to the desired vision of the Global Campaign. Partners' knowledge of the Youth Power structures was more limited. They could not identify the different stakeholders that make up the Youth Power movement which include the Partners, Accountability Advocates,, Global Leaders and the Taskforce team.

**Recommendation:** To strengthen linkages, sharing and learning as well as leveraging on each others expertise, there is need to invest more time in ensuring members of the Youth Power coalition understand the theory of change, how they contribute to it, the different stakeholders involved and how they all fit together.

### 4.3 Technical guidance and advice enhances the partner's participation

**Finding:** Partners indicated that they value the technical support and guidance they receive from Restless Development in holding their leaders to account for the Global Goals. Global moments action guides, group and individual calls, technical guidance and advice on campaigning, advocacy, communications, social media engagement and blog development enhance their participation and capacity to hold their leaders to account.

*"The Webinar on Fundraising equipped us with important fundraising skills including managing donor relations, prospecting and fundraising techniques..." Poonam Ghimire, Ashraya, Nepal.*

We learned that further support is needed, due to the complex nature of advocacy fuelled by lack of political will, difficulty in accessing decision makers and challenges of measuring change.

**Recommendations:**

- (i) There is need to continuously build the capacity of partners on key thematic topics that enhance their campaigning and advocacy efforts around Youth Power. This could be through webinars, developing action guides, briefing papers and interactive group and individual calls to share ideas and learn from each other;
- (ii) Global Leaders could take an active role in facilitating in-country and cross regional sharing and learning through hosting country specific and regional calls to increase decentralised interactions and communication; and
- (iii) There is need to expedite development of the Youth Power curricular that elucidates a supported journey for Youth Power Partners, Champions and Accountability Advocates with simple tools and ideas on how they can effectively run their local campaigns, join global moments or take part in high level advocacy.

**4.4 Challenges of funding**

**Finding:** All Partners mentioned funding as a challenge. Funding shortages limit the partner's engagement as they operate on no or restricted funding limiting the scope to grow their campaigns. Lack of funding limits innovation and the nature of activities that can be done. Partners also indicated their limited capacity to fundraise for their Youth Power Campaigns.

**Recommendation:** Restless Development needs to lead prospecting and fundraising for Youth Power. In addition, Partners must be given structured support for their fundraising, sharing funding opportunities and organising sharing and learning sessions within the Global Partnership.

**4.5 Potential for stronger communications**

**Finding:** Some Youth Power partners defined a strong movement as having "strong linkages at all levels, from the local level right through to the global level with a shared vision, clear, well understood structure and clear communication lines that are cost effective and easy to follow". A strong movement needs a robust communications' strategy to be successful that is two-way, continuous and cost effective. Good communication allows for more sharing and learning, showcasing of best practices and more linkages at all levels of the campaign.

**Recommendation:** There is need to utilise additional appropriate communication channels at different levels of the campaign from local, national, regional and global level. This will create room for more decentralised communication, where partners communicate directly with other partners, and Global Leaders take a leading role in communication supporting the Global Campaigns Coordinator  
Communication channels could include:

**At Global and regional level**

- Emails including google groups
- Group calls & 1:1 calls
- Facebook group to showcase best practices , real time storytelling and sharing videos and images
- Twitter for updates(having own twitter handle, plus hashtag )
- Instagram account

#### **Additional comms channels at national level**

- Regional and national focal people
- Face to face meetings
- Setting up informal structures that allow Youth Power partners to link up more at national level .

### **5.0 Stories of impact**

Youth Power partners indicated that they gained multiple skills through their engagement with the campaign. These include increased knowledge of the Global Goals, increased advocacy and campaigning skills, skills on using social media for campaigning and advocacy, and different strategies to engage with decision makers and hold them to account. Others even secured grants for their Youth Power campaigns after the fundraising webinar. We set out below three case studies here to highlight examples of our support and our partners' impact.

**Ashraya** is a small community based organisation in Nepal. They joined Youth Power in February 2016 and to date have trained almost 1000 young people on goal 13 and climate change. With Restless Development's support which included help with designing their local campaign plan, fundraising support and general guidance and advice on how to campaign, advocate and communicate, they have formed 8 green clubs in schools and are championing for an end to climate change effects in Nepal.

**Gadef** is a Youth Power Partner from Ghana. Gadef joins Youth Power Monthly calls, and receive action guides to support their Global Moments activities. One of their staff members was a main panelist on the fundraising webinar that we organised sharing tips on fundraising with other Youth Power Partners. They have connected to a global network of over 150 youth organisations, sharing ideas and knowledge on campaigning, advocacy, communication and use of social media. Some of their Youth Champions have been elected into the Youth Assembly in Ghana, with one becoming a town mayor through showcasing strong leadership skills. They also established a Youth Parliament to continue lobbying their government especially on issues around youth representation in decision making spaces and mining.

**Organisation of African Youth** is a youth network of 20 youth organisations in Kenya. They are a Youth Power Partner whose focus is to increase Youth Participation in decision making process in Kenya. They noted that they "greatly benefited from the technical guidance and support they received from Restless Development through group and individual calls plus

action guides on engaging with the High Level Political Forum and Voluntary National Review Process in their country.” OAY mobilised 20+ youth organisations to have their views feeding into the VNR review process for Kenya (with financial support from IPPF). Michael Asudi, the National Coordinator for OAY -Kenya, also attended HLPF in New York to share his experiences and further lobby for youth -led accountability at this space. Locally they have started a local campaign called ‘[Jiactivate](#)’ to gather young people's voices ahead of the elections in Kenya getting over 104k signatures!

## **6.0 Scaling the pilot study**

This pilot forms a key component of our work for the next 5 years around building a Youth Collective, particularly the coalitions. The data gathered will help us improve our engagement with all 168 organisations subscribed as Youth Power Partners. We started with 11 of our most active partners, and tools and learnings will be transferred factoring in contexts, sizes and types of organisations. Some questions reflected in this pilot will be included in the quarterly surveys shared with partners to continue getting data to improve the campaign’s decision making.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

This study revealed key lessons around coalition building, including on better partnership building, engagement and management. We learned that organisational structure, technical and financial capacity will determine the level of participation. There is need to invest more time in ensuring members of the Youth Power coalition understand the theory of change, how they contribute to it, the different stakeholders involved and how they all fit together. In addition, good communication allows for more sharing and learning, showcasing of best practices and more linkages at all levels of the campaign. These lessons will be used to inform how the Youth Power campaign is managed and will feed into our building of the youth collective in line with the Restless development’s strategic focus in the next five years.

*If you have questions or to learn more about this study, please email Primrose Manyalo, Youth Power Global Campaigns Coordinator on [primrose@restlessdevelopment.org](mailto:primrose@restlessdevelopment.org)*