YOUTH LEADERSHIP,
PARTICIPATION AND
ACCOUNTABILITY 2.0

PART 2.

THE MODEL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Supported by:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AU - The African Union

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

CESCR - UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

CPD - UN Commission on Population Development

CRC - UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

CSE - Comprehensive Sexuality Education

CSO - Civil Society Organisation(s)

CSW - The UN Commission on the Status of Women

EAC - East African Community

ESA - East and Southern Africa

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development

IMF - The International Monetary Fund

INGO - An international non-governmental organisation

IPPF - International Planned Parenthood Federation

NGO - Non-governmental organisation

SADC - Southern African Development Community

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SRH - Sexual and Reproductive Health

SRHR - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

UNAIDS - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNFPA ESARO - United Nations Population Fund East & Southern Africa Regional Office

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WHO - World Health Organization

YWCA - The Young Women's Christian Association

1. PLAN IT: AN ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL THAT PUTS YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF CHANGE

Informed by the contributions from young people from across East and Southern Africa, we have built a youth-led accountability model aimed at amplifying young voices to better fulfil their sexual reproductive health and rights and achieve greater gender equality in the region.

The model has been developed in response to key recommendations on how to deliver effective youth-led accountability work, as outlined in **Part 1, Section 5**: 'How to strengthen youth-led accountability for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender Equality,' and includes a practical step-by-step guide for young people wanting to hold decision makers to account.

A dual-purpose model, it serves to engage young people directly in planning their own accountability projects, while also providing a replicable model for development practitioners and government entities on how to run effective youth-led accountability programmes, as guided by young people themselves.

The Accountability Cycle

The Accountability Cycle is based on three interconnected enablers defined by young people as being critical for impactful youth-led accountability, namely, increased capacity, access, and agency.

The hypothesis behind this approach is simple: Empower young people with data, skills and networks (increased capacity); connect them to meaningful opportunities to participate in review processes and dialogue and engage with decision-makers (access); let them report back on progress and respond to the communities they represent (agency) and in the process, young people will take a lead on holding decision makers to account.
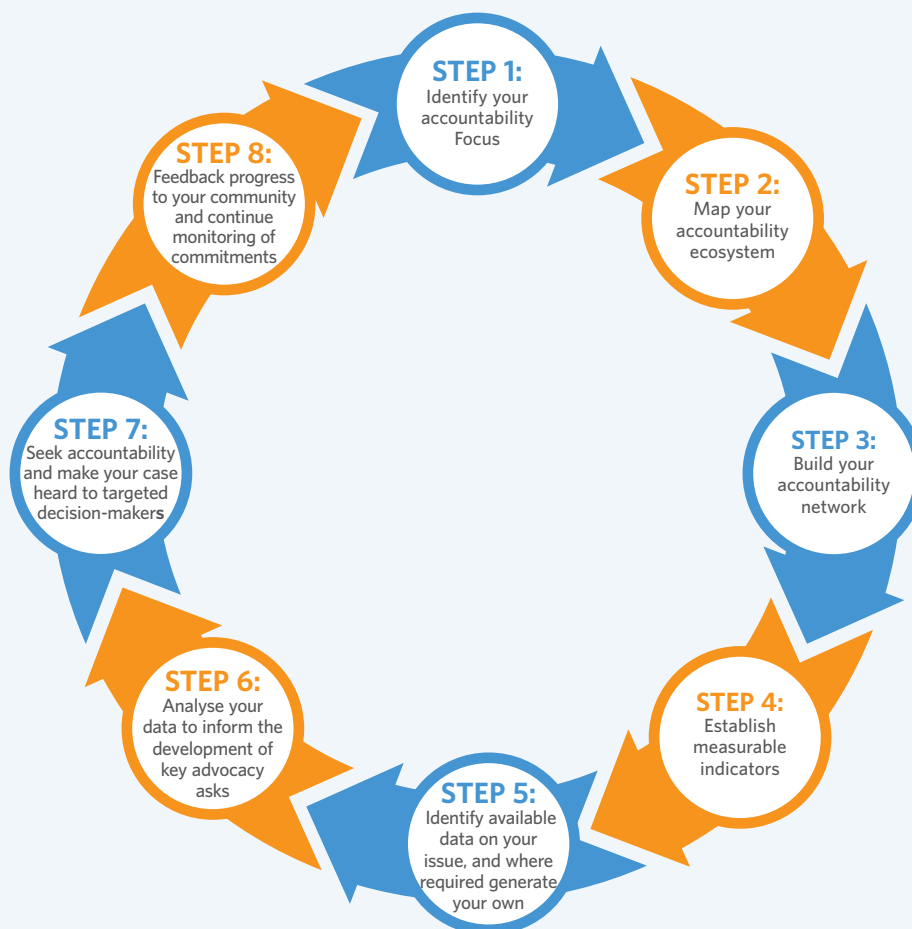
> *The Accountability Cycle is based on three interconnected enablers defined by young people as being critical for impactful youth-led accountability, namely, increased capacity, access, and agency.*

The Model Includes 8 Interconnected Steps:

1. Identify your accountability focus
2. Map your accountability ecosystem
3. Build your accountability network
4. Establish measurable indicators
5. Identify available data on your issue, and where required, generate your own
6. Analyse your data and inform the development of key advocacy messages
7. Seek accountability and make your case heard to targeted decision makers
8. Provide feedback to your community and continue monitoring progress or commitments.

The focus is specifically on delivering national to community level youth-led accountability work, but makes reference to the importance of understanding and (where possible) engaging in relevant regional and global dialogues and commitments as a means of strengthening individual outcomes and enhancing impact across a region.

STEP 1:
Identify your accountability Focus

STEP 2:
Map your accountability ecosystem

STEP 3:
Build your accountability network

STEP 4:
Establish measurable indicators

STEP 5:
Identify available data on your issue, and where required generate your own

STEP 6:
Analyse your data to inform the development of key advocacy asks

STEP 7:
Seek accountability and make your case heard to targeted decision-makers

STEP 8:
Feedback progress to your community and continue monitoring of commitments

Step 1: Identify Your Accountability Focus

As a first step, you will need to choose a commitment that young people and the community have identified as a priority. Top tips from youth experts include:

Pick your passion: It's important to choose a focus you personally feel passionate about: Is it an issue you have been working on already? Is it something you have been personally affected by, and would like to change?

Validate it with the community: You will have greater representation and buy-in if the priority you have chosen also impacts those you will be working with and representing. Do other young people and the community you represent also feel this is an issue that needs to be addressed? If not, are there ways you can align your initial focus to include a broader community voice? Running a community consultation is a great way to establish this .

Align to national, regional and global commitments to SRHR and gender equality: Governments across the ESA region have signed up to a number of international development frameworks with specific goals and targets for achieving sexual reproductive health and rights, and gender equality. These include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG3 and SDG5, Family Planning 2020 Framework, the Maputo Protocol, ESA Commitment, the African Union 2063 Agenda, and the recently ratified Southern African Development Community Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Strategy (SADC SRHR Strategy) and its scorecard. Research which of these commitments your government has signed up to, and see if you can align your specific goals and targets to any of them.

> *It's important to choose a personal passion, while also taking responsibility to 'go beyond yourself' and collect data and voices that fully represent the community.*
>
> **- Youth Advocate**

Step 2: Map Your Accountability Ecosystem

An accountability ecosystem looks at the different organisations and individuals who have a stake in the issue you are working on. For some, it may be because they are affected by the decisions relating to the issue, while others in your ecosystem may be making those decisions. Your accountability ecosystem may include: personal contacts, broader civil society stakeholders, institutions and ministries, key decision makers, elected officials and beyond.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Your personal network is a great starting point: We all have a network, however small, that can help get you started with your ecosystem mapping. Reaching out to youth networks and community members can help to point you in the direction of a broader list of relevant stakeholders, including some you hadn't considered. Ensure marginalised groups are represented: When focusing on sexual rights and gender equality issues, it is important to include groups that might not normally be represented. Young women, young people living with disabilities, those living in poverty, the LGBTIQ+ community, men who have sex with men, substance abusers and those engaging in transactional sex, are often those most adversely affected by the issues you are seeking to address. Make sure they are included.

Be creative: Consider non-traditional role players such as social media influencers, artists and musicians. While they might not be a technical expert on your accountability focus, they can help raise awareness and influence change. It is also important to link up with other youth influencers such as young journalists, researchers, parliamentarians and entrepreneurs to amplify your voice.

Include relevant SRHR and gender organisations and networks in the region: Some great places to start include AfriYAN, Y+, FEMNET, and Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Adolescent and Youth Constituents, FPA2020 and Women Deliver young leaders, Southern Africa SRHR Trust, African Monitor, Right Here Right Now, Girls Not Brides, Global Youth Coalition on HIV and AIDS, and the GBV Prevention Network. UN agencies are also very active on these issues including UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNESCO.

Power mapping and analysis: It is critical to understand the specific complexities of government institutions and where the power sits, as it is unique to every context. Once you have mapped a broad range of stakeholders, it is important to assess who wields influence over your issue. This could include a range of players, from government departments and civil society organisations to UN institutions, parliamentary portfolio committees on health, population development or women's rights, the private sector, the broader community and beyond.

Share your ecosystem: Young people don't always feel they have access to or an understanding of internal politics. Share your ecosystem with others to build on each other's mapping and information gathering.

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It is also important to link up with other youth influencers such as young journalists, researchers, parliamentarians and entrepreneurs to amplify your voice.

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Step 3: Build Your Accountability Team

Looking at your accountability ecosystem mapping exercise, you will see that there are some stakeholders in the accountability ecosystem that you will want to work more closely with than others.

These organisations and individuals will form part of your accountability network.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Consider linking up with established networks: If you are already part of a formal network or you know of one in your area, this could be a great entry point to building your accountability network.

Networks don't need to be over structured: If you are building your own network, consider approaches that work best for your environment and young people. Having an active WhatsApp group, and informal meeting spaces can be highly effective, particularly if members are busy and geographically spread out.

Make your network diverse and assign roles based on expertise: Having a variety of stakeholders in your network, alongside young people, will bring together a range of experiences and connections. A SWOT analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats will help identify responsibilities and assign roles to members of the network. To develop unity in your network, develop a charter outlining the network's common goals and objectives that you can all work towards.

Include decision makers in your network: While they might not have the time to support your day-to-day work, by including decision makers from the outset in key meetings about the project, they are more likely to feel involved, and therefore more committed to ensuring its success. Local government can be a great entry point, as it is often more accessible to communities and can be the bridge to regional and national decision makers.

Step 4: Establish Measurable Indicators

Indicators act as signals: they are the signposts that tell you whether or not change is happening. For data-driven accountability, it is critical to identify relevant indicators (or develop complementary indicators) to guide the data collection work.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Start with global and/or regional indicators that already exist: Examples include the SDG Framework (in particular SDG3 and SDG5), Family Planning 2020 Framework, the 2016 UNGA Political Declaration on Ending AIDS (specifically the pieces on Comprehensive Sexuality Education), East and Southern Africa Commitment on CSE and SRH services for adolescent and young people, the Maputo Protocol and SADC SRHR Strategy. Begin by researching the indicators aligned to the relevant goals and targets you identified when setting your accountability focus.

Move to national indicators: Most countries in the region will have aligned their National Development Frameworks to global and regional development frameworks. Look at your government's existing monitoring frameworks on the corresponding plans of policies you have identified. They will likely have much better knowledge of national indicators. In particular, most governments in the region have national Strategic Plans on HIV, gender, family planning and dedicated Adolescent Health or SRHR strategies at the national level.

Map indicators across your network: Even if you are monitoring national policies, it is worth noting that local agencies, governments and civil society actors may be setting monitoring indicators at the local level where national policies are actually implemented. Reaching out and working with these networks can help you establish robust and context-specific indicators for your work.

Be focused and develop your own indicators if needed: Global, regional and national indicators are often deliberately broad. If there aren't enough existing indicators available to capture the information you are looking for, you can develop your own complementary indicators. Work with your network to brainstorm potential indicators and prioritise the ones you think will be most important to measure your progress.

Ensure community input and validation: Before finalising your indicators, make sure that your community has input. Set up a meeting to gain consensus.

> *Begin by researching the indicators aligned to the relevant goals and targets you identified when setting your accountability focus.*

Step 5: Identify Available Data on Your Issue, and where Required, Generate Your Own

Collecting evidence is an important step to understanding why commitments linked to your accountability focus may be off track. Begin by researching what data currently exists and assess the quality of that data. Refer to your list of stakeholders and think about who owns - or has access to - the data you need. If there are gaps in the data, you can generate your own.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Where data exists, use it: Look to see what data may already exist on your issue. Your accountability network (see Step 3 above) is a great asset here, and can often help to point you in the right direction. Some sources to consider include relevant government ministries, national statistics bureaus, civil society organisations working on your focus issue, private sector organisations, and international sources such as the IMF, World Bank, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women and WHO.

Involve young people and marginalised groups in your data collection: Under-represented groups are likely to be more open to talking to people from the same community or background.

Be inclusive in your data collection: Pictures, storytelling, song and oral submissions are all accessible ways of gathering information. These bring vital 'lived experience' to your data collection, and build a better understanding of the reality and root causes that often sit behind the numbers.

Make advocating for open data part of your work: In some countries in East and Southern Africa citizen-access to open data is still scarce. Using the data you've collected is a great opportunity to reach out to official primary sources of data such as national statistics bureaus and ask them to open access to their data sets so others can also benefit. If data doesn't exist, or you doubt the accuracy of existing data, then you can always flag this on platforms like CIVICUS Datashift, who can then provide support. Using government-supported data collection tools such as the SADC scorecard is a great way to generate open data.

Step 6: Analyse Your Data to Inform the Development of Key Advocacy Asks

Once you've collected your data, it is time to analyse it. At this point it is important to refer back to your indicators and map your data findings against them. This will help you to understand how much progress has been made towards achieving a specific commitment, and define what needs to change to accelerate further action.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Let the data tell you what needs to change: We often come at a problem with preconceived notions of how to fix it. Your data might indicate an entirely different barrier to achieving progress and may prove your assumptions wrong. For this reason, it is important to approach your data analysis with an open mind: the data trends you start to see will either reaffirm your assumptions or present new ways to approach the challenge. Turn these into asks you can take to key stakeholders. Essentially: don't look for data to support your theory. Let the data tell its own story.

Find interactive and accessible ways to present your data analysis: Storytelling, graphs and infographics are compelling and accessible ways to share data as they help to communicate your message and bring a human-side to the numbers.

SPOTLIGHT

TOP TIPS FROM YOUNG 1ove ON DATA COLLECTION

" Young 1ove is an evidence-based youth-led organisation reaching over 55 000 young people in Botswana with life-saving health and education programming. Data collection is one of the ways we generate evidence to inform our work. Our main priorities in data collection are quality and security.

The biggest transition we have made to ensure accurate and reliable data is switching to digital data collection. This transition has made it easier for field teams to submit their data and has improved our data quality through built-in quality assurances in the digital surveys. It has also allowed for quicker data analysis; targeting operations and teams that need additional support at an earlier stage. In terms of the safety and security of our data, we ensure all teams collecting data are well trained on protocols related to data ethics. We anonymise all data collected, and store sensitive data in encrypted folders. Ensure your data files are well organised, and the data code can be replicated. Our best practice is to have the data team accountable to an external research authority. "

Step 7: Seek Accountability and Make Your Case Heard to Targeted Decision Makers

Using the data you have collected, the key asks you've developed, and the relationships you have built, it is now time to hold decision makers to account.

There are a range of approaches to seeking accountability, here are some tips from youth experts:

Report: Use your data to feed into official processes and reviews. You can also report unofficially by developing a shadow report. This may be more applicable in some contexts. Great examples of this include the African Monitor Citizen Reports in East and Southern Africa; UNICEF's U-Report tool in countries such as Uganda, Mozambique and Zambia; and youth consultations around the Universal Periodic Reviews such as to be found in Mozambique.

Mistrust of citizen-generated data: Be aware that some countries might be less open to citizen-generated data, and in some cases will not accept it as valid. As mentioned in earlier steps, the best way to overcome this is to build strong relationships with decision makers from the outset, particularly local government and national statistics offices with whom you can share your data collection approach. If there is still a challenge, consider asking decision makers to support centralised collection on missing data sets, and the role of young people to support this.

Consider your context and be creative: Presenting your findings doesn't have to be boring. Consider your audience and which approaches will work best for them. Community campaigning stunts, petitions, and public hearings with young parliamentarians can be combined with an official report for government. If you want to spread the message beyond your area, consider organising a roadshow with a number of interactive events in different regions. For further suggestions, you can refer to the recommendations outlined in **Part 1** on 'leveraging and diversifying resources for youth-led accountability'.

Ensure representation: Engage targeted stakeholders in the planning of your accountability activities; that way they will feel part of the process and will be more likely to respond to your asks. Also consider who should be presenting your message - it doesn't always have to be you. If a marginalised group is particularly affected by your issue e.g. young women or someone living with a disability, ask if they would like to be your spokespeople. Ensure safe spaces for women and girls in your planning.

Connect your recommendations to national, regional and global platforms: Use the relationships you have developed - from decision makers to grassroots communities - to bring together actors to discuss your findings. Use pre-organised dialogues such as community structures and local government meetings, where they exist. Where they don't, work with your network to set up an event inviting key stakeholders.

Connect: Share your unique findings with citizens, the media, on social media and with civil society to support campaigns and grassroots movements to bring new perspective to the work of others.

Support: Approach your network and build into your plans any relevant regional and global platforms to target your accountability work. The commitments you will be targeting are often set in regional and global dialogues, bringing together a number of decision makers in one space, which can provide great opportunity to share your message. Governments also play a role in holding each other to account on their joint commitments in these spaces. As a starting point you could use your network to approach national government delegations that may be attending. Appreciating funding and geographical challenges to attend in person, there are often ways to feed into relevant consultation processes online in advance of meetings.

SPOTLIGHT

TOP TIPS FROM MIA FITIAVANA MIANGALY RANDRIANTSEHENO FROM MADAGASCAR ON HOW TO ENGAGE AND INFLUENCE DECISION MAKERS.

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We used a number of combined tactics to influence decision makers. Working with Malagasy Youth Networks such as Tanora-Iray, AfriYAN, Tanora Garan'teen and IYAFP, we formed a partnership with the government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports. We saw this as a great avenue to influence the voting laws governed by the Malagasy parliament, and the Ministry helped us build links to members of parliament. Since politicians are hard to find, we also decided to write a letter addressed to the President of the National Assembly. He used our letter to influence other members to vote for the law we proposed, as it demonstrated a combined voice from Malagasy Youth Activists on behalf of their rights. We also hosted a roundtable bringing together young people and female parliamentarians to discuss the proposed law. The head of female parliamentarians gave a speech at the Senate to further garner support for the law. Through these combined efforts, we changed the law so that people under the age of 18 are now able to access contraception. "

Step 8: Feedback Progress to Your Community and Continue Monitoring of Commitments

It is critical to provide feedback on the outcomes of your advocacy work to the community, and to be accountable to those you represent. Where commitments have been made by decision makers, you can now use these commitments as new targets to monitor.

Top tips from youth experts include:

Develop and implement an accountability scorecard for young people: This can be a scorecard co-developed with the community that highlights key milestones young people or community leaders have agreed to take action on. The scorecard can be used to monitor progress, and as a guide to share feedback on milestones to the community. It can also help the community to work with you to inform your next steps.

Develop a report on community perspectives: This is useful to document community feedback, and to share with them as an additional accountability tool.

Run community events: To increase awareness on the role of accountability in improving sexual rights and gender equality, young people can also run training sessions with peers and community members on the accountability cycle, outlining the role of community participation.

2. ARE YOU A DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER EAGER TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOLDING DECISION MAKERS TO ACCOUNT?

For any work on youth-led accountability to be effective there first needs to be an enabling environment, whereby young people have access to their rights to influence decision making, and where decision makers positively perceive the role of young people in supporting, leading and driving development solutions.

> *Don't make young people an afterthought, take into account their ideas and experiences, especially if the initiative you are planning is supposed to reach or benefit them – you can't go wrong with involving young people meaningfully and early!*
>
> **- Development Practitioner**

As a Development Practitioner, you have a meaningful role to play in ensuring young people know their rights, proactively challenging the prevailing social, economic, political and cultural barriers to youth participation (as outlined in Part 1), and support building trust between decision makers and young people to create a more cohesive community. Without these pre-conditions, it is very difficult for youth-led accountability to thrive.

Below are some tailored suggestions on how development practitioners can support young people in accountability work, and by so doing, continue to create conditions for an enabling environment. For further advice on how to create an enabling environment for young people, read Restless Development's **'From Rhetoric to Action Report'**. If you would like further guidance on practical skills to support meaningful youth engagement, please refer to our **"Unofficial Handbook" in Part 3.**

Create an enabling environment:
Youth-led organisations are often critically underfunded, which significantly impacts their ability to deliver accountability work. Young people are often working in a voluntary capacity, which creates constraints on their time if their accountability work competes with paid employment. Grass-roots youth-led organisations can be informal in their set-up, which can aid their flexibility and agility to respond to community needs, however, it also makes it more difficult for them to navigate the red tape and restrictions often required by donors. Funding for their accountability work needs to not only include activity cost (e.g. data collection tools, funding for community dialogues, advocacy outreach and events), it also needs to cover sufficient stipends for young people to take part in events, and full overheads (e.g. for office rent, internet, tax).
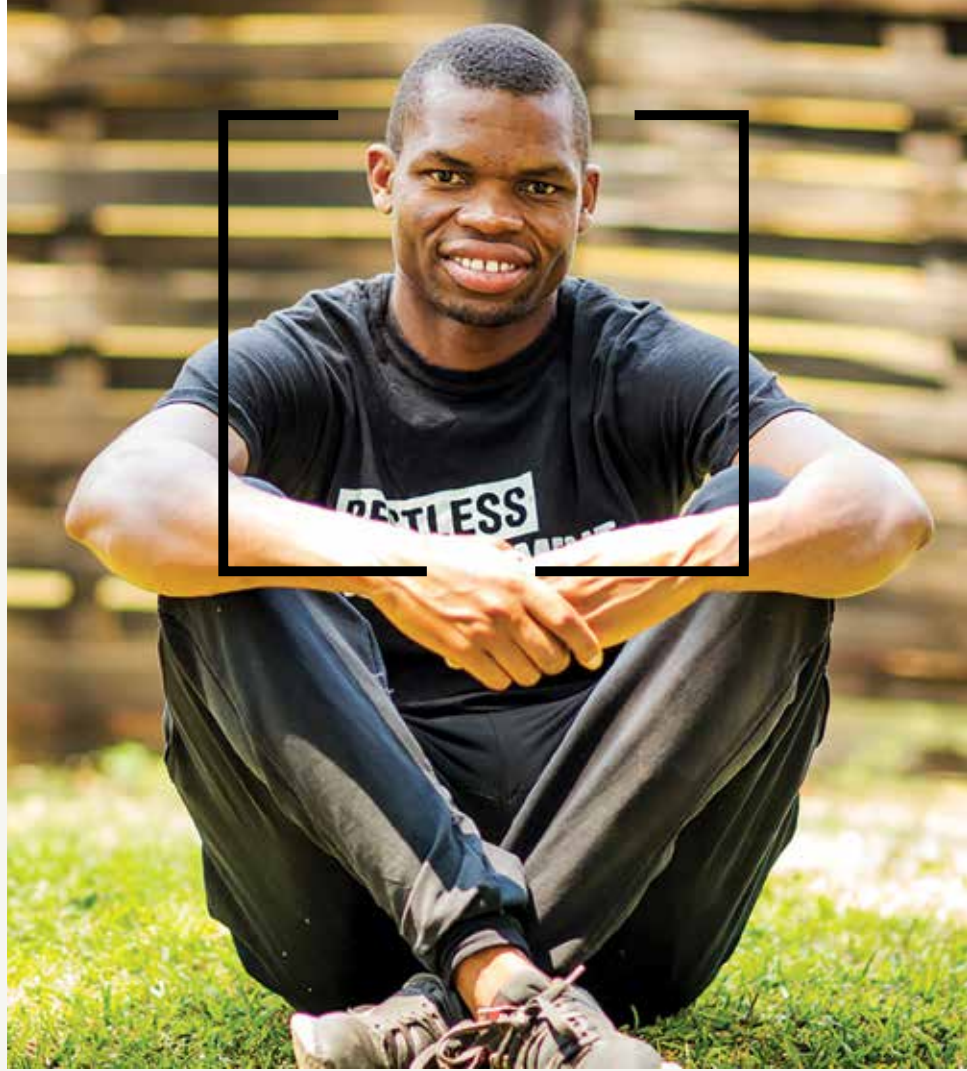
Help young people fund their work: If you are a Development Practitioner who can leverage funding through your organisation, this is an extremely effective way to support youth-led mobilisation. Work with young people to better understand the restrictions they face when applying for funding, and advocate for more flexible funding approaches to be built into your grant-giving mechanisms.

Alternatively, if you are a Development Practitioner with fundraising expertise, work with grassroots youth-led organisations to support them to build their fundraising skills and diversify fundraising streams to incorporate more flexible funding approaches, e.g. social enterprise models and crowdfunding, and help young people identify relevant funding opportunities that they may not usually have information on or access to.

Provide training, ongoing mentorship and support: Young people are very well placed to lead accountability initiatives. They add huge value in terms of levels of education, networks within the community, and innovative approaches, especially when it comes to using social media and technology to campaign and raise awareness.

Young people want to be supported with better technical training on how to deliver accountability work, which builds skills in a range of necessary areas including:

• Project management (including people and budget management)
• Data literacy, analysis and visualisation
• Network building and relationship management
• Working with decision makers
• Navigating your political context and power mapping
• Communications and media
• Advocacy and campaigning
• Resource mobilisation
• Monitoring and evaluation

Development practitioners can play an exciting role in providing technical 'in house' training to young people in preparation for their accountability work.

Alongside this, development practitioners can provide beneficial guidance and ongoing mentorship to young people as they step through each stage of the Accountability Cycle. Development practitioners can play a key role in coaching through project delivery, troubleshooting challenges, and sound-boarding new ideas. This also ensures that the project is building on iterative learning and feedback throughout its delivery, and helps young people to hold themselves accountable. Keeping this support regular and consistent is important. Consider co-developing mentorship Terms of Reference, to pre-agree ways of working between young people and development practitioners.

Good practice would be to consider monthly catch-up meetings, and more significant support to be provided at key moments throughout the cycle, such as network building, indicator setting, data analysis and advocacy outreach events. Local expertise is hugely beneficial for context-specific and tailored mentorship. If you know a Development Practitioner with accountability expertise from a specific country or region that aligns with the focus and geographic location of the youth-led accountability work, encourage localised mentorship.

In order for young people to take an evidence-based approach to seeking accountability, they need access to data. Where data doesn't exist, the right training can help them to generate their own. In some countries in East and Southern Africa, citizen access to open data is still scarce. Often established NGOs and international development institutions have access to rich and relevant sources of data, which can be shared with youth-led organisations to help bolster their data findings.

Making your data open and accessible to the public, is an easy way to support young people's accountability work. Go one step further, and support young people in advocating for better access to data, and for national bureaus of statistics to focus additional data collection on critically unrepresented issues, e.g. access to holistic family planning services for young women.

Help young people access data: If you are a Development Practitioner with data collection and analysis expertise, support grassroots youth-led organisations by directing them to existing relevant data portals on their accountability focus area and providing data literacy training. This will help young people collect credible and robust data sets and ensure their work is considered valid by decision makers.

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Support young people by connecting them to relevant contacts, and vouching for their work.

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Access to key decision makers: Critical to the success of any youth-led accountability programme is identifying, accessing and building effective relationships with key decision makers or other duty-bearers who have a stake in the issue they are seeking to improve. Quite often young people, particularly those from marginalised groups, might not have a large personal network or access to decision makers. As development practitioners, you are often well positioned to play 'mediator' and 'connector' roles between young people and those in positions of power. It is also important to understand your own power, and whether you are in a position to respond to advocacy asks from young people to help further their cause. You can play a critical role in helping young people better understand how to navigate their political context, undertake power analysis and build an influencing network.

Alongside connecting young people to decision makers, development practitioners can also support young people by linking them to relevant decision-making platforms. As outlined in our practical guidelines for young people, there are national, regional and global dialogues that bring together decision makers and present exciting opportunities for youth-led influencing. For more advice on how to support young people to meaningfully engage in advocacy dialogues, please refer to the **"Unofficial Handbook" in Part 3**.

Support young people by connecting them to relevant contacts, and vouching for their work. Help guide young people on how to approach decision makers, and support meetings to be set up in an accessible way, taking into account geographic location, language and tone. Where relevant, consider joining young people at initial meetings with decision makers, acting as an ally for their cause and boosting the credibility of their work, making sure to step back and let them lead the discussion.

NOTES