



YOUTH ACTION LAB

OUTCOMES & LEARNINGS OF THE YOUTH ACTION LAB 2020

In March 2020, CIVICUS Alliance launched the first iteration of an inspiring youth-led pilot project: the Youth Action Lab (YAL). This co-created space allied CIVICUS and young grassroots activists to explore how to strengthen meaningful youth participation in civil society and test alternative resourcing mechanisms that shift power and resources to grassroots movements. This is an innovative, safe, active, inclusive, collective, representative and connected experimentation lab supporting ten young activists based in the global South per year in being more sustainable and resilient in their activism.

Between March 2020 and February 2021, ten brave young social movement activists from El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Liberia, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Tunisia and Uganda, were selected from 920 applicants with guidance from the youth grassroots co-design team, "Ubuntu". The ten activists demonstrated significant contextual awareness and courage to support radical and innovative initiatives that address the needs of their communities outside traditional CSO structures and with very little

to none funding, all of which align entirely with the criteria and vision of the Youth Action Lab.

With limited resources, we worked with each participant to test our assumption that youth leaders and their groups can achieve their desired social justice objectives and defend the rights of their communities if they have access to **flexible funding, mentorship, and opportunities to build meaningful alliances and relationships.**

IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR, THE PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED A GRANT OF US\$4500 THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO USE WITH AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY, AND PARTICIPATED **IN VIRTUAL TEAM BUILDING SESSIONS, TRAINING COURSES, PEER-EXCHANGES, DONOR DIALOGUES, REFLECTION DISCUSSIONS AND ONE-ON-ONE CHECK-INS** EVERY TWO WEEKS WITH CIVICUS YOUTH STAFF MEMBERS.

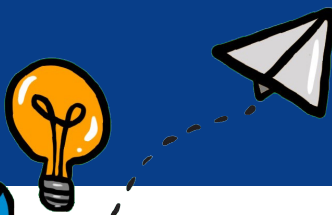
YAL OFFERINGS

1 ACCESS RESOURCES

Our research has shown that young people face increasing barriers to accessing resources to support their work. This is especially true for non-formal youth movements and collectives who work at the grassroots level. To begin to address this, the Lab provided participants

with an unrestricted microgrant of \$4500 USD, access to in-kind support and

other non-financial resources, as well as capacity strengthening on sustainability.



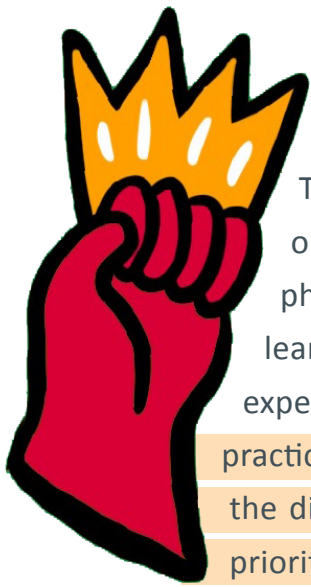
2 DEVELOP STRATEGY

Although youth-led movements are powerful in their ability to mobilise for change, they often lack the technical capacity and networks to articulate their agenda for change to policy-makers and decision-makers and access power. The Lab will provide opportunities for capacity strengthening through peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and skill-building workshops with the aim of supporting them to be more strategic in their activism.



3 BUILD ALLIANCES

Youth-led movements are able to mobilise powerful campaigns around crucial issues. However, movements tend not to speak with one another, despite having a keen interest to do so. The Lab will create spaces for movements and collectives of young people to connect, share experiences, and heal together. This will be through an in-person orientation residency and regular peer sharing and accountability sessions.



DID THE YOUTH ACTION LAB ACHIEVE ITS GOALS DURING THIS FIRST YEAR?

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Lab's testing phase and lists a series of learnings emerging from the lived experiences of the activists about practices that work to respond to the different resourcing needs and priorities of young activists in the global south. We include feedback from some

of the participants about how this experience positively impacted their work, factors of success, some of the challenges they faced and what their communities thought about their work last year. The information presented here is the summary of the final narrative reports that the young activists produced using creative formats such as audio, video, text, or infographics in their own languages.



YOUTH ACTION LAB SNAPSHOT

1 In 2019, nine young grassroots activists worked in partnership with CIVICUS as the co-design team that created the Youth Action Lab.

2 The call for applications and nominations was launched in English, French and Spanish.

3 CIVICUS staff reviewed and filtered applications to ensure that the reviewing panel received only complete applications and from eligible applicants.

4 The co-design team received 50-55 applications per person to review and score. They interviewed the top 15 applicants and requested for reference letters.

5 Semifinalists were evaluated using a scoring sheet. Finally, the co-design team analysed all the profiles together until they were able to agree collectively on the ten finalists, ensuring representation and diversity.

8 The 2020 Youth Action Lab members participated in an impact reflections session and a design thinking workshop to reflect and create the second iteration of the Youth Action Lab 2021.

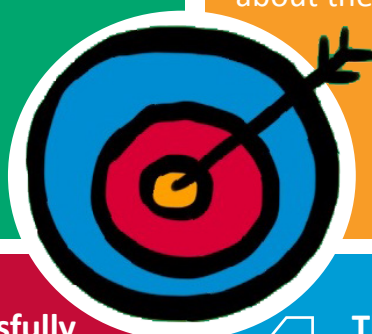
6 CIVICUS and the selected activists signed a revised and short funding agreement. Activists initiated the virtual onboarding and received the grants.

7 After a semi-structured needs assessment period, activists hosted a peer-learning festival and started the learning partnership programme.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE YOUTH ACTION LAB IN 2020:

1 Ten young grassroots organisers, movement builders and protest leaders from outside the capital cities of 10 countries from the global south applied and participated in the first testing phase of the YAL. Thanks to the collaboration of the co-design team, CIVICUS was able to reach past usual traditional civil society structures and support activists on the margins of traditional development and philanthropy processes.

2 Activists advocated for a more enabling civic space without putting themselves at risk. Thanks to support from their mentors, local experts and civic rights defenders with wide networks and extensive knowledge on the best strategies for advocacy and safety, activists self-reported increased levels of confidence in speaking up, in the use of creative tools and approaches for digital advocacy and good practices in digital security. Read more about the Lab mentorship approach [here](#).



3 Activists adapted successfully to COVID-19 restrictions in ways that were context – and person – specific, bridging the digital gap the pandemic created in their communities. Thanks to the unrestricted funds the activists received at the beginning of the programme (US\$2,500) and the US\$2,000 they received three months after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, the activists were able to cover the costs for the equipment needed to move their work virtually and any costs to adapt their initial plans to the new realities.

4 The YAL challenged predominant ways of monitoring and evaluating “grantees” progress by having the communities take the lead on determining the value and impact of the YAL activists’ work. Using a development evaluation (DE) approach shifted the focus on measuring success from using previously determined indicators to considering instead the lived experiences of the activists and their communities. The Youth Action Lab focused on outcomes harvesting, community feedback and storytelling to track progress and open spaces for learning, and referred to the lived experiences of participants as key indicators of success.

ACTIVISTS' SUCCESS STORIES AND WHAT WE LEARNED AS ENABLERS OR DONORS



Defending Indigenous Rights in Philippines through activism



Kinja decided to mobilise local communities through **indigenous music** and culture, building community solidarity and spreading messages of collective action for sustainable development.

The Kasiyana music video series centring on indigenous knowledge, were circulated on social media (see [Partners for Indigenous Knowledge Philippines](#) 'PIKP's Facebook page and website) and featured in various campaigns, webinars and online activities by other Indigenous people's organisations. Kinja participated in online campaigns such as [#defendcordilleraPH](#), a campaign against state attacks and development aggression (e.g., large-scale mining) that intensified with the government's response to the pandemic. For Kinja, a learning process with her self-

selected mentors was key in finding relevant advocacy approaches for indigenous people's rights under the harsh community lockdown conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After watching [Kinja's video](#) of her personal journey in 2020, some members of her community said:

"Great to see that you were able to place your time into really meaningful work during the community quarantine. Also inspiring to see that there are actually a lot of things that youth can do to forward this advocacy." – Gabriela Cariño, friend.

LEARNING #1: Grantees must have the flexibility and power to decide the type of support and supporters that better suit them, results in more relevant solutions.

Traditionally, CIVICUS and probably other similar organisations often choose the experts or mentors we think are a good match to young activists or participants. The YAL offered a different approach, asking participants to choose mentors on their own, who were paid by the Lab. In the case of Kinja, they chose a civil rights lawyer expert in indigenous rights, a social media manager, and graphic designer that Kinja knew and trusted. Mentors received financial support to dedicate one day a month over the course of 6 months to advise and coach Kinja in the framework of the YAL Learning Partnership Programme.

Fighting for Trans Rights in Uganda

Nana is the Executive Director for Trans Youth Initiative-Uganda (**TYI-Uganda**) which advocates and advances the health and human rights of rural transgender youth women, transgender youth sex workers, gender non-conforming youth, gender non-conforming youth sex workers and intersex youth in Uganda.



The communities' uptake and utilisation of sexual and reproductive health services in western Uganda are hampered by experiences of transphobia, discrimination, and criminalisation, which has affected the overall wellbeing of the community. TYI-Uganda seeks to strengthen capacities, knowledge, and skills to articulate and dismantle violence in their communities and advocate for a safe and secure environment that protects their fundamental rights. TYI-Uganda conducted a validation meeting on the findings from a study on their communities' needs and challenges that limit their rights, access, and utilisation of sexual and reproductive services. The organisation then facilitated a training on how to document, report and follow up on cases of human rights violations among rural transgender youth women, transgender youth sex workers, gender non-conforming youth, gender non-conforming

youth sex workers and intersex youth. The findings from the study and validation meeting are being used as an evidence-based advocacy tool to engage key stakeholders. Even though Nana is operating in a very challenging context putting her life at risk in a country where same sex relationships are still criminalized and trans people are discriminated, receiving the trust from international organisations to conduct this initiative, it has strengthened access to justice among TYI-Uganda's communities.

"Thank you, Trans Youth Initiative Uganda, for the tremendous work done in the implementation of these activities...which were so beneficial to the rural transgender youth women, trans sex workers and gender diverse youth. These helped to create visibility and a platform for community members to table their concerns as it was evidenced in research."

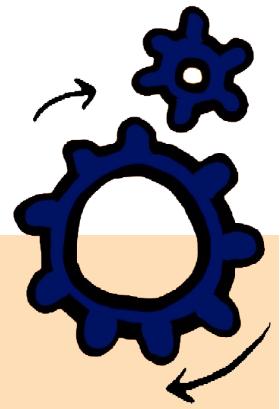
– Janei Munanura, TYI-Uganda volunteer.

LEARNING #2: Partner with grassroots activists to reach beyond the usual suspects and fund the unfunded, impacting those working on the frontlines but typically excluded. Reaching out to these amazing, radical and brave activists like Nana, who are working on the frontlines responding to the exact needs of their communities and challenging discriminatory laws, was possible thanks to the nine young grassroots activists from the **co-design team** who collaborated hand in hand with CIVICUS for 9 months. The co-design team was in the driving seat from the very beginning of the conceptualisation of the programme to the recruiting and selection of the YAL cohort. As a donor or ally who wants to support and invest in the new generation of changemakers outside traditional circles, working with grassroots activists is key to reaching out to those usually excluded from traditional philanthropy processes and the ones most at risk.

Advocating for Enabling Civic Space for Young People in Pakistan



Sabir is an activist from Pakistan who is mobilising youth and advocating for youth and women engagement in civic spaces, especially policy and decision-making processes, where they are largely excluded.



Thanks to his own networks, complemented by those of his mentor, Sabir initiated dialogues and consultations with policy makers, the Department of Youth Affairs, national human rights institutions, and youth, including a virtual consultation with 200 youth on provincial youth policy that documented recommendations for policy revisions. After sharing his reflections from his work in 2020, a community member said:

“Sabir’s work in recent months for youth is of high importance because policy revision is a sustainable change and for the first-time youth recommendations are documented and presented before the provincial government and the efforts will promote more youth participation in civic spaces and CSOs.” – Sidh, Civil Society Network.

LEARNING #3: Helping connect young activists to influential and well-connected civil society leaders and advisors is a powerful resource.

Mobilising CIVICUS networks and offering a stipend and a semi-structured mentorship plan with two local experts to dedicate eight hours a month each to work with the Youth Action Lab activist, proved to be of great benefit to the activist’s advocacy plans. Like Sabir, the YAL activists increased the size of their networks, scope and their confidence to advocate for change in a country where young people are constantly discouraged to participate and engage in public matters of their country.



Using radio stations to promote Gender Justice in Liberia



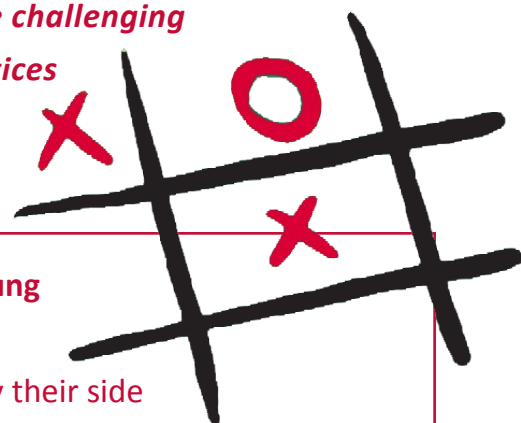
In 2020 **Abigail** founded **The Alliance for Gender Justice and Human Rights**, a network of grassroots organisations dedicated to advocating for the rights of women and children, providing training opportunities for emerging activists and promoting women empowerment in rural **Liberia**.

Abigail focused mainly on Nimba County in Liberia due to an increase of sexual gender based violence (SGBV) in the area. Abigail and her team initiated their year with numerous in-person engagements: peaceful protests, push back and awareness raising around SGBV, press conferences, community workshops, and gatherings including football games. Due to her own learning journey, where CIVICUS was helping her to reflect every 15 days about her strategies and results, Abigail and her team shifted their strategies and decided to create a radio talk show programme on two radio stations with wide listenership: Radio Kergaimah and Voice of Gompa. The radio programme served as an oral learning hub where listeners were kept updated about

human rights and COVID-19 developments. In the last months of the Action Lab, Abigail set up a SGBV task force across nine zones in Nimba County, and worked consistently with 16 grassroots organisations, 28 communities and 20 high schools in four cities to create awareness around SGBV. Through these partnerships and radio shows, she helped to re-shape the mindset of a larger number of community members towards victims of SGBV, using a decentralised and offline approach.

“We were able to break the culture of silence. However, there is more to be done as they are challenging traditional practices in Liberia.”

– Abigail



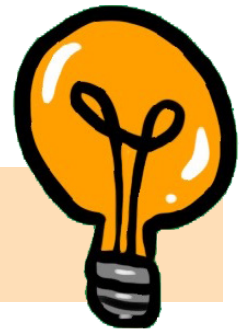
LEARNING #4: Allow activists to test and fail forward. Many young activists are testing out ideas and approaches for the first time.

Allow activists to test them and fail if that is the case, and then be by their side with them to reflect together about their experiences and ways in which those learnings and tools for growth can be capitalised in the future. Mentors and donors play an important role as advisors in sharing their own experiences, successes, and failures. But allowing space and time for the activist to try out, fail and learn on their own is also a great resource of support for growth. To actually support this, donors have to be open to welcoming changes to initially proposed activities and outcomes and of course, in the way granted resources are used. In the long-run, the movement will be capable of increasing their scope, reach and impact.



Scaling up Fridays for Future outside Accra

Perk is the national coordinator for the Ghana Young Environment Movement (GYEM).



In 2020, he led a national training programme called the

Ghana Youth Environment Programme (GYEP) to leverage the power of under 25-year-olds outside Accra through in-person seminars and trainings to join global conversations about the climate crisis. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Perk had to embrace one of the biggest challenges in Ghana and in many countries in the global South, the digital divide. Access to telecommunications and reliable electricity sources is a daily barrier for all people, but especially youth. With the extra US\$2,000 provided by the Lab to support digital transitions, Perk secured a fibre-optic internet connection and a Zoom licence for the entire year, which allowed him to run virtual training workshops with the 281 young people from all across Ghana

who signed up for the trainings. In August 2020, the training started using a low-zero data cost model in which all trainings were recorded on Zoom and broadcasted using Facebook live, which is free to connect to in Ghana and does not require Wi-Fi or data. Even with these technical challenges, in just six months, 31 of the 281 GYEP training participants had demonstrated sufficient commitment to the programme to transition into the Steering Group - the decision-making body of the programme. Read more about Perk's journey [here](#).

“My experience with GYEM has impacted me with a lot of skills and knowledge dealing with environment issues and...the way I think about the environment around me has changed and the way I react to environment issues. I think we need a lot of organisations like GYEM in Ghana.” – GYEP 2020 participant

LEARNING #5: Fund technical equipment to help close the digital divide. The flexibility of the YAL funds allowed the activists like Perk to re-allocate their budget for in-person activities to virtual workshops. Having access to a functioning laptop, fibre-optic internet connection, power banks, data, video and sound systems made all the difference to scale-up #FridaysForFuture Ghana's efforts in Accra to reach other territories across the country.



Securing funds for the second part of a queer feminist docuseries

Saif is a 22 year old feminist and queer activist in **Tunisia**.



After a series of attacks targeting them and comrades of the movement because of their gender or sexual orientation, Saif started to think about strategies to highlight the stories and experiences of the queer and feminist community in Tunisia using the power of social media and storytelling. With the Lab offerings, Saif decided to take the support available to test an idea around creating a docuseries with well-known feminists in different sectors of society from Tunisia such as Sophie Bessis. Using Instagram and Facebook channels, in less than a year the account [@feministes.v.v](#) gained more than 2000 followers and the attention of local media and international donors. Throughout the year developing the docuseries, Saif realised how valuable their networks were to secure the participation of well-known and very diverse guests in their docuseries; confirmed they had the talent to create a safe space for the interviews and to provide inspiring conversations for the viewers; and made great the progress in managing a project, their time and the camera. The flexible funds and technical support provided by the Lab were not only

a great resource for Saif's advocacy to reach more people; they represented a great opportunity for personal and professional growth and helped them secure more funds, from German foundations, to run the second part of the docuseries in 2021.

“Saif’s video clips represented a space for learning, sharing and capitalization in a time of cyber and physical attacks against feminism and feminists in Tunisia and across the globe. To me, the episodes are a way to explore new ways of activism through media and artistic performances using innovative and ground breaking tools.”

– Malek, a Tunisian feminist activist who watched Saif's episodes 'Feministes Voie/s et Voi/x'.



LEARNING #6: Trust young activists with seed funding and build their legitimacy in front of potential new funders. Saif would have not been able to secure additional funds to create the second part of their project, if it wasn't for the trust the Youth Action Lab put on them and fund an idea without asking for their track record in making a documentary, managing a budget or having a registered organisation. Young activists need trust from donors to create radical change.



Mobilizing youth and non-youth to volunteer for sexual education in Cusco

Banesa founded **Ñañaykuna** in 2017, a volunteer group interested in providing popular education to indigenous women about sexual reproductive rights in Cusco, **Peru**.

Regardless of the great passion and sense of commitment the volunteers had for the mission of Ñañaykuna, it was very challenging to retain their engagement and to mobilise funds to compensate them for their time and at the same time cover the costs of their multiple projects. In 2020, during Banesa's participation in the Youth Action Lab, Ñañaykuna was able to cover the fees to register as a non-profit organisation under Peruvian laws. During this experience she also secured a partnership with the CAMY Fund (The Central America and Mexico Youth Fund), which provided financial support to cover some of the costs of their flagship project called “**Online Families**” and to provide stipends to some of the most active volunteers. Thirty women survivors of gender based violence who engaged with Banesa's organisation through the Online Families project, shared that thanks to the information and conversations facilitated by Ñañaykuna, they became aware of their rights to protect their life

and denounce domestic violence, and they now know what hotline to call to seek support when the police does not respond. By the end of the year, Banesa's work was widely recognised at a local and regional level, and this resulted in a 33% increase in the number of volunteer applications they received compared to the last year – 150 people from all ages in Cusco expressed interest in volunteering for Ñañaykuna, of which 50 were selected. Additionally, the Organisation of States of the Americas recognised them with the award of Best Practices in a Latin American Youth-led Organisation. Thanks to the additional human resources acquired in 2020 and those recognitions, the team is very motivated to continue working in 2021 with the same passion and strength.



LEARNING #7: Consider the recognition and value the community gives to the activist as an indicator of success and impact. Traditionally, donors and NGOs track the number of direct beneficiaries as an indicator of success. In a new era for community organising, listening to the feedback of the community about the grantees work and considering external recognitions received (e.g. awards or collaboration proposals), gives a much more relevant picture of how valuable and impactful their work is.

Raising awareness in the public and private spheres for women rights in the Pacific

In 2020, Faith founded *Women of the Pacific Movement* for the purpose of reminding the Pacific that greater gender equality and equal participation, especially in decision-making processes, improves economic circumstances in regional, local, and household levels.



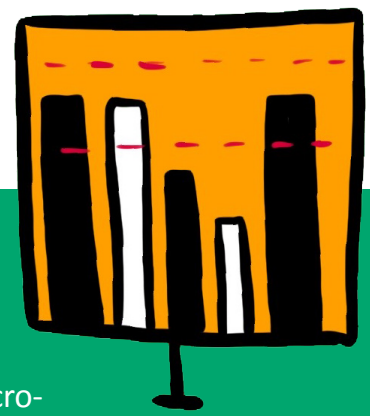
The @womenofthepacific Instagram page acts as a news source which shares important stories of diverse women that often do not make the front page of mainstream media. Faith made the platform as simple as possible so that people who are already engaged can connect on a broader scale and those who have a nascent understanding of gender equality and participation can begin to learn. Faith felt that it was important to gather data and information by collecting stories from women from diverse backgrounds as evidence to share with policymakers, which would help guide and influence their decision-making process. Faith decided to conduct virtual interviews with women of influence in the Pacific. This included Lenora Qereqeretubua, who is a member of the Fiji Parliament in the NFP party. This approach to storytelling aimed to empower and inspire her audience,

while advocating for more women participation in decision-making roles at all levels in the Pacific. The Instagram page grew to 1400 followers, mainly youth and women. The stories educated and reminded the region that women's participation in decision-making in the Pacific is key to creating a more just world and contributed towards a shift in cultural mindsets towards women in power.

“Faith is teaching the next generation of women to not stand for any indifference faced in their community and that every voice deserves to be heard.” - ANA TUIKETEI (Mentor/Learning Partner). “I initially thought that gender equality is something that the government should work on fixing, but after reading Faith’s report and looking at stories on Instagram, I am corrected in my mindset that EVERYONE can do their part to advance women’s Rights!” – VACISEVA YALIMAIWAI (Family Member).

LEARNING #8: Resourcing young feminist movement builders, storytellers, community organisers is not only possible but essential to shift traditional patriarchal beliefs. Funding new approaches with an open mind is critical. Most traditional donors would probably not consider the creation of an Instagram account to tell women stories for advocacy purposes, but look at the impact of this one!

CONCLUSIONS



In conclusion, the first year testing the Youth Action Lab was an overall success. First, we can firmly say that the Lab has had a strong positive impact on the lives and work of its participants. Participants increased their self-confidence, demonstrating their creativity in managing a micro-grant successfully, and left a legacy in their organisations by setting up new policies, securing additional funds, improving their digital presence and re-affirming their belief and passion to continue their activism regardless of how challenging it is sometimes. Thanks to their positive experience in the Lab and the important investment in social capital made during the first year, these young individual activists, non-registered groups and movement builders who were off the radar of traditional grant-makers, have recommended the Youth Action Lab in their networks, and we were able to secure an amazing cohort in 2021 again.

Secondly, the Youth Action Lab is also changing CIVICUS internal processes for the best. As a result of the experience with this pilot project, CIVICUS has now incorporated improved participatory grant-making and selection practices when offering grants to members and is now replicating the co-design modality that originated the Lab in a new resourcing campaign, following the same principles of listening, understanding, providing flexibility, being more patient and valuing members skills and time. The tools and systems to measure progress are now being replicated across different projects in the organisation.

8 LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE YAL 2020

LEARNING #1: Partner with grassroots activists to reach beyond the usual suspects and fund the unfunded, impacting in this way to those working in the frontlines but typically excluded from mainstream funding.

LEARNING #2: Grantees must have the flexibility and autonomy to decide the type of support and supporters that better suit them.

LEARNING #3: Helping connect young activists to influential and well-connected civil society leaders and advisors is a powerful resource.

LEARNING #4: Allow activists to test and fail forward.

LEARNING #5: Fund technical equipment to help close the digital divide.

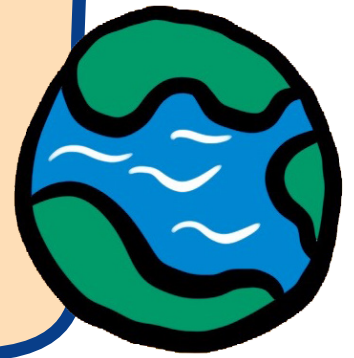
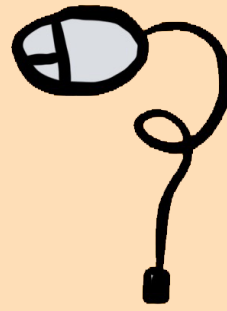
LEARNING #6: Trust young activists with seed funding and build their legitimacy in front of potential new funders.

LEARNING #7: Consider the recognition and value the community gives to the activist as an indicator of success and impact.

LEARNING #8: Resourcing young feminist movement builders, storytellers, community organisers is not only possible but essential to shift traditional patriarchal beliefs.

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE YOUTH ACTION LAB:

- [Youth Action Lab programme summary](#)
- [Resourcing youth-led groups playbook](#)
- [Co-designing with youth learnings report](#)
- [Shifting a residence onboarding to virtual festivals – 2020 onboarding journey](#)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q WHAT WERE THE KEY DRIVERS FOR ESTABLISHING THE YOUTH ACTION LAB?

Resourcing youth became a priority for CIVICUS in May 2018 after the CIVICUS Youth Action Team clearly presented this need to the Board of Directors. Since September 2018, CIVICUS started piloting different resourcing mechanisms for young people as an effort to a) respond to the needs of young activists b) understand the needs of the next generation of changemakers and trends across the world for citizen action c) practice meaningful youth engagement by working with youth as partners and key drivers to find collective solutions to common challenges. Years of research tells us that young activists from the global south are at the bottom of the list of actors that receive funds from bilateral agencies and philanthropy. Lack of trust, rigid and external agendas and endless requirements are some of the barriers that leave youth activism in a state of volunteerism and precarity.

Q WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS PARTNERSHIP MODALITY?

- Going beyond funding and capacity building and spending time in social capital, in relationships, in trust and in mentoring.
- Not having pre-established progress indicators or targets for the programme and allowing lived experiences of the activists to indicate the impact of the approach.
- Recognising youth time and skills providing stipends to activists to co-design a project and select its participants.

Q DID THE YOUTH ACTION LAB HAVE YOU APPLY NEW WAYS OF WORKING IN CIVICUS?

- Yes, the Youth Action Lab marked a milestone on how CIVICUS works with grassroots activists in the circumstances where their input, time and contributions are needed to design, implement or evaluate a programme.
- A participatory selection process was installed where staff members and members jointly decide the criteria, process and results of a grant or fellowship application.
- The Development Evaluation approach and tools developed and adapted for this programme are now being used across different programmes in the organisation.

Q WHAT POSITIVE CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN?

- **EFFECTIVENESS:** Having the support of an international community of like minded changemakers, activists increased their confidence advocating for a more enabling civic space without putting themselves at risk.
- **RESILIENCE:** Receiving flexible funds for core costs without specific requirements on how to allocate them, activists adapted successfully to COVID-19 restrictions in ways that were context- and person-specific, bridging the digital gap the pandemic exacerbated in their communities
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Accessing to different platforms to share their work, activists secured in-kind and financial support to continue their work in 2021
- Increased levels of **CONFIDENCE** from the activists at receiving a financial award for the first time or unrestricted funds for the first time thanks to the brilliant work they were able to demonstrate they have and can achieve
- **RECOGNITION** and inspiration from their communities of the value of the work the young activists are doing.

Q WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

- Some questions and challenges remain unresolved and hopefully with the cohort of 2021 and the support of the partners from the Advisory Group and beyond we can resolve them:
- How can we expand the scope (from 10 to 100 activists or more) without reducing the quality and quantity of support?
 - How can we build alliances of different youth movement builders virtually across time-zones and languages with low data?
 - How can we transfer funds without using bank transfer wires?
 - What is the best approach to strengthen the political agenda and advocacy efforts for each of the 10 movements participating in the Lab?
 - What is the right balance to support young activists without creating Zoom fatigue or overwhelming them with e-mails or messages but at the same time providing the technical and financial support they need?

Q FOR AN INGO THAT HAS BEEN DOING YOUTH PARTNERSHIP WORK AND IS EVOLVING THIS WORK, DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS?

The most important recommendation is to be aware and feel comfortable with change. Context and people change and plans, tools, ways of working most adapt to that change. Accept diversity and accept it takes time for people to be on the same page: not everyone will have the time available and mind space to read a funding agreement and complete a financial report that does not have clear instructions for people who haven't completed a report of that sort. Not everyone has the time and dedication to spend hours in Zoom listening to people they have never met in person in a language that is not their mother tongue.

In conclusion, be kind, listen, build relationships and learn with the young activists during the journey.



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