
**Working Together to
Realize Young People's
Rights**

**GLOBAL
YOUTH
FORUM**
ICPD Beyond 2014

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

E2A **EVIDENCE TO ACTION**
for Strengthened Reproductive Health

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Working Together to Realize Young People's Rights

Bruce Dick¹

If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.
African Proverb

1. Introduction

The Global Youth Forum (GYF) took place in Bali, 4-6th December 2012, to ensure that the vision and perspectives of young people are adequately represented in the development of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond-2014 agenda and the MDG post-2015 agenda. The Forum and the resulting Declaration were structured around five thematic areas: staying healthy; comprehensive education; transitions to decent employment; families, youth rights and sexuality; and fully inclusive civic participation¹.

While the five thematic papers provided structure and focus for the discussions and recommendation made during the Forum, young people's lives are not so categorical. A range of interventions, by different sectors and at different levels, is needed to support young people's positive transitions to adulthood, strengthen their assets, provide them with the knowledge and skills that they need to improve their health and avoid high-risk behaviours. Many different interventions are required to achieve discrete individual outcomes, for example the biological, behavioural and structural interventions that are needed to prevent HIV transmission in young people².

This sixth paper looks at the ways in which many different but inter-related determinants and interventions affect the lives of young people, and explores some of the successes and challenges of collaboration between different sectors and partners, including young people themselves - collaboration that is essential for maximizing potential synergies and ensuring that young people's rights are protected, respected and fulfilled. It is not the intention of this paper to duplicate what has already been included in the five thematic papers that were prepared for the GYF, but rather to explore and synthesize some of the commonalities and crosscutting issues, with a particular focus on intersectoral collaboration.

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2. Setting the Scene

The thematic papers prepared for the Global Youth Forum, which underpinned the subsequent discussions and recommendations, highlighted a number of things that are important for the development and implementation of policies and programmes with and for young people. They stressed, from different perspectives, that investing in young people is important for many reasons, including fulfilling human rights, maximizing the demographic dividend³, achieving social and economic development and stability, and improving public health. These investments have implications that ripple throughout an individual's life-course and outwards through families, communities and societies, and across generations⁴.

The GYF thematic papers stress that much has been achieved in the nearly two decades since the ICPD: more attention, more resources, more action and more positive outcomes. They document the many achievements in terms of policies (employment, youth leadership/participation); frameworks and the evidence base for action (employment, education, health); programmes (education and health) and impact (education). Of course, many things in addition to the ICPD Plan of Action have contributed to this progress⁵ - there is a focus on young people in numerous global consensus statements, commitments and resolutions that have been adopted over the past two decades⁶.

Despite these achievements, the thematic papers point out that many challenges remain. There has been a lack of progress especially in relation to a number of rights violations mentioned in the ICPD Programme of Action (POA), including early/forced marriage, gender-based violence and access to condoms and contraceptives. There is also a greater appreciation of new, or more recently recognized issues that require effective responses, such as masculinity and the structural determinants that affect all aspects of young people's lives.

At the same time, many young people have not yet benefited from the progress that has been made, particularly those who are marginalized and vulnerable⁷ because of their individual characteristics; because their rights are not respected, protected and fulfilled; and because of the situations in which they live, learn and earn. There is still much to be done to ensure that *all* young people are healthy and educated and are able to fully participate in the social and economic life of their communities and countries.

Furthermore, the world has changed significantly since 1994, with profound and mixed effects on many aspects of young people's lives, sometimes compounding and sometimes mitigating already existing problems and opportunities. Many of these were mentioned in the thematic papers and will need to be taken into consideration in future policies and programmes. They include (but are not limited to): a rapid increase of information and communication technologies (ICT) and social networks; an economic crisis and widening social/economic disparities in many countries; globalization, urbanization and migration; the changing nature, structure and roles of families; more competition for the limited financial resources that are available;

newly recognized health and social issues, such as non-communicable diseases, violence and mental health; and a wide range of other issues of global concern, including climate change, sustainable development, food security, and ageing societies.

3. Young people at the centre

The importance of a rights-based approach was touched upon in all of the background papers, and was an explicit focus of the paper on Families, Rights and Sexuality. A rights-based framework provides a clear set of values to underpin policies and programmes, and a number of universally endorsed principles, such as non-discrimination, best interests and evolving capacities.

A rights perspective places young people at the centre, as rights holders, and emphasizes the responsibilities of governments and other actors in their roles as duty bearers. Furthermore, a rights platform moves the discussion from aspiration to obligation, from things that it would be “nice to do” to things that governments have committed themselves to implementing, and for which they must be held accountable.

There can be no real discussion about young people’s rights unless we start with the young people as rights holders and understand that one of the key principles of a human rights based approach is the indivisibility of human rights. It is essential to see things from the reality of their lives; to understand their perspectives and the factors that influence their decisions; and to appreciate how the different aspects of their lives are linked in ways that do not necessarily reflect the sectoral/categorical thinking and approaches that define the programmes of many governments, UN agencies and NGOs, and that are reflected in the GYF background papers.

Many of the problems and opportunities that influence young people and many of the high-risk behaviours that negatively affect their lives have common determinants and are affected by the same risk and protective factors. The negative and positive effects of these determinants can accumulate across the life-course of young people, affecting their transitions to adulthood as well as the health and development of future generations.

By way of example, we know that parents play an important role in preventing the development of many of high-risk behaviours, such as unsafe sex, substance use and violence⁸ that negatively affect young people’s health, scholastic performance and employment opportunities. Parents also influence whether young people have access to, and take advantage of opportunities for education employment, civic participation and better health, including services for sexual and reproductive health. What is true of parents is true of many other structural determinants. At the same time, problems and high-risk behaviours feed off one another: alcohol and drug use, unsafe sex, violence, depression, school drop-out, unemployment, HIV and unwanted pregnancy are all linked together in terms of cause and effect.

Investments in one aspect of young people's lives can have multiple effects. For example, if young people are to be healthy, and remain healthy, they are more likely to have access to and benefit from education, life/livelihood skills and employment opportunities, be healthy adults and parents of healthy children, and contribute to the social and economic development of their countries. Yet to help them develop their potential and problem solving abilities, young people are likely to need to benefit from many interventions. For example, to ensure a disadvantaged adolescent girl is able to enrol and stay in school may require not only interventions from the education and health sectors, but also a range of immediate and long-term interventions, distal and proximal to the adolescent girl and her family, ranging from conditional cash transfers to changes in policies and social values and norms.

4. Crosscutting themes and perspectives

Many crosscutting themes emerged from the GYF thematic papers and discussions. These highlighted a number of tensions that exist in terms of how we think and talk about both the positive and negative aspects of young people's lives, as well as the opportunities and the challenges that confront them.

These are not always either/or issues, but may rather be a question of where the line is drawn along a continuum. At the same time, sometimes it may be necessary to use different arguments for different audiences. For example, do we support comprehensive education to supply the job market or is it to empower young people?

It is important that policies and programmes respond to these crosscutting issues in a coherent and consistent way that avoids duplication and maximizes potential synergies. This has implications for the many partners who contribute to their development and implementation at global, regional and national levels, including young people, governments, UN organizations and NGOs/CSOs,

How we think about the possibilities, the problems and the solutions, and how we define the outcomes that we are trying to achieve have important implications for what we do and how we do it. For example, do we focus on:

- Risk behaviours and/or positive youth development?
- The agency of young people as rights holders and/or the actions of others as duty bearers?
- ASRH problems and/or respectful relationships and pleasure?
- Rights-based approaches (obligations) and/or evidence-based sectoral interventions (aspirations)?
- ASRH alone and/or a broader set of linked health behaviours and problems (e.g. NCDs, injuries and mental health)?
- Individual-level interventions that provide information, skills and services and/or structural interventions that influence policies, legislation, social values and norms.
- All young people and/or vulnerable and marginalized young people?

Key crosscutting issues identified in the GYF thematic papers include the need to:

- Recognize that most of the problems raised in the papers require long-term solutions (although it is also important to be able to demonstrate some short-term results)
- Use a rights-based approach
- Focus on policy/legislative reform that includes attention to the development *and* the implementation and monitoring of policies
- Improve strategic information that *at a minimum* disaggregates data by age and sex
- Carry out more and better research, to include evaluations that improve the evidence-base, and implementation research to better understand the “how to?” type of questions
- Strengthen and develop systems for monitoring and accountability
- Enable and support young people’s leadership and participation
- Link multiple sectors (e.g. education and employment, health and education) and develop/strengthen partnerships, including those with the private sector
- Allocate adequate resources to ensure universal access to effective interventions/services
- Strengthen and develop the capacity of institutions, service providers, individuals and young people
- Ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalized young people, those most in need, are reached by programmes and protected by policies

5. Working together: intersectoral collaboration

The GYF thematic papers highlight the fact that young people’s rights to health, education, employment and other outcomes and transitions have complex determinants and require a range of interventions if they are to be realized. A number of different sectors will need to work together, including young people themselves to achieve the desired outcomes.

5.1. Understanding intersectoral collaboration: Why Collaborate?

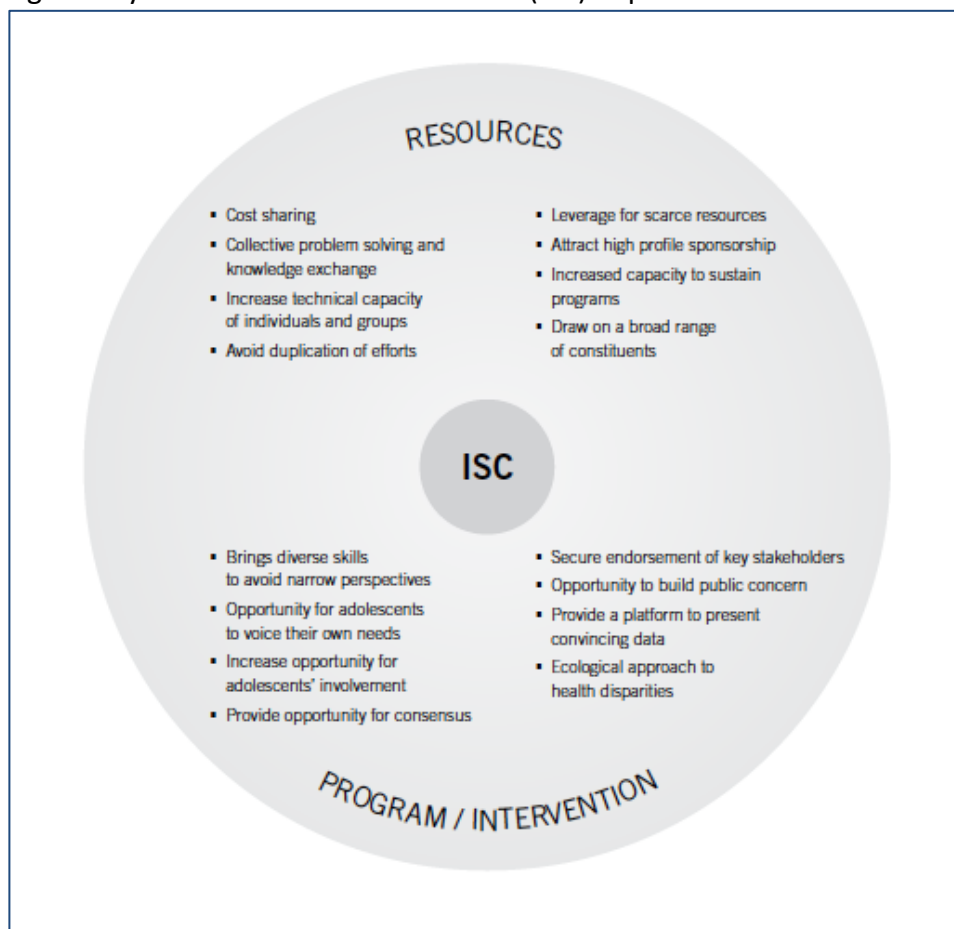
Working together is not a new idea. For many years there have been exhortations for different sectors and partners to work together, so much so that it would be difficult to identify a global, regional or national level declaration that has been made in the past 30 years that has not explicitly or implicitly called for, or made a commitment to intersectoral collaboration^{9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16}.

A number of different sectors *are* already contributing to improving the lives of young people, including the education, health and employment sectors, as outlined in the GYF thematic papers. However, while health, education and employment are fundamental human rights and are ends in themselves, they are also a means to other ends: they help young people claim other rights.

For example, we know how important education is, particularly girls education, for young people’s health now, for their future health and for the health of their children, yet health is not the main reason why we are trying to get girls into school: it’s simply another reason. Similarly, making sure that adolescents are healthy, well nourished, and are able to delay pregnancy is important if they are to benefit from their educational opportunities and remain in schools. But this is not the main reason that the health sector allocates resources to improve the health and nutrition of adolescent girls. While the efforts of the education and health system both benefit adolescent girls, we need more: *working in parallel is not the same as working together.*

There are many reasons for supporting intersectoral collaboration (Fig 1), including the fact that intersectoral policy development and planning is more likely to foster integrated, holistic programmes and policies. Furthermore, such collaboration is central to a human-rights based approach to programming¹⁷ since the essence of a human rights approach to young people’s development and empowerment emphasizes the indivisibility of human rights and the important roles that need to be played by a range of duty bearers.

Fig 1: Why is Intersectoral collaboration (ISC) important¹⁸?



However, despite the many possible benefits of intersectoral collaboration there are concerns that it is often more talked about than done. What do we know about the

factors that facilitate or obstruct individuals and organizations from working together, and does intersectoral collaboration really make a difference?

5.2. Understanding intersectoral collaboration: what does it mean?

The many frameworks that have been developed to better understand young people's health and development, from frameworks built on concepts of entitlement to the ecological models that provide a structure for causation and interventions, all recognize the need for many different partners to work together. However, it is important to be clear what is meant when the words "intersectoral collaboration" are used because it is a term that is used to describe many different types of collaboration.

Intersectoral collaboration may involve many different types of partners and partnerships, including young people¹⁹. These partners and partnerships vary depending on the desired program outcomes (e.g. addressing deficits or building assets²⁰) and the types of interventions (e.g. interventions that are proximal or distal to the young person). The 2011 World Youth Report on employment, for example, highlights the need to engage a range of different types of sectors to improve youth employment opportunities: formal and non-formal sectors; public and private sectors; and the education, employment and IT sectors²¹.

Intersectoral collaboration may be *vertical*, focusing on a range of different sectors (e.g. health, education, employment, water and sanitation, criminal-justice) working together towards a common goal of youth development. Health promoting schools are a good example of this type of collaboration. It may also be *horizontal*, facilitating different elements and levels of a sector to work together more effectively, for example, promoting the collaboration of government, civil society, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and the private for-profit elements of the health sector.

Intersectoral collaboration may also emphasize the involvement and participation of different levels within a country in the development of policies and support for concrete community-level actions, ensuring that people at national level, regional and district levels, and community and family levels all work together; it may also include a focus on different systems: political, economic and social.

The literature highlights the many different perspectives and factors that need to be taken into consideration when using the term "intersectoral collaboration", including:

- The types and levels of collaboration, including formal and informal networks and partnerships
- The definition of "sectors"
- The understanding of what is meant by "inter-sectoral"
- The range of perceived benefits
- The lack of consensus about which outcomes should be measured, over what time period (including implications for sustainability)²²

- The complexity of the relationships among the partners^{23 24}
- The different perspectives depending on who decides²⁵
- The models for implementation, and the different entry points and opportunities for strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration^{26 27}

5.3. Intersectoral collaboration: challenges and solutions

We not only need to work together more, but we need to do it much better.

There are many reasons why collaboration is difficult and doesn't work. Over the past two decades we have learned a number of lessons about what helps and what hinders collaboration and more integrated ways of working. There are a growing number of evaluations of intersectoral collaboration including efforts to synthesize good practice. Much of the published and grey literature relates to health and health outcomes^{28 29 30 31 32}, although the concept of intersectoral collaboration is also applied to a range of other issues, from economic development³³ to water management^{34 35 36}. Within the health field there are both general examples and also examples of collaborations between specific partners and sectors^{37 38 39}.

Although the majority of the available reports do not focus explicitly on young people, there are some examples of youth-specific research and case studies^{40 41 42 43}, including attention to specific issues such as education^{44 45}, sexual exploitation⁴⁶, youth development⁴⁷, child protection⁴⁸, employment⁴⁹ and the empowerment of adolescent girls⁵⁰. Much of the available literature is more descriptive than analytic, and the mechanisms linking intersectoral processes to specific outcomes are often not clear. The strongest effects have been seen with more proximal interventions - the more distal the interventions, such as those dealing with structural interventions, the weaker the association with specific outcomes.

It is perhaps not surprising that many of the lessons learned are fairly consistent across sectors and problems in terms of the challenges and opportunities for intersectoral collaboration. A number of the issues that are raised in the evaluations and reports that examine youth-specific programmes share many commonalities with the findings from interventions that are directed to other segments of the population. For the purposes of this brief review of intersectoral collaboration, lessons from the wider literature have therefore been included with those studies that have explicitly focused on young people, in order to benefit from a larger, but still limited body of research.

What do we know about some of the obstacles to making intersectoral collaboration work⁵¹?

There are many overarching challenges to people working together. Most governments and many NGOs have sector-bound organizational structures and work in settings with weak coordinating bodies. Although different issues in youth development may lend themselves more than others to intersectoral collaboration, there may also be a lack of interest or support from organizational and political

leaders for people to collaborate, despite the lip service paid to its importance. In addition, there are issues of power and turf, and different cultures, goals and methods of working that are likely to affect the development of partnerships between sectors.

People are fond of quoting the African proverb that if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. However, there is often a pressure for quick results, to “go fast”. Short-termism surrounds people, despite the long-term nature of many of the problems that they are trying to solve. It is clearly an additional effort to develop collaboration between people and/or institutions that would prefer to “walk alone”. In some instances the disincentives for collaboration may be stronger than the incentives.

A number of specific problems can undermine intersectoral collaboration. These include:

- Lack of vision, clarity and transparency
- Conflicting goals and different expected outcomes
- Limited political commitment
- Unsupportive leadership styles and skills
- Limited or absent sense of ownership
- Real and perceived self-interests
- Power dynamics, and lack of accountability and trust
- Weak capacity, and lack of time, human resources and social capital
- Unreliable finances
- Poor communication, both in terms of the quantity and the quality of information.

There are also issues of inclusiveness and representation, with young people being most likely to be excluded and under-represented.

Despite the emphasis on intersectoral collaboration in a range of policy documents, well-planned and adequately funded collaborative projects seem to be the exception rather than the rule. At a very practical level, the strategies of the sectors that need to be involved in the collaboration are usually outside the statutory control of the lead sector, and the priorities of the lead sector are often not seen as priorities for the sectors with which it wants to collaborate. Establishing both vertical and horizontal

collaboration can be an additional challenge to working intersectorally, since it requires significant additional effort and negotiation to reach a shared understanding of roles, accountabilities, approaches and goals.

Intersectoral collaboration can divert energy and resources, and must consider the different interests and positions of a number of organizations. It often requires new processes to share power and decision making, which has implications for management, capacity, monitoring and evaluation. In resource poor settings where there is reliance on external funding, donor groups are often organized by sectors, and intersectoral approaches can therefore create challenges for efficient and effective interactions with funders.

Finally, an important reason for the lack of effective intersectoral collaboration is that it has not been easy to demonstrate that it makes a difference for all involved. There are relatively few examples of intersectoral collaboration that have had an impact on health outcomes or on more distal determinants; and while there are some examples of efforts to collaborate across sectors that have demonstrated an impact on intermediate outcomes, little attention has been paid to assessing how the collaboration actually functions. Furthermore, while it is often possible to facilitate collaboration between different sectors and partners in projects, there are few examples of this taking place in programmes that have been taken to any reasonable scale.

There is a growing body of lessons learned about what works, what facilitates intersectoral collaboration ^{52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59}

How an issue is defined is a key factor in facilitating intersectoral work. Advocacy and targeted awareness-raising may therefore be needed to frame the problem(s) in context and highlight mutual gains for different sectors. It is particularly important to be clear about the following elements in the development of intersectoral collaboration;

- What is to be achieved; what is the focus for the collaboration (for example is it to decrease HIV; contribute to positive youth development; decrease multiple risk behaviors; ensure safe and productive transitions to adulthood)?
- What is known about the pathways to achieving the desired outcome(s)?
- What are the characteristics of the systems through which these interventions need to be implemented (programmes for young people often need to be seen within the context of programs for the rest of the population: health systems and employment are obvious examples)?
- How will progress be measured?

By answering these questions collaborators may be able to develop and adopt a clear framework that reflects a shared vision of the problem(s) to be addressed; a common understanding and conceptualization of the problem(s) and solutions; and consensus about defining success.

Ensuring that the right people are involved is essential. Organizations and individuals involved in partnerships need to have both the authority and the flexibility to engage in mutual decision making. Clarity about partners and stakeholders is key: who, how many, their roles and responsibilities, and the need for consistency of participation and commitment. The best examples of interagency cooperation bring together professionals with different but

The development of shared values, interests and objectives is important for building trust, developing understanding and ensuring respect between different professional groups, as well as a sense of partner interdependence for mutual benefit. In addition there must be a clearly articulated strategic focus, with formalized partnerships, a well-planned course of action and incentives/rewards for partners to collaborate. Partners need to be clear about their individual goals as well as the collective goals of the collaboration.

complementary resources and expertise. The mobilization of political leadership and the senior managers of the relevant sectors can help facilitate the identification of key participants.

Broad stakeholder engagement from the outset is important to generate ownership, develop strong relationships among partners, and ensure the most effective mix of partners. Finding ways to effectively engage communities and involve young people are crucial to many intersectoral efforts.

Other important lessons learned include:

Early investment in training in how to work across sectors can foster the development of expertise and help to strengthen relationships. Training should build both the technical and the strategic capacity to manage intersectoral relationships. This should include investments that develop young people's leadership and provide them with the information and skills that they need to work effectively with other stakeholders, so as to play a key role in intersectoral and intergenerational collaboration.

Effective facilitative leadership in advancing shared purposes and sustaining the collaboration between equal partners is essential (including consideration of shared or rotating leadership). Leadership needs to be supported by adequate, sustainable and flexible resources. Central government agencies play a vital role in making inter-agency co-operation work, by developing or improving guidelines and protocols, for example. Strong accountability mechanisms will reinforce the position that intersectoral collaboration and activities should be taken seriously at leadership and operational levels. While existing policies may support the initiation and implementation of intersectoral action, there is likely to be a need for advocacy that further advances and supports intersectoral initiatives.

Finance and funding mechanisms play a central role in facilitating intersectoral collaboration. There should be adequate mobilization of funds and financial commitments, and intersectoral projects should be clearly budgeted by the range of sectors involved in the collaboration.

Supportive and facilitating structures and processes to do the work of collaboration are essential, including systems for adequate and continuous communication and consultation within and across sectors. An ability to respond to change needs to be built into such structures. Action and outcome-oriented procedures are also important to ensure that partners are able to undertake joint action to achieve the goals that are articulated in the inter-sectoral action plans. For

Adequate funding for intersectoral initiatives was reported as being an important mechanism for supporting the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of intersectoral collaboration.

inter-sectoral collaboration around service provision, action plans need to focus on common and complementarity locations.

Appropriate administrative systems and organizational arrangements, need to be developed, which must include the designation of convening or coordinating bodies. The convening body must have sufficient credibility to facilitate the mobilization and allocation of resources. Committee structures should be spelled out and should consider which approaches are likely to work best at what level, for what issues or problems, and under what conditions.

Assessments, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting are essential throughout the whole process. A common, shared information system must be established that includes sector-specific data. Linked to this is the need for implementation research that assesses impact and helps manage the process of collaboration, including intersectoral studies and pilot projects to guide the development of best practices and explore different models of collaboration. Research findings and the documentation of experiences should be widely disseminated, as published findings from program and policy interventions will make an important contribution to the currently weak evidence base about intersectoral action. Adequate funding is required to ensure organizational capacity and systems to collect the data necessary for rigorous evaluations.

It is important to be able to demonstrate that there is real value-added to working together, because it is resource intensive and takes time and effort.

On-going technical guidance and support to partners (and funding agencies) on best approaches to intersectoral collaboration are also likely to be needed. This should include “backbone” support organizations and where necessary, capacity development. A number of reports stress the importance of strengthening processes that support the involvement of communities, if intersectoral collaboration is to result in change at the local level. This also clearly applies to the involvement of young people.

It goes without saying that the lessons learned about effective intersectoral collaboration need to be tailored to country specific situations. Prevailing contexts will affect the ability of governments and organizations to work intersectorally, for example conflict or social values and norms, especially in relation to ASRH. In addition, it needs to be understood that adopting an intersectoral approach does not mean abandoning individual departmental and/or organizational mandates.

5.4. Intersectoral collaboration: sectors requiring special attention

Young people

Young people are significant actors in improving their own lives and in contributing to the wellbeing of their peers, families, communities and countries. Young people need to be at the table when policies and programmes are being planned, implemented and monitored and there is a pressing need for much clearer channels for young people's participation in political processes and in civil society more generally. Furthermore, young people can play an essential role in ensuring that other individuals and organizations that need to be at the table are present and that they are working together. These challenges are well documented in the GYF thematic paper on youth leadership and civic participation.

Communities

There is growing evidence that support from a wide range of community actors and stakeholders are essential for achieving many outcomes in relation to young people's health and education.⁶⁰ This includes traditional and religious leaders, community-based organizations, community workers in health, education, and agriculture, among others, and local government structures. These stakeholders are often the guardians of social values and norms as well as being the institutions and individuals who are closest to where most young people are: they are the people who are responsible for turning national level ideas, policies and programmes into local action. Several of the thematic papers mention community level interventions, and it remains a challenge to really engage and collaborate with community-level actors, to tease out exactly what needs to be done and by whom, and to make sure that the resources and capacity strengthening are available to *do* what needs to be done.

Parents and guardians

For adolescents and young people, the influence and role of families is central to achieving an enabling environment. For younger adolescents in particular, parents and guardians are key to achieving a range of positive outcomes, from entry and retention in schools to protection against high-risk behaviours and positive youth development⁶¹. Even as adolescents evolve, mature and grow more independent, parents remain an important force in their lives. Yet despite the importance of parents, and the ever-changing structure of families, parents, families and caregivers are often not effectively engaged as partners in the development and implementation of policies and programmes for young people. Fortunately there are growing examples to build on of interventions developed to provide parents with the support that they need to fulfill their duty bearer roles in realizing young people's rights⁶².

Social networks

There is probably no other sector that has changed so rapidly over the past 20 years as the use of information and communication technologies, the rapidly expanding penetration of mobile phones and Internet access, and the growth of a range of social networks. And young people are at the centre of this technological and social

revolution! Certainly there are many young people who cannot yet access such technologies, and the so-called digital divide requires on-going attention. However, young people have shown in many ways how these new media can be used, from sharing ideas and information to helping topple oppressive regimes. While there is a need for more evaluations to strengthen the evidence base, the use of ICT and social media will likely remain central to advocacy, activism, sharing, mobilizing and supporting interventions in the decades ahead - and in this, young people have the edge⁶³.

5.5. Intersectoral collaboration: the role of young people

While young people have much to gain from stronger partnerships across a range of sectors, it is also important to be clear how they can contribute to this intersectoral collaboration. Possibilities include:

- *Advocacy and activism*

No one advocates for young people better than young people! But young people are also advocates and activists for other social issues, many of which will confront them tomorrow if they are not solved today. There are endless examples young people contributing to positive change, from the schools in apartheid era Soweto to recent events in Tahrir Square in Cairo. Young people not only need to claim their rights but they also need to mobilize the range of duty bearers to work more effectively together so that they can respect, protect and fulfill young people's rights, for today and tomorrow.

- *Informing, influencing and mobilizing*

Young people are well-positioned to inform and mobilize other young people to do what needs to be done to meet their rights, improve their health, and ensure access to education, employment and other opportunities, starting with their friends, families and communities. They can highlight not only what needs to be done, but also why it is important that different sectors work together, and the importance of them engaging and working with young people.

- *Being the glue for collaboration*

How can young people both mobilize for intersectoral collaboration and also facilitate it? They can identify, document and disseminate examples of where it has worked well, and where it hasn't. They can show that it can make a difference, and if it doesn't work be able to articulate why things are not working as they should.

- *Holding themselves and others accountable*

The idea of intersectoral collaboration is not new. Governments and partners have been calling for it and endorsing it for years. Can young people play a stronger role in monitoring whether or not it is taking place? And where it is occurring, can young people help determine and demonstrate its impact? How can young people make sure that governments and partners are held accountable (e.g. the Ureports in Uganda)⁶⁴.

- *Providing technical support*

There are many examples of NGOs that are created and staffed by young people. There are young professionals networks, such as the one that has been initiated by concerned young professionals to address NCDs in young people⁶⁵. Young people have many skills that they can put to good use, including providing support for IT developments and m-technologies. These skills can help strengthen the ways that individuals, organizations and sectors work together.

- *Linking the different agendas*

Young people can take a lead on ensuring that governments and other partners review, develop, implement and monitor a range of laws and policies that have an impact on things such as young people's access to health services, domestic violence, harmful practices, gender inequities and stereotypes; and the implementation of evidence-based interventions that realize young people's rights, including reaching the poorest and most marginalized. They can also help to ensure that governments and a range of sectors not only achieve the unfinished agendas but that they link these with the new agendas, such as the UN Secretary General's System-wide Action Plan²; the NCD agenda; the climate change and other environmental agendas (clean water and sanitation); and the many issues that have been suggested by the GYF for inclusion in the beyond-2014 ICPD agenda and the post-2015 MDG agenda.

² The System Wide Action Plan focuses on many of the same issues that were discussed during the GYF: employment; entrepreneurship; education, including SRH education; protection of rights; civic engagement and political inclusion; and health

References and endnotes:

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²

http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/20111110_JC2007_Combination_Prevention_paper_en.pdf

³ <http://www.prb.org/pdf12/achieving-demographic-dividend.pdf>

⁴ See also: UNFPA (2010): *The Case for Investing in Young People as Part of a national Poverty Reduction Strategy*; World Bank (2007): *The World Development Report 2007 – Development and the Next Generation*; Cynthia B. Lloyd, Editor, Panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries, National Research Council (2005): *Growing Up Global - the Changing Transitions To Adulthood In Developing Countries*

⁵ For example:

The Fourth World Conference on Women

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

The UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS

<http://www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/unitednationsdeclarationsandgoals/2001declarationofcommitmentonhivaids/>

The UN General Assembly on Children <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

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http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2012/Agenda%20item%208/Decisions%20and%20Resolution/Resolution%202012_1_Adolescents%20and%20Youth.pdf

The WHA 2012 Resolution http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA64/A64_R28-en.pdf

The Secretary General's SWAP on Youth

<http://social.un.org/index/Youth/InternationalYouthDay/IYD2012.aspx>

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