



# WE TRUST YOUTH RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Collaborative  
Partnerships with Youth

A JOINT INITIATIVE BY:



START-UP FUNDS SUPPORTED BY:

**FP>>2030**

# WE TRUST YOU(TH) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR COLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH YOUTH

by We Trust You(th) Problem Solving Community

## BACKGROUND

The [We Trust You\(th\) Initiative](#) aims to tackle practical problems that result from systemic inequities that currently thrive within relationships between youth-led organizations and youth-focused donors and iNGOs. To support collective problem solving between youth, iNGOs, and donors, We Trust You(th) issued a public [challenge](#) and established a [practical problem solving community](#).

For iNGOs and donors, who currently often hold the most power and decision-making, We Trust You(th) is co-hosting three practical problem solving workshops. To support workshop follow-up and others who have accepted the challenge or who want to improve their ability to equity partner with young people, We Trust You(th) will be sharing lessons and recommendations publicly.

The following recommendations were compiled and collected based on the discussions held during the second We Trust You(th) Problem Solving Community workshop. This workshop was attended by iNGOs, Donors, and Youth-led Organizations ([listed in acknowledgments below](#)) on May 4th, 2022. **Recommendations outlined below are intended to help youth focused donors and iNGOs take necessary steps to tackle the following problem:**

## FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

Relationships and partnerships between youth-led efforts and iNGOs and donors largely remain surface level and informal, often putting young people in compromising situations.

## OUR HOPEFUL OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP WERE:

- Donors and iNGOs to have a better understanding of what it means to be inclusive and equitable partners to youth-led organizations and efforts.
- A recommended model of partnerships that can be mutually discussed and agreed upon through the lens of our respective institutions.

# WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH PARTNERING WITH DONORS/INGOS?

Demanding additional activities above what has been agreed upon in the initial process of contract development.

Very lengthy administrative procedures

Smaller budgets and lack of funding for operational costs for YLOs (HR, Fundraising, etc.) which adds up to other challenges YLOs face.

Delayed contracting, yet expecting the same deliverables in a significantly shorter timeframe.

Complicated, time consuming procedures (compliance, due diligence, reporting, M&E procedures etc.) which are hard for YLOs to sometimes follow.

Believing that youth are not capable of playing a bigger role, hence being delegated to smaller or menial tasks within a project.

Having youth make media appearances without any voice in developing the messages, program or policies that the youth are expected to talk about.

Creating space for feedback but not relaying the changes we've discussed or requested.

Rigid TORs with no room for adjustments and YLOs have to decide to respect them or forfeit the funding.

Lack of trust or not enough responsibility entrusted to youth (this could be due to the belief that youth are inexperienced, could be tokenistic and more factors)

# IN-DEPTH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH YOUTH:

## THE M WORD - MONEY!

### **NOW: How are partnerships with youth formed currently?**

- Youth often expected to deliver work free of charge; not seen as paid experts
- Always limited budget available from donors/iNGOs for youth work or youth-led partners



### **FUTURE: Where do we want to go?**

- Youth compensated fairly for their time & efforts
- Youth seen and treated as equal partners both on paper and in verbal communication
- Accessible, unrestricted and/or long-term, and flexible funds for youth, as well as flexible platforms for transactions



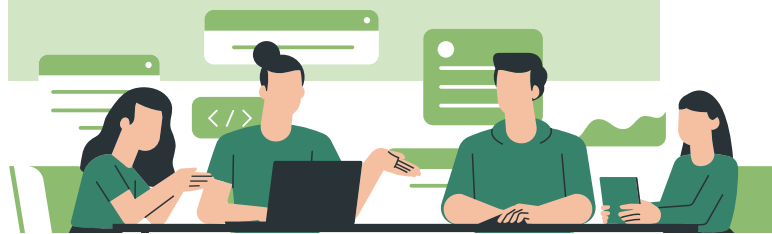
## COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

### **NOW: How are partnerships with youth formed currently?**

- Fixed agreements/ contracts prioritizing donor/iNGO interests
- One-way flow of decision-making from donors to iNGOs to youth, where the ultimate decisions are flowed down from donors
- Surface level relationships, and lack of reflective conversations
- Claimed ownership/intellectual property rights by donors
- Collaboration that tries to fulfill a requirement instead of being meaningful
- Tokenistic and superficial means of collaboration that boosts the external image and reputation of donors/iNGOs
- Youth work concentrated in a department with people who have programmatic “youth knowledge”

### **FUTURE: Where do we want to go?**

- Co-developing partnership agreements, contracts or MoUs
- Joint decision-making on how funds will be used
- Mutual constructive feedbacking and reflection along the way
- Co-ownership of developed products/knowledge in partnership agreements
- Enabling environment is built with effective tools that make the most out of young people's experience
- Young people are involved in internal and significant decision-making processes
- Collaboration with youth is transversal throughout the organization
- Being in community with youth-led partners



# YOUTH-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

## **NOW: How are partnerships with youth formed currently?**

- Partnership agreements/ contracts heavy with technical language & global North oriented terms
- Traditional procedures often require technical knowledge & have a high reporting burden



## **FUTURE: Where do we want to go?**

- Inclusive, accessible and easy to understand language in partnership agreements
- Youth supported by donors/iNGOs in technical language and knowledge
- Providing alternatives for youth to contribute their inputs (WhatsApp groups etc.)
- Clear templates and tools to simplify reporting of activities and accountability

# TIME-SENSITIVE COLLABORATION

## **NOW: How are partnerships with youth formed currently?**

- Youth groups seen as secondary stakeholders compared to adult-led organizations
- Agreements, contracts or payments delayed

## **FUTURE: Where do we want to go?**

- Youth contracted and paid in a timely manner
- Responsive and timely communication with donors/iNGOs



# SAFE SPACE

## **NOW: How are partnerships with youth formed currently?**

- Limits of what the partnership process looks like solely set by donors/iNGOs
- Youth are often talked on behalf of by non-youth donors/iNGO representatives
- Youth are seen as a homogeneous group - youth have different needs & expectations!

## **FUTURE: Where do we want to go?**

- Co-creating a safe space for youth to ask questions about partnership agreements & technicalities
- Inclusive communication with youth & contextualizing inclusion (depending on different needs or circumstances of youth)





# WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN YOUTH - DONOR/INGO PARTNERSHIPS?

We asked YOUTH about #TheWayForward:



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Recommendations made are primarily developed by We Trust You(th) co-leads and youth partners. However, they are strengthened by our ally partners and the wider We Trust You(th) problem solving community.

- **Youth Partners:** We Trust You(th) is co-led by five youth-led organizations: [International Youth Alliance for Family Planning](#), [CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality](#), [Copper Rose Zambia](#), [Green Girls Platform](#), and [¿Y Yo Por Qué No? \(YYPN\)](#). In addition, the co-leads have established formal youth partnerships with [Concealed Narratives](#), [Youth to Youth Cameroon](#), and UP Babaylan – three additional youth-led efforts who provide strategic guidance and input.
- **Ally Partners:** We Trust You(th) proudly collaborates with [Elevate Children Funders Group](#), [EngenderHealth](#), [Children Rights Innovation Fund](#), [Participatory Grantmakers Community of Practice](#), and [We Are Purposeful](#). Critical kick-start funds have been provided by [Family Planning 2030](#), [UN Foundation](#).
- **We Trust Yout(th) Problem Solving Community:** Inputs provided by iNGOs and donors who attend the second workshop have been integrated into these recommendations. ([Workshop 2 Attendees](#))