

End Review of ACT!2030 Phases 1- 4: Youth-led, data-driven accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals

Final Report



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Disclaimer

The views and ideas expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily imply or reflect the opinion of the Swiss TPH.

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Abbreviations

AfriYAN	African Youth and Adolescents Network on Population and Development
AIDS	Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism (of the Global Fund)
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (Spanish- CEPAL)
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GYAN	Global Youth Action Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
ICASA	International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
JYAN	Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle Eastern and North Africa (region)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
NAYHD-TWG	National Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Technical Working Group
NCPI	National Commitments and Policy Instrument
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLHV	People Living with HIV
PMNCH	Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
PWID	People Who Inject Drugs
SCIH	Swiss Centre for International Health

SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
Swiss TPH	Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
TB	Tuberculosis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organisation
YFS	Youth-Friendly Services
YKPs	Young Key Populations

Executive Summary

The world has more young people than ever before, offering an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the world's development goals by prioritizing the needs and wellbeing of this important group. However, progress on key aspects of the health of young people has been slow, and the Millennium Development Goals failed to give explicit attention to adolescents and young people. Increased international recognition of the importance of meeting the needs of young people was reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) yet specific targets and indicators are still being negotiated. In response to the need to ensure youth issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV are well reflected in country and global targets, youth leaders and their supporters at UNAIDS and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) joined forces with the PACT (a coalition of youth organisations working on HIV and SRHR) to create a youth movement to advance and monitor progress on the SDGs through youth-led, data driven accountability and advocacy.

ACT!2030: ACT!2030 (formerly ACT!2015) was a collaboration between The PACT and one selected youth-led organization (i.e. ACT!2030 Alliances) in twelve participating countries. It was envisioned as a movement that was initially coordinated by a secretariat based within UNAIDS and then later, transferred to IPPF (for administrative purposes). ACT has been implemented in four phases from September 2013 to December 2017. Each phase of the initiative built on the achievements of the preceding phase. Activities in the earlier phases focused on conceptualisation, strategic planning, youth mobilisation and development of advocacy and communications tools, while phases 3 and 4 aimed to increase youth-led accountability on SRHR through strengthened national and international youth advocacy and lobbying, as well as improved collection and use of data at country level.

Evaluation approach: The ACT!2030 review was based on a logic model to describe the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and goal of the ACT!2030 initiative and was developed to summarize the change process envisioned by ACT!2030 in its 4th phase. The review followed international evaluation guidance and used standardised qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Analysis and triangulation of evidence ensured reliability of findings. Evaluation questions were developed based on the ACT!2030 logic model to ensure that the review thoroughly assessed the intended key outputs and outcomes of the initiative. The evaluation questions were aligned to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, with particular focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the ACT!2030 model. Ten desk case studies and two country case studies (in Mexico and Zimbabwe) were carried out. The evaluation was conducted by a team of experts at Swiss TPH, including two Swiss-based youth consultants and 12 youth consultants in each of the target countries. The evaluation was supported by a Reference Group and 12 national ACT!2030 coordinators. Quality assurance mechanisms were followed throughout the evaluation.

Key findings and achievements

Evidence-based reporting and advocacy (Relevance and Effectiveness): **ACT!2030 successfully contributed to evidence-based reporting, policies, programmes and legislation related to young people's SRHR, and by doing so, increased accountability at all levels of national commitments related to young people and the SDGs.** It did this by building the skills and knowledge of ACT!2030 Alliance members using evidence based resources in their training and capacity building workshops. ACT!2030 Alliance members worked to fill data gaps, and organise themselves to lobby and advocate for youth SRHR and HIV within the national, regional and global political spaces around initially the MDGs, and then more recently Agenda 2030. While most countries engaged with data driven advocacy, and creating space and platforms for youth voice, this did not usually involve indicator advocacy as initially envisioned by the initiative. Multiple factors constrained national level capacity to advocate for youth specific indicators including limited understanding of SDG

processes by participating youth organisations. ACT!2030 Alliance members received skills and training on the importance of data to the monitoring process, recognition of data gaps, and the need to fill those gaps to advocate effectively for youth SRHR issues within Agenda 2030 in their countries.

Young people's leadership, meaningful participation and engagement for accountability (Relevance and Effectiveness): ACT!2030 facilitated and supported youth-led participation in national and global platforms and processes through advocacy, lobbying and awareness-raising activities for young people's SRHR to varying degrees and outcomes. Through collective, creative collaborations, ACT!2030 Alliance members created opportunities to bring their issues forward within national dialogues and processes related to policy, legislation and monitoring of the SDGs.

ACT!2030 Alliances in countries reported that they had significantly included marginalised and vulnerable young people in their activities - in many countries this involved young key populations such as gay men and other men that have sex with men and young people living with HIV. In some countries, **ACT!2030 Alliance purposefully reached out to young key populations (YKPs) successfully despite the stigma and discrimination and legal ramifications of doing so.** Limited financial resources constrained some of the national level Alliance's ability to include more remote and marginalised population of young people.

ACT!2030 advocated for youth participation and inclusion within monitoring processes related to the Agenda 2030 where possible. **Using social accountability mechanisms and in some cases, sheer perseverance, ACT!2030 Alliances in some countries were able to engage in accountability platforms successfully.** ACT!2030 Alliance country coordinators experience and position within their national country political landscape often determined their ability to position the Alliance to advocate for greater attention to youth SRHR and HIV needs in the context of the SDG agenda.

Communication and coordination for youth-led accountability (Relevance and Effectiveness): ACT!2030 Alliances in-country benefited from advocacy and communication tools developed by the PACT, UNAIDS and IPPF (and others) for their training of national Alliance members in advocacy and communication. **Social media, such as Facebook, Blogs and Twitter were used to pressure government on youth SRHR and HIV issues effectively.** Some good practice experience was shared between countries but low usage of the specific ACT!2030 social media platforms and blogs suggested that other social media platforms were more adequate for their perceived communication needs. Closer follow up of the ACT!2030 social media platform could have facilitated greater sharing and learning between Alliance countries on effective advocacy strategies.

Strong ACT!2030 Alliance national coordinators and members successfully led advocacy activities in countries that effectively gave voice and political momentum to their SRHR and HIV messages. Some ACT!2030 Alliances were able to develop a network and movement in country, while others were limited by financial, contextual, political, or geographic constraints.

Sufficiency of resources and efficiency of use (Efficiency): ACT!2030 was envisioned as a movement not a project. As such, it was built on volunteerism with few expectations by those engaged that specific funding would be provided for participating. ACT!20103 Alliance coordinators did not receive funding until the 3rd phase of the initiative as a way to expand and strengthen their activities at country level. **The limited resources were dedicated to training, advocacy, lobbying, regional and global exchanges, and modest overheads and coordination by the ACT!2030 Secretariat (UNAIDS and IPPF) and national ACT!2030 coordinators. Despite the limited funds, most ACT!2030 countries considered the modest funds sufficient.** As activities increased however, volunteerism and innovation were needed to sustain ACT!2030 activities. The ACT!2030 Secretariat provided training in financial management to national Alliance coordinators to improve

reporting, yet reporting remained challenging for some Alliance partners. Available resources appeared to be efficiently utilized.

Sustainability of national alliances (Sustainability): ACT!2030 did not foresee long-term sustainability of the initiative as a specific aim and thus, did not fully plan for and address the long-term sustainability of national youth alliances (i.e. ACT!2030 Alliances in-country). As a result, sustainability of ACT!2030 Alliances in countries was mixed with some countries more successful than others. Capacity building and training in fund management, donor reporting and resource mobilization was provided to help Alliances raise funds locally but coordination and planning for sustainability appeared to come late to the initiative after many of the ACT!2030 Alliances had already lost momentum. ACT!2030 Alliances in countries used various approaches to sustain themselves from fund raising to finding ways to integrate into the broader national dialogue and thus sustain themselves through new partnerships of thematic focus – usually HIV – where more resources could be available. Greater sharing between countries and documentation of lessons learned for sustainability was requested and at the time of the evaluation, seen to have been a missed opportunity by Alliance members.

Recommendations

Recommendations related to Relevance:

Accessibility and representativeness requires planning for inclusivity from the start. Resources need to be allocated for organisation development, and translation to support involvement of more marginalised youth organisations.

Recommendations related to Effectiveness

Building Youth Leadership to effectively sustain national youth movements requires planned investment and an organizational structure such as a membership hub to unite the groups under a common umbrella and objective. **Capacity building** tools used by the Alliance at national level could be further used at sub-national level by members that have been trained to build up their own constituencies in their area. Early capacity building activities and trainings should be provided on other critical issues (e.g. gender and cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness, etc.) to ensure all ACT!2030 Alliance members share common understanding of the key issues, and values on proposed solutions and messages.

Multi-sectorial support can provide important coalition partners and resources for youth organisations in countries. Alliances should consider partnering beyond their usual allies to build a wider net of support for youth SRHR issues including with the private sector and universities. The ACT!2030 Alliance successfully used **global and regional engagement** to advocate and call decision-makers to account around their issues. Increased visibility and partnering, needs to be foreseen in the budget from the start to fully participate at national, regional and global levels.

Youth-led accountability efforts through data driven advocacy in national and global platforms depends on the strength and breadth of one's power base, and the evidence you can use effectively. ACT!2030 could broaden their base by exploring new collaborations and partnership to influence national SDG monitoring processes. ACT!2030 Alliances advocated for, and supported the collection of data for evidence based advocacy but the relatively short project period did not allow for them to maximize the use of the results. It also missed the opportunity to measure whether change can happen through evidence-based advocacy by young people themselves.

Some ACT!2030 Alliance members and partners accepted as given social and political norms that limit youth voice, and that there are predefined spaces where youth can actively participate. **Innovation and transformation of the youth space** deserves further reflection, consideration and innovation to ensure a common understanding of the barriers that limit youth participation and voice can be overcome. Values clarification exercises and training on

innovation and transformation, as well as learning from best practices could benefit all ACT!2030 Alliance members to ensure everyone shares a common vision of the change the Alliance aims to achieve together.

Recommendations related to Efficiency

ACT was envisioned as a movement not a project. Greater foresight and planning in the **project design** of the various phases of initiative as it involved from movement to project could have benefited from better alignment of budget, timelines and aims. ACT!2030 was driven by exceptional individual and organizational commitment but it cannot be a substitute for adequately funded and well planned projects with the necessary staff to achieve project objectives.

A future ACT!2030 initiative should be **designed to build common cause** and consensus among national youth organisations and stakeholders on the overall project objectives to avoid unnecessary tension and conflict. Leadership within the ACT!2030 coordination (secretariat and national coordinating organisations) should be better explained through a transparent process with the engagement of national youth organisations.

Project administration and management would require better planning and resource allocation, in line with a realistic assessment of partner needs for managerial and technical support. Increased technical and financial support, for example, for complex activities such as the data collection and research studies are needed to facilitate ACT!2030 Alliance members to complete such work within the given project cycle.

Recommendations related to Sustainability

To successfully sustain a youth movement in countries, **guidance and support** for core advocacy competencies of national youth led organisations is needed. **Partner engagement**, stakeholder mapping, and political strategy should be fundamental to early training of ACT!2030 national coordinators. Creating a youth movement through the ACT!2030 Alliance in countries must include the search for, and the capacity building of, new young champions to be included in the ACT!2030 Alliance structure if sustainability is to be achieved. Retaining the experience and knowledge of alumnae is critical. Older advocates that have grown up in the youth movement should remain allies and important advisors. An Alumnae initiative may have the potential to sustain some of the achievements and provide continuous capacity building of the next generation. Stronger facilitation by the international coordinators could facilitate learning, sharing and exchange of best practices for sustainability. In addition, more funds and a longer project cycle would be needed for ACT!2030 Alliance partners to operate independently and have the time they would need to build greater sustainability of their Alliance efforts in countries.

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1 Introduction

1.1 ACT!2030 and the global context of adolescents and youth

The world has more young people than ever before,² offering an unprecedented opportunity to achieve the world's development goals by prioritising the needs and wellbeing of this important group. Health-related behaviours and conditions, such as exercise and diet, alcohol and drug use, overweight and obesity, and sexual behaviour are often established during adolescence, with follow-on effects for the adult years and, ultimately, the health and development of the next generation.³ However, progress on key aspects of the health of young people has been slow, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) failed to give explicit attention to adolescents and young people. Although significant gaps remain in data on the health of the world's young people, evidence suggests that they continue to face a myriad of health challenges, including rising rates of road injuries, mental health issues, and non-communicable diseases.⁴

Figure 1: Definition of terms: adolescents, youth and young people¹

While there are no universally accepted definitions of adolescence and youth, the United Nations understands adolescents to include persons aged 10-19 years and youth as those between 15- 24 years. Together, adolescents and youth are referred to as young people, encompassing the ages of 10-24 years.

Young people face particular challenges in relation to their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). To date there has been little overall improvement in rates of adolescent pregnancy, child marriage, and the harmful practice of female genital mutilation. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is one of the leading causes of death for young people aged 15-24.⁵ While knowledge has increased, many young people still have inadequate knowledge on HIV transmission and prevention,⁶ and certain groups remain especially vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health problems, including young gay men and other men who have sex with men, young adolescent girls, young transgender, young people who use drugs, and young sex workers.⁷

Adolescents and youth have also struggled to achieve active and meaningful participation in their societies to help address these issues that affect them. Young people themselves identify limited opportunity to participate in decision-making processes as one of their key

¹ Although the UN has a standard definition of adolescents and youth, countries and regions differ in how they define youth legally and in cultural terms. Youth, for example may be up to 35-40 years of age in some countries, or until marriage. It is important to consider national norms in the definition of youth. Report of the Advisory Committee for the International Youth Year (A/36/215 annex)

² UNAIDS Factsheet: Young People, Adolescents and HIV, 2012. Available at http://files.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/factsheet/2012/20120417_FS_adolescentsyoungpeoplehiv_en.pdf

³ Health for the World's Adolescents: A second chance in the second decade. WHO, 2014.

⁴ World Health Organization (WHO), Media centre, WHO calls for stonger focus on adolescent health. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/focus-adolescent-health/en/> (accessed 24 April 2018).

⁵ Global Health Estimates 2015: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2015. Geneva, World Health Organization; 2016.

⁶ <https://ourworldindata.org/hiv-aids#people-with-hiv-aids> (2016) ;

⁷ Epidemiology of HIV and AIDS Among Adolescents: Current Status, Inequities and Data Gaps. Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, Volume 66, Supplement 2. Idele et al., 2014; World Health Organization (WHO), Bulletin of the World Health Organization. Young people, sexual and reproductive health and HIV. Raoul Fransen-dos Santos, WHO, 2009. <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/11/08-059915/en/> (accessed 24 April 2018).

challenges.⁸ They are frequently under-represented in formal political institutions such as in Youth Ministries that are established to address and meet young people's needs. Indeed, people under the age of 35 are rarely found in leadership positions.⁹ Addressing these challenges by ensuring the meaningful participation and engagement of young people in democratic processes and decision-making mechanisms would help guarantee their basic rights and empower them to achieve their potential. Capturing the voices of young people is also vitally important in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the global development agenda.

In recent years, international recognition and investment in the wellbeing of young people has grown. Now it is necessary to respect, fulfil and protect their human rights so that this investment can offer enormous and long-lasting economic and societal advantages. As a result, international development frameworks have placed increasing emphasis on meeting the needs of young people. Global development processes such as the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 review have been enriched with youth participation and had their wellbeing and rights prioritised by including sexual, reproductive health and reproductive rights; additionally, rights for the most marginalised, are emerging as major development priorities. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise young people as a previously neglected group whose needs must be addressed.¹⁰ As the SDGs will drive global development priorities until 2030, this presents an unprecedented opportunity for the world to act by empowering young people with the ability to fulfil their potential. With young people between 15-24 years of age accounting for over one third of all new HIV infections among adults and approximately 2000 young people becoming newly infected each day, the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV has acknowledged and emphasised the need to focus on adolescents and youth. The updated Global Strategy for Women, Children and Adolescent Health (2016-2030) places adolescents at the centre of their strategy for the first time.¹¹

ACT!2030 directly responds to this context by placing young people front and centre to use data to advocate for their own sexual and reproductive health and rights. The project was initiated as a collaboration between UNIADS and youth alliances and coalitions working on HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights,¹² in 2013, with the objective of increasing youth participation in negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda. The initiative now

⁸ A survey conducted by the UN IANYD in August 2012 as part of the development of the System-Wide Action Plan on Youth found that a majority of 13,000 respondents voices 186 countries highlighted that the main challenges for youth were limited opportunities for effective participation in decision-making processes. Source: UN Youth Factsheet: Youth, Political Participation and Decision-making; UN Youth United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) Open Meeting with Youth-led Organisations, Networks and Movements Report, 2013.

⁹ UN Youth Factsheet: Youth, Political Participation and Decision-making. Available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political-participation.pdf>

¹⁰ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

¹¹ The Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health. Every Woman, Every Child, 2015.

¹² The PACT is a coalition of more than 80 youth organisations established in 2013 to collaboratively and strategically contribute to the global HIV response. The coalition emerged when youth-led civil society organisations asked UNAIDS to support a strategic meeting of 15 youth organisations and the newly formed UNAIDS Youth Advisory Forum to develop key priorities and strategic actions for implementation of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. The main output from the meeting was a civil society-led mutual accountability framework entitled The PACT for Social Transformation. The four current priority areas for The PACT are to advocate and promote youth-led accountability and participation for the integration of HIV and SRHR services and policies; to mobilise young people and engage decision makers to increase access to evidence-informed HIV prevention and treatment; to strengthen young people's capacity to change the legal and policy frameworks that prevent young people from accessing HIV and SRHR services; and to advocate for young people's participation in global, regional and national decision-making processes to ensure adequate funding for young people in the context of HIV and SRHR. Source: <http://www.theyouthpact.org>

focuses on accountability for implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals: the current phase of the project emphasises data and evidence, advocacy for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health / HIV indicators, communication and global exchange.

1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the ACT!2030 review

The ACT!2030 end review examined all phases and locations of the ACT!2030 project (September 2013 – December 2017). The primary objective of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the ACT!2030 initiative (OECD/DAC evaluation criteria), while also considering relevant gender and human rights issues (including marginalised and vulnerable groups of young people). The review was strongly focused on ACT!2030s contribution to meaningful youth participation and was designed to be forward-looking and utilisation-focused¹³.

The review covered the twelve countries: Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where ACT!2030 has been implemented. Particular emphasis was on two country case studies (Mexico and Zimbabwe) to allow deeper understanding of the project's effectiveness. The review aimed to describe learning across four key areas:

- Achievements of the ACT!2030 project in Phases 1 – 4 and identification of how these results were achieved;
- Implementation challenges;
- Lessons learned;
- Recommendations moving forward to ACT!2030, and/or other initiatives focused on youth-led participation and advocacy.

While the review considered all phases of the ACT!2030 initiative, Phase 4 (September 2015 – December 2017) was the primary focus, given that it built on previous phases of ACT!2030 and that recent learning was likely to be the most useful and relevant to on-going efforts to strengthen youth-led SRH advocacy.

2 The ACT!2030 strategy and logic model

2.1 ACT!2030 approach and aims

ACT!2030 (formerly ACT!2015) was an innovative initiative which supported youth-led social action and advocacy for data-driven accountability around the Sustainable Development Goals and other sexual and reproductive health and rights agreements and frameworks. Supported by the UNAIDS and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), ACT!2030 was a collaboration between The PACT and national youth alliances (i.e.

¹³ Utilization-Focused Evaluation is an approach based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. Evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance. For more information see https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation.

ACT!2030 Alliances) in twelve countries. Phase 4 of ACT!2030 was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

ACT!2030 aimed to advance and monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals through youth-led, data-driven accountability and advocacy. It strived to equip and empower young people to use data to show governments the realities that young people face, advocate for better policies, and hold them accountable for their promises. These goals correspond directly to UNAIDS, IPPF and PACT strategies and relevant political declarations, including the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast-Track to accelerate the fight against HIV and to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.¹⁴

The core components of ACT!2030 were:

- A **political advocacy strategy** to influence decision-makers via lobbying and advocacy;
- A **global campaign for country-level social action** to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights and the HIV response in the post-2015 development framework;
- **National youth-led, data-driven accountability mechanisms** established to build an evidence base for monitoring and advocacy and ensure youth engagement for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as other relevant processes.

ACT!2030 also gave rise to **#UPROOT, a global, youth-led political agenda** based on the principles of equity, inclusion and solidarity, aimed at ending AIDS by 2030 and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, by tackling the barriers, bigotry and exclusion that jeopardise young people's health.¹⁵

The key objectives of #UPROOT are to:

- Challenge policy and legal barriers that pose obstacles for young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services;
- Support young people's participation in community responses through fostering leadership and youth participation in decision-making;
- Support the scale-up of age-sensitive, youth-friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services;
- Facilitate and strengthen partnerships between youth-led and youth-serving organisations and other stakeholders for an effective HIV response.

¹⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/70/266. Adopted on 8 June 2016. http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2016-political-declaration-HIV-AIDS_en.pdf (accessed 24 April 2018).

¹⁵ See <https://www.theyouthpact.org/uproot.html>

2.2 ACT!2030 partners and roles

ACT!2030 is a collaborative project by THE PACT, UNAIDS and IPPF, and is implemented by **national youth alliances (i.e. ACT!2030 Alliance)**, consisting of one selected youth-led organization in-country as the coordinating body and lead (i.e. **ACT!2030 national coordinators**; see Figure 2). IPPF served as the coordinating organisation for ACT!2030 initiative by providing grant management, reporting, and acting as global project focal point together with UNAIDS. For the purpose of this evaluation we referred to the 12 country project as the **ACT!2030 initiative**. UNAIDS and IPPF comprise the **ACT!2030 secretariat** as they held the overall responsibility for the financial, administrative and technical stewardship of the initiative. At country level, the ACT!2030 Alliance lead organization actively built a consortium together with other youth-led **member** organizations in-country (i.e. **ACT!2030 Alliance members**) jointly all countries contribute to the ACT!2030 Alliance.¹⁶

PACT is a coalition of youth-led and youth-serving organisations within the SRHR movement, which champions social transformation in partnership with UNAIDS. A selection process was undertaken to select the ACT!2030 countries and national partners, who together act as the second implementing partner for ACT!2030 activities in each of the twelve countries. The ACT!2030 priority countries and national partners are shown in Figure 2.

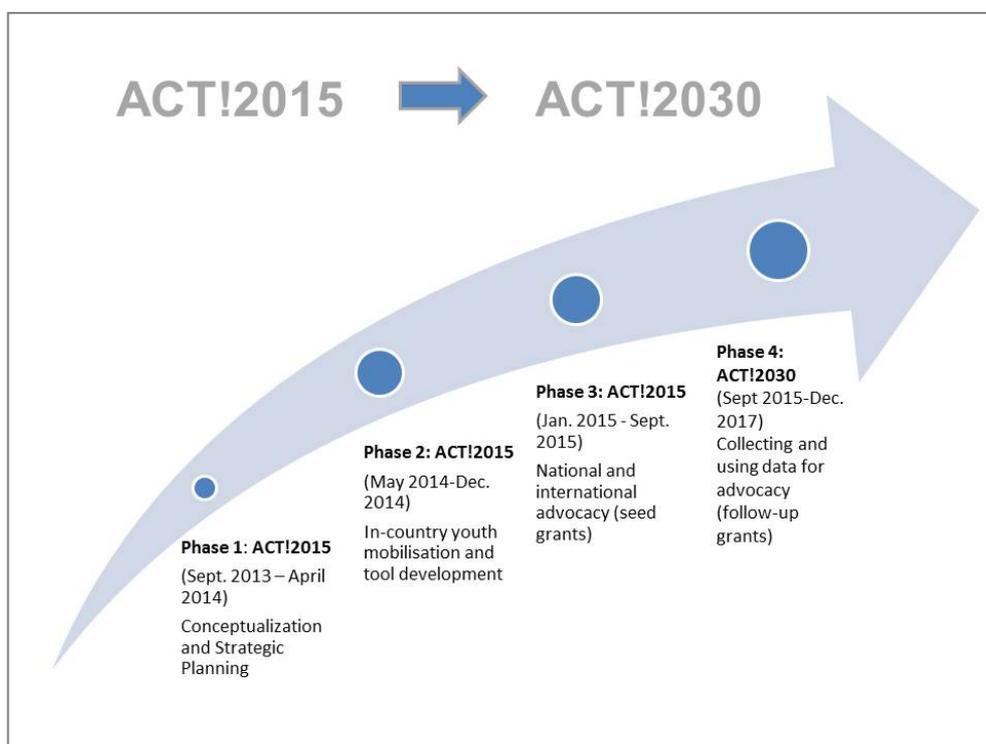
Figure 2: ACT!2030 countries and ACT!2030 national coordinators

- Algeria: AIDS Algeria
- Bulgaria: SMART Foundation
- India: DOVE India
- Jamaica: Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network
- Kenya: Fortress of Hope Africa / YAS Network
- Mexico: Espolea/CPPD
- Nigeria: Education as a Vaccine
- Philippines: ACHIEVE
- South Africa: Hope to Educate
- Uganda: CYSRA / UNYPA
- Zambia: Restless Development Zambia
- Zimbabwe: Youth Engage

¹⁶ Throughout this report and to maximize readability it is referred to the ACT!2030 unless a distinction has to be made.

2.3 ACT!2030 phases

Conceptualised in 2013 as ACT!2015, the project initially aimed to increase youth participation in the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, as a way for young people to come together, express their issues, and make their voices heard, and push for their priorities to be reflected in the new global development framework. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ACT!2015 has been renamed to ACT!2030, reflecting the shift from MDGs to SDGs. ACT has been implemented in four phases from September 2013 to December 2017. Each phase of the initiative built on the achievements of the preceding phase. Activities in the earlier phases focused on conceptualisation, strategic planning, youth mobilisation and development of advocacy and communications tools, while phases 3 and 4 aimed to increase youth-led accountability on SRHR via strengthened national and international youth advocacy and lobbying, as well as improved collection and use of data.



Phase 1 (August 2013 - April 2014) included conceptualisation and strategic planning of the initiative, as well as initial youth mobilisation efforts. Activities included a strategic planning meeting on the side-lines of the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, repurposing of CrowdOutAIDS.org (the website used formerly for Crowd Out AIDS, a crowdsourcing platform of UNAIDS), tool development and translation into four languages, and mobilising young people around the world to organise ACT!2015 community dialogues.

Phase 2 (May - December 2014) built on the ideas of in-country youth organisations as proposed during Phase 1. Activities included development of a suite of tools to support youth organisations to take action for their sexual and reproductive health and rights in their countries. These tools include a national advocacy toolkit, an online action and capacity

building platform and a grant management guide. The online platform, youthpact.org, served as a hub for Phase 2 of the initiative.

Phase 3 (January - September 2015) focused on national and international advocacy and lobbying. National youth alliances (i.e. ACT!2015 Alliances) received a second round of seed grants for national level advocacy and social action. More than eight ACT!2015 young advocates joined national delegations to post-2015 negotiations and events, approximately 132 youth-led and youth-serving organisations became engaged in ACT!2015, and eight negotiation briefs were produced for youth post-2015 advocacy and negotiations.

Phase 4 (September 2015 - December 2017) aimed to identify, assess and address key policy barriers to the achievement of young people's sexual and reproductive health by collecting and using data to advocate for policy changes. ACT!2015 in this phase evolved to focus on the post 2015 agenda, specifically monitoring and accountability of the SDGs related to adolescents. To align with their new focus, the initiative changed its name to ACT!2030. In this phase four main activities were undertaken: indicator advocacy, evidence gathering, communications, and global exchange with the aim of persuading decision-makers to adopt youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and HIV indicators, improving collection and use of youth SRH data, and increasing youth-led accountability in national and global development processes.

Figure 3: Expected outcomes of ACT!2030 Phase 4

- Increased knowledge and skills of ACT!2030 Alliances in-country (including networks of young key populations and young people living with HIV) in relation to national reporting and monitoring indicators, data collection and analysis, and evidence-based advocacy;
- Creation of an evidence base through youth-led accountability at the national level to improve access and quality of youth-friendly services and comprehensive sexuality education;
- Adoption of national youth-led accountability mechanisms into national level governance structures for the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs;
- Effective global, regional and national coordination and coherence across youth partners;
- Increased visibility and recognition for national-level youth-led accountability mechanisms on global agreements and frameworks at national, regional and global meetings;
- Improved access for young people to evidence-based HIV and SRHR programming, including quality youth-friendly services and comprehensive sexuality education.

2.4 ACT!2030 logic model

For the purposes of this review, the evaluation team has constructed a logic model to describe the inputs, activities outputs and outcomes and goals of the ACT!2030 initiative. A logic model was developed to summarise the change process envisioned by ACT!2030 in its 4th phase. The model is based on key strategic ACT!2030 documents, the #UPROOT strategy and programming documents of the ACT!2030 initiative, including the types of activities conducted, guiding principles, overall goals, expected impact, and relevant external factors.

Figure 4 describes the elements (levels) of the logic model, as shown on the next page (Figure 5.)

Figure 4: Logic model elements	
Inputs	Financial and other resources, technical support, and capacity building and training.
Activities	The actions or interventions undertaken in countries as part of the ACT!2030 initiative.
Output	The immediate or short-term changes generated directly by completed ACT!2030 activities. Outputs are often interlinked and can contribute to one or several outcomes.
Outcomes	Outcomes are the short- to medium-term changes that stem from ACT!2030 outputs. They suggest intended benefits or improvements in comparison to the baseline situation and relate logically to the overall goal of the ACT!2030 initiative.

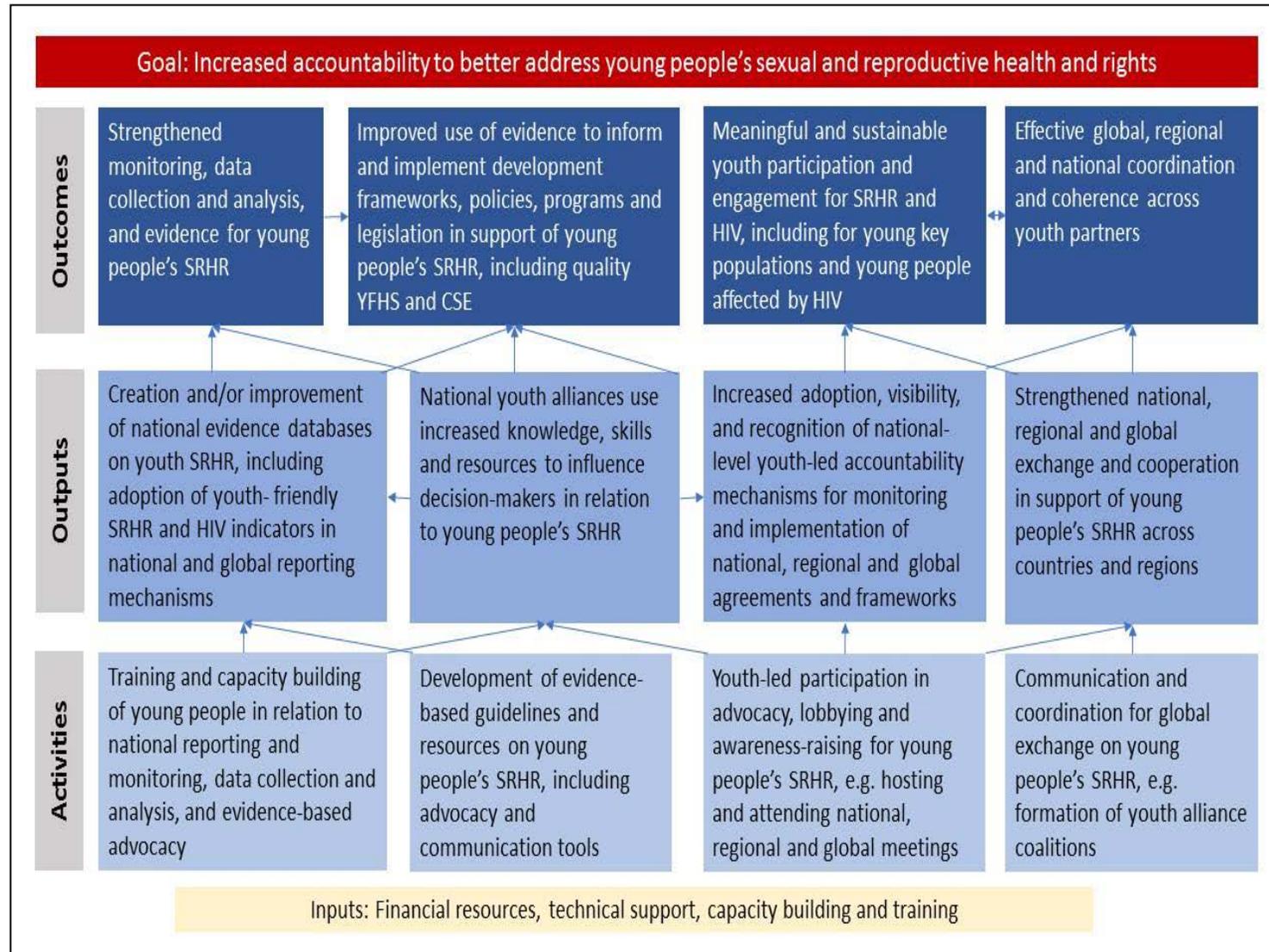


Figure 5: Logic model for Phase 4 of ACT!2030

3 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Evaluation approach

The ACT!2030 review was conducted according to the principles and approaches described in UN and international evaluation guidance relevant to adolescent health, HIV and advocacy including, among others:

- United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, with emphasis placed on robust methodology;¹⁷
- UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender in evaluation;¹⁸
- The Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!): Guidance to Support Country Implementation;¹⁹
- UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: Companion to the Advocacy Toolkit.²⁰

Rigorous adherence to this guidance ensured that the evaluation was conducted in an impartial, transparent, ethical and utilisation-focused manner to ensure that the results are as relevant as possible for those implicated by the initiative. As recommended by the United Nations Evaluation Group, attention to human rights and gender were central to the review methodology, with particular emphasis on equity, non-discrimination, and inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable young people. A *utilisation focus* underpins the review making it as informative as possible for the intended users (encompassing a broad range of stakeholders including youth organisations, UNAIDS staff, other UN organisations, and others working in HIV advocacy or adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health more generally). The evaluation team worked closely with the coordinators of the Initiative at UNAIDS and IPPF to ensure the relevance and quality of the evaluation design and questions and the incorporated participatory approaches, i.e. the meaningful involvement of young people to determine the focus, methodology and design of the evaluation and to review findings and recommendations.

The review used standardised data collection methods via a mixed-methods approach and triangulation of evidence was conducted at all stages ensuring reliability of findings. The evaluation team aimed to communicate clearly with the evaluation reference group and other stakeholders at all stages and adopted a transparent approach to validating findings and requesting feedback from the reference group, young people and other key stakeholders.

3.2 Proposed evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were developed based on the ACT!2030 logic model to ensure that the review thoroughly assesses the intended key outputs and outcomes of the initiative. They are aligned to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, with particular focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the ACT!2030 model. They aim to test the

¹⁷ UNEG (2016) Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

¹⁸ UNEG (2011) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, Towards UNEG Guidance.

¹⁹ WHO (2007) The Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!): Guidance to Support Country Implementation.

²⁰ UNICEF (2010) Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: Companion to the Advocacy Toolkit.

assumptions inherent in the logical pathways described by the logic model. Given the focus on ACT!2030 on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV, and youth participation, the review questions are also designed to capture evidence relating to meaningful youth participation as well as gender and human rights issues.

Figure 6 below summarises the evaluation questions and sub-questions. The evaluation questions are presented in more detail with the rationale for assumptions, indicators and conclusion in Annex 5. An evaluation matrix which closely aligns to the logic model, served as the central tool for data collection and analysis. The questions below and evaluation matrix were developed in consultation with the evaluation reference group.

Figure 6: Evaluation questions and sub-questions
EQ 1: To what extent has ACT!2030 contributed to building an evidence base related to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights?
1.a To what extent were the skills and knowledge of national youth alliances and youth organisations increased in relation to national reporting and monitoring, data collection and analysis, and evidence-based advocacy for young people's SRHR? How?
1.b Did ACT!2030 contribute to the development of evidence-based guidelines and resources on young people's SRHR, including advocacy and communication tools?
1.c To what extent did ACT!2030 contribute to national and global evidence databases and reporting mechanisms for SRHR and HIV? How?
1.d Is there evidence that ACT!2030 contributed to the consideration of, and/or adoption of youth-related indicators (such as for YFS, CSE or youth and HIV indicators) in national and global databases and/or monitoring and reporting mechanisms related to the Sustainable Development Goals?
1.e Did ACT!2030 contribute to advocacy for the collection and/or use of age- and sex-disaggregated data on young people's SRHR (including the SRHR of marginalised and vulnerable young people) and if so, how?
EQ 2. To what extent has ACT!2030 contributed to increasing young people's leadership, meaningful participation and engagement for accountability on their sexual and reproductive health and rights?
2.a How and to what extent did ACT!2030 facilitate and/or support youth-led participation within national and global platforms and processes through advocacy, lobbying and awareness-raising activities for young people's SRHR? (Consider training, capacity building, attendance at workshops, conferences and meetings).
2.b Were marginalised and vulnerable groups of young people, including young key populations at risk of or affected by HIV, meaningfully included in ACT!2030 efforts?
2.c Were national youth-led accountability mechanisms or processes adopted for monitoring and implementation of national, regional and global agreements and frameworks, such as the SDGs? To what extent can this be attributed to ACT!2030 specific

efforts or activities?
2.d Did existing national and global youth-led accountability mechanisms achieve greater visibility and recognition because of the efforts or activities of ACT!2030?
EQ 3. To what extent did ACT!2030 contribute to communication and coordination across countries and regions for youth-led accountability in relation to young people's SRHR?
3.a Did ACT!2030 contribute to development, sharing and exchange of evidence-based communication and advocacy tools ? If so, to what extent? Were such tools shared across countries and regions?
3.b To what extent did ACT!2030 strengthen youth-led global, regional and national partnerships and networks through coordination and cooperation in support of young people's SRHR? How? (Consider the creation of national, regional or global partnerships and coordination mechanisms.)
EQ 4. Were sufficient resources available and efficiently utilised to achieve sustainable results?
4.a Were sufficient human and financial resources available to meet ACT!2030 objectives?
4.b Were available resources efficiently utilised ? Is there evidence of utilisation problems, e.g. due to administrative constraints or deficiencies?
4.c To what extent did national youth alliances collect and share evidence of successful approaches or challenges ? (What were the communication channels used between ACT!2030 alliance members and how were they used to share information to improve national-level ACT!2030 activities? Did each phase of national implementation of the ACT!2030 strategy build upon previous successes and/or use previous learning to address challenges?)
4.d To what extent did ACT!2030 plan for and address the long-term sustainability of national youth alliances ? How? (Consider ongoing training and capacity-building provided over the course of the initiative, efforts to secure sustainable funding and other resources, creation of formalised long-term positions for young people / youth alliances to participate in decision-making.)
4.e To what extent did ACT!2030 adapt local approaches to address gender, cultural, or social barriers to meeting the needs of young people in relation to their SRHR?

4 Methodology

4.1 General approach

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that were triangulated to ensure a robust, evidence-based final report. All data was collected by Swiss TPH team members in conjunction with national and Swiss-based youth consultants, who were transparently selected by Swiss TPH in consultation with ACT!2030 implementing staff. Terms of Reference for the Swiss, and national youth consultants are available in Annex 10 and 11 respectively.

The review considered both primary and secondary data. Primary data collection was done through two in-country visits (in Zimbabwe and Mexico); an online survey; and selected interviews with key international, regional and national stakeholders either working globally, or in each of the other ten implementation countries. The evaluation leads and national youth consultants collected data. The review used key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and a document review by the coordination team and ACT national coordinators to ensure a rigorous set of national level information would inform the final analysis. Secondary data was collected from relevant in-country and global ACT!2030 documentation, including sources from national youth networks, regional youth alliances, and documents from UNAIDS, IPPF, and THE PACT.

Standardised evaluation instruments were developed to ensure consistent data collection methods were used across countries. These included an evaluation matrix based on the logic model and standardised guides for interviews and/or focus group discussions (see Annex 6). All evaluation team members, including national youth consultants, were trained on the use of the instruments prior to commencement of data collection.

All data was disaggregated by sex and age wherever possible, and by other social variables as appropriate (e.g. to ensure inclusion of young key populations), while protecting the confidentiality of informants. In line with UNEG guidance, specific efforts were made to include marginalised groups as informants, for example people identifying as LGBTI, people living with HIV (PLHIV), as appropriate for the local context. At all stages of the review, emphasis was placed on including young people in the review process, to ensure that their viewpoints were central to the evaluation.

4.2 Stakeholder mapping

Three categories of stakeholders were identified as priority groups from which information was sought:

1. Young people and youth organisations involved in ACT!2030 (e.g. members of implementing national youth alliances and PACT);
2. Other young people (particularly focusing on direct beneficiaries of the project such as young data collectors);

3. Other stakeholders (e.g. UNAIDS and IPPF staff at the national, regional and global levels; national, regional and global staff from relevant UN organisations such as UNFPA and UNICEF; staff from local or national governments.)

For each of the 12 ACT!2030 countries, a stakeholder mapping was conducted by the ACT national coordinator to identify key partners from these groups. Mapping of the youth organisations involved in ACT!2030 considered their level of engagement, timeframe of involvement, location, number and profile of members, and key focus. Stakeholders for interviews were then purposefully selected from these lists to ensure (as possible) representatively of young people wherever possible and diversity of interviewees (e.g. representation of young key populations). Information on the results of the stakeholder mapping and stakeholder interviewee lists can be found in Annex 1 and 2.

4.3 Document review

The evaluation included a comprehensive document review conducted by Swiss TPH staff in and national youth consultants in each of the ACT!2030 Alliance countries. Relevant documents were provided by UNAIDS and national ACT!2030 Alliance organisations as well as other local sources such as civil society organisations and government ministries, The PACT, UNAIDS and IPPF. The document review was completed prior to the collection of qualitative information in ACT!2030 Alliances countries. The document review provided the necessary background and context for in-country data collection. Information collected from the document review was collated separately for each country (and as appropriate from regional and global sources) and analysed for the evaluation. The document review also served to highlight areas in which further data needed to be collected via interviews, focus group discussions, and the online survey.

4.4 In-country visits

Two in-country visits were carried out by Swiss TPH staff to gather information in first-hand information on implementation of the programme in the countries. Mexico and Zimbabwe were selected for in-country visits by the Reference Group and the ACT!2030 secretariat by IPPF and UNAIDS. These countries were selected for representativeness and their level of activity within all phases of the ACT!2030.

A mixed-methods approach was used during in-country visits to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. As described above, review of local ACT!2030 documentation was completed prior to the country visit by a local youth consultant, with supervision from Swiss TPH staff. During the visit, Swiss TPH worked closely with the national youth consultant to conduct group discussions with young people and interviews with key informants. Informants were selected purposefully from a stakeholder mapping to ensure representativeness (i.e. geographic, thematic, size, and duration of involvement in ACT!2030) to capture a diversity of views of among national stakeholders. Questions for the interviews and the group discussions were drawn from the logic model and are presented in Annex 6. As with the document review, all collected data was collated by evaluation question and entered into an evaluation matrix to facilitate data analysis, comparison and triangulation across contexts.

All individuals interviewed were assured anonymity and confidentiality of information provided. A verbal informed consent process was conducted before each interview and focus

group discussion including request for permission to take and/or use photos provided to the evaluation team for use of this final evaluation report.

The in-country visits had an expected duration of one week with the following dates for the visits: January 29th through February 3rd, 2018 for Mexico and March 7th through March 12th, 2018 for Zimbabwe.

The in-country visits were supplemented by brief country visits conducted by an IPPF staff member in Jamaica, Kenya and the Philippines between January and May 2018. The aim of the additional visits is to gather examples of best practices around youth organising that were developed and/or strengthened through ACT!2030.

4.5 Desk studies

For the ten ACT!2030 countries not visited by Swiss TPH staff, desk studies were conducted. This process was led by a national youth consultant in each of the countries in consultation with Swiss TPH staff. After completion of a thorough document review, an average of three to five interviews were conducted by the national youth consultant using standardised interview guides (see Annex 6) with supervision and support from a Swiss TPH youth evaluation team member. These interviews were primarily focusing on understanding the youth perspectives on the effectiveness of the ACT!2030 project in countries. After completion of the evaluation matrix with data collected from the document review and interviews, findings of each desk review were collated into a short summary responding to the relevant evaluation questions. The results were analysed collectively with the in-country visit assessments and global data collection.

4.6 Online survey

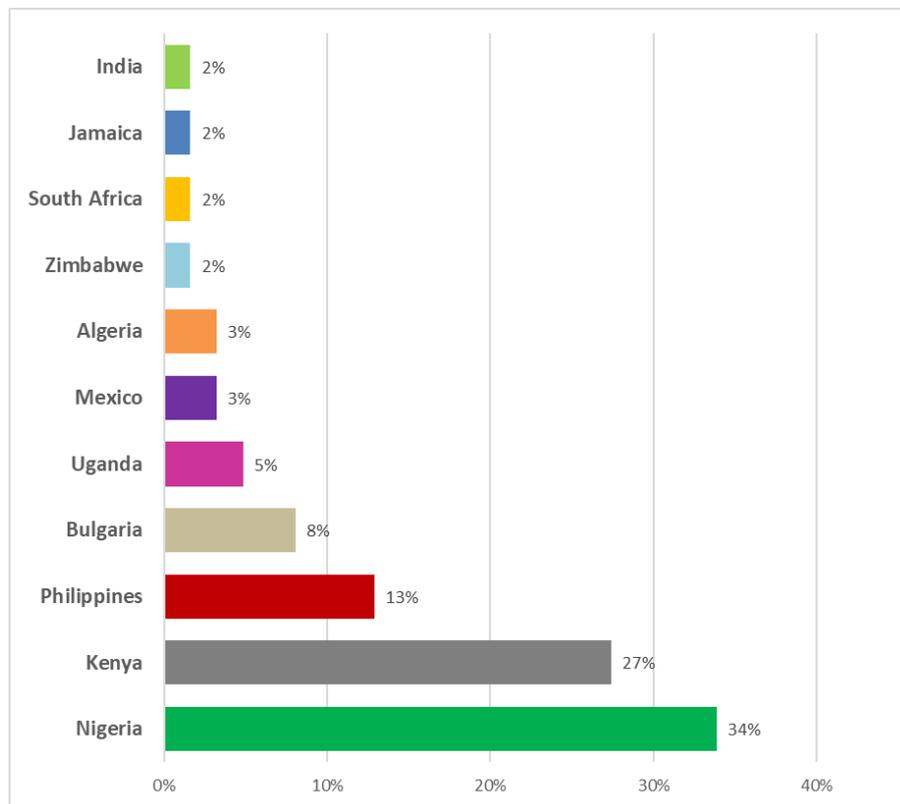


Figure 7: Survey responses by country

Data collected via document review, interviews and focus group discussions was complemented by an online survey of youth stakeholders, to which all national ACT!2030 national coordinators and Alliance members were invited. Survey questions were designed based on gaps identified through the document review and interviews conducted. In addition, participants were asked to directly respond to abbreviated evaluation questions, with a focus on collecting quantitative information that could be directly compared and contrasted between countries and regions. The Survey instrument is available in Annex 7.

In total 66 responses were received of which 50 were complete and included in the analysis. Responses were received from 11 countries; however, more than a half of all responses came from just two countries. Furthermore, there were 19 responses from a single organisation in Nigeria, which is more than the sum total from 8 of the other countries. To avoid bias, results were double-weighted to ensure that each country and each organisation within a country were equally weighted. In this way, all countries receive equal weighting in the survey results. It should be noted, however, that for countries with a single respondent, that respondent is speaking for the activities of the ACT!2030 Alliance in the country and results should be interpreted with this in mind.

4.7 Additional interviews with key stakeholders

The national data collected via desk reviews and in-country visits was complemented by a series of key stakeholder interviews with relevant regional and international informants to capture the perspectives of regional and global stakeholders. Swiss TPH staff conducted these interviews online or by telephone with key stakeholders from the PACT, IPPF, UNAIDS, donors, and relevant UN and civil society organisations. Relevant interviewees were identified through the stakeholder mapping process.

4.8 Analysis framework

Analysis approach and triangulation

Each in-country visit culminated with an analysis of the data collected locally by the lead evaluation consultant and the national youth consultant. Preliminary results were shared with ACT!2030 stakeholders in country by the Swiss TPH evaluation team during a debriefing meeting. The preliminary results represented a synthesis of emerging findings drawn from the in-country data collection and the preceding document review. It also was a moment to discuss with ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators information gaps and to clarify questions that may have emerged. Similarly, national youth consultants worked with a Swiss TPH evaluation staff member to conduct the preliminary analysis of data collected via document review and interviews, and synthesise it into a summary country level analysis presentation. After completion of the data collection phase, a data analysis workshop was conducted at Swiss TPH to synthesise and analyse all data. The workshop involved all Swiss TPH evaluation team members, including the two Swiss TPH youth consultants to reflect on all data collected during the document review, online survey, desk studies, and country visits. The analysis workshop focused on comparison and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative evidence to formulate draft findings that directly respond to the evaluation questions. The process was facilitated by preparation of evidence tables by evaluation

question, which combined all sources of evidence from different contexts according to theme. Gaps in evidence were actively filled as possible, for example by further document review.

As possible, at least three data sources (e.g. documents, interviews, focus group discussions, survey) were used to support each finding. Data sources were clearly marked in brackets unless confidentiality would be compromised. For sections related to efficiency, references have been marked with an asterisk and removed to protect the anonymity of sources. The evaluation also specifically compared the responses of beneficiaries of the project, ACT!2030 partners, and external stakeholders to ensure that the findings are as impartial as possible.

Validation and eRoundtable

Validation of findings was ensured via a variety of mechanisms, including internal team meetings, briefing and debriefing meetings during each country visit, and input from the review reference group. The validation process was carefully monitored through the quality assurance mechanisms described below to strengthen the credibility of the review.

To ensure that youth contributed to the formulation and validation of findings, and that the results consider national and regional views, an eRoundtable discussion was facilitated with national youth ACT!2030 coordinators and regional UNAIDS youth advisers. A total of 17 participants were invited (12 national ACT!2030 coordinators; 5 UNAIDS regional youth advisers), of whom 12 actively participated in the discussion (10 national coordinators; 2 UNAIDS regional youth advisers). The eRoundtable - an online discussion forum – was hosted in a closed Facebook group where participation was facilitated by invitation. The eRoundtable was held in English and moderated by a Swiss TPH evaluation team member. It shared the preliminary review findings with the participants and solicited their input to validate and refine the findings. Questions shared through the platform are available in Annex 8. The results of the eRoundtable were considered in the final round of data analysis. The findings and recommendations of this report reflect their input.



Figure 8: ACT!2030 eRoundtable on Facebook

Quality assurance

Swiss TPH conducted internal quality control on all products before external dissemination using evaluation quality assurance tools.²¹ In addition to internal quality assurance mechanisms implemented by Swiss TPH review members, the reference group provided external quality assurance for the review by monitoring the review process closely and providing feedback on the deliverables.

These quality assurance mechanisms complement the strong evaluation design. The transparent, utilisation-focused design of the evaluation facilitated high quality data collection and analysis and robust findings. The data collection tools were designed to explicitly correspond to the logic model and evaluation questions to ensure that data collection is conducted in a uniform and consistent manner. Selection of stakeholders to be interviewed and primary documentation to be assessed was completed prior to the field visits to reduce selection bias. When replacement of stakeholders was required in the field, the team leader or senior member of the team in the field made the selection based on previously agreed criteria, to ensure balance and representation within the sample. During data analysis and synthesis of findings, the use of participatory methods such as the eRoundtable with youth leaders helped to ensure that young people themselves validate the review's preliminary results.

Swiss TPH evaluation team members worked according to ethical guidelines and supported and supervised the national youth consultants to do likewise. All efforts were made to ensure the confidentiality of information, data, records and transcripts.

Limitations of the evaluation

The evaluation sought to involve youth researchers from all countries engaged in ACT!2030. The evaluation necessitated support from the country teams that were very helpful and informative. Youth researchers and the evaluation team however did have challenges in getting the information needed as little more than three months was given for the effort. As a result, many documents were reviewed quickly and interviews were set up at a very late stage in the data collection. While the team sought to look comprehensively across the programme, undoubtedly some information could not be fully reviewed and analysed. In addition, a full picture of all aspects of the programme was not possible. The team did what was possible within the time frame. The final report was commented on by the reference group, which cited numerous points of clarification or query. We believe this review by the reference group has significantly improved our analysis of the results, as well as the factual accuracy of the report. Through this validation process, we believe most of the issues were clarified or further explained.

5 Findings and Achievements

RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 Evidence-based reporting for advocacy

Summary: ACT!2030 successfully contributed to evidence-based reporting, policies, programmes and legislation related to young people's SRHR, and by doing so, increased

²¹ For example, the UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assessment tool, 2012.

accountability at all levels of national commitments related to young people and the SDGs. It did this by building the skills and knowledge of ACT!2030 Alliance members using evidence-based resources – mostly developed at global level with national Alliance members participating in their training and capacity building workshops. Since its inception in 2013, ACT built the capacity of youth advocates globally, and later in countries to be more effective advocates for their SRHR issues for the global and national post 2015 agenda. All countries held trainings on the importance of data for advocacy, and taught data reporters or researchers to collect data on youth, especially YKP's SRHR needs, and the barriers they face in accessing information and services. Another training on Tracking Progress towards 2030 helped ACT!2030 Alliance members understand how the SDG monitoring process works, and how they could influence it to ensure youth SRHR and HIV issues are taken into account by the national and international governmental stakeholders. As a result of these trainings, ACT!2030 Alliance members worked to fill data gaps and organise themselves to lobby and advocate for youth SRHR and HIV within the national, regional and global political spaces initially around the MDGs, and then more recently Agenda 2030.

ACT!2030 Alliances adapted approaches provided by the Global ACT!2030 initiative to their national context. Indeed, flexibility by the donor and the coordinators of the global initiative provided the space for national ACT!2030 Alliances to adapt their programmes to be as effective as possible within their national contexts. Countries were thus provided the space to define their strategies in such a way to influence national decision-makers. While most countries engaged with data driven advocacy, and creating space and platforms for youth voice, this did not usually involve indicator advocacy. Respondents to our survey stated that less than 50% of the countries saw this approach as the way forward in their context reflecting an evolving view of what was possible and what could be most useful in advancing the youth SRHR and HIV agenda in countries.

Indicator advocacy was a key pillar of Phase 4 of the ACT!2030 initiative which proved hard to influence – initially because of a lack of understanding of the global SDG processes and how they would be monitored, and ultimately, because the pathways for engagement were either complicated to access, difficult to change (given national data collection constraints) or predetermined at a higher level. Lack of understanding of the process was ably managed by the programme through training of ACT!2030 Alliance members on the importance of data to the monitoring process, recognition of data gaps, and the need to fill those gaps to advocate effectively for youth SRHR issues. Filling data gaps was seen as a basic measure for effective advocacy and how to influence the national dialogue around the SDG indicators. Through this process, ACT!2030 Alliance members came to appreciate the power of data for advocacy and accountability. In countries with well-established lead organisations that had previously been engaged in advocacy on youth issues, penetration into the national dialogue proved challenging due to internal political constraints. As a result, some national Alliances had a more nuanced approach to influencing national debate and dialogue on youth SRHR. In all cases, a clear analysis of the political landscape informed ACT!2030 Alliance member strategies that were then tailored their contexts. ACT!2030 Alliances became very adept at analysing the political landscape and adapting their advocacy strategies to be as effective as possible in a changing context. In Mexico, the value of investing political capital in a government that was likely to change was assessed as less useful in the short term; instead they chose to build up capacity of Alliance members and position themselves for when a new government comes in.

Skills and Knowledge

ACT!2030 strengthened ACT!2030 Alliances' and their members' skills and knowledge (advocacy negotiation, capacity building, data analysis, data collection, communication, reporting and research skills) through trainings and workshops [A//] throughout its international network. Since 2013, ACT has engaged with over 85 youth organisations to build their capacity to advocate for their SRHR and HIV issues within the post 2015 agenda [Global]. ACT!2030 Alliances conducted a data collection and advocacy workshop based on the curricula "Making it Count" which formed the basis of the training for youth researchers to collect data to inform their advocacy efforts in country.

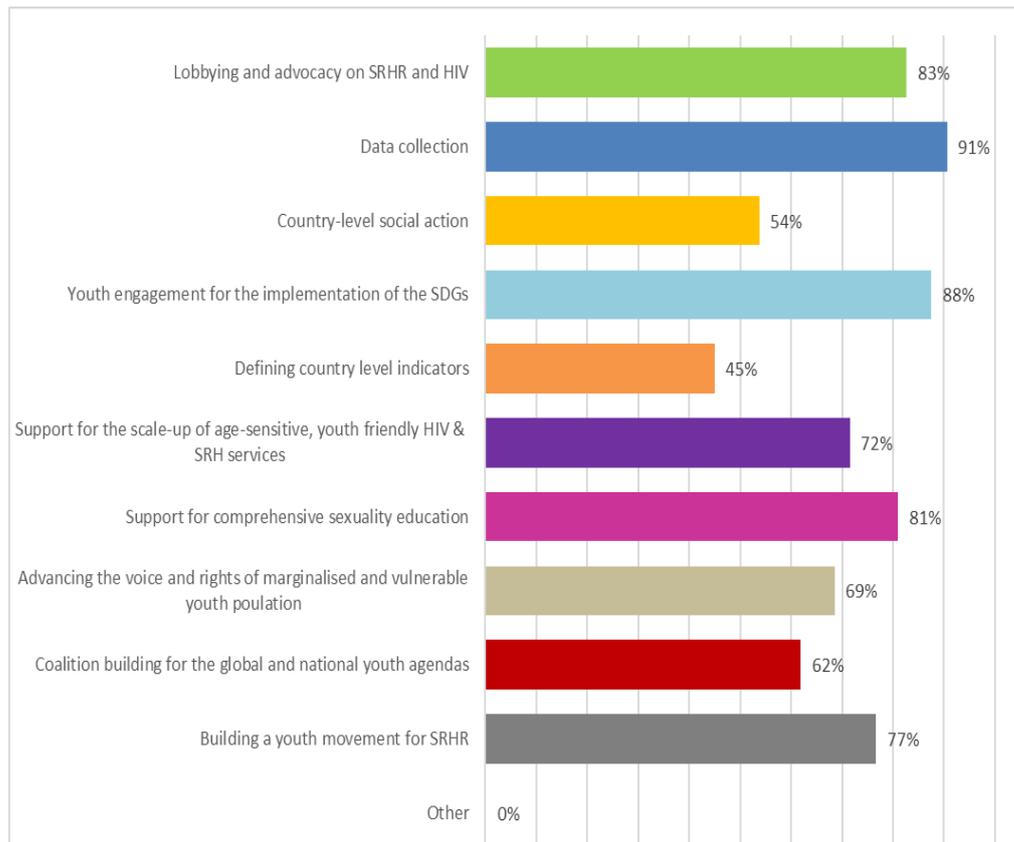


Figure 9: ACT!2030 Alliances and members views on how ACT!2030 advances progress on the SDGs

The new data collected by Alliance members was used to influence national HIV strategic plans [Global, Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe], policy [India, Philippines, Zimbabwe] as well as national dialogue around the SDGs or youth policies, plans or laws [Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe], and in some countries, to Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes [Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe] for the SDG Agenda 2030. For example, youth organisations were involved in updating the South African National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs where they advocated for youth friendly services that were eventually included in the Plan [South Africa]. And yet, in the Philippines, where civil society organisations' (CSOs) activism is quite advanced, ACT!2030 trainings were perceived by some as rather "basic," meaning that they offered similar information as had been previously provided in other projects prior to when the programme started. Others, however, felt the training was too technical. The balance between the more and less advanced ACT!2030 Alliance members in the

Philippines was perhaps difficult to accommodate as the same training led to differences in opinion about the value of the training and how to accommodate such differences.

"Without ACT I would have never worked on policies and pursued a master [program]; I would have never worked at such a high level; I truly became a youth expert."

ACT!2030 Alliance member

ACT!2030 strengthened ACT!2030 Alliance member organisations and often other national youth organisations' knowledge and understanding of the SDGs through workshops entitled "Tracking Progress towards 2030" [*Global, Algeria, Bulgaria, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Zimbabwe*] and in some countries, additional focus was provided to increasing understanding of SRHR of young people generally [*Bulgaria, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa*] through trainings on specific topics. In some countries, there was a particular focus on providing information on HIV/AIDS to young people [*Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Zambia, Zimbabwe*] and on integrating young people living with HIV into advocacy activities [*Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe*].

"ACT provided me with skills that no one can take away from me: advocacy, life skills, programming and financial management. I became a better person through ACT."

ACT!2030 Alliance member

ACT!2030 also expanded the understanding of their ACT!2030 Alliance members on the role and positions, of their local government on SRHR and how to monitor the implementation of SRHR policies that affect young people [*Kenya, Nigeria*]. In *Zimbabwe*, an ACT!2030 Alliance representative became involved with the Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) by participating in the writing group to ensure youth SRHR and HIV issues would be reflected in the concept note to the Global Fund. Due to the knowledge and skills acquired, numerous youth leaders and members felt more empowered at a professional and personal level [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*]. Some individual ACT!2030 members, for example, reported that their engagement with the ACT!2030 Alliance also helped them define their professional careers [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*].

Evidence-based guidelines and resources

ACT!2030 at the international level contributed to the development and sharing of evidence-based resources primarily related to advocacy and communication for youth-led organisations to advocate around Agenda 2030 on youth SRHR (see below) which are available on the ACT!2030 website²² [*All*]. The resources were developed by UNAIDS, IPPF and partners of the PACT and were used by the ACT!2030 national coordinators for their capacity building efforts in countries with youth-leaders and members of their ACT!2030 Alliances. Most were translated into different languages including English (E), Spanish (S), French (F), and Russian (R). Tools such as "CSE and Me" (E)²³, "We Demand More" (E, S, F), the ACT!2030 Toolkit (E, F, R), and negotiation briefs (E,S) were used by ACT!2030 Alliance members in countries as resource materials for their "Making it Count" and "Tracking

²² <https://www.act2030.org/resources.html>

²³ Soon to also be available in Arabic, French and Spanish.

Progress” workshops, though the lack of materials for some countries in their specific language limited use in those countries (i.e. the Advocacy Toolkit was not yet available in Spanish at the time Mexico was conducting their initial trainings though it was used subsequently) [*Mexico, Bulgaria*]. In addition, the materials, provided evidence-based information on SRHR for capacity building of ACT!2030 Alliance members that came from other thematic focus areas (e.g. human rights, gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender, etc.) [*Bulgaria, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa*]. While such resources were made available, some respondents reported that they would have appreciated closer follow-up and sharing on the value and use of the materials between countries (see below). IPPF and UNAIDS are currently developing a guide of best practices on youth-led advocacy and accountability based on lessons learned in the ACT!2030 initiative which should be available in 2018 to fill this resource need.

At the national level, ACT!2030 developed and shared resources made available at the global level with national ACT!2030 Alliance members through their trainings, website links and social media [*All*] though it was observed that hard copies of materials were insufficient due to lack of financial resources to reprint them [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*]. Some country teams developed a survey questionnaire to assess the state of adolescent and youth SRHR which was evidence based [*Algeria, India, Nigeria*] while others, opted for advocating the use of international guidelines such as the “International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: an evidence-informed approach”²⁴ developed by UN partners [*Philippines, South Africa*]. Advocacy materials provided by the PACT/ACT globally were also adapted locally for use in countries [*Jamaica, Mexico*]. In *Kenya*, for example, national level advocacy tools included the development of a policy brief as a result of the YFS research report, which was shared with relevant stakeholders, policy makers and health centres, and in *Algeria* and *Mexico*, such tools supported the development of negotiation briefs and talking points for international advocacy efforts, but only some of these were used nationally. New country specific guidelines and evidence-based resources developed as a result of the ACT!2030 initiative for use by national ACT!2030 Alliance members and partners were not observed.

Disaggregated data, databases and reporting mechanisms for SRHR and HIV

ACT!2030 contributed to increasing the availability of disaggregated data at national level on the needs of youth and especially key populations related to SRHR and HIV. Training and capacity building was provided to ACT!2030 Alliance members to collect new information and fill data gaps – particularly among key populations. Through data reporters [*Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe*] and studies [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*] ACT!2030 Alliance members collected data which they would use to influence policy dialogue and programming around youth SRHR in the 2030 Agenda. In some countries, involving young key population organisation members themselves in data collection on their issues was absolutely new and rewarding [*Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Zimbabwe*]. In *Mexico*, one youth organization of young key populations learned the power of data through the trainings they received and started to provide data on their specific issues to strengthen their rationale in their proposals and reports, which resulted in increased funding and visibility. In *Algeria*, ACT!2030 contributed to strengthen the network in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with regional partners to better understand and evaluate the magnitude and impact of the HIV response, especially within the most vulnerable communities and the key populations. As a result of these data collection efforts, ACT contributed to raising awareness and building the evidence base for

²⁴ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002607/260770e.pdf>

advocacy on the unique SRHR needs of YKPs [*Algeria, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, Zimbabwe*].

Other countries used national HIV platforms such as the Global Fund mechanisms and processes to highlight evidence on youth SRHR and HIV issues [*Algeria, India, Kenya, Zimbabwe*] In *Nigeria*, ACT!2030 developed a State level scorecard for advocacy purposes to push local governments to better address the youth SRHR/HIV needs. This scorecard also served as an alternative to the report the Nigeria government presented at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), demonstrating the capacity of youth-led organisations to create monitoring platforms in their own right [*Nigeria, Global*]. Elsewhere, Alliance members used available dialogue platforms at national level to raise awareness of the data gaps that need to be filled to adequately monitor youth SRHR [*Bulgaria, Philippines, Uganda, Zimbabwe*]. In the *Philippines*, for example, the team's inclusion of YKPs in the development of the government's AIDS Medium Term Plan managed to focus attention on age restrictions in accessing HIV testing and services, which was eventually addressed through a "proxy consent" policy.

ACT!2030 Alliance members also tried to influence global and regional level processes with data both directly - through individual member participation and advocacy [*Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Mexico, South Africa, Zimbabwe*] - as well as through national dialogue platforms, and actions [*All*]. For example, an ACT!2030 delegate from *Mexico* to the High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS (2016) used their position to lobby other Mexican delegation members to speak out on youth issues by providing the delegation chair with evidence-based talking points and briefing notes. In other countries, data was shared through national level engagement in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) [*Mexico, Kenya, Nigeria*], Shadow reports [*Uganda*] and other civil society organisation (CSO) advocacy and coordination platforms such as the CCM [*Zimbabwe*] to further call national attention to youth SRHR issues. Data was also provided to government delegations participating in global meetings on the 2030 Agenda. For example, ACT!2030 Alliance representatives from Kenya and Zimbabwe contributed to the Government VNR report that was presented in the HLPF in New York on HIV. Other national ACT!2030 Alliance members participated on their government delegation demonstrating the position and influence of ACT!2030 Alliance members had in countries [*Mexico, Zimbabwe, Bulgaria, South Africa, Jamaica*]

ACT!2030 had originally planned (in Phase 4) to develop a global database entitled iCount. After consultation internally and externally with the donor, it was decided not to take this activity forward as it was already being done in other formats by UNAIDS and partners, and would prove unnecessarily costly. The activity was revised and focused on national level data collection to fill evidence gaps, particularly related to young key populations and the SDGs. [*Global, Mexico*].

Indicator advocacy

A primary focus of ACT!2030 was to gain greater traction and inclusion of youth-related indicators for youth friendly services (YFS), comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and youth focused HIV indicators in national and global databases and/or monitoring and reporting mechanisms related to the SDGs both directly and indirectly.

At the national level, indicator advocacy to influence the national SDGs indicators selected to reflect ASRHR issues was less profound with 54% of countries respondents to the survey reporting they had not had been involved in the development or monitoring of youth related indicators in national and global databases and/or monitoring and reporting mechanisms at country level [*Algeria, Mexico, Philippines*]. Countries were however in very different stages

of establishing the indicators they will track related to the SDGs and thus, indicator advocacy was not equally appropriate across all ACT!2030 Alliance country contexts. Through ACT!2030 data collection and research young people were supported to make demands of those responsible regarding access to youth-friendly services – a key demand of the ACT!2030 indicator advocacy. And in *South Africa* and the *Philippines*, working with national authorities and participating in consultations on indicators allowed ACT!2030 to participate in the indicator selection process, which in South Africa, became part of a national SRHR framework adopted by parliament to guide monitoring as part of the National Agenda 2030 efforts. Yet in *Mexico*, despite ACT!2030 participation in the national SDG CSO dialogue and working groups, indicator advocacy was difficult due to the fact that the national indicator development process was in effect, conducted independently by the national statistics bureau and thus not accessible for advocacy efforts. Exceptions included a roadmap for indicator advocacy that was developed in *Kenya* as a way of influencing the development of national indicators.

At regional level however, some ACT!2030 Alliances had greater influence on the selection of indicators in regional platforms [*Algeria, Bulgaria, Mexico, South Africa*]. The *Algerian* ACT!2030 Alliance, for example, managed to add key indicators on mother to child transmission, discrimination toward PLHIV, and discrimination toward key population in accessing SRH/HIV services in a regional consultation in the lead up to the SDG review in 2015. The *Mexico* ACT!2030 Alliance coordinator was also an important member of the Mexican delegation to the regional Agenda 2030 consultation process, which included the inclusion of key youth indicators in the Montevideo Consensus in 2013.

At global level, ACT!2030 Alliance members participated with their delegations in high-level policy meetings where youth SRHR indicators were being discussed and advocated for. At ECOSOC 2017, ACT!2030 Alliance members that were part of their country delegations [*Bulgaria, Mexico, Zimbabwe*] advocated for the need to address and prioritise SRHR issues affecting young people including CSE and YFS specifically [*Zimbabwe*]. The *Mexico* ACT!2030 delegate, for example, used her position to lobby the head of their delegation to make concrete statements about youth SRHR issues at the UNGA successfully. And in countries where CSO and youth engagement was more restricted, advocacy was done from the civil society platform rather than from within the government processes and delegations. In *India*, ACT!2030 representatives created a stir in global dialogue process by demanding the need for youth related indicators at some of the key events including World Festival of Youth and Students in Russia and the Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights in Viet Nam.

A significant contribution of the ACT!2030 movement for more and better youth-related indicators and data, has been the support from UNAIDS in including key indicators related to age of consent, spousal consent, Comprehensive Sexuality Education and youth participation through the Global AIDS Monitoring (GAM) and the National Commitments and Policy Instrument (NCPI). The GAM provides guidance to countries to report on progress of the national HIV response, and countries are expected to report on NCPI indicators every two years. This is a first important step to securing sustainable and global consideration of youth SRHR and HIV targets in countries.²⁵

²⁵ http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/2017-Global-AIDS-Monitoring_en.pdf

RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

5.2 Young people's leadership, meaningful participation and engagement for accountability

Summary: ACT!2030 facilitated and supported youth-led participation in national and global platforms and processes through advocacy, lobbying and awareness-raising activities for young people's SRHR to varying degrees and outcomes. ACT!2030 national coordinators in countries were selected for this visibility and position within the youth movement in each country, and expectedly, their tenacity and perseverance in creating space for youth voice and participation was significant. ACT!2030 Alliance members in-country however were not sufficiently skilled and required training to claim the space created for them by the ACT!2030 national coordinators in countries. Through collective, creative collaborations, ACT!2030 Alliance members created opportunities to bring their issues forward within national dialogues and processes related to policy, legislation and monitoring of the SDGs. Individual and organisational capacities and context in some countries limited the effectiveness of ACT!2030 Alliance member participation.

ACT!2030 Alliances in countries reported that they had significantly included marginalised and vulnerable young people in their activities - in many countries this involved young key populations such as gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender and young people living with HIV. This was a significant contribution of ACT!2030 in some countries where the project purposefully reached out to YKPs successfully and despite the stigma and discrimination and legal ramifications of doing so. Financial limitation limited the programme's ability to some of the more remote and most marginalised population of young people.

ACT!2030 advocated for youth participation and inclusion within monitoring processes related to the Agenda 2030 but did not specifically contribute to national youth-led accountability mechanisms²⁶ because they did not fully exist as yet. National platforms and mechanisms where youth organisations and CSOs generally can effectively hold their government to account for commitments made under the auspices of the SDGs are nascent. In the Alliance countries, there was no mention of an accountability mechanism that effectively calls government attention to commitments made under the SDGs and includes a consequence for inaction. The SDG monitoring process has only just begun however and national voluntary reporting, and the National Commitments and Policy Instrument are important steps towards greater accountability for youth related indicators. Nonetheless, CSO platforms were active and ACT!2030 participated in calling for greater accountability of their governments on their SDG commitments related to youth SRHR although recourse measures for inaction have yet to be established in the countries reviewed (as required for functional accountability). Some ACT!2030 Alliance members also played a role in global and regional accountability in regard to youth issues related to monitoring the SDGs, with the NCPI guidance as a notable example.

²⁶ Accountability mechanism in this context refer to processes where youth organisations can hold their government or other State actors to account for promises and commitments made to implement the SDGs related to youth SRHR, for example. This can be done through social and political accountability (through naming and shaming for breach of commitments as recourse); professional accountability (through legal, policy or regulatory recourse mechanisms), or financial accountability (budget tracking etc).

ACT!2030 sought to develop and influence youth-led accountability of the SDGs in countries. Their capacity to do so was not always easy with access often dominated by larger more established CSO. Using social accountability mechanisms and in some cases, sheer perseverance, ACT!2030 Alliances in some countries were able to engage in accountability platforms. The effectiveness of ACT!2030 Alliances to penetrate accountability efforts was largely determined by whether they had previously been positioned to do so at global or regional level. Despite these constraints, ACT!2030 Alliances managed to engage at the national level in all countries to some degree.

ACT!2030 used different entry points to create space to participate in youth-serving accountability mechanisms and by doing so achieved visibility and recognition in national, regional and global dialogues and consultations related to the youth agenda in the monitoring of SDG Agenda 2030. Visibility and recognition were built by strengthening youth voice (and youth led organisational engagement) and by creating spaces for that engagement through partnerships with key stakeholders, and collection and use of data for advocacy in national, regional and international platforms.

Youth-led participation

ACT!2030 facilitated and supported youth-led participation in national and global platforms and processes through advocacy, lobbying and awareness-raising activities for young people's SRHR to varying degrees and outcomes [*Global, All*]. According to our survey, 90% of country respondents think that ACT!2030 increased the involvement of youth in decision-making at country level.

"ACT has managed to break barriers that limited youth involvement in key decision-making platforms."

- ACT!2030 National Alliance Member

ACT was very strategic in creating space for youth voices in national level dialogues, platforms and processes within civil society spaces, but also by creating opportunities for collaboration and partnership with government ministries, and high-level decision-makers overseeing the SDG negotiations and later, the monitoring process. ACT!2030 Alliances organised multi stakeholder strategic dialogues, meetings and conferences to review progress on the SDGs or other youth related policy or strategic planning issues to raise awareness of SRHR issues related to youth. In this way, they managed to develop partnerships, collaborations, and eventually establishing a space for youth participation and voice on key issues that relate to them [*All*]. In *India*, where civil society is vast and powerful, creating space required sheer determination to get individual meetings with parliamentarians and ministers – a determination that eventually saw the ACT!2030 Alliance representative included in the Indian national delegation to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). In *Nigeria*, representatives from the ACT!2030 Alliance participated in the national stakeholder consultations around the Voluntary National Reviews on the SDGs where ACT!2030 positions were included and presented at the High Level Political Forum in New York.

In all countries, however, youth-led organisations were not sufficiently informed or engaged to advocate effectively for their own issues within the established SDG monitoring space. ACT!2030, rightly, invested in building the capacity of youth-led organisational members in countries to be able to meaningfully participate in the SDG processes. In *Mexico*, for

example, ACT!2030 Alliance leaders recognized that Mexico youth organisations were not sufficiently informed or skilled in advocacy to engage at the subnational or national level on issues that mattered to them. Through training, they started to become more engaged in local and national level advocacy on their own issues, and became more aware of CSO advocacy platforms and partnerships they could join to have a greater impact in the processes available to them. The same could be seen in many of the other ACT!2030 countries where skills were built for more meaningful participation and voice [*Algeria, Bulgaria, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Zimbabwe*].

ACT!2030 coordinators in countries were selected for this visibility and position within the youth movement in each country, and expectedly, their tenacity and perseverance in creating space for youth voice and participation was significant. The task, however was to create a space for youth-led accountability which required not only youth participation but importantly, youth engagement in the monitoring and accountability process around youth issues within the MDGs and later the SDGs. In *India*, the ACT!2030 Alliance strategically approached local governments to advocate for issues related to HIV, SRH and youth issues. The Indian ACT!2030 Alliance gathered support from Members of Parliament, Union Ministers, and even the Governor of a State to support their advocacy for advancing youth SRHR in the National Indian Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. Yet in other countries, despite the space created by the ACT!2030 Alliance members through their social and political accountability activities (e.g. campaigns, public speaking, use of social media, participation in government and CSO dialogues, policy platforms, etc.), their views were not always heard, reflecting perhaps the position of CSOs and particularly youth-led organisations in some countries, or perhaps the political positioning of the particular ACT!2030 national coordinators and their organisation, and or the accessibility and political space available for youth voice within the national context. In *Bulgaria*, for example, the ACT!2030 national coordinator felt that youth voice should always be partnered with adults, as this partnership would be more effective. In countries like *South Africa* where government-led delegations to international UN meetings and assemblies are large, some respondents expressed concern that participation could be assured, but not necessarily voice, as tokenism competed with true meaningful participation of youth delegates included on the national delegation. [*Philippines, South Africa*]. In other countries however, ACT!2030 Alliance members, particularly the leaders were appreciated as a knowledgeable and an important resource on youth SRHR issues for the CSO coalition that was lobbying the government for greater accountability on the SDGs.

As mentioned previously, individual ACT!2030 member participation in global level advocacy was done through individual positioning and participation in national government delegations to international meetings [*Bulgaria, India, Mexico, South Africa, Zimbabwe*]. For example, an ACT!2030 leader from *Mexico* participated in the Major Group for Children and Youth, as well as in the regional processes to establish SDG monitoring in countries through the LAC Regional Montevideo Consensus. In those events, ACT!2030 Alliance members used negotiating briefs, presentations, reports and other IEC materials to try and influence government representatives to advocate for youth SRHR issues within global and regional platforms. Advocacy with national delegation leaders in *India, Nigeria* and *Mexico* proved effective in securing a privileged position to be able to speak with government representatives in face-to-face meetings in coalition with CSO partners [*India, Mexico, Philippines*] or by participating in campaigns that created the political space to be heard as was done in *Nigeria* [*Nigeria*]. In all cases, ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators together with their

national Alliance members managed to bring youth SRHR issues on the table in discussion about monitoring progress of the SDGs, or related to a specific law or policy that would directly affect their sexual and reproductive health rights.

Inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups

ACT!2030 Alliances reported that they had significantly included marginalised and vulnerable young people in their activities - in many countries this involved young key populations such as gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender and young people living with HIV. This was a particularly important contribution of ACT!2030 in some settings where the project purposely reached out to YKPs successfully, despite the stigma and discrimination and legal ramifications of doing so [Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Philippines, Zimbabwe].

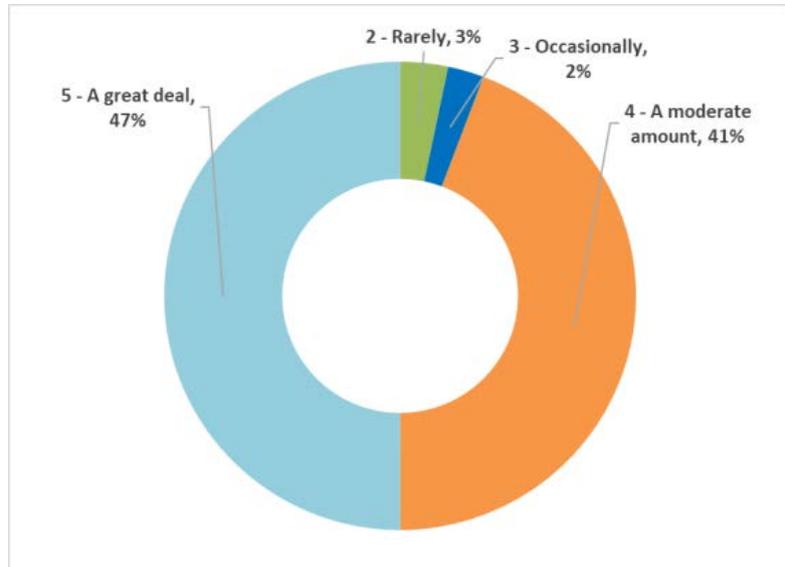


Figure 10: Degree to which ACT!2030 focused particularly on the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable

In some countries, it was the first time marginalised groups had become involved. ACT!2030 gave them voice and a platform from which to effectively participate in the national and local dialogue on matters that are important for them in the SDG 2030 agenda [Algeria, India, Mexico, Philippines, Zimbabwe]. Based on our survey, the diversity of marginalised and vulnerable groups identified by national Country Alliances was those with the most heightened SRHR needs (such as young people living with HIV and the gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender community referred to by respondents

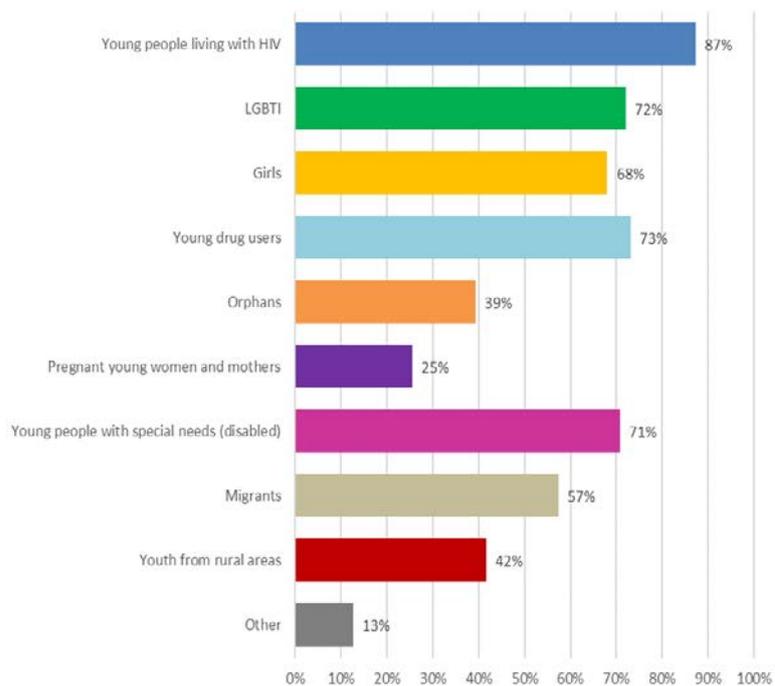


Figure 11: % of countries identifying the group as an important marginalised and vulnerable group

as LGBTI in the survey). Yet, some groups were difficult to reach through these means, for instance injecting drug users (PWIDs) in *Mexico*.

Focus on gay men and other men who have sex with men and the transgender community of young people nonetheless proved challenging in countries where same sex relations are highly stigmatised and even criminalised.

"Young people were empowered and the voices of the LGBTI community was heard. The alliance generated momentum for youth inclusion to address health and economic challenges affecting young people."

ACT!2030 Alliance member.

Extreme caution, confidentiality, and alternative ways of working in reaching those communities were required. ACT!2030 was exemplary in their capacity to involve YKPs in a meaningful way while respecting and protecting their anonymity. ACT!2030's data reporters served as a good source of information as some were actually recruited from those communities to collect data for advocacy on their specific needs. Financial limitations meant that data was largely collected in urban areas, often close to the capital city, and most critically, by middle class youth that may not have the same reach into some of the most marginalised YKPs [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*].

Adoption of national youth-led accountability mechanisms

The PACT worked closely with UNAIDS to ensure a platform for youth-led advocacy and to create a space for youth participation in the UNAIDS Global Strategy 2016 – 2021 process. Creating youth-led accountability mechanisms to monitor national or international commitments or pledges may include for instance official roles for youth within local and national governments, clear roles and space for youth voices and open access to information to young people to use in advocacy efforts. ACT!2030, as a project of the PACT sought to develop and influence youth-led accountability of the SDGs through such platforms.

Creating youth-led accountability mechanisms, or even engaging with CSO accountability mechanisms related to the SDGs proved challenging. In some countries where ACT!2030 worked, accountability mechanisms related to monitoring progress towards the SDGs exist, but were often established for broader civil society engagement and thus not youth-led, or fully accessible to ACT!2030 Alliance members [*Mexico, Philippines*]. In other countries, advocating for youth-led accountability was focused on specific issues such as in *Bulgaria* where advocacy for the approval of the National CSE law was followed by accountability monitoring at district level the implementation of the CSE curricula in schools. Others engaged in social accountability (campaign) to call their governments to account for youth specific SRHR issues in their SDG implementation activities [*Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria*]. The same was true for regional and global levels where accountability mechanisms related to the SDGs are largely coordinated by the office of the UN Secretary General (Global SDG Indicators database among others), the HLPF and the VNRs. Global benchmarking and social accountability efforts conducted by UN organisations and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (PMNCH) (on behalf of the H6 and CSO partners) as well as the Independent Accountability Panel (IAP) for the Secretary General's Every Women, Every Child, Every Adolescent Strategy, for example, involves partners including

UNAIDS and IPPF but operates at a global rather than a national level. At least 2-3 Alliance partners were engaged in global accountability through these processes and through the space provided by UNFPA in their post-2015 stock-taking consultations and through the PMNCH accountability platforms. An ACT!2030 Alliance member served as the interim chair of the PMNCH Adolescent and Youth Constituency and played a leadership role in side events on accountability convened by the Secretary General in New York. Some ACT!2030 Alliance members that had a broader mandate from their country or region, as was the case for the Mexico ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators, did find themselves involved in regional and global advocacy such as the Regional Montevideo Consensus process.

At national level, ACT Alliance members found, and or created collaboration and entry points to participate in Agenda 2030 dialogue and monitoring via national platforms, meetings, conferences, and report contributions [All]. ACT!2030 also contributed to these accountability processes by providing youth SRHR data to fill evidence gaps and focus attention on youth SRHR issues, and particularly the unique needs of the more marginalised and vulnerable youth populations [India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Zimbabwe]. In Jamaica, JYAN earned a formal position within the national dialogue and the youth parliament agreed to include a member of JYAN. In Mexico, an ACT!2030 representative was on the national delegation and was widely seen by CSO and government representatives as the youth voice that needed to be present in national dialogue around the SDGs in Mexico.

At the global level, selected individuals of ACT!2030 Alliance members participated in national delegations [Bulgaria, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe] and for example, worked with the Major Group for Children and Youth [Mexico] to advocate for and monitor Agenda 2030 related to youth, although not in a coordinated way.

Despite these solid efforts, the effectiveness of ACT!2030 Alliance members to penetrate accountability efforts related to the SDGs in their countries was largely determined by whether they had previously been positioned to do so at global or regional level [Global, Bulgaria, Mexico, South Africa]. At national level, many managed to enter into these consultations through perseverance or by creating new platforms for engagement [Algeria, India, Nigeria, Kenya]. Despite the constraints, ACT!2030 managed to engage at the national level in all countries to some degree [All].

Visibility and recognition thanks to ACT!2030

At the global level youth participation and involvement in decision-making was barely visible as recent as three years ago. Through the PACT, with support from UNAIDS, and then through ACT!2030, youth became increasingly visible in international discussions on HIV and young key populations. In the lead-up to the SDGs (2014) however, the youth movement was not fully aligned during negotiation of SDGs. The Major Group on Children and Youth members had many priorities with youth constituencies advocating for multiple competing agendas (not only HIV and SRHR but also climate change, education, employment issues among others). Yet, despite the varied interests, impressive achievements were accomplished by youth activists, particularly those engaged in ACT!2030. The ACT!2030 Alliances successfully created youth led coalitions in 12 countries to advocate for youth issues within the SDGs at country level. As the ACT!2030 Alliance supported by IPPF's coordination and guidance, were able to align their strategies to become more effective in advocating for their issues around the SDGs and SRHR issues locally.

ACT!2030 used different entry points to create space to participate in youth-serving accountability mechanisms and by doing so achieved visibility and recognition. Examples are the establishment of strategic and strong partnerships with key stakeholders to influence the agenda [A//]; the “Making it count” initiative and collection of evidence through Youth Data Reporters and youth researchers [A//] and presentation of results to key stakeholders and at international platforms; the strengthening of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focusing on young key populations – all led to greater visibility and recognition [A//]. In *Nigeria* for example, the ACT!2030 Alliance coordinator and members prepared a progress report tracking the SDGs which resulted in great visibility and an invitation to participate in the implementation plan for the SDGs. In *Zimbabwe*, the ACT!2030 Alliance was invited as part of the national delegation to the HLPF in 2017 and contributed to the presentation and final report. In the *Philippines*, visibility was institutionalized through a newly created National Adolescent and Youth Health and Development Technical Working Group (NAYHD-TWG) which ACT!2030 helped to create. The aim of TWG was to serve as a technical recourse group to develop and coordinate actions to improve adolescent health in the Philippines.

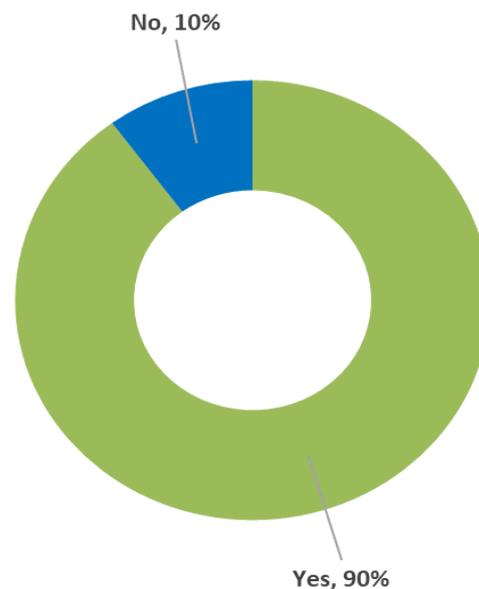


Figure 12: % of ACT!2030 Alliance in countries that felt that ACT!2030 increased visibility and space for youth voice in the Agenda 2030

Based on our survey, 90% of the people think that ACT!2030 increased visibility and political space for youth voice in national, regional and global dialogues and consultations related to the youth agenda in the monitoring of the SDGs – a perception shared by global stakeholders. [Global, A//]. In addition, among those 90% who answered positively, 84% think that it increased visibility at the national level; 55% at the regional level and 41% at the global level.

RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

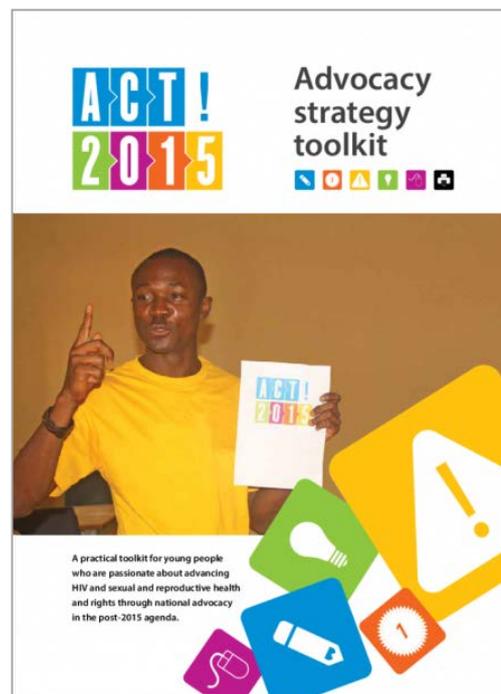
5.3 Communication and coordination for youth-led accountability

Summary: ACT!2030 Alliances in-country benefited from advocacy and communication tools developed by the PACT – tools that allowed members to train national members in advocacy and communication. Traditional advocacy through reports, campaigns, radio and TV presentations were complemented greatly with social media strategies that were used effectively for their cause. Social media, such as Facebook, Blogs and Twitter were used to pressure government on youth SRHR and HIV issues effectively. Some good practice experience was shared between countries but low usage of the ACT!2030 social media platforms and blogs suggested that closer follow up could have facilitated greater sharing and learning between Alliance countries on effective advocacy strategies. ACT!2030 coordinators however did create sharing opportunities and platforms for national Alliance

members which they did not use as fully as they could have. The ACT!2030 Alliance culminates a broad effort to mobilise youth led organisations across 12 countries to advocate for youth SRHR and HIV issues within the 2030 sustainable development. PACT/ACT!2030 strengthened youth-led and youth-serving networks and partnerships at national, regional and global levels. Through strong ACT!2030 national coordinators and ACT!2030 Alliance members in countries, ACT!2030 was able to lead advocacy activities in countries that effectively gave voice and political momentum to their SRHR and HIV messages. Some ACT!2030 Alliances were able to develop a network and movement in country, while others were limited by financial, contextual, political, or geographic constraints. Some ACT!2030 Alliances effectively maintained partnerships with regional networks and movements but their activities were not linked through ACT!2030 and thus lacked alignment with larger advocacy platforms. ACT!2030 was strategically focused on advocacy and accountability around youth SRHR and HIV in the SDG agenda and worked to build Alliances in countries to call governments to account for their SDG commitments. While some Alliance members and partners felt that further outreach to other youth organisations would have added value and momentum (towards building a global youth movement), others considered the outreach and the capacity building of the member organisations within Alliance as a sufficient challenge which ACT!2030 managed successfully.

Development of evidence-based communication and advocacy tools

The PACT developed a suite of advocacy tools including a youth-led scorecard on adolescent health and its community dialogue tool, an advocacy and social media strategy toolkit with blogging calendar and a monitoring and evaluation framework were used by the ACT!2030 national coordinators to train ACT!2030 Alliance members on how to conduct advocacy and the importance of data driven accountability efforts. Other materials developed include a PACT/ACT!2030 produced guide with some lessons learned on how to develop successful coalitions and collaborations entitled “Strategizing with your Youth Constituency”; an ACT!2015 leaders Facebook page; a managerial “Basecamp” for sharing between country Alliances; Social Media Strategy Tips document (by PACT), a national partner contact sheet including social media outlets, and others. In phase 4, a new website for the PACT was created (theyouthpact.org). A new website for ACT was also created at the request of national Alliances (act2030.org). Both the PACT and ACT websites have been very active in publishing blogs from country Alliances that you can find under the blog sections for both websites. Some respondents however stated that the blogs were not used as often as partner websites [*Global, Jamaica, Mexico, South Africa*] though details of which sites were preferred was not mentioned.



ACT!2030 contributed, in part, to the development, sharing and exchange of evidence-based communication and advocacy tools, but did not regularly follow up their use in countries. Alliance members stated that they would have appreciated regular sharing of advocacy tools

and communication strategies to increase mutual learning between Alliances to validate their usefulness and effectiveness. At the national level, all Alliances used a range of social media channels to disseminate successful approaches and share information and opportunities independently – some being more effective and used than others. These included WhatsApp groups, Emails, YouTube videos, Facebook pages, Google groups and Listserves. The ACT!2030 Alliance also had a management platform called “Basecamp” for coordination and information sharing between country Alliances.

Despite a stated desire for more learning among ACT!2030 Alliances countries, there was nonetheless, clear evidence of sharing of advocacy and communication tools between ACT!2030 Alliance members [*Algeria, Kenya, Mexico, Zambia, Zimbabwe*]. Communication tools used by ACT!2030 Alliance members included the creation of videos on the SDGs [*Zimbabwe*] and SRHR [*Bulgaria*], infographics on SRHR shared on social media as a sensitisation strategy [*Kenya, Mexico*], and blogs written by beneficiaries on their experiences with ACT!2030 [*All*]. In *Algeria* for example, young NGOs from the ACT!2030 Alliance shared the graphics, videos and blogs made as per ACT!2030 on social media (mainly on Facebook) and websites. In *Kenya*, the ACT!2030 Alliance coordinator and members contributed to the making of a documentary and worked extensively through Twitter, blog posts and other social media platforms to implement their advocacy campaign, which at one point reached more than 50,000 people in Kenya. Blog posts also had a broad reach in Kenya (reached over 60,000 fans) where 20 were written by young people engaged in ACT!2030 work and can be read on the site yasnetwork.org, that is yet to be shared. In *Nigeria* tweets reached 22,000 twitter accounts with a call for better HIV and SRHR services as part of their post 2015 development agenda social media strategy.

In other countries, social media was complimented with traditional communication and advocacy done via radio talk show presentations, campaigns and events, such as World AIDS Day events, reports, briefings points and dialogue meetings to influence national debate on youth SRHR issues [*Algeria, Bulgaria, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe*]. In *Zambia*, for example, media houses participated in ACT!2030 campaigns and helped develop stories that were later shared – yet some felt this approach was perhaps not as effective as other approaches.

ACT!2030 national Alliances shared experiences between countries and regional networks [*Bulgaria, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe*]. *South Africa, Zambia* and *Zimbabwe*, for example, shared advocacy material and strategies with Afriyan – a regional network in Africa; and *Bulgaria* shared advocacy training and materials through a meeting of Eastern European organisations. Topic specific sharing was also done on such issues as “age of consent”, child marriage [*Zambia Zimbabwe*] and advocacy strategies to advance SRHR and CSE among BRIC countries [*India, South Africa*]

Some Alliance members thought that additional opportunities for cross country sharing and learning could have been achieved through greater facilitation by ACT!2030 leaders globally who they felt were often were not up-to-date on how materials were being adapted or used; so were not in a position to share best practice and results for learning between countries [*Global, Mexico*]. It should be noted however that the ACT!2030 Alliance global initiative did create space for sharing through coordination meetings (two in the last phase of the project), and numerous planned and ad hoc meetings at global gatherings and events such as the UNGA. In addition, platforms such as Basecamp, and blog spaces were set up to facilitate exchange on best practice, Because the national Alliances did not themselves use the opportunities and resources made available to them by the ACT!2030 as fully as they could have, and is perhaps a missed opportunity.

ACT!2030 tools were developed for and by the ACT!2030 Alliance secretariat and national coordinators. As not all national Alliance members were involved in their development, testing or use, ownership of the tools was not given [*Global*]. Currently, new materials are being developed by IPPF and UNAID that build on experiences in countries and will be available in the coming months. It will share lessons learned (via case studies) on how to work on youth-led accountability and advocacy around the 2030 Agenda (toolkit) [*Global*]. These new materials will likely represent national Alliance lessons learned and thus reflect the diversity of the ACT!2030 Alliance more generally.

Strengthening of youth-led global, regional and national partnerships and networks

The ACT!2030 Alliance culminates a broad effort to mobilise youth led organisations across 12 countries to advocate for youth SRHR and HIV issues within the 2030 sustainable development agenda. First as the PACT, then ACT!2030 youth-led and youth-serving networks and partnerships were strengthened at national, regional and global levels [*Global, All*]. In 2014, in the lead-up to the UNGA, the ACT!2015 convened meetings in 10 countries with over 85 organisations, in five regions, and one global meeting in New York to coordinate advocacy and increase the capacity of youth organisations to effectively champion their SRHR and HIV issues in the post 2015 agenda (see Annex 4 for a full Output Table). While in New York additional meetings with young advocates from 11 countries and their countries' UN missions resulted in advocacy roadmaps, work plans, budgets and an ACT!2015 blog to share country achievements. Due to this activism, more than 8 young activists eventually were included in national delegations at UN meetings as youth delegates. By January 2016, more than 132 youth-led and youth-serving organisations were engaged in ACT!2015 [*Global*].

At the national level, seed grants from ACT!2030 enabled youth organisations to establish national advocacy Alliances for the advancement of youth SRHR in their countries [*Global*]. ACT!2030 coordinators and coordinating organisations were selected because they were already youth leaders in their countries, and in a position to develop a network and movement in their countries, and evidently, the commitment and motivation to do so. In phase 4, when programmatic funds became available, national ACT!2030 Alliances grew and were fortified through trainings and activities. As funds dwindled, were slow to be dispersed, or because of other contextual issues in countries, the capacity of ACT!2030 to maintain some of the national ACT!2030 Alliances became less secure [*Global, Mexico, Uganda, Zambia*].

ACT!2030 differs from one country to another in terms of advocacy strategies and goals, although the overall framework of accountability for the SDGs is the same. In some countries they have a strong alliance structure with many organisations involved which enables the involvement of diverse people and organisations [*Mexico, Philippines, Zimbabwe*], but in others only one lead organisation is funded and tends to guide the work [*Jamaica, India, South Africa, Zambia*]. Where ACT!2030 Alliances were strong, smaller youth-led and youth-serving organisations were included and together they were able to give a greater voice for their SRHR, especially for YKPs [*Mexico, Philippines, Zimbabwe*].

ACT!2030 strengthened youth-led national partnerships and networks at the grassroots level, by engaging youth data reporters and strengthening the coordination between youth-led organisations in country to include organisations working with YKPs. Further, ACT!2030 was successful in establishing strong strategic partnerships with UN organisations and Ministries and participation in technical working groups at national level [*Bulgaria, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, Zimbabwe*]. In *Uganda* for example, the ACT!2030

Alliance participated in the Technical Working Group on SDGs and the evaluation sub-committee on government performances and the national planning authority expanded board. These strategies' effectiveness was demonstrated at the high level meetings with members of Parliament, and Government Ministers so that ACT!2030 Alliance members were able to advocate for youth SRHR and HIV issues [*India, Kenya, Jamaica, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe*].

In addition, individual ACT!2030 Alliance members participated in numerous global conferences and high-level meetings. Some examples follow. ACT!2030 Alliance members met at the ICASA workshop, during which best practices and experiences were shared [*Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda*]. In the *Philippines* for example, the ACT!2030 Alliance ensured participation during the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva and contributed to the coordination and cooperation in support of young people's SRHR. Representatives of the ACT!2030 Alliance in *Zimbabwe* were part of the National Delegation at the HLPF in 2017 and contributed to the country presentation and report. In *India*, an ACT!2030 Alliance representative secured a position at the official delegation for the UNGA, while ACT!2030 *Zimbabwe* participated in the Africa SDG Conference in Ghana [*Zimbabwe*]. Participation of ACT!2030 national Alliance coordinators and members in global and regional events also provided an opportunity for informal sharing and exchange which many benefited from (even if some Alliance members' perceptions were that such opportunities for exchange were limited). It is important to note that the opportunities ACT!2030 afforded Alliance coordinators was not the same as those of the national level Alliance member organisations; the former had much greater opportunity for exchange, learning and sharing at global events than a national Alliance member organisation operating largely at the national or sub-national level.

At the regional level, the establishment of partnerships and networks were largely based on previous relationships and memberships in regional activities [*Algeria, Bulgaria, Mexico, Zambia, Zimbabwe*]. *South Africa and Zambia* ACT!2030 Alliances were engaged in the Afriyan network, focused on HIV where they shared advocacy tools and information with partner organisations beyond the ACT!2030 Alliance. Despite these Alliance country initiatives, regional activities were not linked through ACT!2030. Priority was given to building national Alliances and in their contribution to the broader global movement. Some stakeholders and members felt that ACT!2030 missed an opportunity to link their newly strengthened youth movements (national Alliances) to regional youth networks who then in turn, could link to global processes.

No global concerted effort was made to link ACT!2030 to formally link additional regional or global youth movements or networks beyond their partners within the PACT [*Global, Algeria, Mexico, Zimbabwe*]. ACT!2030 operated at national and global levels effectively, yet some stakeholders felt that it could have used its position to create greater synergies between youth networks, even those that are members of the PACT such as Youth Lead, Afriyan, and YPeer, among others. ACT!2030 made strategic choices in Phase 4 to build capacities at the national level for youth-led organisations creating national level Alliances to advocate and afford accountability in countries around the SDG youth SRHR and HIV agenda. It is unclear whether an additional focus for ACT!2030 on coalition building and harmonisation between youth-led movements would have been achievable by the Alliance, or whether it would have distracted from their primary Phase 4 objective of creating national level Alliances for advocacy and accountability at the country level.

ACT!2030 was represented at numerous global platforms, but some stakeholders noted that the results of these engagement were not always visible and clear, for instance in terms of strengthening the youth-led partnerships [India, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Uganda, Zimbabwe]. There was dissonance between what national ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators and some Alliance national members appreciated from ACT!2030 engagement. More fulfilling for national ACT!2030 Alliance members was their participation in campaigns and linking with networks and regional organisations, including the “Have you seen my rights” campaign, “Right here, Right now”, “Ask”, the regional network in the Asia Pacific region of key populations - Youth LEAD²⁷, and #UPROOT – all examples of international advocacy and mobilization that ACT!2030 Alliance members thought were very successful [All]. ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators and the PACT strategically partnered for global advocacy on key youth SRHR and HIV issues. ACT!2030 was present and created political spaces for activism at events like the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the World Health Assembly Global Citizens Hearings, as well as through policy platforms for the Major Group for Children and Youth, and the HLPF. At the WHA Global Citizens Hearing, for example, ACT showcased its results and presented how it can be a model and an inspiration for other youth initiatives. ACT!2030 participation in these platforms was facilitated by IPPF and UNAIDS at global and regional levels. However, with the increasing number of coalitions and youth networks in the global and regional development space, some Alliance members and stakeholders consider that there is significant untapped potential for youth organisations to work in coalition with other youth networks and movements beyond those partnered with in the PACT and ACT!2030 on SRHR and HIV issues: such as the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN), and the International Youth Foundation, among others. Respondents stated that ACT!2030 could make alliances with youth-led networks and coalitions across thematic issues of concern to young people to build a broader global youth movement with, they suggested, the commensurate increased influence joining forces could provide.

Some ACT!2030 Alliances were able to develop a network and movement in country, while others were limited by financial, contextual, political, or geographic constraints. Some ACT!2030 Alliances maintained partnerships with regional networks and movements effectively, but activities were not necessarily linked through ACT!2030 and thus some national ACT!2030 activities did not necessarily contribute to a larger advocacy platform in the country, region or globally. While this was not a specific objective of ACT!2030, some stakeholders thought there were opportunities for such coherence that could have been an additional outcome of the initiative.

The value and effectiveness of depth versus breadth in coalition building can be debated. ACT!2030 was strategically focused on advocacy and accountability around youth SRHR and HIV in the SDG agenda and worked to build Alliances in countries to call out governments on their SDG commitments. While some Alliance members and partners felt that further outreach to other youth organisations would have added value and momentum (towards building a global youth movement), others considered the outreach and the capacity building of the member organisations within Alliance as a sufficient challenge which ACT!2030 managed successfully. The ACT!2030 mandate in phase 4 called for building national Alliances as a key objective that they successfully achieved in all countries – a contribution in itself towards building the foundations of a global youth movement.

²⁷ Constituting a youth-led regional network focusing on young key populations in Asia and the Pacific.

EFFICIENCY

5.4 Sufficiency of resources and efficiency of use²⁸

Summary: ACT!2030 was envisioned as a movement not a project. As such, it was built on volunteerism with few expectations by those engaged that specific funding would be provided for participating. ACT!20103 Alliance coordinators did not receive funding until the 3rd phase of the initiative as a way to expand and strengthen their activities at country level. ACT!2030 was run on a limited budget with resources dedicated for training, advocacy, lobbying, regional and global exchanges, and minimal overheads and coordination by the ACT!2030 secretariat (UNAIDS and IPPF) and national Alliance coordinating organizations. National ACT!2030 coordinators in countries were selected for their individual and organizational capacities (particularly in terms of advocacy, policy influencing and tracking government commitments) and were well positioned to build an ACT!2030 Alliance in their own countries. As activities increased however, volunteerism and innovation were required to sustain ACT!2030 activities. This proved to be a challenge for some of the countries that had to limit their activities due to the limited resources available – particularly after the ACT!2030 grant for coordination in the 4th phase had expired. Nonetheless, Alliances led by the country coordinators managed to maintain their activities in countries in light of their own capacities and overwhelming commitment to the mission of ACT!2030.

Financial resources made available to the ACT!2030 initiative globally were quite modest for what was expected and ultimately achieved. Despite this challenge, ACT!2030 Alliance members reported that funds were sufficient to conduct project activities including trainings, data collection, and to meet salary and overhead costs for these activities. Lack of funds due to delays in disbursements in various countries had an impact on implementation of ACT!2030 Alliance activities, largely overcome through individual and organizational creativity, flexibility and innovative strategies. ACT!2030 secretariat provided training in financial management to national Alliance coordinators to improve reporting. Despite this effort, financial reporting was in some countries inadequate – an issue that also may have affected the timely disbursement of funds to in some countries. Given that final financial reports were still being developed concurrently when this evaluation was undertaken, a complete analysis of expenditure of funds for this evaluation was not possible.

Available resources appeared to be efficiently utilized, and no country observed any evidence of misuse of funds or fraud. Lack of experience in managing grants and reporting on them by some ACT!2030 national Alliance coordinating organisations was an issue at all levels despite guidance and support provided by IPPF, the grantor for ACT!2030 national coordinators at country level. Despite reporting challenges, flexibility by the Phase 4 donor (the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and the grantors (IPPF and UNAIDS) was greatly appreciated by national ACT!2030 Alliances which was an asset for innovation and creativity.

²⁸ In this section, reference to countries that made the statement have been removed to provide anonymity as requested by the countries and assured by the evaluation team.

Human Resources

The ACT!2030 initiative was envisioned as a country level compliment to the work of the PACT. It was not envisioned as a long-term project but rather a movement. It ran for the first 2 phases without financial resources when country level, national Alliance coordinating organisations received small grants to support training and small funds for organizational overheads, staff time of coordinators, meetings/training, and small stipends for data reporters or research. The leading organisations in each country (i.e. ACT!2030 national coordinators) were selected for their reputation and capacity to lead an ACT!2030 Alliance in country. As it was not set up initially as a project, expectations for additional funding were limited.

This meant that the ACT!2030 Alliances in countries relied heavily on volunteerism and their own capacities to generate support locally for the work they managed to do. ACT!2030 national Alliance coordinators reported that while limited, the resources were sufficient to conduct training, provide organizational support, and facilitate regular and clear communication and guidance tools to meet their objectives. As a result, ACT!2030 Alliance members in countries worked collectively and synergistically to achieve their aims [*Mexico, Nigeria*], and used creative and innovative approaches to receive support at all levels [*Mexico, Zimbabwe*].

Other countries however struggled to maintain their ACT!2030 Alliances and staff to meet ACT!2030 objectives. For

instance, in *Uganda* human resources were insufficient to coordinate the number of organisations in the national ACT!2030 Alliance in their “coordination through teams” approach. The *Philippines* had an issue with lack of capacity and knowledge of members in terms of policy-level engagement that required more staff time and investment by the coordinators. Indeed, reliance on volunteerism and whatever they could resource from other means meant that considerable time and energy was spent by ACT!2030 Alliance partners²⁹ in securing the necessary support needed to do their activities [*Global, Mexico, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe*]. This proved to be a challenge for some of the countries that had to limit their activities because of the limited resources available – particularly after the ACT grant for coordination had expired [*Mexico, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe*]. Nonetheless, Alliance country coordinators acknowledged that the initiative was never foreseen as a project as it was never designed as such, and thus, large funds were never expected. A unique feature of the ACT!2030 initiative is that it was largely driven by the capacity and overwhelming commitment of the national coordinators – something quite unique for development initiatives.

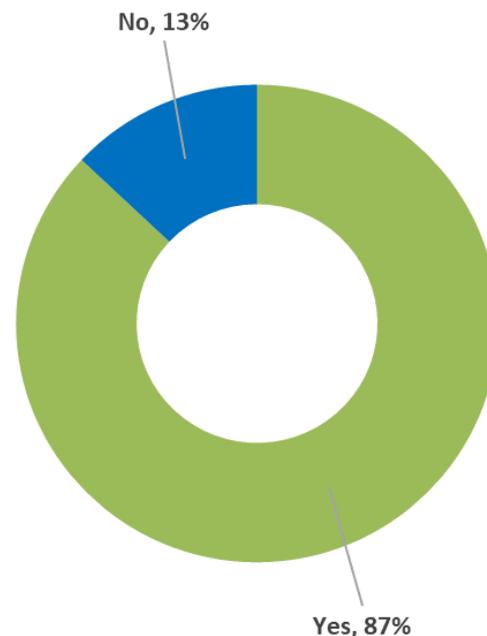


Figure 13: % of countries that felt resources were appropriate and sufficient

²⁹ Partners are defined as organizations which collaborated with the ACT!2030 Alliances in country, such as UN organizations.

Financial Resources

ACT!2030 Alliance was run initially on a volunteer basis and then, in the 3rd and 4th phases, within a small budget for cross country collaboration, global advocacy and in-country capacity building and advocacy activities. ACT!2030 was not envisioned from the outset as a multi-year programme or project with a commensurately planned budget. The initiative evolved from one phase to the next, responding to opportunities and needs identified by the youth leaders that were involved. Consequently, financial and human resources planning for growth or sustainability trailed implementation with managerial and financial problem-solving occurring as the issues arose. The availability of financial resources for the ACT!2030 programme and initiative reflected this evolution. Since 2015, the project provided two grants for a total of US \$75,100 to finance mainly trainings in the first US \$15,100 tranche, and a second tranche of US \$60,000, financing data collection national trainings and advocacy activities. Initially all national coordinating organisations got a grant for US \$15,100 which ended on 30 June 2016 when the financial agreement (RFA) expired. There was no guarantee of continued funding or an immediate new grant for the ACT!2015 initiative at the time. Throughout July and the rest of 2016, the secretariat and the national Alliance coordinators had significant discussions on the project's iCount component. After consultations with partners and the donor, in which it was considered that investing a substantive amount of resources on a mobile phone application was not sustainable or suitable to achieve the ACT!2030 objectives. It was decided to redistribute around \$250,000 USD, and revise all Alliance coordinator's terms of reference, given that the iCount application was no longer going to be developed. To facilitate the discussion, IPPF and UNAIDS held webinars in September 2016 to discuss the ideas, e.g. the removal of iCount from the planning. A coordination meeting was held in New Delhi in October 2016 to finalise the plans for the subsequent phase. At this time IPPF (with a grant from UNAIDS) provided each partner with a grant of US \$5,000 to cover salary and coordination to prepare for the India meeting. During this time, the secretariat was waiting for donor approval on the project changes and could not issue new contracts as the terms of reference for the next phase had not yet been approved. Once the new grant was approved, RFAs were released in early 2017.

Indeed, the financial resources made available to the ACT initiative were very modest for what was expected and ultimately achieved. And although funds were limited, some of the national ACT!2030 Alliance coordinating organisations had never managed such large grants and thus had trouble reporting on the funds received. As could be expected, all countries report that if ACT!2030 had provided them with additional resources, more could have been done with greater impact. [All]. Yet, despite these challenges, some ACT members reported that ACT!2030 provided enough funds to conduct trainings, engage data reporters and remunerate themselves to analyse and prepare research reports, meet office expenses, and pay salaries [Algeria, Kenya].

Lack of funds due to delays in disbursements in various countries [Algeria, India, Mexico, Philippines, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe] had an impact on implementation of the project. For example, some members could not attend trainings because of a shortage of funds. In Zimbabwe, ACT!2030 Alliance members were asked to contribute to pre-fund activities with approximately 10% of the remaining funds, which was very challenging for youth-led organizations in the given context. While this is standard practice for consultancy contracts to receive the last 10% of a grant upon completion of the activity, it presented a challenge which IPPF tried to mitigate for some Alliance partners (e.g. for an organisation, they

negotiated an 8% final payment). Other ACT!2030 Alliance coordinating organisations in countries received their funds late. [*India, Mexico*] In *India*, due to delay between grants, resources were not available to meet the project fixed costs which were compensated by the organization itself. In *Mexico*, changes in administrative status of the coordinating organisation significantly delayed disbursement until well into the expected period for implementation. While initially they managed to conduct some activities with internal resources of their organisation, they then had to stop activities for a period of time until funds were received. The delays were in part due to disbursement at IPPF level for reasons that some felt were not explained thoroughly despite efforts (e.g. webinars) by the secretariat. In *Zimbabwe*, the limited resources led to a stronger focus on urban areas during data collection, which limited outreach in rural areas where they suspected was the greatest need. However, in both *Mexico* and *Zimbabwe*, creativity, flexibility and innovative strategies by the coordinators led to them to secure enough resources to meet the grant agreement budget, despite the delays and funding limits. In *Bulgaria*, innovation was also shown in their use of an online training course for everyone to reduce costs.

Financial reporting (see below) also appeared to be a problem that may have affected IPPF's ability/willingness to disburse funds until previous accounting was in order. The Secretariat allocated time and resources to have several sessions on project management at the India Global Coordination Meeting and developed new and simpler reporting templates to ease the process of reporting for national alliances, without compromising quality and transparency. Nonetheless, reporting challenges remained in some countries.

Expenditure analysis

At the global level, the 4 phases of the ACT initiative (ACT!2015 and ACT!2030) had a total budget of more than US \$1.5 million. The first phases were supported by UNAIDS core resources (from contribution from other donors), while the last phase was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Significantly, additional resources (human and financial) were provided by the youth themselves that were engaged in the initiative as national Alliance coordinators, members and partners. The biggest cost categories were teaching, training and communication followed by overheads including staff costs and funds for data collection by youth researchers/journalists (see Figure 14).

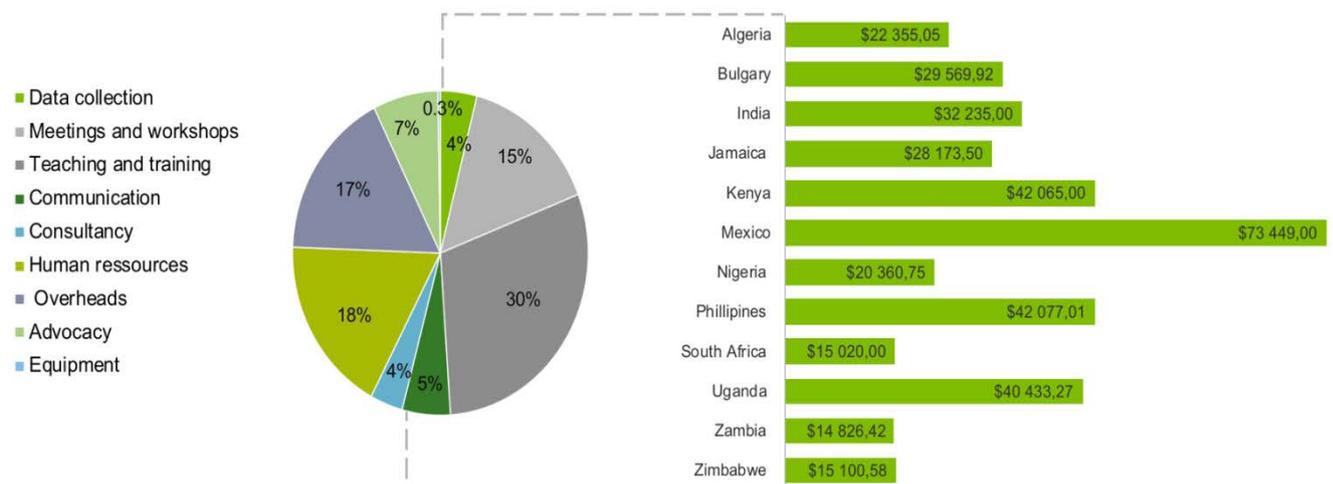


Figure 14: Breakdown of national level expenditures by categories

Quality of financial reporting and challenges

Available resources appeared to be efficiently utilized, and no country observed any evidence of misuse of funds or fraud. The quality of financial reporting appeared to be an issue at all levels. Country progress reports did not provide sufficient detail and clarity despite guidance and support provided by IPPF, the grantor for ACT!2030 country coordination organisations. Reporting limitations and discrepancy appear to have been a problem at all levels as reports from the secretariat were also insufficiently detailed to provide a full overview at the time of the evaluation. The final report for the Phase 4b grant by SDC was not yet available for review.

Despite reporting challenges, flexibility by the donor and the grantors (IPPF and UNAIDS) was greatly appreciated by national ACT!2030 Alliances which was an asset for innovation and creativity. Funds were disbursed to national ACT!2030 Alliances through a lead organization, and in some cases, funds were further disbursed in the form of in-country sub-grants. UNAIDS sub-granted to IPPF who was then responsible of disbursing the money to national ACT!2030 Alliances who were then responsible to report back to UNAIDS to inform their report to the donor. The sub-granting by UNAIDS to IPPF made sub-granting to local organisations possible. It may have also complicated disbursement and reporting as well however [*Global*]. The lean design of project may also have contributed to the administrative challenge of overseeing and supervising the administration and reporting of 12 sub-grants to, in some cases, small organisations without experience in reporting on such grants. Youth-led organisations are young by nature and need more support in terms of reporting generally, and financial reporting specifically [*Global*]. The flexibility on the part of the donor to modify work plans and budget after grant documents were designed is recognition that donor, UNAIDS and IPPF recognized the challenge building an ACT!2030 Alliance of youth-led and youth-serving organisations across 12 countries would entail.

SUSTAINABILITY

5.5 Sustainability of national alliances

Summary: ACT!2030 was not planned as a long-term initiative but rather evolved into a project over time. As a result, the Secretariat and the national coordinators did not fully plan for and address the long-term sustainability of national ACT!2030 Alliances in-country with mixed results. Capacity building and training in fund management, donor reporting and resource mobilization was provided to help Alliances raise funds locally but coordination and planning for sustainability appeared to come late to the initiative after many of the ACT!2030 Alliances had already lost momentum. ACT!2030 Alliances in countries used various approaches to sustain themselves by fund raising to finding ways to integrate into the broader national dialogue and thus sustain themselves through new partnerships of thematic focus – usually HIV –where more resources could be available. Greater sharing between countries and documentation of lessons learned for sustainability was requested and at the time of the evaluation, seen to have been a missed opportunity by Alliance members. A recent 2018 meeting held in Bangkok focused on sustainability and planning for future collaboration between ACT!2030 Alliances was a positive development, but one which could

not be assessed in this exercise as it occurred just after the evaluation concluded data collection. In addition, the new initiative “#UPROOT” is reported to be a continuation of ACT!2030, offering promise of support and monitoring by youth-led organisations for national level accountability to ensure the end of AIDS by 2030.

ACT!2030 did not foresee long-term sustainability of the initiative as a specific aim and thus, did not fully plan for and address the long-term sustainability of national youth alliances (i.e. ACT!2030 Alliances in-country). As a result, sustainability of ACT!2030 Alliance in countries was mixed. Coordination and planning for sustainability appeared to come late to the initiative (a sustainability workshop was in conducted in Bangkok in early 2018 after the last grant expired) after many of the ACT!2030 Alliance in countries had already lost momentum. The global coordination meeting with all Alliances was convened to discuss sustainability and future next steps. National Alliances developed national sustainability plans with concrete tasks that UNAIDS, IPPF and the alliance coordinators would undertake to sustain the outcomes they had achieved through ACT!2030. In addition, it was noted that the momentum and achievements of ACT!2030 would also be continued through the #UPROOT campaign aimed at holding governments accountable for their commitments to ensure the end of AIDS by 2030.

The ACT!2030 Alliances faced challenges in securing sustainable financial support to maintain activities inspired by ACT!2030 after project resources were finished [A/I]. ACT!2030 Alliance *India*, for example, was looking for donor support through regional agencies. Indeed, there has been discussion among ACT!2030 Alliance national coordinators to come together through their own resources for a period of six months while they continue to explore funding options. However, it was clear that unless ACT!2030 Alliances secure a sustainable funding source, they will not be functional for long. In the *Philippines*, the lack of funds has already reduced the number of youth organisations actively participating in the ACT!2030 Alliance, and in other countries, even the coordinators have had to move on due to lack of funding for their salaries [*Global, Zambia*]. One major challenge observed was planning for succession between youth leaders within national ACT!2030 Alliances [*Global except Mexico*]. In almost all Alliance countries, there were no reports of specific training by aged-out leaders for new leaders to take over. Generally, national Alliances did seek to engage new youth led organisations specifically to build the youth-led constituency within the Alliance. [A/I]. In Mexico, training for over 50 young leaders was provided in September of 2017 by at least 6 “aged-out leaders” from the coordinating organisation. In addition, the older youth leaders in Mexico also have made themselves available and provided institutional support for a new generation of organizations that are forming and getting involved in the ACT!2030 Alliance. These efforts were only reported by Mexico, though other such efforts may also have taken place in other Alliance countries as aging-out is a known challenge facing youth movements globally – not only those engaged in advocacy around SRHR and HIV.

Two main approaches by the youth organisations involved in ACT!2030 were taken to sustain ACT!2030: 1. Organisations partnered with other organisations and policy makers specifically on SRHR; or 2. Organisations partnered with youth organisations that worked on other topics (e.g. climate change, employment, health, environment), and then transitioned into the broader youth agenda (away from SRHR/HIV specifically). Both approaches were understandable given the limited funding and support available for ACT!2030 Alliance members to continue their activities.

Sustainability of youth issues within the SDG agenda of the ACT!2030 Alliances in countries can be strengthened through integration into the national debate. In some countries, ACT!2030 Alliance members focused on integrating themselves into on-going national platforms and debates that could sustain them, usually related to HIV. Consequently, the work has become siloed for HIV exclusively in countries where HIV continues to have a strong youth focus [*Philippines, South Africa, Zimbabwe*]. For example, ACT!2030 Alliance members became focal points for the Global Funds CCM process [*Zimbabwe*], or national delegation members to HLPF [*South Africa*], which allowed them to influence the agenda within the given space. In *Kenya*, ACT!2030 Alliance members contributed to an end-line assessment of YFS by the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MoH) by providing data collectors, as well as two youth participants to assist the quality assurance team; and through voluntary contribution to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Life Skills Strategy. In addition the MoH is now considering including young people into the process (though coordinated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) of preparing proposals for DFID, UNDP and the continuous maintenance of partnerships for this purpose [*Kenya*].

Greater sharing between countries and documentation of lessons learned for sustainability was not conducted consistently with the most important actions taken only at the end of the initiative in 2018. Communication between countries could have strengthened coordination across the ACT!2030 Alliances, for example. Despite diverse communication platforms, efforts by the secretariat, and sharing WhatsApp and Facebook groups used for communication between countries, ACT!2030 Alliance members reported that the group discussions did not often provide helpful responses. As an Alliance however, some of the responsibility for sharing and learning between countries should also have been promoted by the coordinators themselves. Overall, lack of uptake by Alliance coordinators of the opportunities afforded them by ACT!2030 Alliance were underutilised and thus a missed opportunity for learning, sharing and sustainability. It should be noted however, that ACT!2030 evolved as an initiative inspired and led by youth activist coordinators and their organisations. It was not planned as a permanent new network or movement, though through their efforts, momentum was created at the national and even global level for youth advocacy and accountability for SRHR and HIV and the SDGs.

6 Observations and Lessons Learned

Observations and lessons learned have been drawn from the broader evaluation team's analysis of the ACT!2030 initiative. Many of the critical issues repeated themselves across country contexts. Others came from observation of key stakeholders and country teams. Below is a summary of these analyses. The recommendations that follow have been synthesised from these observations and lessons learned.

RELEVANCE

Accessibility: In SRHR and HIV advocacy, a lack of attention is focused on YKPs. Marginalized and vulnerable youth from rural areas or more remote regions of countries are often not included due to cost, distance and other demographic barriers (e.g. language, ethnicity). YKPs from these areas are even less likely to be reached. **To be truly inclusive, project resources (e.g. budgets, outreach, trainings, travel) need to be planned and prioritized for these hard-to-reach populations of young people and need to take country specificities (e.g. such as geographical and political factors) into account.**

Accessibility: Making participation and engagement accessible requires not only reaching out to the marginalized and vulnerable in specific countries, but also by ensuring that international initiatives such as ACT!2030 make the necessary provisions for full participation of youth leaders from non-English speaking countries and regions. **Though translation is costly and time-consuming, innovation in the domain can be explored to be more inclusive and make all resources available across language divides.**

Representativeness: Inclusion of youth organisations from varied geographical and economic contexts must be planned for and funded purposefully. ACT!2030 members in some countries were largely capital-based rather than for more remote regions where access to such opportunities for youth organisations is limited. In countries like Mexico, where Alliance members were drawn from around the country, the Alliance was more representative and richer for their contribution. The initiative was driven largely by the personal commitment and dedication of the youth leaders themselves. Volunteerism and personal or organizational investments for underfunded programmes is not only unfair for those that give so much, but also exclusive in that young people with fewer personal resources and their organisations can participate less, as they may have access to fewer resources to contribute. This creates an exclusivity that limits participation and engagement of some young people. The credibility of the ACT!2030 Alliance and its long-term sustainability would have been further strengthened had there been greater recognition of these limitations. Small, young organisations that have less to give or cannot comply with requirements need facilitation, organization development and engagement training. **Organization development and inclusivity must be planned for in the design and budgeting of such programmes to ensure that all young people have an equal chance to participate and that priority expectations of the broader ACT!2030 Alliance can be met. Donors must also recognize the increased cost of inclusion and be willing to support outreach**

EFFECTIVENESS

Building Youth Leadership: ACT!2030 has shown that an Alliance at country and global levels can be led by youth for youth. When given a mantle of leadership and support to advocate for their own issues, they are very capable. The success of the ACT!2030 initiative is evidence that such engagement contributes to effective advocacy and voice. Working through small youth-led organisations will not be sustainable however, if there is no mechanism to create a more inclusive base with a wider range of partners and collaborators for the ACT!2030 Alliance. **More opportunities should be given to young people to continue learning about advocacy within local, national and international institutions. Equally, strengthening national youth movements in countries requires an organizational structure with a membership hub to unite the group under a common umbrella with a common objective. ACT!2030 coordinators should seek out innovative ways to perpetuate the capacity building of youth led organisations, so that they can continue to play an advocacy role in their countries after ACT!2030 ends.**

Capacity building: ACT!2030 did an excellent job of using global tools and resources to build the capacity of youth-led organisations to advocate for their issues in their own countries and beyond. This training provided by ACT!2030 national Alliance coordinators in countries was fundamental to building youth participation and leadership and should be continued. **Tools for use by local advocates such as the Advocacy Toolkit could be useful for sub-national partners to build up their own area constituencies. Adaptation of the tools for**

sub-national use could be an effective way to support local members efforts in their communities beyond ACT!2030.

Capacity building: ACT!2030 training on advocacy and tracking progress showed that many ACT!2030 Alliance members need training on SRHR and HIV issues generally. **Early capacity building activities and trainings could have been provided on other critical issues (e.g. gender and cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness, etc.) in all countries to ensure all ACT!2030 Alliance members share a common understanding of the key issues, and values on proposed solutions and messages.**

Multi-sectorial support: ACT!2030 supported advocacy for CSE and YFS (among other SRHR and HIV issues). Support and provision for these issues requires both government and non-governmental engagement including the private sector. Too little has been done to generate broad-based support among stakeholders to advance youth SRHR issues in the context of the SDG Agenda 2030. **ACT!2030 Alliances should consider partnering beyond their usual allies to build a wider net of support for youth SRHR issues, by including the private sector and universities in-country. This could be in the form of political support, but also it could be in the form of financial or in-kind support. Telecommunications, services (e.g. hotels, airlines, car rental companies), and even local branches of multi-national corporations (e.g. Google, Microsoft, energy companies) are examples of the kinds of partners that could be helpful in advancing the national youth agenda.**

Regional and global engagement: It is important to make the voice of young advocates heard in global and regional events. Showcasing ACT!2030 country level achievements at regional and international events was an important contribution of the initiative to the larger global youth movements, but more can be done, especially among other youth groups working in thematic areas such as environment and climate change. Through such visibility, country level Alliances can be featured and or pressured to support youth SRHR issues more deliberately. **Showcasing ACT!2030 Alliance achievements at the global and regional SRHR and HIV events was an important achievement of the ACT!2030 initiative. Such showcasing needs to be foreseen in the country-level budgets from the start as national resources are rarely available for participation in these events. With additional resources, showcasing should be done for a larger youth audience, which in turn can support advocacy efforts to gain additional support for ACT!2030 SRHR issues.**

Youth-led accountability: ACT!2030 Alliance partners could explore ways to provide technical support to the indicator design process, even when it appears to be formally closed to external (non-governmental) participation. The indicator process is often independent, thus hard to influence. UN organisations are often involved in advising national statistics offices that are usually charged with collection and monitoring of national indicators. **ACT!2030 could broaden their advocacy efforts and use all possible collaborations and partnerships to effect the change they want to see in the national monitoring processes, specifically related to the collection of disaggregated data on key issues. A political power analysis of stakeholders could help to better focus the advocacy on critical players who can be swayed to achieve desired objectives.**

Data for Advocacy: ACT!2030 was unique in its focus on data for decision-making and advocacy. Many projects have this as an objective, but few put in place the data collection

points needed to fill the evidence gaps, and then use the new information to influence policy at country level. Of particular note is the engagement of young key populations in this process. ACT!2030 has just begun to make use of their data results with potential to develop databases to inform their advocacy and continuation of data collection for ACT!2030 Alliance partners and government entities. ACT!2030 needs **additional time (and donor investment) to see the results of the data collection efforts, Using research results for evidence-based advocacy by young people themselves needs to be studied and its impact measured as a learning and strategy for the initiative. It would also provide an opportunity for the ACT!2030 Alliances to further document and use the data for materials development, fundraising and targeted positioning of their advocacy messages in countries.**

Innovation and Transformation of the Youth Space: While some ACT!2030 Alliance members pushed the boundaries to secure a place at the negotiating table, others worked diligently within the given spaces to be heard. The priority given by some ACT!2030 Alliances to working with “youth-led” rather than “youth-serving” organisations may have limited the ACT!2030 Alliance’s capacity to sustain achievements and build broader coalitions. Conversely, in one country, adherence to social norms around the capacity and recognition youth-led organisations can act as a reminder of the limitations even activists are at times resigned to. **Acceptance of perceived limitations to youth voice, and predefined spaces where youth can participate deserves further investigation and innovation to overcome such obstacles, without too easily abandoning the aspiration to be primarily a youth-led effort. Training on innovation and transformation, as well as learning from best practices could benefit all ACT!2030 Alliance members and partners.**

EFFICIENCY

Project Design: ACT!2030 was an aspirational project that proved to have many important elements that could be fortified to build youth voice around the SDG Agenda 2030 with further investment. Activity, output and outcome were unrealistic for the time frame and funding provided. As a result, individual and organizational investment was needed to achieve project aims. National ACT!2030 Alliances with greater resources (e.g. personal, financial, positioning, partnerships, etc.) achieved more in the time allotted. ACT!2030 Alliances that were able to generate additional resources were able to more fully sustain the activities after global resources from ACT!2030 expired. Others were in the process of building new partnerships and securing additional support. Nonetheless, **greater foresight in the planning, design and budgeting for the initiative could have mitigated some of the challenges. Better alignment of budget, timelines and project aims may have seen additional results – a task for both those designing the terms of reference for the initiative and those writing the proposal to receive the grant.**

Project design: ACT!2030 achieved much more than could have been expected given the human resources available within the country teams. The successes seen by ACT!2030 were largely due to the individual commitment and dedication of ACT!2030 national coordinators and ACT!2030 Alliance members in countries. Indeed, motivated staff that can manage the multiple demands the project was required to achieve project aims. Individual sacrifice cannot be the basis upon which success is achieved; all staff needs to be appropriately compensated for their work. Other advocacy and activist efforts (such as the women’s movement) have recognized the value and the cost of depending too heavily on personal sacrifice to maintain a movement. Youth movements should learn from these

experiences and place sufficient value on people's time to ensure they can sustain their engagement in the long run. All stakeholders need to recognize the full cost of limited funding and who will bear the brunt of the shortfalls. **While such individual and organizational commitment is needed and should be congratulated, it should not be a substitute for well-funded projects with the necessary staff to achieve project objectives.**

Project design: The ACT!2030 national coordinators in countries played a large role in the Alliance structure. National ACT!2030 Alliances received investment to coordinate youth advocacy without a mandate from local youth organisations and stakeholders in countries. In most cases, the selected Alliance coordinating organisation already held this convening role and was thus unchallenged but, in some countries roles and interests merged. **To ensure clear communication and avoid potential conflict of interest, it is suggested to establish an independent ACT!2030 secretariat, as either the convening body or as a separate entity to the convening organisation for greater transparency and engagement of national youth organisations.**

Project administration and management: ACT!2030 contributed significantly to bring youth voice and advocacy to bear on government actors responsible for delivering on their youth related SDG commitments. The ACT!2030 Alliances were characterized by their huge commitment, effectiveness in terms of capacity-building and advocacy, and their success in growing national youth Alliances; yet these impressive achievements were not matched by the commensurate funding normally attached to such objectives. Minimal funding and administrative hurdles (some of their own making) delayed implementation in some countries. As a result, at the time of the evaluation, many countries were still concluding their activities from the last grant cycle due to these delays. **Increased technical and financial support for complex activities and country level activities that were extremely promising, such as the data collection and research studies, is needed to facilitate ACT!2030 Alliance members in completing their work within the given project cycle and then see the fruits of their efforts disseminated through evidence-based advocacy in countries.**

Project administration and management: ACT!2030 achievements are numerous despite the several administrative and managerial challenges such a large initiative brings. Turnover in senior management from those who had conceptualised the initiative translated the initial inspiration for a youth-led advocacy coalition concept into a more implementable initiative. Changes in the original team, and the practical requirements of funding arrangements to facilitate sub-granting, moved the original concept towards national Alliance-building, which had been identified as key for advocacy and accountability in countries. Alliance members who had been involved since the beginning noted the shift, while appreciating the value of the movement to country level action. The demands, however, from the evolving needs of the project in terms of capacity-building, guidance and oversight, turned out to have been more than the ACT!2030 secretariat could completely fulfil. As a result, strategic planning, monitoring, reporting and documentation of results were not as strong as they might have been had the programme been conceptualised from the start with the Phase 4 objectives in mind. The evolution of the ACT programme concept was a strength that responded directly to what national coordinators saw as the immediate need to move the youth SRHR and HIV issues within the 2030 Agenda in countries. The evolving project concept however also brought with it challenges in planning, design and budgeting for effectiveness and sustainability. **To mitigate administrative and technical challenges, while still allowing**

for flexible programming, future ACT!2030-like programmes would benefit from more detailed planning and budgeting for expected and unanticipated needs – including resources for the secretariat to more readily respond to the changing needs of national Alliances in a changing global context. Lessons from the ACT initiative could inform a future theory of change exercise for the #UPROOT and other spin off initiatives.

SUSTAINABILITY

Partnerships: ACT!2030 worked with other national stakeholders to advance the youth SRHR agenda around the SDGs. For some national ACT!2030 Alliances, preexisting relationships or newly created ones supported their efforts in countries. Other ACT!2030 Alliances however, were slow to formalize partnerships with important stakeholders who could have helped them to advance their advocacy earlier in the project timeline. Guidance for ACT!2030 Alliance members on core advocacy competencies, on partner engagement, stakeholder mapping, and political strategy was fundamental to the early training of ACT!2030 national coordinators. Despite these trainings, national Alliances in some countries felt that they had not sufficiently engaged partners from ministries at important stages of their process (as opposed to only informing them of their role at the workshops and meetings after they were well advanced in the activities). **ACT!2030 provided training in stakeholder and political analysis for effective advocacy and lobbying, though more could have been done to follow up with country Alliances on the effectiveness of their political strategy, assumptions and hypothesis around the change process they hoped to achieve.**

Sharing and cooperation: ACT!2030 Alliance coordinators in countries expressed concern in the early days of the initiative of an unspoken narrative of competition among Alliances, particularly at the beginning of the programme, to see who was doing better when in fact all were working towards the same goal. Likewise, ACT!2030 Alliance members felt that the programme could have been strengthened if closer follow-up, feedback and mentoring had been provided. **Indeed, the secretariat and national Alliance coordinators shared responsibility in creating constructive and effective partnership between ACT countries. A future initiative of this kind should pay additional attention to unspoken tensions (if they exist) to further facilitate solidarity, sharing and exchange of best practices during the life of the programme.**

Sustainability: Youth-led and youth-serving entities in countries are highly fragmented and need organisational capacity-building to ensure sustainability of high impact interventions. ACT!2030 has the potential to be a coordinating network of youth organisations, similar to the role the CSO/NGO association play in many countries. One follow up initiative, #UPROOT, has begun to play this roll, which could be considered a follow up initiative to ACT!2030. Lack of awareness by national Alliance members and partners of follow up networks and projects miss the opportunity to forge strong links between the accomplishments of ACT!2030 and the new initiatives in countries. **Mapping of the needs of youth organisations in ACT!2030 Alliance countries could inform the new initiatives so that ACT!2030 strategic successes and lessons can contribute to improve common outcomes.**

Sustainability: ACT!2030 achievements of its objectives will require longer term investment in the building up of youth organisations that can one day take up the leadership of the

ACT!2030 Alliance. It will also require structures to be put in place to pass that leadership along as youth leaders age out of the movement. **Creating a youth movement through the ACT!2030 Alliances in countries must include the *continuous* search for, and the capacity building of, new young champions/activists to be included in the Alliance structure, if sustainability is to be achieved. While some ACT!2030 Alliances have been more successful than others, building new leadership among younger youth groups and activists must remain front and center of any youth movement as a critical priority for the future.**

Sustainability: Institutionalization of youth voice requires purposeful partnership and collaboration with youth-led and youth-serving organisations and government institutions. Joint planning and common purpose to create such spaces as an obligation rather than a gesture by those in power will lead to true accountability for youth. Youth participation and voice in national delegations, committees, taskforces, and ministerial working groups are examples of where youth representation could be institutionalized. **ACT!2030 should link to existing youth movements, networks and youth councils to create sustainable platforms and mechanisms for youth engagement.**

Sustainability: Building leadership and sustaining youth-led organisations requires anticipation and planning within projects including specific action plans associated with the issue. Too little thought went into sustainability given the real issue of aging out. **Consideration needs to be given a place and not push out older advocates that have grown up in the youth movement and remain allies and important advisors. An Alumnae initiative may have the potential to sustain some of the achievements and provide continuous capacity building of the next generation,** for example, by maintaining alumnae on the board of advisors to serve as advocates, trainers of new leaders, and support fundraising.

Sustainability and independence: Limitations in available resources compromised the sustainability and depth of the program. ACT!2030 leadership was forced to seek funding for individuals to participate, which was always insufficient to build leadership by including more junior advocates in the process. The limited funds also require ACT!2030 to potentially seek funds from partners in the government that they hope to lobby,- compromising their independence. **More funds and a longer project cycle probably is needed for ACT!2030 Alliance partners to operate independently and have the time they need to build greater sustainability of their Alliance efforts in countries.**

7 Recommendations

RELEVANCE

Accessibility:

- To be truly inclusive, project resources (e.g. budgets, outreach, trainings, travel) need to be planned and prioritized for hard to reach populations of young people.
- As translation is costly, innovation in this domain could be explored to be more inclusive and make all resources available across language divides.

Representativeness:

- Organisational development and inclusivity must be planned for in the design of programmes such as ACT!2030 to ensure expectations of the broader ACT!2030 Alliance can be met.

EFFECTIVENESS

Building Youth Leadership:

- More opportunities should be given to young people to continue learning about advocacy with local, national and international institutions. To sustain national youth movements in countries however, requires an organizational structure such as a membership hub to unite the groups under a common umbrella and objective.

Capacity building:

- Tools for use by local advocates such as the Advocacy Toolkit could be used for sub-national partners to build up their own area constituencies.
- Early capacity-building activities and trainings should be provided on other critical issues (e.g. gender and cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness, etc.) to ensure all ACT!2030 Alliance members share a common understanding of the key issues, and values on proposed solutions and messages.

Multi-sectorial support:

- Alliances should consider partnering beyond their usual allies to build a wider net of support for youth SRHR issues including with the private sector and universities. This could be in the form of political support, but also in the form of financial or in-kind support. Telecommunications, services (e.g. hotels, airlines, car rental companies), and even local branches of multi-national corporations (e.g. Google, Microsoft, energy companies) are examples of the kinds of partners that could be helpful in advancing the national youth agenda.

Regional and global engagement:

- The convening opportunity of the ACT!2030 initiative was an important opportunity to showcase ACT!2030 Alliance achievements in global and regional events. More could be done with such opportunities to expand the Alliance and forge new regional partnerships. Increased visibility and partnering needs to be foreseen in the budget from the start, as national resources are rarely available for broader Alliance member participation at these events.

Youth-led accountability:

- ACT!2030 could broaden their advocacy efforts and move beyond their natural power base by exploring all possible collaborations and partnerships to effect the change they want to see in the national monitoring processes, especially related to the collection of disaggregated data on key issues.
- A political power analysis of stakeholders could help to better focus the advocacy on critical players who can be swayed to achieve desired objectives.

Data for Advocacy:

- More time is needed within the programme to maximize the results of the data collection efforts and measure whether change can happen through evidence-based advocacy by the young people themselves. It would also provide an opportunity for the ACT!2030 Alliances to use the data for materials development, fundraising and positioning of their advocacy messages in countries.

Innovation and Transformation of the Youth Space:

- Some ACT!2030 Alliance members and partners accepted as given social and political norms that limit youth voice, and that there are predefined spaces where youth can actively participate. Truly transformative activism as envisioned and practiced by most of the Alliance members cannot be taken for granted and deserves further reflection, consideration and innovation to ensure a common understanding of the barriers that limit youth participation and voice that or and can be overcome. Values clarification exercises and training on innovation and transformation, as well as learning from best practices could benefit all ACT!2030 Alliance members to ensure everyone shares a common vision of the change the Alliance aims to achieve together.

EFFICIENCY

Project Design:

- Greater foresight in the design of the project could have mitigated some of the challenges. Better alignment of budget, timelines and project aims could see additional results.
- ACT!2030 was driven by individual and organizational commitment which was needed and should be congratulated, but it cannot be a substitute for adequately

funded and well-planned projects with the necessary staff to achieve project objectives.

- A future ACT!2030 initiative should be designed to build common cause and consensus among national youth organisations and stakeholders on the overall project objectives from the start to avoid unnecessary tension and conflict.
- To ensure clear communication and avoid potential conflict of interest, it is suggested to establish an independent ACT!2030 secretariat as either the convening body or as a separate entity to the convening organisation for greater transparency and engagement of national youth organisations.

Project administration and management:

- Increased technical and financial support for complex activities such as the data collection and research studies is needed to facilitate ACT!2030 Alliance members' ability to complete such work within the given project cycle.
- To mitigate administrative and technical shortcomings, better planning and resource allocation, in line with a realistic assessment of partner needs for managerial and technical support is required.

SUSTAINABILITY

Partnerships:

- Guidance for ACT!2030 Alliance members on core advocacy competencies on partner engagement, stakeholder mapping, and political strategy should be fundamental to early training of ACT!2030 national coordinators. For example, ACT!2030 Alliance members could support engaging partners from ministries at important stages of their process, as opposed to just informing them of their role at the workshops and meetings after they were well-advanced in the activities.

Sharing and cooperation:

- Stronger facilitation by the international coordinators could have created more cohesion and regional solidarity, by the sharing and exchange of best practices during the life of the programme.

Sustainability:

- Future efforts to create a youth organisation Alliance should consider creating a membership organisation that could increase the value of the Alliance as a coordinating body and create greater credibility for the Alliance with their stakeholders.
- Mapping of the needs of youth organisations in ACT!2030 Alliance countries could have informed the ACT!2030 strategies to improve outcomes.

- Creating a youth movement through the ACT!2030 Alliance in countries must include the search for, and the capacity building of, new young champions and activists to be included in the ACT!2030 Alliance structure if sustainability is to be achieved.
- ACT!2030 should link to existing youth movements, networks and youth councils to create sustainable platforms and mechanisms for youth engagement.
- Consideration needs to be given to not push out older advocates that have grown up in the youth movement so that they remain allies and important advisors.
- An Alumnae initiative may have the potential to sustain some of the achievements and provide continuous capacity building for the next generation, for example, by maintaining alumnae on the board of advisors to serve as advocates, trainers of new leaders, and support fundraising.

Sustainability and independence:

- More funds and a longer project cycle would be needed for ACT!2030 Alliance partners to operate independently and have the time they do need to build greater sustainability of their Alliance efforts in countries.

Annexes

See separate Annex document.