



Global agreements, grassroots advocacy:

Youth and governance in a post-2015 world.

A toolkit for young people who want to make sure
their voice is heard in a post-2015 world.

What is this toolkit for?

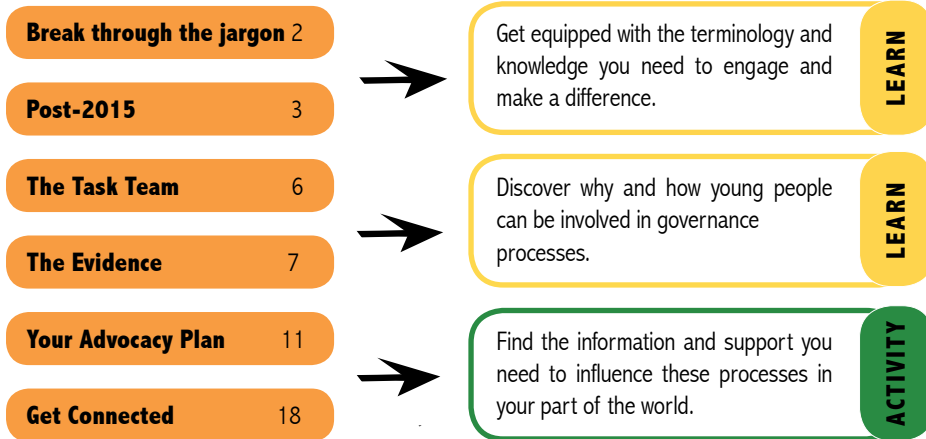
The world now has the **largest generation aged 15-24 in history**, making up a **quarter of the world's population**. Almost 90% of this age group live in developing countries yet just one in three countries consult young people with regards to plans for tackling poverty and development (*Partners for Change 2014 Report*, Page 2). **The time for change is now.** Read this toolkit to find out how you can make a difference to ensure the voices of young people are heard in the corridors of power across the world.


This toolkit is for you if you are:


- a young person or member of a youth organisation.
- passionate about having an honest and responsive government.
- of the belief that young people must be fairly represented and involved in making the decisions that affect them.
- keen to raise awareness of important issues in your local and national government, and connect with other young people promoting the same causes.

This toolkit references the *Partners for Change: Youth and Governance in a Post-2015 World Report* throughout. Download a copy [here](#) or contact Miriam (Miriam@restlessdevelopment.org) for a printed version (location dependent).

Contents of this toolkit:



 When you see this icon click on it to get to useful information and resources.

 The questions in the grey bubbles will help you to identify where your personal experience might be related to the topics in this toolkit.

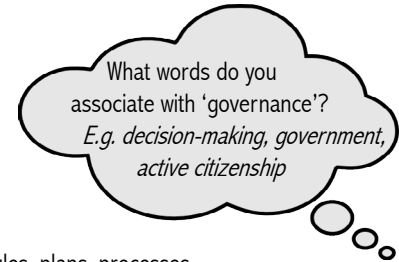
Break through the jargon

Governance

'is the way in which a country or society takes decisions and allocates resources. It's not just about voting systems, it's about the way in which people, including the poorest and most excluded can be involved in those decisions, and hold institutions accountable' (ActionAid).

Accountability

'means ensuring that officials in public, private and voluntary sector are answerable for their action and that there is redress when duties and commitments are not met' (Transparency International).



Transparency

is about helping citizens to understand 'rules, plans, processes and actions. It is knowing why, how, what, and how much'. Transparency ensures that governments, headteachers, managers and businessmen act visibly and understandably and report on their activities (Transparency International).

Participation

is 'the active, informed and voluntary involvement of people in decision-making and the life of their communities (both locally and globally). Participation means work with and by people, not merely work for them' (DFID-CSO Youth Working Group).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Post-2015 Agenda

is the future global development framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

are organisations and networks 'that are independent from government and that sometimes come together to advance their common interests through collective action' (World Health Organisation).

UN Member States

are states or governments that are recognised members of the United Nations.

Case study of a governance activity; participatory-budgeting in Argentina:

Young people were invited to identify neighbourhood priorities and elect delegates to each district's Youth-Participatory Council. These Councils met regularly to plan how to address these priorities (*Partners for Change 2014 Report*, Page 9).

Post-2015: The Sustainable Development Goals

What are they and why are they important now?

Governments, the international development community and the United Nations are discussing a new set of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, also known as the **Post-2015 Agenda**. These will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which come to an end with the closing of 2015. The MDGs were agreed in 2000 and played an important role in focusing attention, resources and money on global development. The SDGs will shape efforts to ensure sustainable development over the next 15 years and beyond. It is essential that we influence the content of the goals to ensure young people's views are represented within them and that the role of young people is clearly defined. We have until September 2015 to make our voices heard. Now is the time to use your skills, energy and ideas to influence and inform this crucial framework.

2012

In 2012, a **UN High-Level Panel on Post-2015 (HLP)** was established to guide the first stage of the process of developing the new framework. The three co-chairs were the Prime Minister of the UK, and Presidents of Liberia and Indonesia.

2013

At the **UN General Assembly in 2013**, it was decided that the Post-2015 framework will be a universal agenda, combining the SDGs with poverty eradication, and will be applicable to all countries.

2014

A working group was created, called the **UN Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs**. It was a group of 70+ Member States who met several times in the course of 2013 and 2014 to discuss and share their views on the SDGs.

In July 2014 the OWG concluded their work with an outcome document, *The Future We Want*, which proposed 17 goals and 169 targets. This document will now form the basis of the intergovernmental negotiations.

In December 2014, the **Secretary General Synthesis Report** brought together the results of the different work streams on the SDGs. Young people are highlighted throughout and are referred to as 'the torch bearers of the next sustainable development agenda'.

2015

Throughout 2015, UN Member States will be meeting frequently in New York to debate what the final SDGs should include.

The negotiations will conclude and the final Post-2015 Agenda will be announced at the Post-2015 Summit in New York in September 2015.

2016

Beyond 2015, huge decisions will still be made, such as choosing which indicators will be used to measure the goals. Governments will also be interpreting the SDGs and implementing them at the national level.

What has happened so far?

A wide range of people have influenced the development of the SDGs to date. The key moments, and how young people have raised their voices so far, are explained here:



Young people were **highly active** in the three outreach meetings. The HLP **report** was praised for strong references to youth-led development.

The **'My World'** Survey and national youth consultations held around the world, have shown that honest and responsive governance is a top priority for young people. Issues raised frequently in the consultations included 'a world where corruption is eradicated' as well as accountable and transparent decision-making, fair representation and participation.

Many **consultations** took place to find out what people believed were the most important issues to be included in the Post-2015 Agenda.

A lot of work was done by young people, including the Major Group of Children and Youth (MGCY), to lobby for the inclusion of youth priorities.

Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) - the official UN participation constituency for people under the age of 30.

Ahead of the negotiations, Member States should be consulting their governments and citizens, including young people, to understand what their country's position and priorities are.

Young people will be working towards influencing this moment!

What do the goals include so far and what is our objective?

One of the most contentious issues in the debates around what the SDGs should look like has been whether or not to have a goal on **'good governance'**. Eventually 'Goal 16' was agreed upon between member states, which covers the 'promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development' and 'building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions'. The goal includes a specific target on 'ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'.

However, there are **still important gaps** to be addressed. Whilst some targets in the OWG outcome document explicitly mention young people and age, targets under Goal 16 fail to focus on the need for participation in governance from young people and marginalized communities. This gap, coupled with an ongoing risk that the goal may be removed from the framework during intergovernmental negotiations, means urgent action to help ensure good governance worldwide is required. **We need you and other young advocates across the globe to ask their national government to ensure a goal on governance, with a clearly defined role for young people's participation, is included in the SDGs.**



Photo credit:
Plan International /Wilton Castillo

Who else cares about this issue?

The Accountability and Governance Task Team (the Task Team) is a growing global network of young people who voluntarily champion youth voices and demand youth participation in all aspects of governance in the SDGs. They push for young people to be meaningfully included in decision-making processes and to have a role in holding their local and national governments to account on delivering the Post-2015 Agenda. The issues they advocate for are based on evidence based research including the Partners for Change 2014 Report.

How do they do this?

Armed with their own experience from working with young people as well as being involved in governance activities, they reach high-level decision makers with their recommendations and support other children, youth and youth-led organisations to engage. In 2015 the Team will continue to support children and young people to advocate for a standalone goal on governance in the SDGs with the role of young people clearly defined.

Introducing the Task Team...



"I'm Cheick from Burkina Faso, project manager at Burkinabe Movement for Development and Citizenship. For this reason, I mobilise field and political actors for the consideration of youth nationally and am currently advocating for the new government to create a Special Envoy on Youth"



"I'm Muna from Nepal. I have experience of civic participation in good governance and love working with diverse youth to create positive vibes among the global actors. I mobilise the media here in my country to act upon ensuring fundamental rights in line with the post 2015 development framework."

*"We are **calling for a standalone goal on governance** in the Post-2015 Agenda, with the role of young people clearly defined as part of this goal"*

Letter by Task Team members to their UN Missions in New York (Sept 2014)

Read on to find out how you can be part of the Team.

Why is the involvement of young people so important?

Strong evidence and recommendations on youth and governance are vital for our advocacy work. We need to understand what support young advocates like you have and how your calls for good governance in the SDGs could be strengthened.



The Overseas Development Institute (ODI), alongside Plan UK and Restless Development, worked with the Task Team to produce the report, **Partners for Change: Youth and Governance in a Post-2015 World (Partners for Change 2014 Report)**, which provides evidence and allows an understanding into causes for common barriers to young people's participation in important decision-making.

The report concluded the following:

- 1) It is **young people's right to participate in the decisions** that affect them.
- 2) Consulting young people means that decisions are informed by young people's experiences and perspectives and are likely to have a **greater impact**.
- 3) By including young people, they themselves are more likely to **become active citizens** - with the skills, knowledge and motivation to contribute to their communities and countries more widely throughout their lives.

Photo credit:
Plan / Seydou Dolo



So why are young people frequently excluded from decision-making?

Below are a few of the key challenges, opportunities and solutions identified in the *Partners for Change 2014 Report*. Think about the questions in the white clouds – these will help you to identify where your personal experience might be similar or relate to the findings from the report.

Have you ever found that people in positions of power don't take you seriously because you are a young person?

CHALLENGE:

Attitudes - Often adults don't think young people 'should' or 'can' be involved in decision-making and governance processes. Young people are sometimes seen as risky and aggressive or immature, without the ability to understand or contribute.

SOLUTION:

Provide young people with spaces to participate in governance processes alongside adults. This can help inform and change attitudes about what young people 'can' and 'should' do. For an example see Page 3 of this toolkit.

OPPORTUNITY:

Young people's skills - When young people participate, their individual capabilities, such as their leadership or advocacy skills, are strengthened.

RESPONSE:

Provide young people with the right training as they get involved in decision-making. Training in communication, understanding policy or civic engagement enables young people to get the most out of their experience.

CHALLENGE:

Young women often face further barriers, including domestic responsibilities or restricted independence. Some people question if young women getting involved in governance processes is appropriate or desirable at all.

SOLUTION:

Actions to support girls and young women to engage in governance processes need to be tailored and gender sensitive. For example change the venue and timings of meetings to maximise their attendance and ensure meeting spaces are safe. For further solutions, see Page 11 of *Democracy Watchdogs* by ActionAid.



CASE STUDY: The Anti-Corruption Caravan campaign (Uganda) described how girls and young women who had overcome household-level constraints (such as time spent cooking and cleaning) were perceived negatively by some community members as they were seen to be acting out of place, and were even labelled as ‘prostitutes’. (*Partners for Change 2014 Report*, Page 7)

Do any of the challenges outlined here remind you of something you have experienced?

What would stop you from going to your local decision-making space, for example a town hall meeting or a meeting of community leaders?

CHALLENGE and OPPORTUNITY:

Spaces. Young people tend to engage in decision-making and governance processes in two types of ‘space’:

‘Invited’ space; young people participate alongside adults in local governance processes.

‘Created’ space; young people create committees to influence decision makers. This can also be split into **‘formal’** e.g. a National Youth Council with an official mandate or **‘informal’** e.g. a pressure group led by young people.

CHALLENGE:

Adult’s skills. As well as the skills and abilities of young people, we also need to enhance the skills of adults and decision-makers young people work with.

SOLUTION:

A platform should be created for young people and others working on governance and accountability to seek advice and learn. Attention should also be given to the economic, social and legal empowerment of young people (from civil society when government resources are stretched).

SOLUTION:

Get those in power to think about how gender affects young women’s ability to take part, to ensure young people from rural areas are included and to make decisions which provide funding and resources for youth-led initiatives at a local level. E.g. train decision-makers on how to communicate with and involve young people.



Photo credit: Plan International

Following on from the evidence and specific solutions above, the *Partners for Change 2014 Report* makes some overall recommendations:

- **The SDGs should include a goal on governance.** The goal should include specific reference to the engagement of young people, to ensure investment and support for their participation.
- **Adults involved in the SDGs process must realise the huge potential for young people to become actively engaged in national and local level delivery of the goals,** to ensure that they are fulfilled. Young people’s engagement is important now, while they are still ‘young’, but also as tomorrow’s active and engaged adults.
- **Invest in skills** – training and skill sharing should be provided to both young people and those who hold power so they can work effectively together in decision-making and accountability.
- **Governments must increase the capacity of their institutions** to facilitate and meaningfully engage young people in different levels of decision-making.

Find the complete list of barriers, opportunities and recommendations in the full *Partners for Change 2014 Report*.

How can I make a difference?

Follow these seven steps to develop your advocacy plan. **By combining your personal experience with evidence from the *Partners for Change 2014 Report*** this section will enable you to identify how you can have an impact on Post-2015 governance and will guide you to develop an effective strategy to influence change in the Post-2015 Agenda.

Step 1 - Identify the Issue:

Having thought through the challenges to engaging in governance processes, you can work through this problem tree to better understand the issue that you want to focus on. Try separate problems trees for 2-3 different issues.

Start here:



1. Tree trunk =
What is the problem?
Who, what, where, when?

E.g. Young people are underrepresented or excluded from decision-making processes.



2. Roots =
What are the root causes?
Why do these problems exist?

E.g. Adults think young people 'can't' or 'shouldn't' be involved in community-level decisions.



4. Leaves =

Identify the solution(s)

What would address the root causes and/or remove the barriers? Be as specific as possible.

E.g. Holding a conference with different stakeholders from your district to showcase young people's ideas and present them as valuable decision-makers.

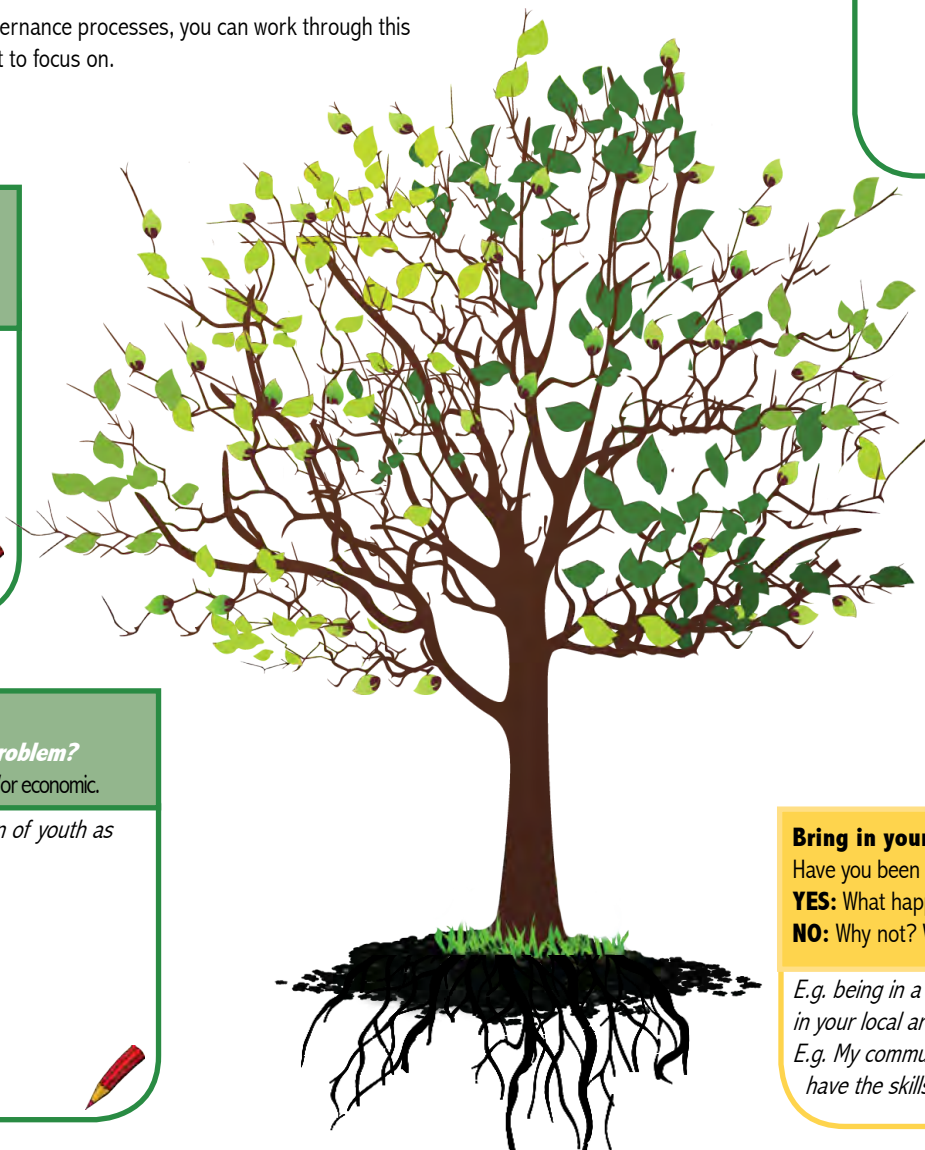


3. Branches =

What are the barriers to solving the problem?

There could be several; cultural, social, political and/or economic.

E.g. mistrust by older people or the perception of youth as violent or as only beneficiaries.



Bring in your personal experience!

Have you been involved in decision-making or governance processes in your community?

YES: What happened as a result and how did you feel during and after that experience?

NO: Why not? What stops you from being involved?

E.g. being in a student council at school or helping to decide how the budget is used in your local area.

E.g. My community put money towards building a new youth centre. I understand and have the skills to be part of local governance processes.

Step 2 - Develop an Advocacy Goal:

Having explored the issues, now it's time to prioritise what you want to focus on. Fill out the boxes below as you work through the following pages.

Which issue can you realistically change?
Which will have the strongest level of support from your decision-makers, your community or other young people?



My Advocacy goal is...

This is the change that you want to see.
It is the long term result of your activities and can be general.

E.g. an increased number of young people are being consulted as equals by governments when making decisions which affect them.



My objectives are...

These are the specific changes you can bring about that contribute towards achieving your goal.

E.g. nationally, x% of young people to be trained in leadership and civic participation and involved in governance processes.



Make sure your objectives are **SMART**:

Specific:

Say what you mean. Change? Who, what, when and where?

Measurable:

Will it be possible to measure success? It should be!

Achievable:

Be realistic about what can be achieved.

Results orientated:

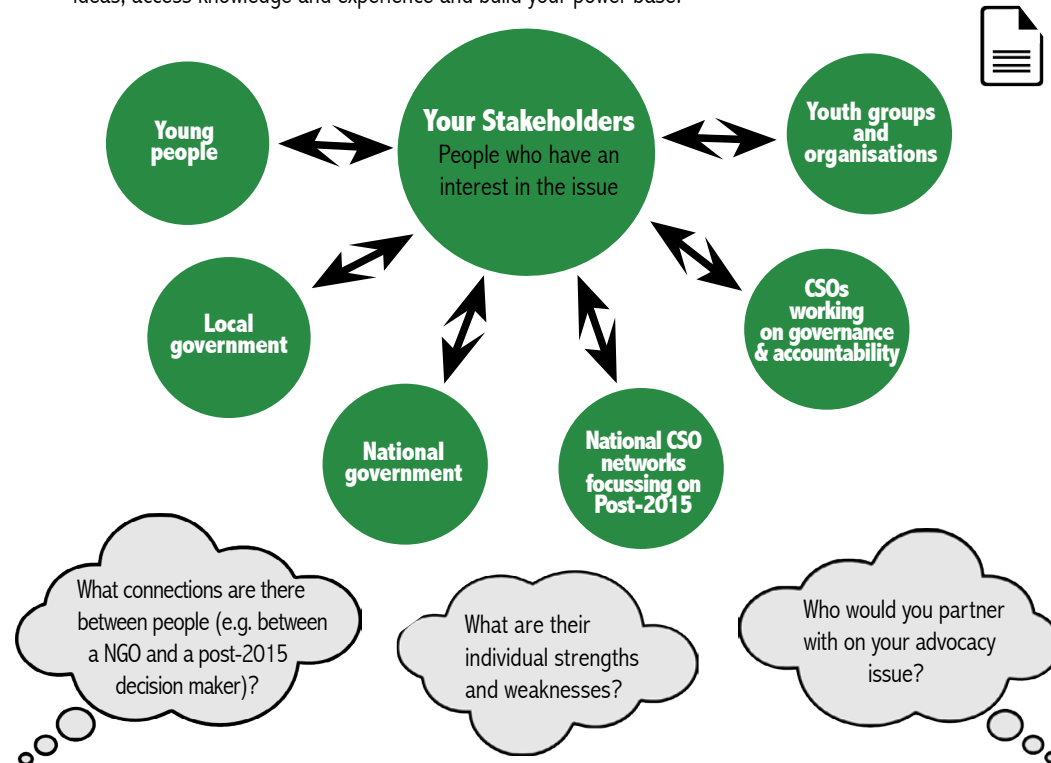
Focus on achieving meaningful change.

Timebound:

Say when the change will happen by.

Step 3 - Map your network:

Grab a pen and paper and brainstorm who you could connect with in your network to help develop your ideas, access knowledge and experience and build your power base.



Step 4 - Choose who you want to influence:

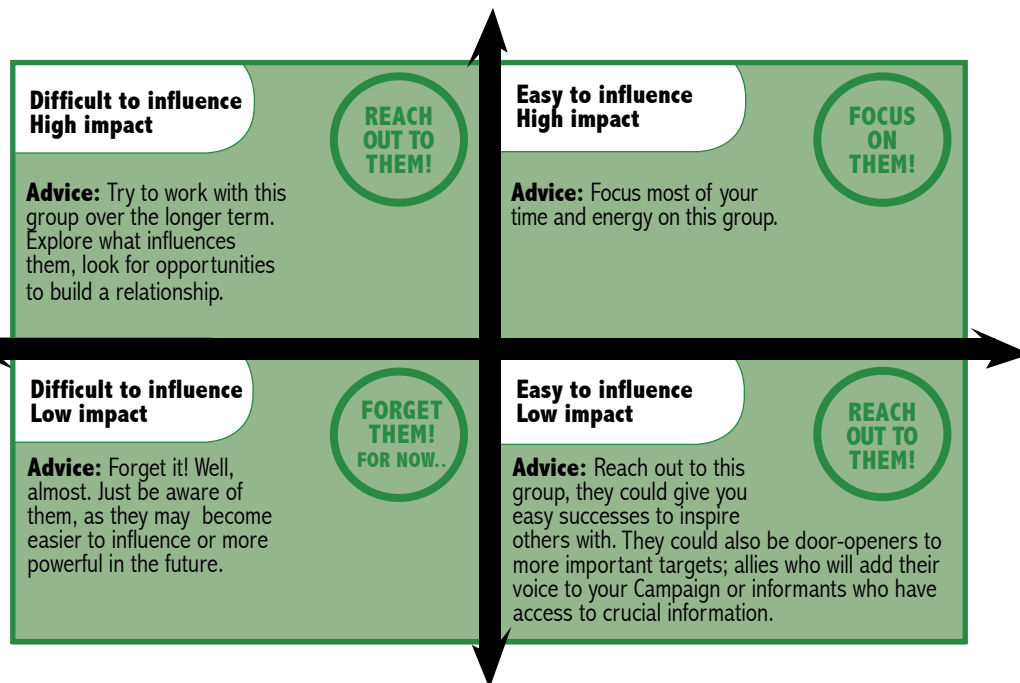
Build partnerships with your new allies by spending time revisiting your advocacy goal and working together on how best to move forward. Together, work on writing down the people or institutions you want to reach, splitting them into:

Primary person or institution: the policy makers and influencers who have the power to make the change you are advocating for. *E.g. who is your country's representative in the intergovernmental negotiations? Which National government department is leading Post-2015? This varies country to country e.g. Planning department, Office of Foreign affairs, Development Cooperation, etc.*



Secondary person or institution: the person or group you can influence who in-turn can influence your primary focus. *E.g. UN Resident Coordinator, Chairs of the National Youth Council, Civil Society Representative.*

Organise your targets into the graph below and use it to help you decide where to focus your energy:



Step 5 - Choose your activities:

With your advocacy goal, network and targets in mind, you are ready to move on to choosing your activities. Grab some colourful pens and paper, and think of all the ways to influence decision-making on your issue. Get creative! Effective actions are innovative and make people stop and think. You could hold a public panel discussion, send a creative message to your decision-maker, get on your local radio, organise a media stunt, write a press release or start a blog. The possibilities are endless. Remember, the aim of your activities is to get your message heard either by decision-makers or by people that will promote your message, such as the media or other youth groups.



Derick (Kenya) is supporting a growing group of volunteers in Kenya to hold a conference where they will share the report to influence Kenyan government positions on governance in post-2015.

Sana (Morocco) is an avid writer and blogger and uses different media channels and conferences to speak out on youth policy, climate and gender equality.



Think about these questions whilst choosing your activities:

- What is possible? Consider your organisational capacity and experience and the laws of your country.
- What kind of activities will work in your country and what sort of messaging and language will your decision-makers respond to? Tailor your message to the person that you are speaking to and always be friendly.
- What is available? Are there resources, such as materials or a venue accessible through your network?



What kinds of risks are there? Working on governance and accountability may have risks. These may include personal safety, relationships with government or other groups, impact on objectives or public reputation.

You will need to assess whether a particular action is safe to carry out. Identify the risks and level of danger in advance. Consider how to avoid them if you can – or deal with them if the risks turn into realities. *E.g. My family will disapprove if I attend government meetings = medium risk. I will try to prevent this by explaining beforehand how this will benefit my skills and our community.*

Step 6 - Plan Moments:

When will your activities be most effective? Your government may be participating in regional decision-making meetings (e.g. African Union summits, High Level Political Forum regional meetings) or global events that relate to your issue or the SDGs process. 'Beyond 2015' (contact details on page 19) have national and regional hubs that may be able to help you find this information. Find out if there are events planned on specific dates, such as on International Youth Day (August 12th).

Prioritise events in your timeline by thinking about where you could have the greatest influence.

Put a price tag on it. Think through the resources you need for your activities and the cost of these. Build a budget for your advocacy plan. You may include costs like travel, accommodation and food allowances for volunteers and partners as well as renting a venue, resources (like stationery or campaign materials) or conference attendance fees. You may also want to budget for contingency (unexpected costs) or central costs (e.g. electricity). Be realistic about what budget you have and think of partners who could financially support you.



Step 7 - Monitor and Evaluate:

This is essential to determine whether you are successfully on your way to meeting your advocacy objectives or risk any challenges. Here are a few questions to help you monitor and evaluate your activities.

Have you created time in your plan to think about your progress and learning as you go?

1. Think about your advocacy goal. What information will show you whether you've had an impact, or not? *E.g. support or commitment from your country representative or UN Resident Coordinator, public or community support for your advocacy goal and/or increased pressure on decision-makers.*

2. What things do you need to collect to prove this? *E.g. number of young people supporting your ideas, quotes from your advocacy target or partners, evidence that your tactics have taken place.*

3. How will you get this information or proof? Who, how, where and when? *E.g. taking photos at events, interviewing your partners or targets after you have organised a public event, counting your support on social media.*

Working through these traffic light steps can help you to identify what you have learned from your activities. Share your learnings with your colleagues and the network.

STOP

What didn't work well and should you consider stopping?

CONTINUE

What worked well and should you keep doing?

START

What could you do to improve?

Well done! Now that you have completed these steps, you are ready to take action. Good luck!
Read on to find out how you can join others like you.

Useful Links

Post-2015	Letter from young people to the High Level Panel	restlessdevelopment.org/file/youth-letter-to-high-level-panel-pdf
	Open Working Group	https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html
	OWG Final document	https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf
	Youth Voices on a Post 2015 World	http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/youth-voices-post-2015-world-pdf
	MyWorld Survey	http://data.myworld2015.org/
	UN Secretary General Synthesis Report: 'A Road to Dignity...'	http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&Lang=E
Evidence	Intergovernmental negotiations process	https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015
	<i>Partners for Change; Young people and governance in a post-2015 world</i>	http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/partners-for-change-pdf
	Summary	www.plan-uk.org/assets/Documents/pdf/ODI_Plan_Restless_Development_Project_Briefing.pdf
Advocacy	<i>Democracy Watchdogs : Youth-driven participatory accountability and monitoring in the Post 2015 Development Agenda</i> (ActionAid, January 2015)	http://www.actionaid.org/publications/democracy-watchdogs-youth-driven-participatory-monitoring-and-accountability-post-2015-
	<i>Act!2015 Advocacy strategy toolkit</i> Prioritise your issue Pg 30 Budgeting template Pg 83	www.restlessdevelopment.org/file/act-2015-advocacy-toolkit-pdf
Other	<i>Youth Advocacy Toolkit: The Education We Want</i>	www.plan-international.org/girls/reports-and-publications/youth-advocacy-toolkit-the-education-we-want.php
	<i>Pathways to Power; Youth Summary</i>	http://www.plan-uk.org/assets/Documents/pdf/BI-AAG_2014_Report_Pathways_to_Power_Youth_Sum.pdf

Get Connected

We are building a community where you can join, learn from and exchange ideas with other young advocates who are interested in governance and the SDGs. Get in touch with Miriam (miriam@restlessdevelopment.org) to get involved.

Other great global networks that you can get involved with include:

Action/2015 Youth Team: a global movement of young people campaigning for ambitious action in 2015. Find out what's happening in your country by contacting the Action/2015 Youth Coordinator (annar@restlessdevelopment.org) or by visiting restlessdevelopment.org/action-2015



ActionAid Activista: a global youth network involving ActionAid partners and thousands of volunteers in more than 25 countries. www.actionaid.org/activista



The United Nations Major Group of Children & Youth: the official civil society body for youth that is consulted by the UN. www.childrenyouth.org/involved



Beyond2015: brings together Civil Society Organisations in over 130 countries. Look for partners in your country at www.beyond2015.org



This toolkit has been created by Restless Development (restlessdevelopment.org, 7 Wootton Street, London SE1 8TG, UK) and Plan UK (www.plan-uk.org, Finsgate, 5-7 Cranwood Street, London, EC1V 9LH, UK), as part of a joint project with Action Aid and British Youth Council. The project supports a task team of young people and youth organisations globally to participate in the Post-2015 process and to influence the international and national level discussions. Their aim is to ensure that youth are prioritised as a key group within governance and accountability related goals, targets and indicators, and in accountability mechanisms to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, contact miriam@restlessdevelopment.org.

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