



# GOALKEEPERS YOUTH ACTION ACCELERATOR

## Programme report, 2018-2020



In 2018, the Goalkeepers Youth Action Accelerator kicked off - an exciting, innovative, youth-led and multi-partner programme implemented by CIVICUS, a global alliance of over 8,000 members in 175 countries dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society. The launch of the Accelerator was a direct response to the challenges young people face in accessing sufficient and appropriate resources to meaningfully engage in development decisions and activities that affect their communities.

The Accelerator supported promising youth advocates using data in innovative ways to address Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1-6; more specifically, local development challenges related to poverty, hunger, health and well-being, education, gender equality and water and sanitation.

These youth-led initiatives related to:

### Data sourcing & Accountability

Eighteen initiatives implemented by the Goalkeepers focused on gathering community views and experiences and/or crowdsourced data related to the specific development issue they worked on. For example, Fabienne Rafidiharirina grew her project, DataMad Channel, that collects and shares data through stories on different SDGs.

### Data translation & Storytelling

Thirteen initiatives and campaigns focused on translating existing development data into stories that showcase progress and encourage leaders across sectors to act. An example of a successful Goalkeeper initiative is the Instituto Alinha, implemented by Dariele Santos. The organisation aims to change the conditions of sewing workshops by sharing the stories of the workers that produce clothing in Brazil.

Chosen youth advocates received funding, technical and networking support, valued at up to US\$40,000. The work of the goalkeepers kicked off in Arusha, Tanzania from 21-25 January, where the youth advocates met each other and designed the action plans for their projects.

### Goalkeepers Award

- **Flexible support of up to US\$22,000 for organisation or project costs**
- **Technical support of up to US\$12,000 for individual and institutional strengthening support.**
- **Networking support of up to US\$6,000 to attend national or international forums with civil society and decision makers. This included a full week orientation week.**
- **Mentorship program**
- **Digital media promotion**

The programme was made possible through the funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the advice of partners including CIVICUS, Action for Sustainable Development, George W. Bush Institute, Obama Foundation, and Restless Development, along with the leadership of a Steering Committee made up of young leaders from 11 different countries.

This report shares the summary outcomes and lessons from the programme.









# OUTCOME 1: YOUTH AND YOUTH-LED ORGANISATIONS CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE HAVE INCREASED ADVOCACY, TECHNICAL CAPACITY AND ACCESS TO NETWORKS TO ACCELERATE THEIR INITIATIVES.



The CIVICUS Youth Action Team was invited to review the project concept note and participated in long-listing the applications with CIVICUS staff, selecting the top 113 candidates from the overall 2,000 received applications. For the final selection, a youth-led governance structure was designed for a steering committee which included a 100% youth representation to ensure the Accelerator content and process responded to the agreed needs and requirements. The governance structure included 10 young activists between 18 and 35 years old from different regions and backgrounds selected by the programme partners for the steering group, and 3 youth members from the partner advisory committee. A key lesson from this process was the need to initiate the engagement of the committee from earlier stages to increase the ownership and sustain their engagement throughout the programme.

This committee conducted the Goalkeepers Youth Action Accelerator open call, shortlisting 26 participants from the top 113 applicants based on their a) geographic location – this programme was targeted to work with young leaders from the Global South, b) relation of their initiative to the two pillars of the Accelerator and c) demonstrated knowledge and connection with the community that they intend to serve.

Quarterly learning discussions with the group of 26 Goalkeepers were held to ensure that the specific needs of the participants were assessed regularly and used to direct further support or make adjustments. For example:

- Many Goalkeepers raised access to funding as a challenge for sustainability of their projects. As a result...
- Some requested additional time to complete their projects due to different factors including COVID-19, which resulted in a four months extension.
- The Goalkeepers and the programme team shared potential opportunities and connections made to further advance the work of the young advocates.

To further address the needs of the Goalkeepers young advocates, the programme team also conducted a mapping of technical support to determine training needs and identify a pool of relevant training providers. Shortlisted partners developed proposals for service offerings based on needs assessments, which participants could access on demand. These programmatic activities strategically focused on building the capacity of the Goalkeepers through skills development, networking and funding. All participants shared improvements in skills related to advocacy, M&E, storytelling, data management and others.

The Accelerator participants also increased their respective networks by building relationships with the rest of the cohort and through participating in conferences and key events. 21 advocates shared examples of formal partnerships formed, and 16 shared that the Accelerator increased their access to new funding opportunities. Examples include: [Dumisani](#) who was able to establish partnerships with UNICEF Malawi, Young African Leaders Initiative, and Unmanned Systems Lab, among others ; and [Ximena](#) who found two more sponsors to support the replication of her programme in additional cities in Mexico.



**XIMENA ARRIETA, DATOS PARA TODAS, MEXICO**

“We found two more sponsors so we can replicate the program in two other Mexican cities.”

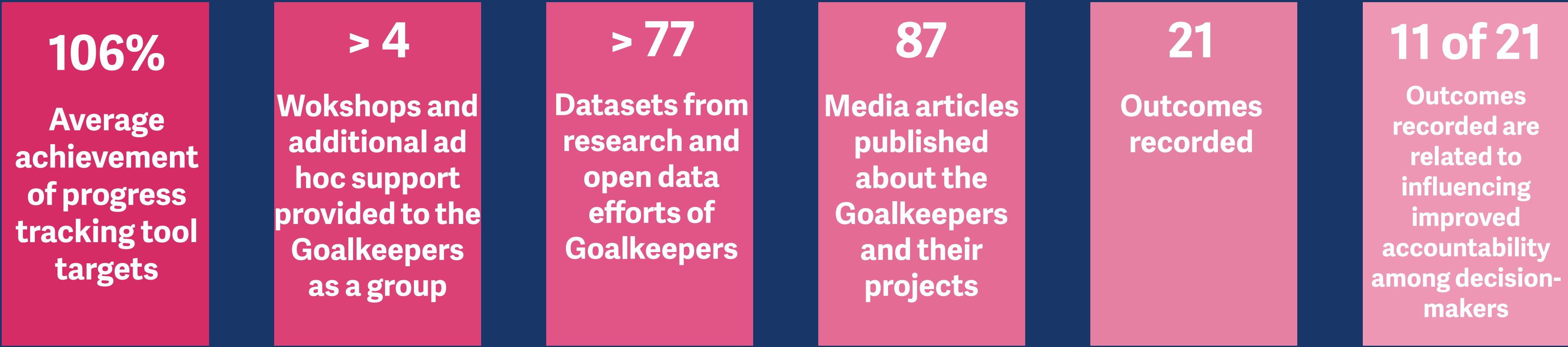


**NIKHIL TANEJA, YUVAA, INDIA**

“The GYAA cohort has given Yuva and me access to global networks of young people working on sustainable developemtn, and particularly within India, with Natasha and Deepa, who are working in gender and marginalised youth communities on mental health and empowerment.



## OUTCOME 2: INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG KEY DECISION MAKERS IN TARGET GEOGRAPHIES (AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA) TOWARDS MEASURABLE PROGRESS IN TARGETS SET WITHIN SDGS 1–6



A progress tracking tool (rubric) was developed for Goalkeepers to track their project-specific targets and progress on a quarterly basis. The Goalkeepers tracked a set of domains relevant to their current and intended project stage. The domains were a set of operational goals and longer term outcomes, such as *“Finance: Sustainable funding secured for at least 2 years from multiple sources of at least \$20,000”*; and *“Outcome: A vibrant network of at least 200 [Nile River] basin journalists sharing opportunities and best practices”*. These are then stratified by the four stages of achievement of this goal (sprout; seedling; flowering; bearing fruit).

This allowed each Goalkeeper to determine their own contextually relevant targets and determine progress over the four stages during the year. The number of domains determined by the Goalkeepers ranged between 4 to 12 domains. The average achievement of these domain goals against targets was 106% and ranged between 67% and 200%. This means that some advocates achieved more targets than what they initially planned. For example:

- 18 Goalkeepers shared a total of 21 outcomes related to improved services, scale, recognition and driving accountability among key decision-makers - three of these are represented in the below quotes.
- 9 of the 26 Goalkeepers shared how they have influenced an increase in accountability among key decision-makers as specific outcomes. This included 11 outcomes related to the improved accountability.
- Natasha shared how the Delhi Medical Council, responsible for registering and de-registrering doctors in the capital, agreed to these commandments and committed to providing safe services for unmarried women.
- Brice shared that he convinced the government of Benin not to adhere to the 1991 convention on the protection of new varieties of plants which threatens food sovereignty and the right of access.
- 10 Goalkeepers reported collating or generating substantial data through surveys, assessment and open data advocacy. Fabienne shared that she facilitated the sourcing of 68 databases published on the Madagascar Open Data Platform.

The Goalkeepers advocates are growing in prominence in the role they play in their country. Their projects or profiles have been shared publicly in more than 87 media articles. Some examples include the Zamhive Project (David Mwabila) being featured on the UN Environment and the South World impact news; 18 Infonile (Annika McGinnis) stories published through multiple media houses; and Public Space Network’s (Ana Tehlova) initiative featured on CNN International Inside Africa documentary.



**DUMISANI KALIATI,**  
**FLYINGTHINGS, MALAWI**

“We have set up a drug store as our first step towards establishing low-cost last mile mobile clinics that will serve remote areas with drones. The drug store is expected to serve a population of over 20,000 people.”



**BRICE SOHAU,**  
**STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY BY SUPPORTING FARMERS WITH DATA ON LAND FERTILITY, BENIN**

“We convinced the government of Benin to not adhere to the 1991 convention on the protection of new [botanical] varieties, which threaten food sovereignty.”



**WILSON VILLONES,**  
**CHECKMYSCHOOL, THE PHILIPPINES**

“[We facilitated] the commitment of the Department of Education in the Philippines to adopt a participatory monitoring and evaluation platform.”



## KEY LESSONS

Through the reflection workshop and the quarterly learning sessions key lessons were documented. The key lessons are listed below.

- 1) **Go beyond funding** when supporting youth-led organisations. Consider technical support, networking opportunities, mentorship and media promotion.
- 2) Increase visibility through **storytelling and media coverage** to improve legitimacy
- 3) **Use light touch M&E tools and frameworks** in native languages to build resilience and enhance sustainability. The flexibility and openness of the Goalkeepers programme allowed advocates to adjust their plans based on their learnings and changes encountered.
- 4) **Involve people who represent your constituents** to co-design projects and sustain their engagement from beginning to end.
- 5) Ask for **flexibility from your donor** to make your project more successful. Having an open and honest relationship with partners and donors allowed the programme to quickly adjust in times of Covid-19 to avoid creating any harm to advocates.



Learn more on [civicus.org/accelerator](https://civicus.org/accelerator)