SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT AFTER FUNDING EDGES

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This section is part of the Youth Action Lab Playbook - a collection of resources, learnings and recommendations for donors and youth partners based on the Youth Action Lab pilot project. Click here to read more about the YAL Playbook, its background and purpose.

BACKGROUND

Although financial and technical assistance are crucial for the development of individuals and organisations, building networks is equally important to gain access to new ideas, perspectives, approaches and, potentially, new resources.
**APPROACH**

The CIVICUS Youth team used different approaches to sustain engagement and co-create opportunities for mutual learning, reflection and alliance building. Through a thorough process of engaging with the learnings gathered since the first iteration of the Youth Action Lab, the CIVICUS team co-created events for the YAL participants to develop their networks by:

- Opening spaces for sharing the most valuable capacity building offerings the YAL had access to with all CIVICUS youth members.

- Offering technical and financial support to CIVICUS Youth alumni - including the Youth Action Lab - to create a series of formal and informal events to connect, exchange knowledge and mobilise in solidarity, online and in person. These events were named **Global Perspectives Lab Series** by the CIVICUS Youth alumni.

- Sharing engagement opportunities with youth partners on an ongoing basis via social media, direct messages and newsletters.

- Re-telling and re-sharing the participants’ profiles and stories online, even when the funding cycle has ended.
In wanting to reach as many young activists as possible, the CIVICUS team ensured that the Youth Action Lab online application form was translated into at least three different languages, namely; English, Spanish and French. All communication throughout the recruitment and selection process was translated with additional support, where needed, being offered to participants who needed it. Moreover, being aware of the ongoing digital divide, CIVICUS chose SurveyMonkey as the chosen platform for the application process as it is one of the more data friendly and efficient platforms.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Listening to grantee partners to secure ownership in the design of future networking initiatives

Engagement during the grant period and after the grant has ended are not the same. Therefore, it is essential for the sustainable engagement plan to consider this shift in order to retain participation and value in the investment. This required 6 hours of feedback sessions one month before the grant period concluded. The participants who were truly excited about the ideas they were sharing, contributed to the design of the networking events that happened right after the end of the grant.

Youth-Led Engagement Opportunities

Once the YAL feedback was collected, it was presented to the CIVICUS Youth Action Team, an action and advisory body within CIVICUS mandated to mainstream youth voices across the alliance and set the agenda for the CIVICUS Youth community. They were the ones who came up with the name of ‘Global Perspectives Lab’ for the series of youth-led organised events and invited active and close members of the CIVICUS Youth community to co-create these conversations. The Youth Action Lab participants were the main leads, facilitators, rapporteurs and promoters, followed by some of the 2022 CIVICUS Youth Ambassadors.

Accessibility and Support

To sustain engagement beyond the end of funding, it is important to ensure that youth partners find engagements useful and that they are presented in ways that are accessible and relevant to their specific needs and contexts. For example, merely sharing resources like the Sustainable Leadership Course through an online platform (the CIVICUS Member 2 Member platform) was not enough for meaningful engagement and learning. Partners required more personalised guidance and support, such as being taken through the course by a coach step-by-step to fully grasp its concepts and apply them in practice. By providing such in-person support and interactions, organisations can help youth partners continue to develop and grow, even after funding ends.
CHECKLIST

- Connect grantee-partners with relevant networks in your circle that may support the activist or grantee-partner, once your grant ends or in a future opportunity. Funders and intermediaries can serve as ‘door openers’ for young changemakers.

- If you have the human resources available to support activist-led conversations, facilitate the financial, technical and psychosocial support for first-time organisers of international and digital events. These open discussions lead to surprising connections and opportunities where grantee-partners collaborate with new organisations independently and autonomously from your support.

- Every 6 or 12 months, book a couple of hours to check in with grantee-partners and make sure they are in your organisation’s database so they receive the updates and opportunities you or your colleagues develop.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT OTHER PRACTICES?

The Playbook is to be read and applied according to your context and can be adapted to suit your needs. Each practice is independent of the other so the order you want to choose to explore is always the right one. Click on one of the circles below to learn more about each practice.