

Youth Breakfast

The role of youth within the post-2015 monitoring and review framework

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Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN

Summary

Half of the world population being under the age of 25, young people will be in charge of not only implementing the post-2015 agenda, but also of monitoring and reviewing it. This agenda requires the courage to shift to a new paradigm; *i.e.* coming up with an innovative way of doing things. And who can better think out of the box than young minds? Youth is both directly concerned by the implementation of the SDGs and constitutes the main actor for change. From the very beginning onwards, it is therefore crucial to ensure youth participation in the monitoring and review processes of the post-2015 agenda. Youth should also be able to ensure accountability for the implementation of the agenda.

The meeting brought together a great variety of young individuals, carrying different functions and coming from various parts of the world, in order to discuss the best ways to involve youth at all levels of the post-2015 review mechanism. Ambassador Michael Gerber, Special Envoy of Switzerland for Global Sustainable Development, gave the opening remark. Ms Sofia Garcia Garcia, Advocacy Advisor Post-2015 Agenda, SOS Children's Villages International, Beyond 2015, presented the final remarks.

During the first part of the meeting, participants discussed youth participation within the monitoring and review process. During the second part, participants focused on both concrete instruments for youth involvement and challenges ahead.

Youth Participation

- Young people must be considered as equal experts with their own knowledge. One must be humble and acknowledge that very fact.
 - o Their capacity of understanding, remembering and creating is too often underestimated. They already have the required capacities and should thus only be given the necessary space to exercise them.
 - o Children and young individuals are better at mastering social media, among other things, than adults.
 - o It has been shown that the current way of dealing with things does not produce satisfying results. Youth can suggest innovative ways for change.
- Governments should adopt a life-based approach instead of a strategic-based approach. National concepts are not that important for young people.
- Young individuals are very diverse and do not all face the same challenges and opportunities. Significant inequalities remain within and across countries. One must thus ensure diversity in youth involvement.
- Moving from the creation of a process to its implementation, the declaration must call for a strong participation by all stakeholders, especially youth.

Concrete aspects and instruments

- Data collection is a key.
 - o Data needs to be disaggregated in at least five years intervals.
 - o Self-organised youth networks are the best actors to collect data regarding youth, thus ensuring that their issues and concerns are not forgotten. These networks need to be empowered and funded, as to ensure their capability of taking over substantial monitoring tasks.

- It is crucial to ensure that the monitored data are both relevant and contextualized: *i.e.* that nobody is left behind. This aspect, particularly relevant for the global south, requires adequate and increasing funding.
- Importance of building upon existing structures and networks
 - National Youth Councils should be further developed and empowered.
 - Existing organisations and networks can play a key role in making the 17 goals youth-friendly.
- The current general debate has been focusing very much on the global, regional and national levels but the critical role of the local level should be acknowledged as well.
 - Municipalities are key to the implementation.
 - It remains difficult for young individuals to engage in a meaningful way at the national level.
 - The monitoring and review processes must begin at the grass root level.
- Policy coherence must be ensured
 - National budgets must be aligned with the challenges faced by young people in participation
 - Youth should have a say regarding financing resource allocation (participatory budgeting).
 - Inclusiveness should be ensured during the entire process.
- Communication, language and awareness are very important. Youth should be informed of the whole process, in order to meaningfully engage in it.
 - National governments are responsible for ensuring that, even in rural areas, people know about the SDGs.
 - Tools easily interpretable by young people should be developed.
 - Language: It is important to clarify the meaning and differences between follow-up & review and accountability. .
 - Translation is a critical point
- Concrete instruments to improve communication, develop capacity building and enhance participation can be implemented:
 - A children's version of the SDGs containing all goals and targets was developed by child-focused organisations and was recently translated into Dutch.
 - Model United Nations and Youth Parliaments are powerful tools to involve young people. Such tools can be implemented at all levels. The involvement of governments and NGOs can promote cross-exchanges.
 - However, Models United Nations only constitute simulations. Can one enhance their concrete impact?
 - One could set up a coalition around each SDG.
 - National Youth Representatives (Youth Rep) should be both present and meaningfully involved during the whole process (avoid a token approach).
- Overall, capacity building and funding remains ones of the main critical aspects of youth participation. More funding is needed as to:
 - Empower and further develop youth organisations, youth networks and national youth councils so that they can engage young people and develop an efficient monitoring framework.
 - Allow local initiatives to scale up to the global level.
 - Give the opportunity to organisation like Beyond 2015 to conduct consultations and actions, ensuring that all voices are heard.

One should all keep up the dialogue and share experiences and best practices regarding youth involvement. One should also get inspired by the proposed solutions and try to design ones adapted to each level.