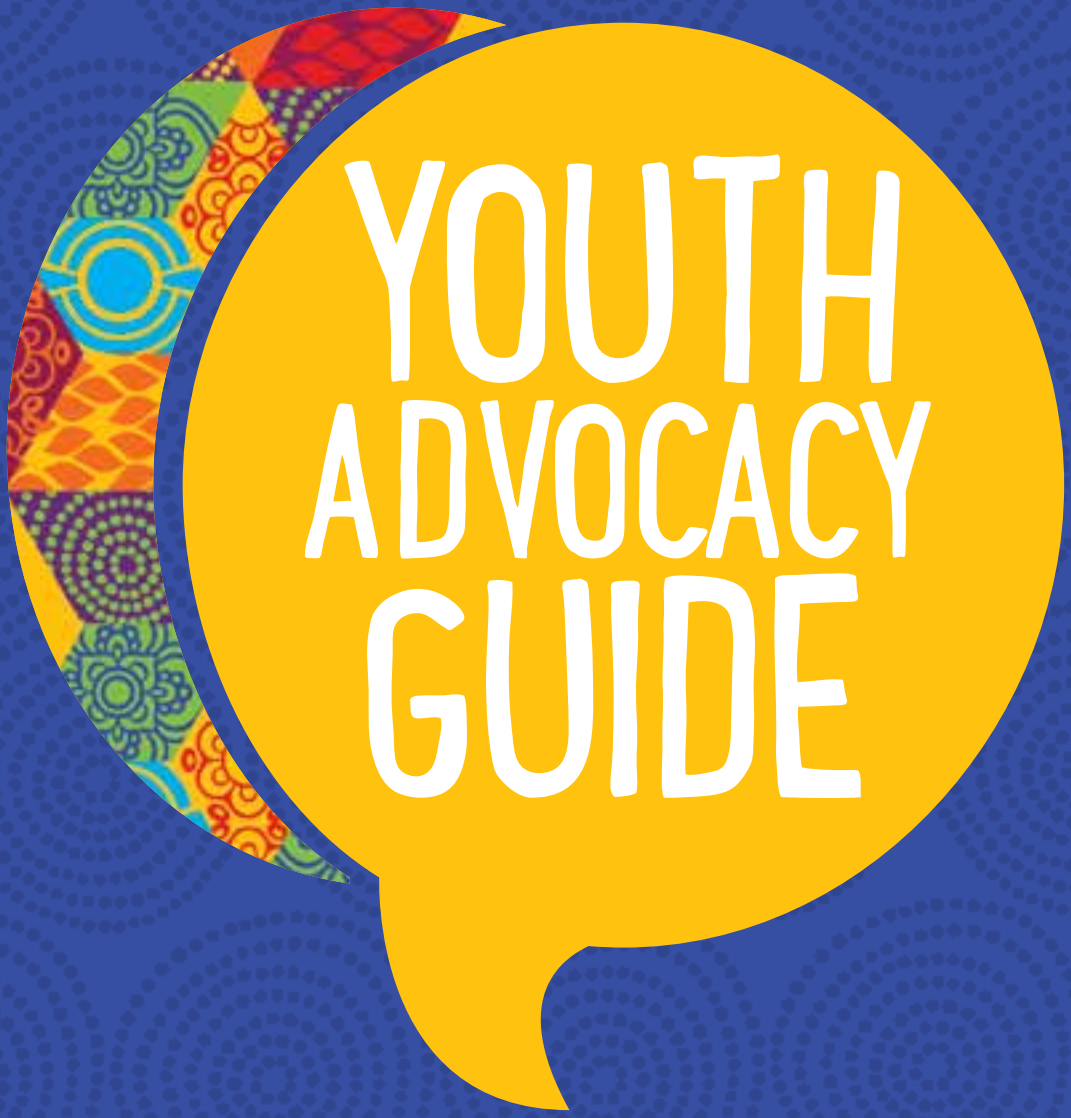
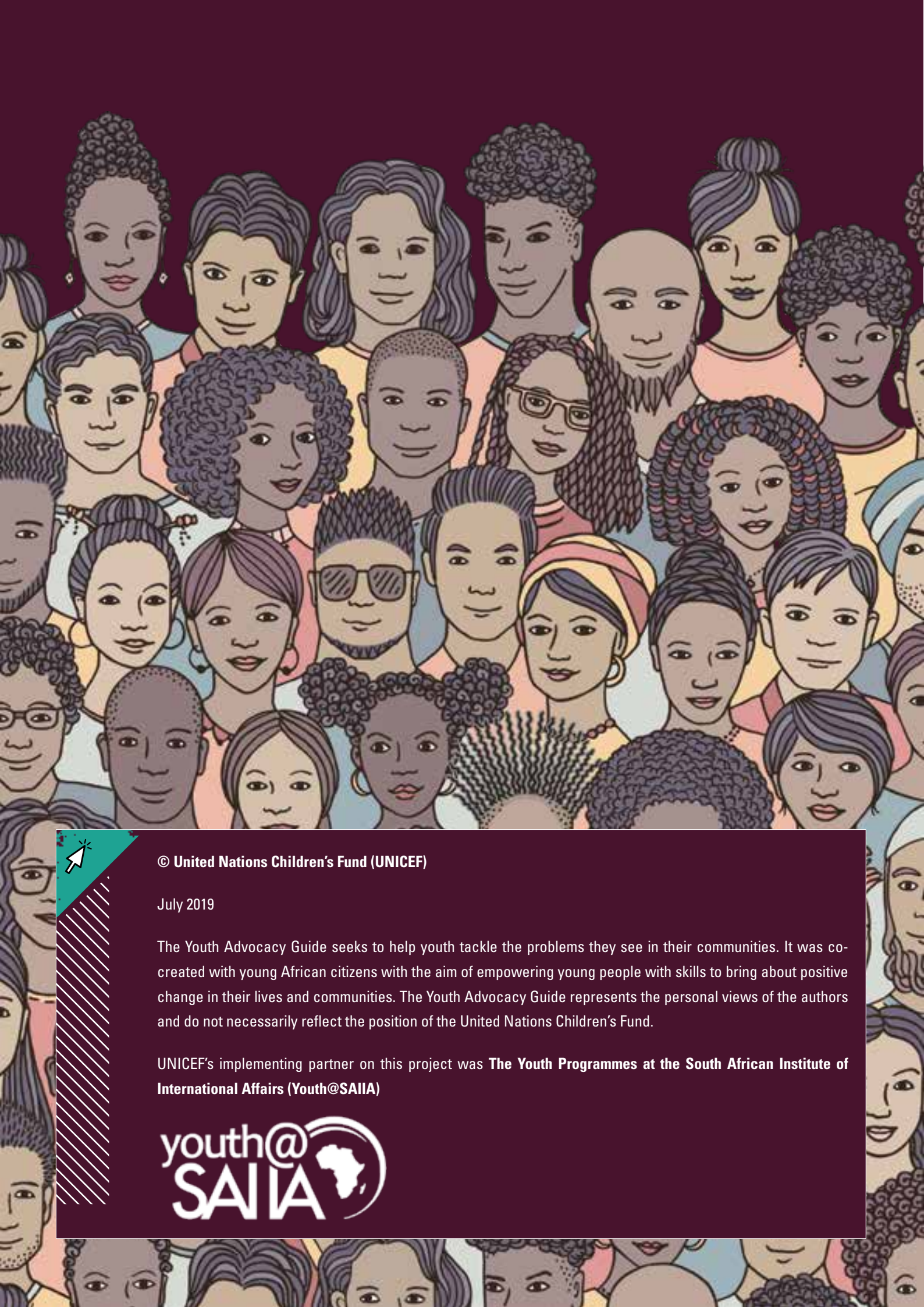
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YOUTH ADVOCACY GUIDE



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July 2019

The Youth Advocacy Guide seeks to help youth tackle the problems they see in their communities. It was co-created with young African citizens with the aim of empowering young people with skills to bring about positive change in their lives and communities. The Youth Advocacy Guide represents the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the United Nations Children's Fund.

UNICEF's implementing partner on this project was **The Youth Programmes at the South African Institute of International Affairs (Youth@SAIIA)**

youth@SAIIA

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INTRODUCTION



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Young people are striving to bring about change in their communities. This young activist is reading out the Children's Declaration at the closing ceremony of the 2010 National Youth Forum on Children's Rights in Niamey, Niger.

DEAR READER...

Can we be honest with you?

This is normally where people list their impressive biographies, but the truth is, we – the authors, contributors and editors of this guide – are just like you. We are young, with different lived experiences, and we come from various parts of Africa. We are united by the idea that we can, and must, make positive changes for a better future.

But how do we do it?

Here are some truths you already know: our continent, and the world, are facing huge challenges. While none of these are of our making, they've been left for us to deal with. Many of us experience these challenges daily. Poverty isn't something we just read about, education isn't guaranteed, inequality is something we constantly experience, and climate change is real and already making our taps run dry.

Now here's something you might not know – the African youth demographic is growing. Africa's child population is currently estimated at 580 million – this represents 47 per cent of the entire continent and is four times larger than the child population of Europe. By 2055, it's expected that Africa's child population will reach one billion.

Such an enormous change in the African population presents immense opportunities – and challenges. What is clear, is that urgent investment in young people is essential. If child and youth-focused policies are put in place now, poverty and inequality would be reduced, and sustainability could be a reality. If not, unemployment will worsen, resources will be further depleted, and instability may become the norm.

But the first scenario – brighter days – is possible, with your help. This Youth Advocacy Guide can help us navigate the various processes to advocate for change. Think of this guide as our ally, as we work to leave our mark on the world. It aims to lead you through the process of advocacy, combining clear 'how to' steps, with inspirational stories from other young people who are striving to bring about change in their communities. When we read these stories of triumphs and challenges, ranging from preventing child marriage to inspiring environmental activism, it reminds us that we are not alone. Rather, we are part of a growing community of young people who are slowly, systematically, changing the world.



So, read on, dive in – change has to start somewhere – and we believe it begins with you, today. And that's the truth.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS: YOUTH PARTICIPATION, ADVOCACY AND POLICY



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The voices of young people must be heard! One way this is done is through U-report, also known as SMS BIZ in Mozambique. U-report is UNICEF's free digital youth engagement tool, which is now active in 53 countries, benefiting more than 6 million users worldwide. In Mozambique, 244,388 u-reporters use SMS Biz, 41% of whom are girls

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Think of youth participation as a giant umbrella that covers many ways and means of being involved. All forms of advocacy done by young people could be defined as youth participation, but not all forms of youth participation could be defined as advocacy. Confused? Let's break it down.

Active youth participation *means you are engaging or are ready to engage. For example, you could participate actively by researching a topic, finding actions you could take and raising awareness with the goal of changing the behaviour of others.*

DEFINITION

Youth participation refers to how young people can be involved in processes, institutions and decisions that affect our lives. Since children and youth make up the majority of the African population, we believe these groups should be participating in all areas related to our social, political and economic life.

Passive youth participation *means you are willing to allow whatever happens to happen, and you are not changing or controlling the situation. For example, you could participate passively by listening to someone speak at an event, but you have no intention of getting involved in the issue or making any changes in your life.*

YOUTH PARTICIPATION CAN BE ACTIVE OR PASSIVE

Both types of youth participation have a time and place – sometimes it is necessary to be passively involved in an issue, other times it is necessary to be actively involved, by taking a definite stand. Learn to distinguish between the two types and how they fit into your unique situation, in terms of your own advocacy, how you want others to be involved, and how decision-makers offer to engage with you. Different levels of youth advocacy also exist, ranging from non-participation to full participation.

Read about **Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation** on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS

ADVOCACY



DEFINITION

Advocacy is about doing something to support, recommend, or implement actions linked to an idea or cause you care about. Advocacy is also about making voices heard, as often the ideas or practices we want to change affect the most vulnerable people in society. Advocacy uses this collective voice to defend and protect rights, or to support different initiatives or causes.



All people, including children and young people, are entitled to a say in the decisions that affect them. When we advocate for an issue, we are holding those in charge accountable to ensure that our rights are protected and upheld. We are not asking for favours.

We often associate advocacy with a dramatic event or impassioned cause. We tend to think of advocacy on large scales, such as the rise of youth movements like #FeesMustFall to address university access in South Africa, or #NotTooYoungToRun to reduce the age limit for elected office in Nigeria. In many ways this is true, advocacy can become something big and it does involve collective action. But this is only half the story.

Advocacy can also be a small act, such as telling a friend not to bully, and encouraging your friends to do the same. It can be more independent, such as researching and providing health information to a community leader to help promote healthy lifestyles. Or it can be about communicating ideas, such as writing a blog or sharing your experiences. Advocacy can also be about changing rules or laws, and organising legal demonstrations or rallies to support this cause.



Africa is filled with inspiring youth advocates, each doing their bit to transform their societies. Now that you know more about advocacy, and the many forms it can take, do you think you are a youth advocate? Or, could you become one?

POLICY

DEFINITION

A policy is a set of principles, ideas or plans that guide decisions to achieve a certain outcome. Policies are important because they shape the way we do things, they determine how we behave, and how we experience our everyday lives.

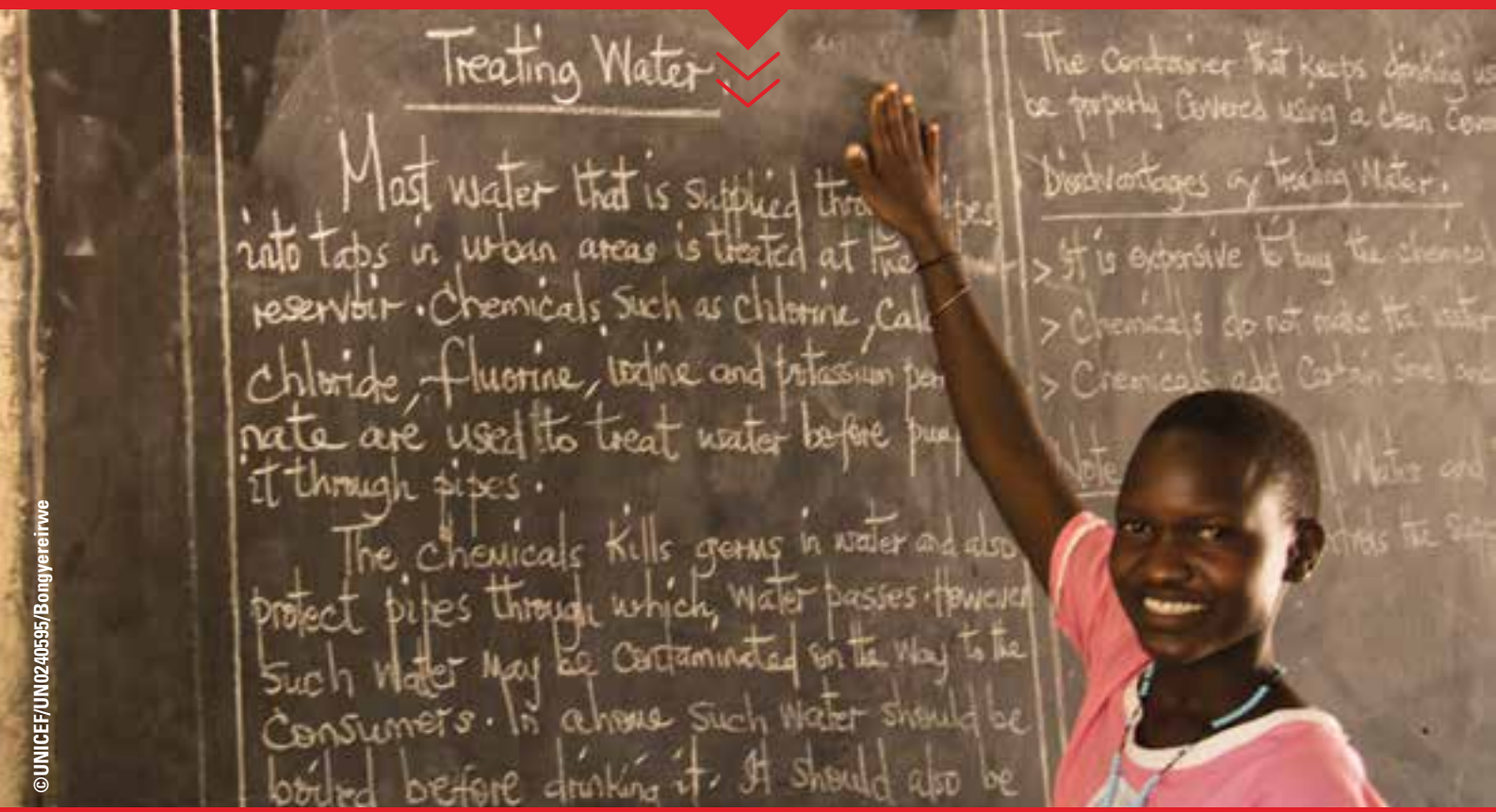
Most institutions or organisations have policies that provide a guide for how to make decisions. At the highest level there is global policy, an agreement between countries on how to engage in certain areas, like trade or the environment. There are also national policies that outline a country's objectives and the plans it has in place to achieve those. There are company policies on how to behave in a work environment, and there are school policies, outlining what behaviour is appropriate for a school.



If you can change the fundamental principles that guide decisions, you have a better chance of achieving your goal and sustaining it into the future. This is why advocacy always links back to policy and we will unpack policy engagement in a later section in this guide.

If you're still feeling a bit uncertain about some of these ideas, that's okay. As you begin your advocacy journey, you will start to see how interconnected everything is. There is no perfect time to start. Find an entry point and jump in!

WHERE TO BEGIN? LET'S START WITH YOU



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A student learns about water treatment processes ahead of the launch of the KOICA-UNICEF-supported water, sanitation and hygiene in schools programme at Longalom Primary in Karamoja, Uganda.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Before we can start any advocacy process, we need to start with ourselves. Think a little bit about what you're doing and why. Think about what you bring to the discussion and where you might be able to make a difference. Remember that advocacy is not always immediate and that sometimes your efforts need to be long-term. It is also important to identify areas that you need to develop and become better at. Advocacy is a constant process of learning and understanding. Reflecting on these areas will also help you identify other people you need to work with.

Some of the **main roles** involved in the advocacy process include researchers, speakers, writers, or implementers. Read more on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy



Researcher:

Research is all about investigation, finding out why things are a certain way, how they came to be that way, and how they might be able to change.



Speaker:

Speaking with people is a powerful way of sharing ideas. Good speakers can inspire people to take action in different ways.



Writer:

Good writing connects things – ideas, concepts, realities – and it helps to tell a story that people can connect to.



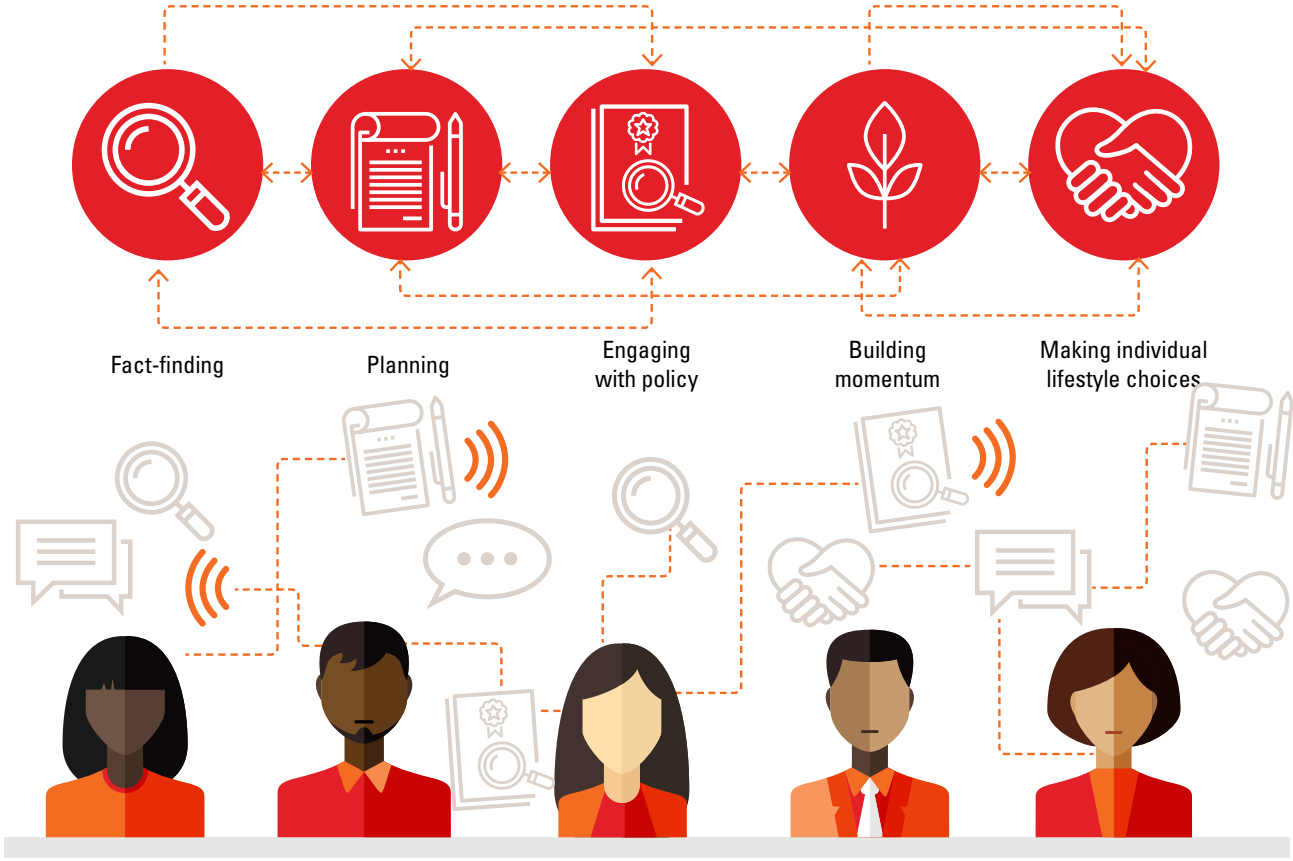
Implementer:

An implementer is someone who likes to get things done, someone who likes to be involved in things and get their hands dirty.

In advocacy, there is a place for everyone. Every individual offers a unique set of skills and abilities that play a role in the process. This is why teamwork is so important - you can start to form a team of people who, collectively, provide all the skills and abilities needed to effectively achieve your advocacy goals.

WHERE TO BEGIN

The advocacy process includes fact-finding, planning, engaging with policy, building momentum, and making individual lifestyle choices. In some ways, these components are linear – you gather information and become knowledgeable before you develop a plan. In other ways they are circular – the more you engage with policy, the more you may identify activities to include in your plan, or issues you need to gather more information on.



As a youth advocate, you can advocate on issues you are passionate about at the community, national, regional, continental or international level.



FACT-FINDING



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Young reporters approach parents in the streets of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to discuss adolescent behavior in the home, for their weekly radio show, which is broadcast across the country.

FACT-FINDING

CHOOSING YOUR ISSUE

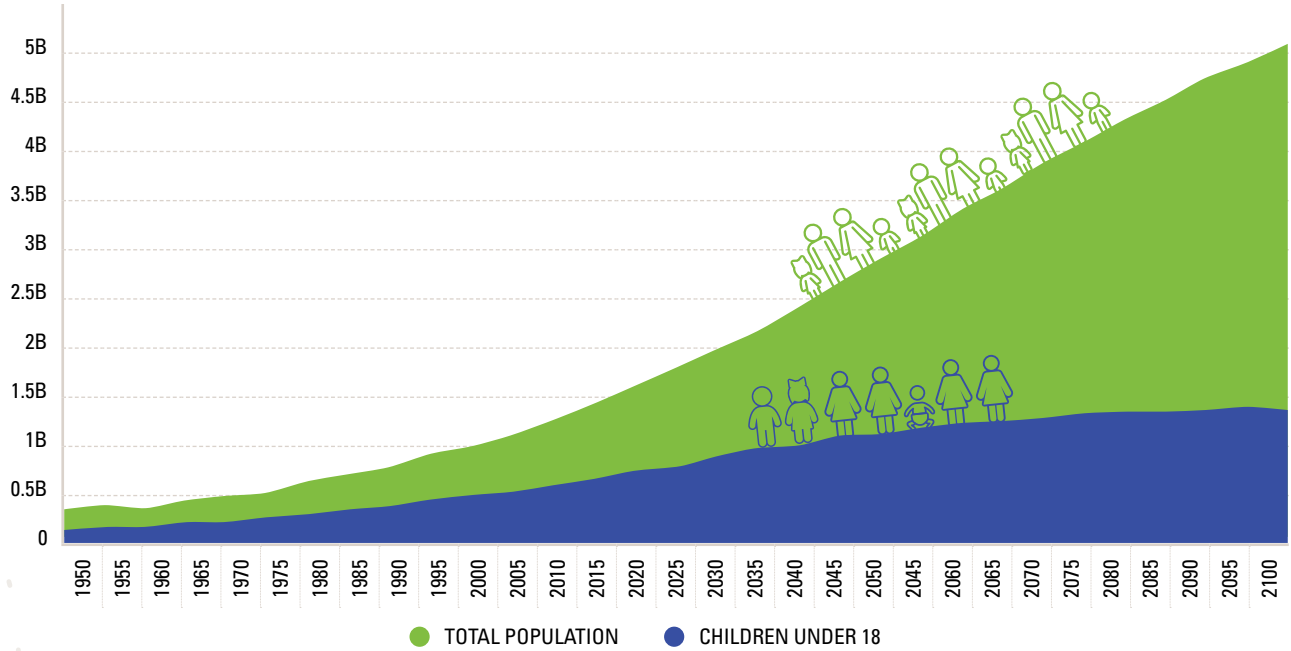
People become interested in different issues and causes for different reasons and that's good – there are a lot of challenges in society and we need everyone to be involved in their own unique way. Your chosen issue could deal with advocacy at the highest level, on an international stage, or could be a grassroots initiative within your community. One is not better or more important than the other, but they do require different approaches.

No matter what your area of interest, the most important thing is that you are passionate about your cause and you are inspired and motivated to get deeply involved. Are you having trouble finding a cause you are passionate about? Read more on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy for some ideas on how to get started.



When looking for your issue, it is important to think about your current situation, but also about the future. The global population is going to be the youngest one we have seen in decades. By 2030, there will be two billion young people seeking opportunities. What will this mean for education, jobs, and healthcare? What decisions need to be made today to satisfy people's needs in 10, 15, or even 30 years?

CHILDREN UNDER 18 AND TOTAL POPULATION IN AFRICA, 1950-2100, IN BILLIONS



Looking for something to advocate for?

With the increasing number of children expected on our continent, will we have enough schools for them? Will enough nurses and doctors be working in health centres? Is this something you can advocate around? The answer is yes. See what issues might be affecting your community and find out more about it.



GATHERING INFORMATION

The first step in an advocacy process is to gain a deeper understanding about your issue or topic. This is where you will use your skills as a researcher. The more you understand your topic and the issues surrounding it, the better equipped you will be to take action.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO GATHER INFORMATION ON:

History and Background	Social Context	Political Context
		

History and Background

It is unlikely your issue came out of nowhere, so you need to understand the history that led to the current situation and place your issue within the historic context of where you are from. Remember, in order to ensure sustainable change, you need to find the root cause of a problem and knowing the history will help you do this. Some of the questions you can ask are:



- What is the issue?
- When did this issue begin?
- What are some of the things that led to, or may have influenced, this issue?
- Who was involved in this issue?
- What are some of the social impacts of this issue?

In addition, reflecting on the history of something also helps you to understand how people feel. Most issues affect people at a personal level and it is likely there are many different opinions and feelings about your issue. Understanding the history and background, and specifically how it relates to your community or area, will help you to understand the different opinions and systems that people have developed over the years – the social context.

Social Context

Understanding the social context of your issue is extremely important. For your cause to be successful, you will need support from people at different levels. You need to understand the different perspectives and opinions that people have about your topic, so you can start to work with them and build relationships that contribute towards finding a solution.

Remember, in many cases, there may be strong emotions about a topic. What seems like a simple issue to you could represent something much bigger to someone else. There may be people strongly for, or against, your cause. Researching the social and cultural dynamics and understanding how different people relate to your topic will help you navigate the situation. Some questions you can explore are:

- Who are the authorities involved, such as government representatives, school boards, community leaders, and what has been their engagement so far?
- How are decisions made within the community?
- Who in the community is involved, either positively or negatively, in the issue?
- How do these people relate to each other? Are there good relationships in the community, or is there tension between groups?
- Does religion and/or culture play a role in this issue?
- What engagement has there been about the issue in the past?
- Am I putting myself at personal risk? Are there any security or safety measures I need to take into account?

Pay particular attention to the last question. No matter how important your issue is to you, advocating for it should never put you, or any other person, in danger. In order to keep yourself safe at all times, you need to manage risks. Make sure you understand the power dynamics, as well as the cultural and political context, of your country. You have the right to be protected from harm, so be aware of people and places you can turn to for help, if needed.

Remember: bringing about change is central to advocacy. To do this you need to gather support and build relationships. Forming alliances and working with other passionate young people around your issue is an extremely important and powerful tool in advocacy. While researching the stakeholders involved, look for any existing youth-friendly platforms, such as youth organisations or groups, that you could join or collaborate with.

Another way to build relationships is through intergenerational dialogue, where people of different ages share their experiences and ideas about how to grow the community. A possible 'sweet spot' of youth participation would be where the wisdom of those who have come before us would be joined by the views and voices of children and youth. Always engage with people respectfully and kindly, bearing in mind their perspective and context.

Political Context

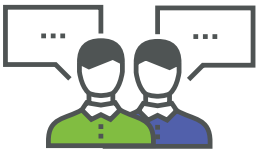
Every situation, whether it is a school project or community initiative, has a political context. This refers to the processes and structures in place that define and guide your topic, as well as the people who control these. First, develop a general understanding of your context by answering these questions:

- Who are the 'rule-makers' and how are decisions made?
- How can people engage with the decision-makers? For example, are there public meetings, community gatherings, or events you might be able to attend? Do you need to write letters or put together a formal submission or petition?
- How are voices represented within the community? Are there any local structures that represent the community?

Second, gain a deeper understanding of your context by reading and understanding the existing policies or rules relating to your issue. Africa is a continent rich with well-developed policies, but unfortunately, weak implementation. It is important to keep this in mind during your advocacy journey and to use policies as a guideline for action. We will go into more detail about policy in section 5.

Now that you know what information you need, you need to start gathering it.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN WAYS OF GATHERING INFORMATION:

Desktop research	Personal engagement
	

Desktop research

Desktop research is essentially when we gather published information about our topic. We could conduct research online, go to the library to collect books, read newspapers, journals, documents or reports. Using different sources of information will help us broaden our perspective and build our understanding. Have a system for saving and organising your documents for future reference. Take notes while reading documents and keep track of different ideas – the process of investigation and learning is on-going and keeping a record of your ideas and activities will help to clarify your understanding.

How do I know if my source of information is credible?

The internet is a great tool for doing research but it's important to ensure the credibility of information. Pay specific attention to what sites you are visiting and make sure you are using official websites, reputable news agencies, or good academic journals. The strength of your understanding will come from the strength of your information, so make sure you are using reliable, accurate sources.

A reliable or credible source is one that is unbiased and backed up by evidence. It can be difficult to determine whether something is credible or not, especially on the Internet, so here are some things to look for:

- **Who:** Who published the information? You should look for authors with a respected reputation who would be writing from an unbiased view.
- **What:** What is the main idea of the piece and are the claims backed up with evidence? Look for pieces with supporting information and a list of verifiable resources.
- **Where:** Where did you find the information? Examine the source of your information and make sure it is reliable. If using a website, look for official sites such as .gov, .ac or .edu.
- **When:** When was the information written? Make sure your information is still relevant, or if it is an older piece, provides some historical context.
- **Why:** What was the reason behind publishing this piece? Try to identify the agenda or objective behind the piece and make sure it is not biased.

Personal Engagement

Another way to gather information is through personal engagement. This is as simple as talking to different stakeholders to gather opinions and perspectives. This will help you understand how people are affected by, and what they feel about the issue.

DEFINITION

A stakeholder is any person, group, organisation, government department, company or institution that has an interest in the issue or cause you are dealing with. Some might be more directly linked to the issue than others, so it could be a good idea to create a map or diagram of all the groups and people that could be connected to your work.



It is important to speak to diverse groups of people, many of which you should have identified in your social context research. Some examples include:

- Government officials
- Experts and academics
- Community-based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or international non-governmental organisation (INGOs)
- Religious groups
- Private sector, such as business
- Peers and colleagues
- Parents, guardians and family members

You can find some tips on **engaging with different community groups** on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy

When engaging with people, it is important to be prepared by knowing who you are speaking to and their general relationship to the issue.

FACT-FINDING

Prepare a set of questions to ask, for example:

- What do they think about the issue and how does it impact them?
- How are they involved in the issue and what has been their experience?
- What do they see as possible solutions?
- Would they be willing to get involved in the issue?

As you engage with people, check if the information you found through your desktop research matches what people are saying. It is often hard to do, but you must try to distinguish between fact and opinion - it's important to understand what is actually happening, versus what people think about what is happening.



#STORY: Listening for Change

When **Innocent Mugerwa** started university in Uganda, he realised that young people were facing a range of challenges and often didn't have the support they needed. "The issues young people were facing ranged from reproductive health to depression. I saw many boys and girls suffering in silence - they didn't have anyone to talk to."

Innocent noticed that support programmes for university students were limited. He was unsure about what to do, but he knew that people needed someone to talk to, so he started listening to them. Over time, Innocent developed a reputation for being a trustworthy confidant and more people started to talk to him.

The more Innocent listened, the more he began to understand some of the difficult life choices people were facing. He did some fact-finding around HIV/AIDS and other health concerns of young people. He did desktop research, and spoke to experts, to build on what he was hearing from his fellow students.

Innocent began to understand what the problem was: people didn't have enough information, knowledge or services to make good decisions in their lives. He started to think about what he could do to make this information more accessible to university students.

Innocent decided to start an organisation specifically designed to address these and other issues. PEARL GENERATION UGANDA offers empowerment programmes and youth public dialogues, where reproductive health issues are discussed. It also runs a chatroom that offers mentorship and support to students and works to raise awareness about sexual reproductive health among girls.



#STORY: Turning Hope into Reality

As a young registered nurse in Lesotho, **Mamello Makehele** couldn't figure out why HIV patients weren't adhering to their medical treatment plans. She knew all the scientific facts and did research on different treatment programmes, but this didn't explain why the people she worked with were not taking their medication regularly.

Eventually, Mamello decided to conduct a different kind of research and started a fact-finding process. She started talking to community members about their lives and listened to their stories. Mamello learned that patients didn't need more awareness-raising campaigns or information about medication. They wanted shorter queues and more medical professionals to provide them with adequate care. As a result of understaffed facilities, many HIV patients were going without medication.

Mamello thought about creative ways to address this situation and came up with an idea to develop a medical app that people could use on their cellphones. She had limited resources and technical expertise, but she kept looking for ways to make the idea a reality. Eventually, Mamello managed to find the technical help she needed and developed the MobiHope app. She entered her app into the World Health Organisation (WHO) competition in health technology and it gained the attention of various organisations, including her own government. She secured sponsorship to develop the app and it is now set to officially roll out throughout the country, making healthcare services more accessible to people in need.



DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY PLAN



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This UNICEF Youth Advocacy Guide was created by young people, for young people. Mohamed Fadiga (l), Aicha Yele Soro (c), and Christelle Anokoua (r) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire participated in one of the workshops organised to co-create the Guide in 2018.

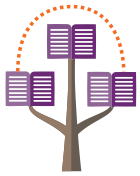
CONSOLIDATING IDEAS

By now you would have gathered a lot of information and you need to start consolidating it. One of the best ways to do this is by writing everything down – you will need this information throughout your advocacy process in different forms. Consolidate the information into the following topics:



Main problem or concern:

Brief overview of the main problem, what the impact of this is and why it is important.



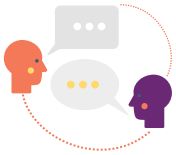
Background and political context:

Overview of the factors leading to this situation and important considerations about the social environment you are working in.



Possible solutions:

An overview of what could be done to address the situation.



Possible allies and youth platforms to support your issue:

A list of other young people and organisations you can collaborate with or learn from.



Key activities:

What you think will be needed to achieve your goal, including the main actors who need to be involved.

At this stage, don't worry too much about what the writing looks like. The most important thing is to consolidate your ideas and to make sure you have a fairly good written overview of these main components.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

As you go through all these steps, it is likely you are beginning to identify actions you can take to help bring about change. Developing a plan for your advocacy depends on how clearly defined your issue or cause is. For example, if you're trying to start a vegetable garden at your school, you need to communicate with the school authorities to get approval and engage with the students to get their support.

Bearing in mind the information you collected, ask yourself the following:



- Who are the main decision-makers I need to engage with and what is the best way of engaging with them?
- How can I influence the decision-making process?
- Who influences the decision-makers, such as media or different groups, and how should I engage with them?
- Who of my peers can work with me at this early stage?
- What is the best way of gaining support for my cause and how should I engage with people to encourage this?
- Who could influence the outcome of my cause, either positively or negatively, and how should I engage with them?
- What sensitivities should I be aware of when engaging with different people?
- Who will I need help or support from?

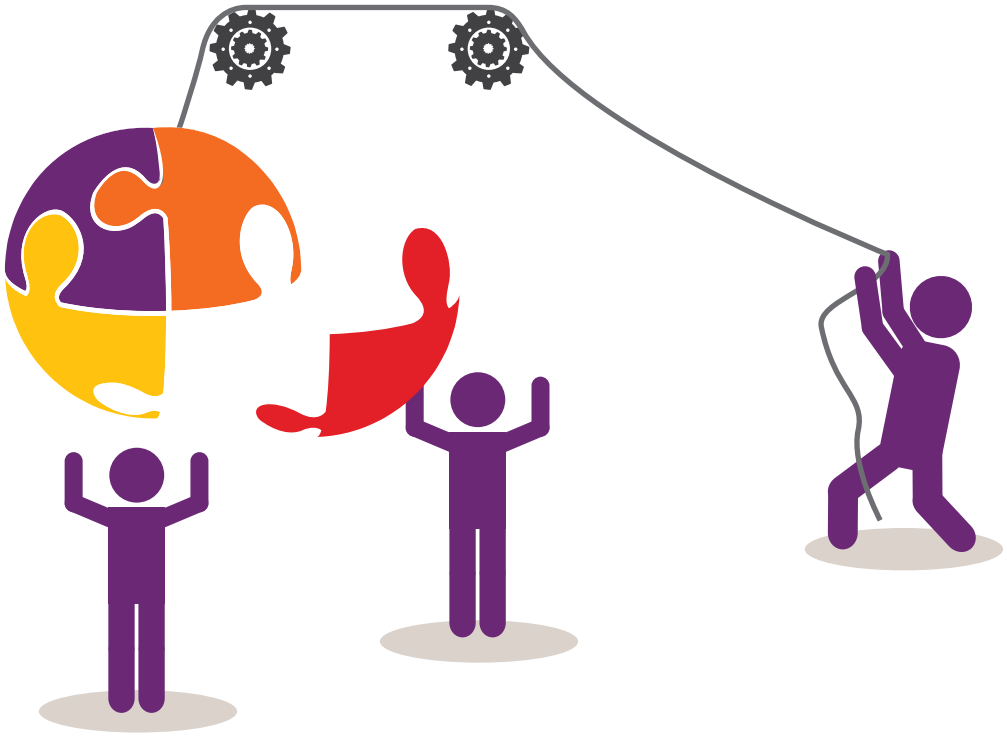
You may not be able to answer all these questions immediately but keep them in the back of your mind.

It doesn't matter how clear or blurry your plan may seem at this stage, you just have to start somewhere. Things will become clearer as you go and the more you engage, the more you will find opportunities to promote your advocacy. Your plan of action is never fixed or set – it grows and develops as you learn, and you will need to constantly revise your plan based on the experiences you have.

Start by developing a structure like the one below:

	NARRATIVE	MARKERS OF PROGRESS
Goals 	• What long-term outcome am I trying to achieve?	• How will I know my goal has been achieved? • What targets will have been achieved? • What would have changed?
Key actions 	• What needs to happen for my goal to be achieved? • Are there any external stakeholders we require?	• What markers will I use to know that I am on target for reaching my goal?

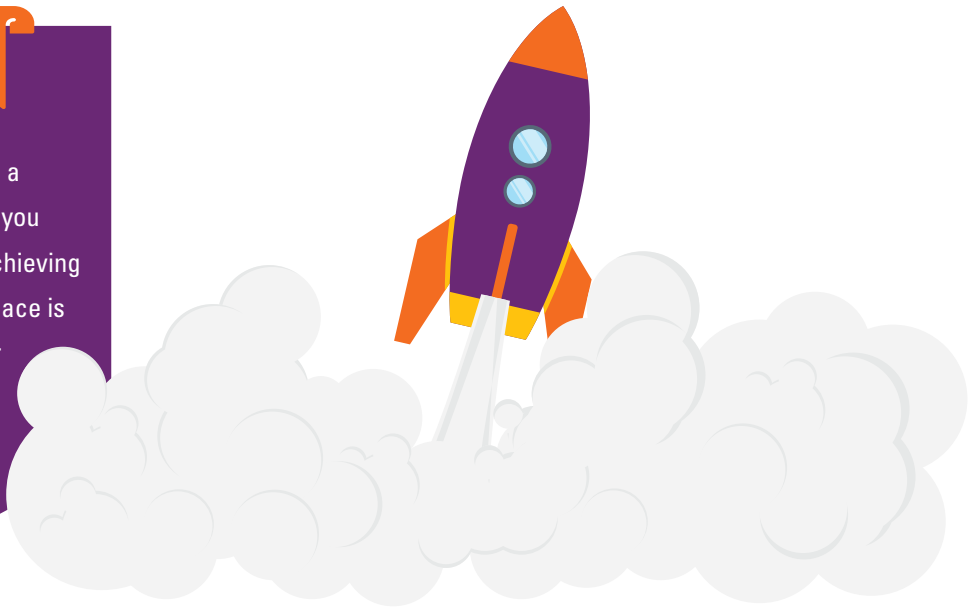
ACTIVITIES	TO DO LIST	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
List the activities that should be carried out	Break down each activity into individual steps	Who from your team should take on this responsibility?	Set deadlines or timeframes for activities



You can already identify the **goal** and you probably have some ideas about the **key actions.** You'll notice something important in this table too – **markers of progress.**

DEFINITION

Essentially, a marker of progress is a measurement, something that tells you whether you are making progress in achieving your goal or not. Putting markers in place is important because they set a target for what you are trying to achieve and they determine whether you are on track.



Here's what we mean. If your goal is the inclusion of girls in schools in your area, how would you know if you were on track for achieving this? Good markers of progress could be an increase in the number of girls attending school, girls becoming more confident in their academic work, possibly a change in the school's policy, or hearing the topic being discussed by lawmakers. By achieving these things, you would know you are on track for including girls in education.

Markers can also be tricky. In some cases, people set targets that don't match the goal and as a result, they don't achieve the overall goals of their advocacy. For example, if your goal is the inclusion of girls in education, your marker could be a change in the school's policy. But the policy might not actually be implemented – so girls are still not attending school.



If you're at the beginning of your advocacy process, you still might not be clear about what specific action you can take, and you might not be able to identify the activities. Don't worry, this is one of the sections that will be developed as you go, and you will need to come back to this at various stages of your advocacy process.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve our advocacy goals, it's important that we constantly assess whether we are on track towards achieving our desired outcome. It's important to know whether our ideas are working, or if there are things we need to change.

This is what monitoring is about – regularly gathering information to determine the impact our advocacy is having and to see if we need to do things differently.

Even with the best planning, things don't always work out the way we expected. Monitoring gives us an opportunity to reflect on our activities and to constantly find ways of improving what we are doing. Advocacy is difficult and so honest reflection is key. We will make mistakes. But if we acknowledge them, we will learn, and quickly become better advocates.

Here are some tips on how to monitor a project:



After you engage with people, take a moment to reflect and think. How did they engage with you? What did you learn? What could you have done better?



Reflect on how people are responding to your initiative. Are they understanding your message? Is there any way you could communicate more effectively?

What feelings and emotions are arising from the work you do? Are you learning anything from the community that would change the activities you had initially planned?

Remember, monitoring is all about making our advocacy as effective as possible. By regularly reflecting on the process and impact, we will continue to learn, improve and grow, and our advocacy will be more successful. We can also run into some risks while advocating and may need to deal with these before continuing our work.

Find some tips on **managing risks** on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy

POLICY ENGAGEMENT



©UNICEF/UNI88782/Noorani

Collaborating with other young people and sharing experiences is an important part of your advocacy journey. During a radio listeners' club meeting, a group of young people discuss child rights in Lilongwe, Malawi.

At the beginning of this guide we noted that youth-focused policies are imperative to realising a sustainable future and we need to equip ourselves with skills so we can engage with these policies. Engaging with policy may seem very intimidating but as a youth advocate it is important that you not only try to connect your issue to policy, but that you engage with the policy process.

As a reminder, a policy is a set of plans or methods to make decisions or achieve a course of action. Many policies may already exist on your issue or cause on a local, national, regional, or even global level. Finding and reading these policies might be a challenge, but your actions will be far more effective if you do. Remember, not every advocacy project is directly linked to a policy. Your action could focus on changing attitudes towards a specific issue, and policy may not be the most effective object of your actions. But for greater change, policy will always play at least some role.

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT POLICY

Before you start reading, you need to identify what policy or policies you are looking for and how to access these documents. Try to determine the following:



- What policy aligns with my issue or cause?
- At local or national level, which department or ministry is responsible for the issue I am advocating for?
- If you are looking for policies at the international or regional level, which section of the organisation deals with the issue I am advocating for?
- Are these documents accessible on the Internet?
- Are these documents accessible in our schools, communities, local government offices, district offices?

Policies are public documents that should be easily available but you may find it difficult to track them down – consider turning these into advocacy goals. For example, if you are trying to access a national policy on health but your country hasn't made the document available online, you could advocate that your government upload all policy documents online for public access.

READING AND UNDERSTANDING A POLICY



Let's be honest, policy documents can be boring or difficult to read. Often they are both. They are full of technical or complicated language, and even the most experienced advocate can struggle. As a result, many young people don't consider reading these documents, meaning that youth voices are often absent in the policies that affect our lives.

Being able to read, understand and comment on policy is an important skill to develop, and you shouldn't be discouraged if you find policy participation difficult. The more you do it the better you will become.

Start by reading through the document to determine if the policy aligns with your issue. Here are some useful steps:

01 Begin by reading the table of contents to get a sense of what is contained in the document.



02 Read the introduction and executive summary – this will give you a good overview of what the document is about.



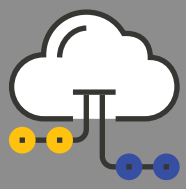
03 When you come across new or difficult words, use a dictionary or web search to improve your understanding. You will be surprised at how much simpler the document becomes once you understand key concepts and terms.



04 **Doing a 'keyword search' on the document can be useful to investigate:**
1) how often 'youth' is mentioned;
2) how often the subject issue is mentioned, e.g. education, health, gender-based violence;
3) the context in which these are mentioned.

05 **Pay special attention to the language used, particularly in the action items. Is the language committal or non-committal, for example:**
"We will eradicate poverty by 2030" or "We encourage the eradication of poverty by 2030."
We can hold leaders accountable based on what they have committed to do and not what they encourage or motivate.

06 Analyse the sources of the information used in the policy document.



07 Google key words from the policy document to see if there are any credible news reports, summaries, or additional sources of information on the topic.



08 **Get help.** Reach out to other young people, or others from your network to discuss and interrogate the document. If the policy document is new it might be good to gather a group and discuss it together.



09 Once you have understood a policy, you may also want to conduct further research regarding an issue. A policy may have good statistics, provide information about the history of the subject matter, and which stakeholders are involved. Make notes and investigate further.

You may need to read the document several times or ask for help to fully grasp the content. If you notice there are gaps in the document, or the policy does not effectively speak to the needs of the community, start making notes on how this can be improved. For example, if the policy document does not mention youth as a stakeholder, or it discriminates against marginalised groups, these are clear areas that need to be amended.

COMMENTING ON POLICY

Making comments on a policy may seem scary, but you, as a young person, have a voice and should be allowed to engage with any policy that affects your life.

Begin by finding out how the policy was created and what the rules say about making changes to it. Is there a way for young people to make comments on the policy? If the process is not open, or if there is no process, it is not the end of the road. You could partner with other young people and organisations to call for the consultative process to be open or created for civil society and youth participation. You might also want to consider advocating for a child or youth-friendly version of an important policy.

It might seem obvious, but before commenting, make sure you have read the whole document. It is easy to spend lots of time commenting on one section, only to find that your points are addressed in another section later on. Try to read other policy documents, laws, acts, etc. that are referenced in the document you are reading. Knowing about other connected policies will help you be aware of potential overlaps or duplication of resources. Finally, many policies are connected to international agreements that your country made at a global level, and it will make understanding your local policies easier if you also have knowledge of these agreements.



At this point you're probably thinking, 'How am I expected to do all of this?' Take a deep breath and take it one step at a time. Changing the world doesn't happen overnight.

If you are ready, here are a few ways to approach commenting on a policy document:

GENERAL COMMENTS



Whether you write a few sentences or a page, try to provide your overall views on the document. You can provide personal comments, but you should also try to refer to your fact-finding research to help you include a wider perspective. General comments can also offer new ideas and solutions, which are not already in the policy.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS



If you feel comfortable moving beyond general comments, you can then focus on specific sections of the policy document that are relevant to you and your cause, identifying the gaps and weaknesses and offering ways in which the sections may be strengthened.

CHANGES TO THE LANGUAGE



The language should be committal and progressive. It should inspire action and give timelines. Language should also be simple, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. Editing the language of a policy is a way to strengthen the document and make it more impactful.

Generally, the more specific you are, the more useful your comments will be. Make notes of all the thoughts you have while reading, and the comments you make on the policy document. You will need these when you enter spaces where you can voice your opinions.

As you can see, there are many ways we can engage around policy. Remember, policies are specific to the institution they represent, and all these activities can be applied in a school environment, workplace, community setting, or even at broader national or global levels. You need to identify how your issue relates to policy and engage with it to bring about long lasting, systematic change.



#STORY: Soaring to Global Heights

Ditebogo Lebea's advocacy journey began as a child when she regularly visited her family in rural Limpopo, South Africa. "I noticed how rivers and dams that once were filled with water, now were bone-dry. It was extremely hot, worse than before, and when it rained, heavy floods would destroy the houses of some of my family members. I saw the effects of climate change first hand. It was, and continues to be, personal to me. I had to take action."

Ditebogo began participating in Model United Nations debates and youth participation work through **Youth@ SAIIA,** and later became a global young reformer through her church. She advocated for churches to educate people on climate change, and for church policies to acknowledge climate action. Her work, together with other young reformers, resulted in churches around the globe committing to renewable energy by using solar power and developing solar cooking projects around Africa.

In 2016, at the age of 19, Ditebogo was invited to attend her first United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22) and represent her church in Morocco. She familiarised herself with national policy-making and global negotiation processes. She attended stakeholder meetings with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and was often the youngest person in the room. Ditebogo began to understand how South Africa creates its national position. She worked with other young South Africans to create a youth statement on climate change and pushed for formal youth participation in the negotiations.

In 2017 Ditebogo was invited to join the South African delegation to COP23 as the country's youth delegate.

Ditebogo's work continues and when the South African draft Climate Change Bill was released in 2018, she was part of the team that analysed the draft bill and submitted a youth position. Ditebogo knows policy change takes time, but she is committed to being part of the fight.



#STORY: Changing National Law

At the age of 17, **Loveness Mudzuru** from Zimbabwe was already married and expecting her second child. Her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer was shattered and she was living a life she had not chosen. When her mother died, Loveness realised that her younger sister would face a similar fate. She decided then and there to act to end child marriage.

"I had been disturbed by the fact that I was a child bride and I had no way of going back to school. It was difficult to see people my age going to school every day while I was sweeping the compound."

Loveness's sister-in-law introduced her to an organisation that works to end child marriage. There, she met many like-minded young women, and got involved in campaigns to combat child marriage. Loveness and another young woman embarked on a journey to change the national policy on the legal age of marriage. After studying multiple national policies and international agreements, they put together an argument that went all the way to the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe. The court ruled in their favour and the law now states that the minimum age for marriage is 18 years, putting an end to formal child marriage.



ATTENDING CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS WITH DECISION-MAKERS



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Our lived experiences as young people matter, and our voices and views should be heard. A youth activist reads a message in the presence of the President of the Interim Parliament during the 2010 National Youth Forum on Children's Rights, held in Niamey, Niger.

ATTENDING CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Attending and actively participating in key conferences and meetings are important parts of advocacy. Many people feel like these spaces are closed off to them, but the truth is that many events are happening around you all the time – you just need to explore a bit.

When attending a stakeholder meeting as a youth advocate, you should engage with various actors about your issue. You may use the policy documents you researched earlier to support your points and positions. If a policy does not exist around an issue, this may be a good platform to call for one. You can speak about the strengths and weaknesses of an existing policy, motivate for more action, or offer your recommendations on what should be done going forward. Overall, it demonstrates that you are well informed and are valuable to further discussions and consultation around the issue.

You can create a position paper as you prepare to represent your group. You can complete the template found in the Youth Advocacy Guide Workbook.

Attending conferences allows you to develop networks with other young people, organisations, and sectors, i.e. allies! These events will help you learn more about your issue from different perspectives and hopefully introduce you to the processes and decision-makers ultimately responsible for making the policies and legislation around your issue.

Be careful of becoming a 'conference hopper' and losing yourself in the process. You do not want to find yourself going from one conference or workshop to another, 'hopping' around to different events.

Don't underestimate yourself. Many young people assume they don't have the necessary qualifications or skills to attend meetings, workshops or conferences. While you may be just beginning in your education or career, remember that your experiences and ideas are important. You might not be the head of an organisation or hold a PhD in Economics, but your lived experience as a young person today matters, and your voice and views should be heard. Apply for opportunities, find help to capture your experiences, and don't be afraid to show up. Being confident in yourself is a big part of the battle. Show up. Listen. Say something if you feel the time is right. Make contact with people and put yourself out there.





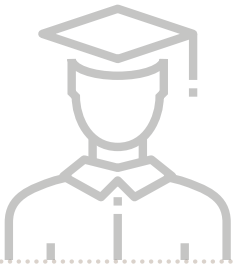
Tips and Tricks for Getting Invited

- **Get on the list.** Securing an invitation to a local or national meeting might be as simple as being on the right mailing list or network. Identify organisations and government sections that work on your issue and ask about stakeholder meetings and whether you can be added to a list of contacts for upcoming meetings, or to a general mailing list.
- **Use social media.** Many decision-makers use social media platforms. If you are on social media, make sure you are following government officials, government departments, organisations, media, business, or other stakeholders related to your issue and see if they are sharing information about meetings, workshops or conferences.

Looking for something to advocate for?

With the increasing need for teachers by 2030, are there any policy points you can advocate for, or conferences where you can raise this concern?



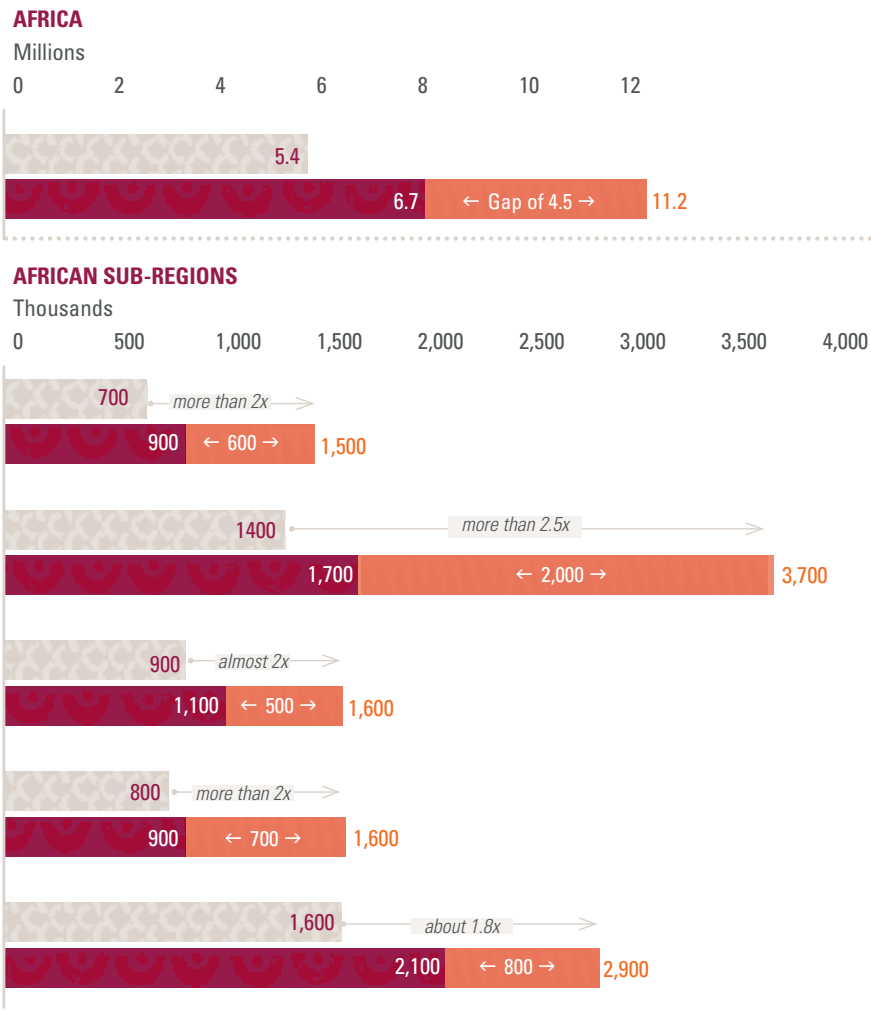


Number of teachers in 2015

Number of teachers in 2030 if pupil-teacher ratio and gross enrolment rate maintained

Number of additional teachers needed by 2030 to match the best sub-regional performer in pupil-teacher ratio

TO MEET AN OPTIMAL PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO IN 2030



Central Africa will need a total of 1.5 million teachers, or **more than double** the 2015 number

Eastern Africa will need a total of 3.7 million teachers, or **more than 2.5 times** the 2015 number

Northern Africa will need a total of 1.6 million teachers, or **almost double** the 2015 number

Southern Africa will need a total of 1.6 million teachers, or **more than double** the 2015 number

Western Africa will need a total of 2.9 million teachers, or about **1.8 times** the 2015 numbers

BUILDING MOMENTUM



©UNICEF/UN0235945/Nybo

Our world is made up of stories - and yours deserves to be heard. Here, Julienne Muhima, a radio presenter and journalist, in Butembo, Democratic Republic of Congo, presents a series on how to protect yourself from Ebola.

Throughout your advocacy process, you will need to build momentum, continuously drawing people together to support your cause. The way you communicate your ideas and activities will depend on what stage you are at within the advocacy process. Whether you are just beginning or further down the line, there are some important points for you to consider.

COMMUNICATING WHAT YOU KNOW AND RAISING AWARENESS

The first stage of building any kind of momentum for an idea is to communicate what you know, to raise awareness about the importance of your cause and why action needs to be taken. Awareness-raising activities can be anything from a class discussion to a national campaign.

Raising awareness involves taking the information you learned during the fact-finding section and turning it into something people can easily understand. You also need to inspire them to get involved and take action. To do this, you need to **know your audience.** Ask yourself these kinds of questions:



- What is important to the people I am speaking to?
- What do they need to hear to realise the importance of this issue?
- Who do they need to hear this message from?
- How do I want them to get involved?
- What kind of language would be most appropriate?

Spend time developing your story – this is the most powerful way of connecting with people and you want it to be meaningful. Pay careful attention to the kind of language you use in your message and make sure it is informative, kind, respectful, and encourages people to get involved. Try to avoid using overly aggressive or provocative language – you are trying to start a discussion and you want to encourage consultation and compassion in all your communication.

Think about other stories, whether it was something your grandmother told you, or a film you saw, or even a meme. Look at the stories you thought were powerful and the stories that evoked emotion in you. Our world is made up of stories, so take time to find the best way to explain your issue through a compelling, human story.

What makes a good story?



- It has a clear structure with a beginning, middle and end.
- It is direct and concise, speaking to the point you are trying to make.
- It is relevant, drawing on the things that are important to people.
- It is personal, appealing to people's emotions and allowing them to connect with you and your story.
- It is clear about what you want people to do.



Once you have identified your audience and developed your story, you can engage with people to raise awareness about your issue. There are many things you can do, from writing letters, to shooting a short video or creating a song, to holding talks or having conversations. Think carefully about the impact you want to achieve, and how best to do this. Go ahead and find creative ways to share your message!

ORGANISING EVENTS

Events are a good way of sharing information, networking with other people, and developing ideas to support your advocacy process. There are a few important things to keep in mind when organising an event.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE



Before you decide to hold an event, you need to determine what your objective is – what are you trying to achieve through this event?

Sometimes your objective might be quite general, such as simply sharing information, and other times it might be more specific, such as asking for contributions to a policy document. Understanding your reason behind organising the event will determine the kind of activities you have, the people you invite, and the way you communicate with them.

AUDIENCE, SIZE & ACTIVITIES

Events can range enormously – it can be a simple gathering in your home, or a large gathering at a community hall. You need to think about the activities people will be doing at the event – will they simply be listening to a speaker or is there a different way they will be engaged? Have a clear idea of who you want to attend and what you want them to do.

ORGANISATION

All events require organisation – you will need to arrange a time, venue, information, materials, and activities. Start by making a list of all the things you will need and how you will arrange everything. If your event is large, you may need other people to help you.



HOSTING THE EVENT

Hosting can be both exciting and stressful. Remember, the most important thing is to stay focused – be clear about what you are trying to achieve and do your best to help generate ideas and discussion. Be confident and trust yourself – you have done the research, you are developing the skills, and you will become even more effective as you go.



MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Building public awareness is an important part of the advocacy process. A good place to start is to identify forums in your area where discussions often take place. If you live in a rural area, people might gather at clinics or community halls, or use notice boards for communication, they may also have more one-on-one contact with other people. If you live in a small town, people might communicate more through a local newspaper or radio, or social gatherings. If you live in a city with widespread Internet access, these conversations might take place online.





ENGAGING WITH MEDIA

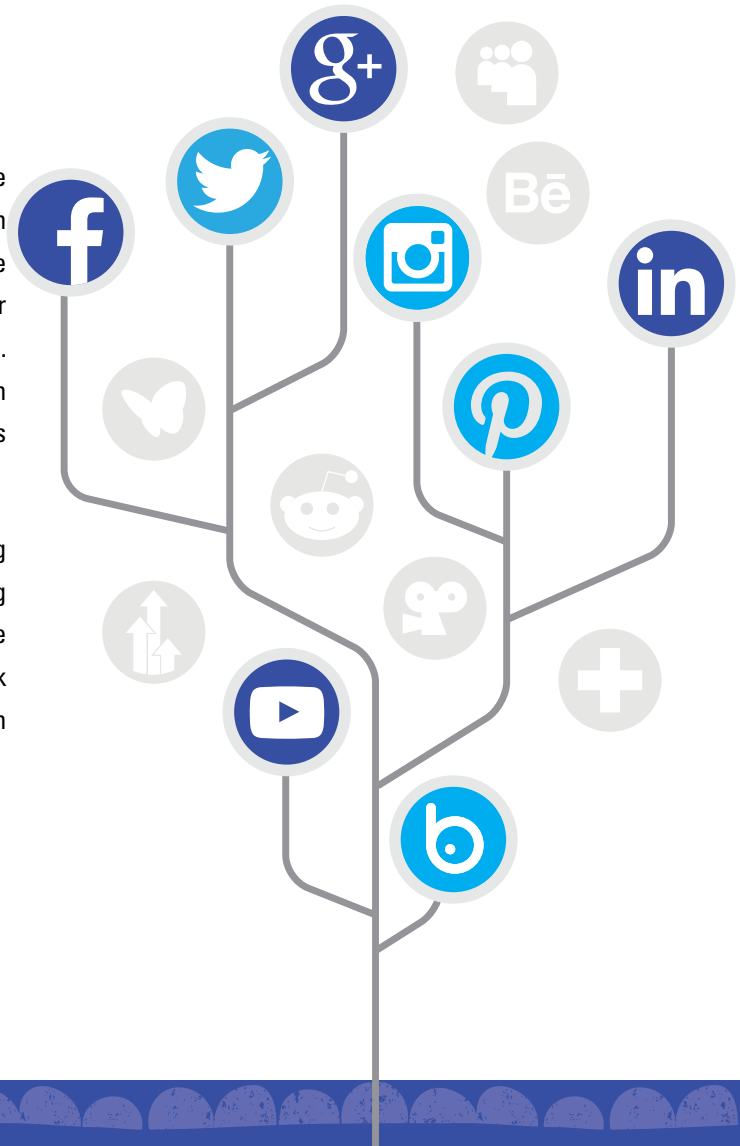
Anywhere you live, people will use a form of media to communicate with each other. This could be a school newsletter, a local newspaper, a radio station or a TV programme. One of the things you could do is engage with a local radio station. Radio is an excellent way of communicating with a large audience and radio hosts are often looking for interesting topics to talk about on their shows. If there is a show that discusses issues related to your topic, give the radio station a call and see if they would be interested in hearing your story.

You could also write something and have it published. This might be an information poster, a short article in a school newsletter, an opinion piece for a newspaper, or a blog post for a website. The main idea is that you are taking your idea and putting it into written form. Be creative: why not try to express yourself through poetry, storytelling, or cartoons? Always make sure your message is strong and clear. You could even call a journalist, make time to sit with them and explain your issue, your story - good journalists are always looking for good stories to tell.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful platform to communicate ideas and raise awareness, but it should be used with great caution. Research the conversations that are taking place online around your issue to get a better understanding of the discussions people are having. You can join in these conversations or create your own dialogue and set the narrative, in line with the principles you are standing for in your advocacy.

Don't get sucked into the social media trap, of having arguments with others, or spending hours scrolling aimlessly though posts. Remember to always check the reliability of the information you find online. Have a look at the fact-finding section to make sure the information you are using and sharing is trustworthy.





CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media campaigns should be designed to encourage broad support and to build momentum around your cause. There are powerful examples of social media campaigns, such as #FeesMustFall where students in South Africa advocated for a reduction of university fees and gathered nationwide support. #AfricaMatters is another campaign that has created a platform to empower African youth to reject indifference and pessimism about the continent.

How to create a social media campaign:

- **Create an account on a social media platform** such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or any platform that is popular in your area.
- **Create a Facebook page and a Facebook group** and invite people to join. Facebook groups are a great platform for quickly and easily connecting with people and for sharing information and ideas. If you need some help starting, have a look at https://nonprofits.fb.com/
- **Identify and create useful hashtags.** Hashtags allow people to easily identify your issue and track the discussions taking place. Catchy hashtags that capture the essence of your campaign can gain attention fast, such as the #MeToo and #BringBackOurGirls campaigns.
- **Produce and share content.** Whether it is articles, memes, photos, videos or music, social media is a great way of sharing content. Make sure what you share speaks to your issue and encourages discussion. Be unique and creative – there is a lot of competition out there!
- **Host live chats,** this is an easy way to bring people together to talk about different things.
- **Organise a social media thunderclap** where many people and organisations post the same message at the same time. If they are well executed, they can make hashtags and movements go 'viral'.
- **Collaborate with social media 'influencers',** individuals who have a large following and powerful impact on social media. These influencers can help gain traction for your advocacy project.
- **Identify the best times to post on social media.** If you post information when people are using social media, your ideas are more likely to be seen, liked, and shared. To engage with school pupils, the best time to post would be before and after school. If you want to engage with adults, early evening might be better. If you want to engage with decision-makers, during the day might be more effective.
- **Respond and communicate.** By responding to messages and comments you receive on social media, you create an important space for dialogue. Engage with people to show your passion and demonstrate commitment to your cause.
- **Protect yourself on social media.** There can be a lot of negativity on social media and you should know how to stay safe. Make sure you have strong passwords and that you protect your accounts, report any inappropriate posts and maintain a civil and compassionate dialogue with people. Be aware of your country's social media laws. We have seen several influencers being taken into custody over tweets or Facebook posts – while online advocacy is important, always be responsible when using social media.

VOICES OF YOUTH RESOURCES

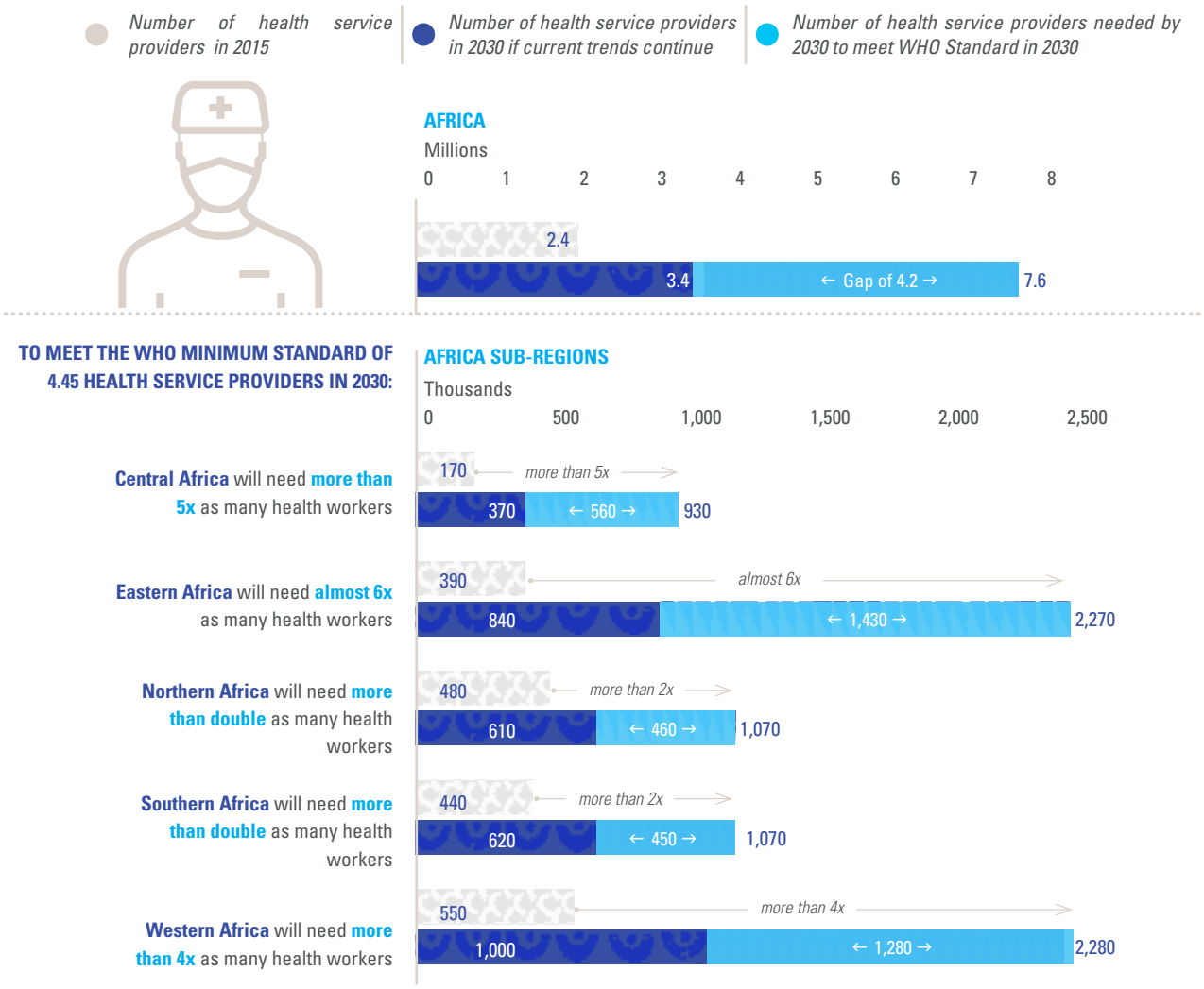
Did you know UNICEF's Voices of Youth website has some great resources to help you develop your blog and digital advocacy skills?

Other forms of group communication

While media and social media are the most common forms of engaging with people, there has been an increase in different communication platforms as technology has increased. SMS and Whatsapp groups have been very effective at bringing people together and helping them stay in touch. It might be useful to start your own kind of group, one that provides regular updates and communication to people who you know are interested.

Looking for something to advocate for?

Have you considered organising an event to raise awareness around the growing need for healthcare services providers across the continent?





#STORIES: Using video to raise social awareness

"Sometimes people don't have the time or energy to read through a thick document, many people find it easier to watch a video, which often has more impact. It makes you see what is happening on the ground and it's an eye-opener. My video really got people talking, and when they became interested, they wanted to know more."

Louise Kongolo Kanza was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and was raised in South Africa, where she faced xenophobia. People treated her badly because she was from a different country. When xenophobic attacks spread across South Africa in 2017, Louise and her sister knew they had to raise awareness about the fear and pain that was being experienced daily.

They formed a group of both South Africans and foreigners and they thought of ways they could share their stories. They didn't have a lot of resources, but someone had a camera, so they decided to make a short video about the impact of the xenophobic attacks. They recorded the film at a house that had been burned down and called the video #Singabantu. They used their personal social media accounts to share the content, and people were moved by the story they told.

The video got a lot of attention and it was eventually broadcast on Trace Africa in 18 different countries. In 2017, #Singabantu won the UN Alliance of Civilizations Plural Plus Award and Louise and the team were invited to several platforms to raise awareness about xenophobia. After these experiences, Louise began to coordinate the Sophie A Kanza Foundation, that organises events focused on uniting her community.

See the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4MocQZSrEw





#STORIES: Turning Tragedy into Triumph

After witnessing the death of her cousin as a result of drug use, **Lima Bamba** from Côte d'Ivoire understood the pain and suffering linked to drug addiction. She knew the most important thing to do was share her story and raise awareness about the danger of addiction. Lima started to engage with children as young as 6, telling them about drugs and how they can keep themselves safe. She also ran anti-drug workshops for university students.

Lima has since founded the 'Emergency for Teenagers' association that raises awareness about drug addiction and helps monitor and support people in recovery. 'Emergency for Teenagers' now collaborates with local NGOs to combat drug abuse, providing significant support to people in her community. Through this, she is able to reach a wider audience and strengthen her advocacy. Her story highlights the importance of forging aliances with other organisations who may be fighting for a similar cause, as you can build on each others' strengths.



TAKING PERSONAL ACTION: PUTTING PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES INTO PRACTICE



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Changing social behaviour is up to us! We reinforce the principles we stand for in our daily lives. These young U-reporters from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, organized a community service outing to clean the beach of Petit Bassam, in Port Bouet.

One of the most difficult components of the advocacy process is putting the principles and policies we have advocated for into practice. When our advocacy ends, when the policy changes have been adopted, or the institution has agreed to a new set of practices, what happens next? If our advocacy takes a long time, what do we do while waiting for a decision?

We often think the implementation of policies and practices should be left up to the decision-makers alone, but changing social behaviour is up to us – we reinforce the principles of what we stand for in different ways every day. We need to become the change we want to see in the world. Here are some ideas.

FOLLOW UP

It is crucial for the success of your advocacy to follow up with contacts you have established during the process.

If your advocacy process has led to a decision, such as adopting a policy or deciding to put something into action, you need to follow up with the decision-makers to make sure this is being done. Hold them accountable to their promise to act.

Throughout your advocacy process you will engage with a wide range of people. Establish a relationship with them and see how you might be able to explore new ideas or get involved in other initiatives. Maintaining a good set of contacts across a wide range of fields will also be useful in your future activities. Here are some tips:



When attending events, or meeting with potential partners, make sure you take down their contact details or take a business card – be it a phone number, email address, or social media handle.



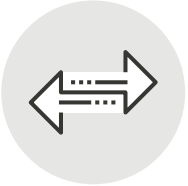
Organise these contacts somewhere, either on paper, or on an excel sheet. Make note of where you interacted with them and include comments on what was discussed and how you could collaborate in the future.



Send a courtesy message the day after meeting, to thank them for meeting, and to ensure they now have your contact details.



Keep referring back to this list during your advocacy journey and contact potential partners for collaboration.



Finally, ensure that you give feedback to anyone who has helped you on your journey. Keeping your contacts, including peers and those supporting you online, informed on your progress is crucial.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the challenges Africa is experiencing and we don't always know what to do in our daily lives to address these concerns. But we often underestimate the importance of lifestyle choices. Every day we make choices about the food we eat, the way we treat people, animals, or our environment. They all reflect the principles we live by.

Spend some time thinking about this and become aware of your own behaviours and practices and see if there might be a better way of doing things. It might be as simple as carrying your own shopping bag to the store so you reduce single-use plastics, or buying food from local farmers in your community. It may be more complex, such as overcoming your own bias or prejudices, and opening yourself up to understanding other people's reality.



We are in control of the decisions we make and if we start to think about the consequences of our decisions in the long-term, we will start to put in place practices that will lead to a better world.



WHAT DO I DO IF I GET STUCK?



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During an AIDS prevention activity in Cotonou, Benin, young journalists from Radio 3S ADO interview their peers.

At various points throughout the advocacy process you will feel stuck, confused, or demotivated. Do not despair – this is all part of the process and it is often in these moments that we do our best learning. So, what should you do if this happens?



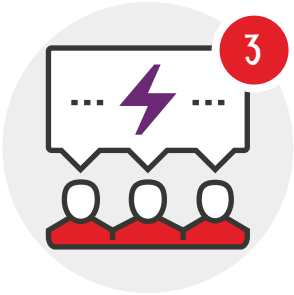
FIRST, TRY TO GET SUPPORT.

Whether it is a friend, guardian, parent, teacher or colleague, try to find someone whom you can talk to and share ideas with. Personal support and encouragement are very important so try to find someone who can support you.



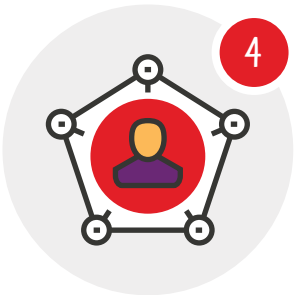
SECOND, REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Sometimes we are the first people to make a path that others can follow, and this can be a lonely experience. Remember that youth from around the world have undertaken similar tasks and faced similar challenges. Read other people's stories, look for examples similar to yours, and see how other people have handled their situations. Connect with youth on different platforms to share ideas, whether through a local community group or an online platform, and as you do so you will start to develop creative or innovative solutions.



THIRD, DON'T TRY TO DO EVERYTHING BY YOURSELF.

You might be the main driver of the cause, or even the main motivation, but you are not super-human and you cannot do everything by yourself. It's very easy to take on too much and to burn out easily, so you need make sure you are looking after yourself, as well as your cause. Start building a team of people that can help you to achieve your goals. Remember, everyone has a different set of skills and abilities and by working with a team, you can start to distribute the workload and engage in the advocacy process more effectively.



FOURTH, REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE ENDLESS RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT YOU DURING THIS JOURNEY.

UNICEF is here for you! Have a look through our website, The Internet of Good Things, Voices of Youth and other platforms for inspiration and guidance. Contact the UNICEF office in your country for support and potential collaboration with other young people in your country.

LAST THOUGHTS – FOR NOW



© UNICEF/UN0275108/E. Ademuyiwa

In Africa, children make up almost half of the population. Our continent is truly full of potential - and students at the Modern Age Academy in Accra, Ghana, clearly agree.

DEAR READER...

We have one more confession - we aren't finished yet.

If you've reached this point, you may have realised that advocacy is a continuum, and just when you think you are done, you may find that you are right back at a new beginning. Along this journey you will hopefully get to see some wonderful things happen as a result of your work, but just remember that change is a process and it takes time.

We cannot forget the struggles, sacrifices, and work of those who came before us. We must remember that they couldn't imagine we'd be where we are today.

As we turn our eyes to the future, we must be brave to take ambitious steps, and remember that policies implemented today might only show results when we are speaking to the young people who come after us. Stay strong, be patient, remember you aren't alone, and know that you are part of an amazing generation of Africans, ready and leading.

There is just one thing missing - YOUR story.

Join us?

#YouthAreLeading



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Guide is a UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office initiative, led by the Africa Services Unit. It is the result of a series of workshops and remote engagements with young people across sub-Saharan Africa. It is not only a toolkit filled with valuable, experience-based information to support youth advocacy; it also contains a collection of stories from youth advocates across the continent who share real-life examples of their important work.

The UNICEF team thanks all who shared their stories of advocacy and youth engagement and gave so willingly of their time and expertise.

WORKSHOP CONTRIBUTORS

A series of training workshops was held with young people from Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda, to gather their experiences and views on youth advocacy. The workshops were structured using participatory methods, and the youth took part in various activities to share their experiences related to youth participation and advocacy. This information was used to inform the overall structure and content of the Guide and selected workshop participants also joined in the co-creation process.

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STORY CONTRIBUTIONS

This Guide is informed by stories from young people throughout Africa. To capture the real stories of youth advocates, an open call was made, for young Africans, between 13-25 years old, to share their stories of how they are advocating for change in their communities. Their submissions informed the content of the Guide, and more of these stories can be found on www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy

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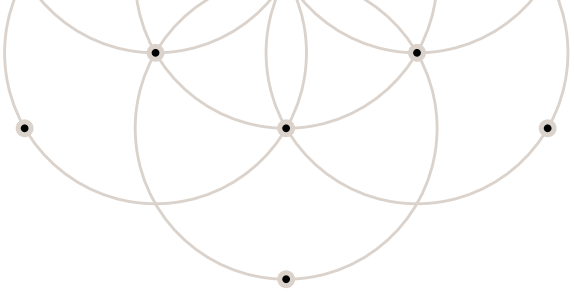
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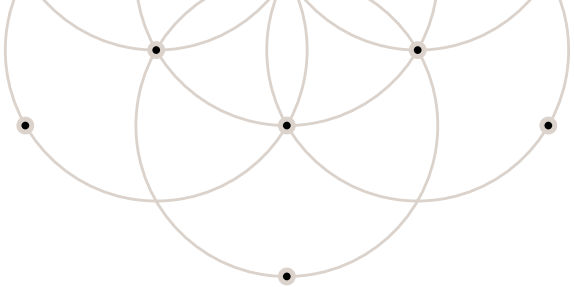
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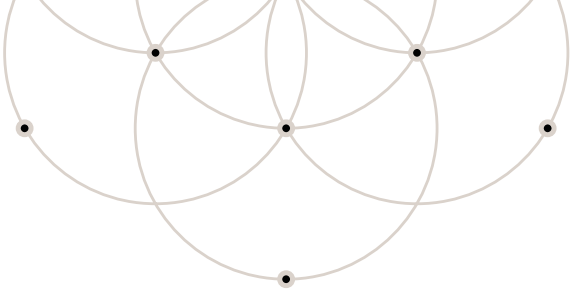
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NOTES



NOTES



NOTES



Did you know?

You can find additional resources and material on
www.voicesofyouth.org/youthadvocacy


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unicef
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