

Chapter 8

Stakeholder Engagement

This chapter examines:

- the critical role that collaborative, multistakeholder development planning plays in delivering with, and for, youth
- the need to make explicit the tensions and conflict among stakeholders in concrete planning.

8.1 Strengthening accountability and transparency between civil society, the private sector and government

The need for the acknowledgement of, and collaboration between, state and civil society/extra-governmental actors is a prerequisite of successful youth mainstreaming. No one party can do this alone.

Collaboration is critical because:

- government roles are increasingly complemented by non-governmental and private sector players, and technical knowledge is dispersed, and
- this helps accountability across stakeholders, particularly accountability to youth stakeholders.

The acknowledgement of this diversity is important because:

- It helps see a specific sector, i.e. the health sector, as a combination of players (just as we discussed in the case of the youth sector) – involving state, non-state and private sector players, including unions, professional associations and youth groups – and ensures co-ordinated planning.
- It helps understand the complexity of the relationship between stakeholders. Stakeholder interests are sometimes common, but sometimes conflict with each other. For example, while youth movements

and academic groups around the world are working to protect education by demonstrating the benefits of public education for reaching the broader goals of education set out in SDG 4, other forces may lobby to deregulate education, which some feel threatens our ability to provide Education for All.

- It allows us to understand that conflicts are not necessarily divided according to ‘stakeholder groups’ such as youth, government, the private sector and so on; there can be conflicts among youth groups or professional associations themselves. The gay rights movement and the anti-gay movement, both represented through youth collectives, is one such example.

This approach to analysing extra-governmental players led to the relative success of gender mainstreaming, because it acknowledged the complexity of stakeholder roles and also enabled an adequate assessment of risks and advantages in development approaches that brought in a wide variety of players outside the state.¹ In this context, it is also worth examining the role of civil society in your context, and the extent of freedom of expression it has, considering shrinking spaces for the civil society voice and influence in many parts of the globe.² An environment that enables diversity and dissent is critical to youth mainstreaming. See Box 8.1 for an insight from gender mainstreaming that has implications for youth mainstreaming.

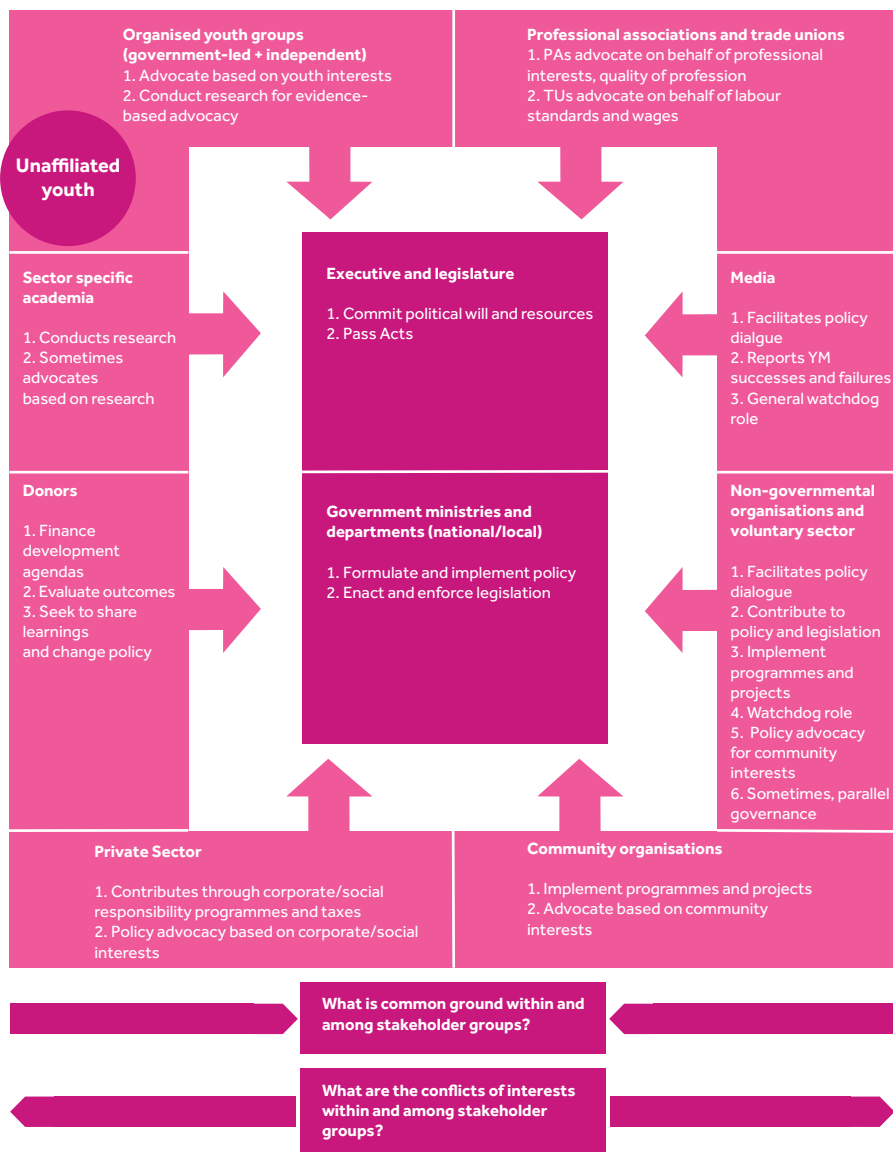
Figure 8.1 attempts to highlight main stakeholder groups, their functions and their interests.

Box 8.1 Sustaining effective civil society engagement

In relation to civil society and youth networks, once again a key learning from gender mainstreaming is that: ‘It is important to note that women’s groups that have organised outside state boundaries are critical to the continued strength and accountability of national machineries’. While the youth sector strengthens national youth councils and youth networking within state machineries, it must acknowledge the existence and concerns of independent young groups, which exist through ‘proposing, pressuring, negotiating, overseeing, criticising, demanding explanations’¹³ in alternative ways.

8.2 Stakeholder groups, functions and interests

Figure 8.1 Stakeholder groups, functions and interests⁴



This figure:

- Helps identify potential commonalities and conflicts of interest among and within stakeholders.
- Highlights that youth mainstreaming needs to enhance the visibility of unorganised/unaffiliated youth (the red circle), who will most often be among the most



Box 8.2 Reflections on Chapter 8: Stakeholder Engagement

- Does all-of-government planning in your context involve all stakeholders we have outlined in Figure 8.1 for each sector?
- Are some stakeholders left out? If so, why, and how can they be involved?
- What are the main conflicts of interest among stakeholders in your context? How are these resolved? Through consensus or by rejecting certain ideas? Which ideas get rejected? Would these ideas have benefited youth?
- In general, are all stakeholders able to freely express themselves, irrespective of their viewpoint?
- How, in your opinion, does the power of stakeholders determine policy outcomes? Does this provide good outcomes for young people?
- Are youth stakeholders considered critical in national/subnational planning?

marginalised. For example, young people in post-conflict countries living in refugee camps may not have the tools or motivation for organisation and articulation of interests. How will they be reached, listened to and planned for through processes co-created by them?

Stakeholder engagement will of course be considered through paradigms of participation, which we discussed in relation to youth in Chapter 7. The ability to participate in policy consensus relies on power and interests. The Power Cube (outlined in Annex 6), a multidimensional concept that helps us ascertain the position of each player in relation to power centres, is once again a useful tool here, just as it is for youth participation advocates and policy-makers to analyse whose interests are strong and why. The Power Cube addresses participation in terms of levels of participation, spaces for participation and forms of participation (see Annex 6).

Notes

- 1 Rai 2003, 32.
- 2 CIVICUS 2017.
- 3 Ugalde 2003, 125.
- 4 This helps an analysis of stakeholder groups at the national/subnational, sectoral and other levels, as relevant to your planning context.

References

- CIVICUS (2017), *Contested and under Pressure: A Snapshot of the Enabling Environment of Civil Society in 22 Countries*, available at: http://www.civicus.org/images/EENA_Report_English.pdf
- Rai, SM (2003), *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State*, Manchester University Press.
- Ugalde, V (2003), 'The Role of the Women's Movement in Institutionalizing a Gender Focus in Public Policy: The Ecuadorian Experience', in Rai, S 2003 *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State*, Manchester University Press.

