

## Annex 2

# Youth Social, Political and Economic Empowerment

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### Young people's social, political and economic empowerment

**Social empowerment** is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude social cohorts (in our case, young people). Young people's empowerment, and their ability to hold others to account, is strongly influenced by their individual assets (such as land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (such as good health and education), social (such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future), which can also be termed as their capabilities.

These strengths are translated into **political empowerment** when they are organised to inform representation and voice in decision-making. This involves representation and voice not just through party politics, but through community organisation and building collective strength to influence change.

Economic empowerment is thought to allow young people to think beyond immediate daily survival and to exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. For example, it enables households to make their own decisions around making investments in health and education, and taking risks in order to increase their income. There is also some evidence that economic empowerment can strengthen vulnerable groups' participation in decision-making. Economic power is often easily 'converted' into increased social status or decision-making power. More generally, the discourse on economic empowerment centres around four broad areas: 1) the promotion of the assets of poor [in our case young] people; 2) transformative forms of social protection; 3) microfinance; and 4) skills training.

– Adapted and rewritten from GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services 2014

## Reference

GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services (2014), *Social and Economic Empowerment*, available at: <http://www.gsdrc.org/topic-guides/voice-empowerment-and-accountability/supplements/social-and-economic-empowerment/>.

