

Benefits of Flexible Funding for Adolescent- and Youth-Led Organizations

Introduction

The YP Foundation, an Indian youth-led civil society organization, has been working to improve access to health information, services and supplies for adolescents and youth by positioning young people as leaders and advocates. The organization recognized that supporting young people to become leaders in the community was essential to achieving this goal. However, it often faced challenges in financing this work due to restrictive funding mechanisms.

Program Description

The YP Foundation aimed to create a Policy Working Group — a youth-led, youth-run and autonomous network of young leaders and advocates working across India to ensure the health and rights of adolescents and youth. To assist the YP Foundation in achieving its goal, PAI's YOUAccess Fund provided flexible funding and advocacy support. The YP Foundation devised a strategy and started the process of creating the Policy Working Group. However, as COVID-19 surges led to national and state-wide lockdowns, it could not continue its work as planned.

While the YP Foundation had not reached its initial goal, it had built relationships with crucial government stakeholders. PAI worked with the organization to adjust its work plan to support adolescents and youth to engage in COVID-19-related discussions with policymakers and shift in-person meetings to virtual workshops. Although the work shifted from the initial plan, the YP Foundation could still support adolescent and youth advocates to deepen their engagement with policymakers. Because the YOUAccess funding was flexible, the YP Foundation was able to resume the advocacy work it had initially planned as COVID-19 restrictions eased. This flexibility helped staff continue their work, ensuring that adolescents and youth were not left behind even in the most uncertain times.

“YOUAccess has been one of our least restrictive partnerships. Because of the amount of trust that PAI has placed in us, we can guide our own work and choose the people that we want to work with, to choose the things that we want to work on and work with the modalities that we choose.”

— ADITI MUKHERJI, FORMERLY AT THE YP FOUNDATION



Results

Flexible funding allowed the YP Foundation to continue building relationships with policymakers, making it easier to resume its planned work when COVID-19 restrictions eased.

The YP Foundation continued to support young people to remain engaged with key stakeholders, even as the cultural and political landscapes shifted, ensuring that youth voices were part of policy decision-making processes.

Lessons Learned

Providing adolescent- and youth-led organizations with flexible funding permits them to adjust their work plans, supporting the advancement of adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Supporting young people to engage in evolving policy discussions allows them to continue building relationships with key decision-makers, shaping their ability to influence policies.



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The YP Foundation is a youth development organization that facilitates young people's feminist and rights-based leadership on issues of health equity, gender justice, sexuality rights and social justice. More information can be found at www.theypfoundation.org.

PAI works with policymakers in Washington, D.C., and our network of global partners to advocate for accessible, quality health care and advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, youth and at-risk communities. More information can be found at www.pai.org.

YOUAccess provides financial and technical support to youth-led organizations to advocate for increased funding and improved policies on adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights in low- and middle-income countries. More information can be found at www.pai.org/projects/youaccess.