

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:
Contributions to *Participatory Learning Action (PLA)* Special Issue
Youth and Participatory Governance in Africa
Plan UK in collaboration with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS)
Deadline: 5th December 2010

Have you got an exciting experience of youth participation in governance, policy or budget processes that you would like to share?

**Are there lessons others can learn from your experience?
Would you like to write it up and have it published?**

If so, read on...

People no longer rely on governments alone to improve governance. All over the world we are seeing experiments in 'participatory governance'. People and organisations are grasping the opportunities offered by decentralisation and other reform processes to demand more of a say in the public policy and budget processes that affect them. These ways of holding the state to account are often called 'social accountability'. Examples include participatory budgeting, monitoring electoral processes, using online and mobile technology, and citizen evaluation of public services. These forms of citizen engagement and social accountability are particularly promising for young people, who often face challenges in getting their voices heard in formal policy and governance processes.

But as exciting as these new social accountability initiatives are, we need to look a little closer. Experience so far suggests that some voices are still getting left out; in particular those of young people. We need to know more about why this is and what can be done about it. Also, while there is a lot of information available about social accountability work in Brazil, South Africa and India, there is very little about what is going on in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa young people constitute more than half of the population and there is much to learn from the ways they are challenging norms and structures that exclude them to engage with the state and demand accountability.

Why a *PLA* Special Issue on Youth and Participatory Governance in Africa?

Participatory Learning and Action (www.planotes.org) is an informal journal on participation that reaches over 10,000 readers in 121 countries worldwide. The journal is published twice a year by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Special Issues exploring particular themes are regularly produced.

The aim of this Special Issue is to capture and share experiences of youth participation in governance processes with practitioners, young people, researchers, and policy makers. We hope that the Issue will stimulate debate and discussion on issues of participation, accountability and transparency with a focus on young people. We also hope that the Special Issue will encourage learning, improved policy and practice, and increased support for youth participation in governance processes. While the Special Issue will focus on Africa, we hope it will also be valuable for those working in other regions.

Who can contribute an article to this Special Issue?

We are seeking submissions from adults and young people working in the field of youth and participatory governance who would like to contribute an article to this Special Issue. You might be a youth activist, a practitioner from an NGO or international agency, or a member of government. Your contribution should capture practical experiences on the theme and include: the processes young people have been engaged in; innovations, achievements and challenges; lessons and ways forward. Each article should be around 2,500 words.

Contributions may focus on (but not be limited to) the following areas:

- Engagement of young people in policy, planning and budgeting processes at local, national, regional and international levels;

- Engagement of young people with oversight actors, including the media, parliament, and civil organisations;
- The role of youth organisations, networks, and movements in relation to both broader civil society and the state; and/or
- The use of ICT and mobile technology by young people to engage in governance processes.

What support will contributors have to develop their articles?

Authors will submit a first draft of their article in February 2011 and, after further drafting, a final draft in June/July 2011. Feedback and support will be provided throughout by the editors, including a workshop for all contributors in March 2011 in Nairobi. During this one week workshop or 'writeshop' each contributor will have one-to-one support with their article and meet with others working on participatory governance to discuss and share their experiences. All participant costs (e.g. flights, visa, food and accommodation etc.) relating to the workshop will be covered.

Are you still interested? Great!

If you want to share your experiences through an article in the Special Issue please submit a short summary (500 words or less) of what you would like to write about to jessica.greenhalf@plan-international.org by 5th December 2010. Summaries will be reviewed by a panel in December and a maximum of 12 contributions will be selected.

The summary should address the following questions:

- What participatory governance experience involving youth do you want to document?
- Why is this important and to whom?
- What will be the key message of your article?
- Will you seek to involve young people in the development of your article? If so how (e.g. consultation, co-writing etc.)?

We look forward to hearing from you!

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