

# What Does “Decolonizing Development” Mean for Youth-Focused Research and Learning?

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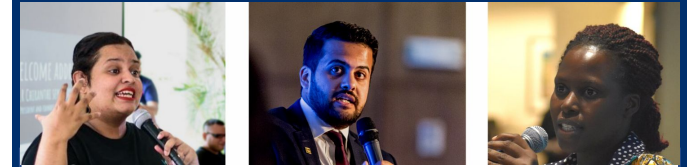
Karen Carjavalino, The Biz Nation, Colombia

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**-Youth Excel-**



YouthPower2 Symposium



NOVEMBER 9-10, 2021

Straight from the Source:  
Perspectives on Effective  
Youth-Driven Programming  
Symposium

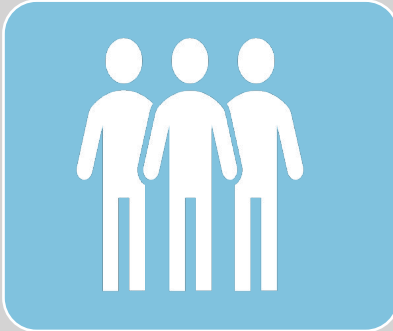
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# Agenda

- What is Youth Excel?
- How do youth experience power differentials? *Video.*
- Revealing power differentials
- How does *Research-to-Change* shift power?
- Discussion / Q & A



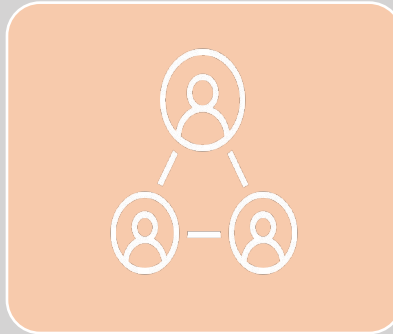
# Youth Excel helps local youth organizations:



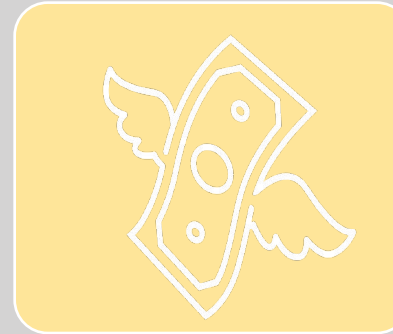
Generate  
**research**  
and  
**evidence** for  
youth  
programming.



Help youth  
strengthen  
**capacity for**  
**research** and  
strengthening  
their own  
programming.



Tackle  
**youth-adult**  
**power**  
**differentials**  
and prioritize  
**inclusion** of  
under-repre  
nted groups.



**Channel**  
**resources** to  
local youth-led  
and  
youth-serving  
organizations.

THROUGH:

**Implementation  
Research**

**Intergenerational  
Dialogue**

**Knowledge  
mobilization**




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# Revealing power differentials






*Which of the two are you likely to quote as a source for an article you are writing?*



Health Topics ▾Countries ▾Newsroom ▾Emergencies ▾Data ▾About WHO ▾



## Adolescent mental health



العربية

中文

Français

Русский

Español

### 28 September 2020

#### Key facts

- One in six people are aged 10-19 years.

#### Related

- [WHO Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents \(AA-HA!\): Guidance to support country implementation](#)

## It's time to talk about the mental health pandemic: An interview with youth advisory council members

By: Sally Bisharat  
September 22, 2021

# Revealing power differentials

*Who of the following are you likely to have on a selection panel in e.g. a youth mental health grant competition you are running?*



Technical Advisor, Trauma-informed  
Approaches Expert



Founder, Youth Led Organization



Student, University of Cape  
Town



Senior Subgrants and  
Capacity-building Officer



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# Revealing power differentials: Knowledge Mobilization

## Desk Review & Listening Series excerpts

**Youth are often not taken seriously by decision makers.**

**Youth (unless having particular credentials) are not considered as valuable sources of information.**

**Youth are considered not to know enough, local information is not as valuable as international or regionally sourced information, local sources are not as trusted as international ones.**

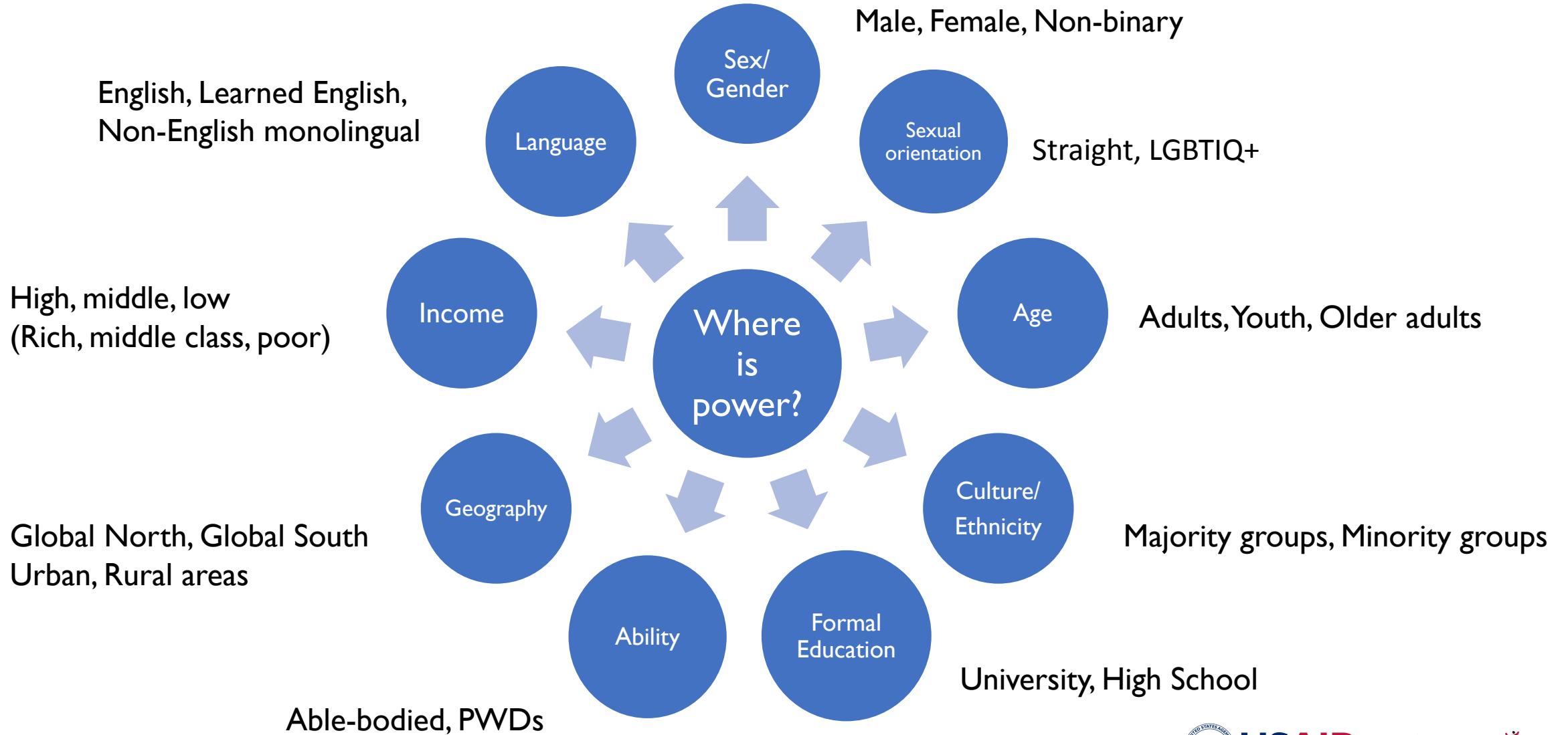
**Products intended to influence policy should be presented in formats that are considered formal and appropriate for decision makers to act upon.**



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# Revealing power differentials: intersectionality of power



What comes to mind when you hear the word  
“research”?



In your experience....

WHY doesn't research  
translate into practice?

*Please post your responses in the  
chat.*



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# Who holds the **power** in research?

## Traditional Research

- Can be distant and detached from practice
- Standards are set by elite institutions often based in Global North
- May not always ask practically-relevant questions
- Users are dissemination targets, not research partners

## Youth Excel's Implementation Research

- Champions implementers as researchers
- Standards are based on usefulness of research findings, as decided by the implementer
- A new frontier for practically-relevant questions
- Opens doors for new (youth) leadership in research



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# Research-to-Change<sup>1</sup> and shifting power

- ❑ It champions the leadership of implementers in research.
- ❑ It explores how and why programs work under **real world conditions**.
- ❑ It is participatory, iterative, and inclusive.
- ❑ It helps organizations gather data, take what they learn, and turn it into what they do, in **real-time**.



I. Research-to-Change is Youth Excel's rebrand of Implementation Research.



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# Shifting power through research: The Biz Nation, Dominican Republic

## Problem

Increasing number of out-of-school, out-of-employment youth in the Dominican Republic

Increasing unemployment due to COVID changes

Need for more entrepreneurs that can create jobs and socioeconomic development

## Program

**Digital Marketing training program**

Onsite kickoff with 11 youth groups.

46 hours of live classes via Zoom (6:00 pm - 8:00 pm).

14 hours of virtual courses.

4 mentorship sessions.

60 participants.

20 mentors.

7 instructors.

## IR Learning Goals

We need to know the internet access of potential participants so that we can provide resources to overcome barriers to online engagement

We need to know participants perspectives of mentorship so that we can strengthen our participant engagement strategies.



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# Shifting power through research: The Biz Nation, Dominican Republic

## IR Learning Goals

We need to know the internet access of potential participants so that we can provide resources to overcome barriers to online engagement

We need to know participants perspectives of mentorship so that we can strengthen our participant engagement strategies.

## Data / Findings:

Internet primarily accessed via mobile phones (Cellular phone, 68.6%, Computer, 27.1%, Tablet, 4.7%).

People who identified as ethnic/racial minorities had lower access to the internet (25% vs 16%).

Varying schedules from participants meant group mentorship sessions were not working out.

## Adaptations

Provided sim cards with internet access to participants.

Adapted the mentorship program so it could be implemented over the phone, Whatsapp or virtual platforms.

Adapted content with gender and inclusivity language.

Switched to I-I mentorship from group mentorship



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# Shifting power through research: Sustainable learning and adaptation -The Biz Nation

Rolling out an  
organizational gender  
policy

Enhancing our mobile  
learning experience

Improved mentorship  
program for future  
TBN programs

Now implementing  
innovative training  
formats-Microlearning  
and Whatsapp

Learning from data  
across all programs via  
data analysis and data  
dashboards



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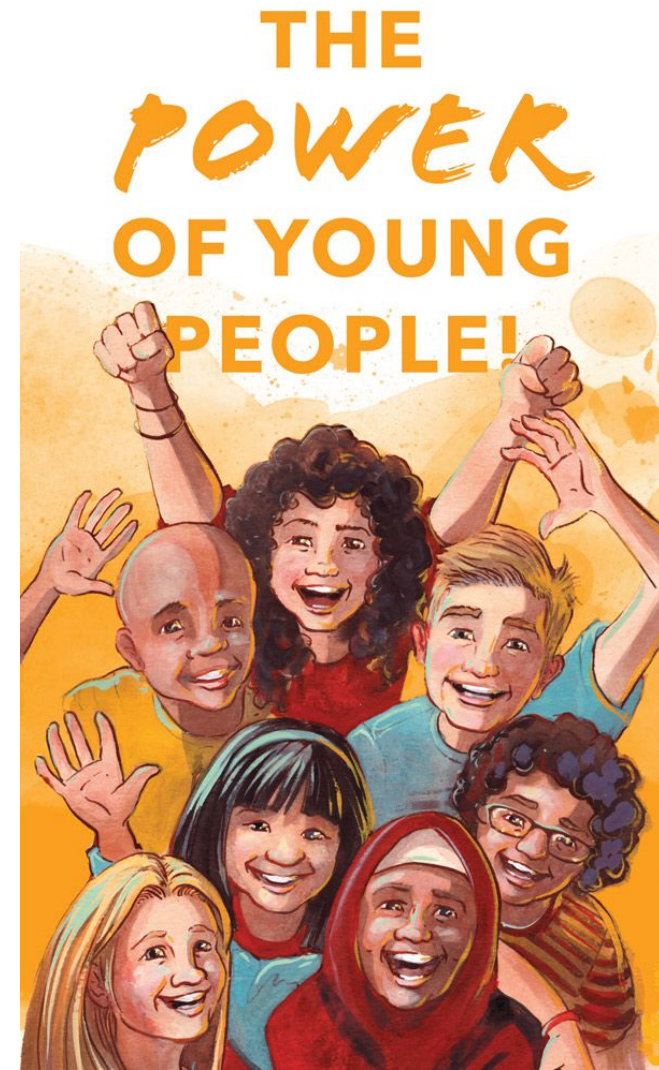
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# To decolonize development....

Research-to-Change **shifts power to youth** by enabling them to set their learning priorities, learn from their work and apply these learnings real-time **for more effective programs**, which give them credibility and platforms for **youth-led advocacy**.

## Questions?



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# Thank You

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