

Design Youth In, Deliver Better Outcomes

The IASC has already committed to youth representation in humanitarian decision-making. The Reset now needs to deliver on that commitment.

Young people are often among the first responders and make up a significant share of people affected by crisis. Yet their role and influence are not consistently reflected in the decisions shaping humanitarian priorities, financing and coordination.

In 2022, IASC Principals committed to representing women-led and youth-led organisations “at every level of humanitarian decision-making.”¹ The 2026 Reset architecture now gives women-led organisations (WLOs) and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) named leadership, funding and representation provisions. Youth-led organisations (YLOs) appear only once, in a membership list. **Closing this gap is not a new constituency request; it is part of making the Reset deliver on localisation, access, protection and accountability.** This also means moving away from viewing young people solely through the lens of vulnerability and recognising them as capable, frontline responders and partners in shaping the response. The decisions requested below operationalise an existing IASC commitment through mechanisms and work already scheduled before March 2027, with no new institution, policy or funding instrument².

Decisions requested from IASC Principals for the Humanitarian Reset

The Principals endorse See. Seat. Fund. Decide. as the common direction for integrating youth leadership into the Reset, and direct existing IASC and OCHA mechanisms to operationalise it by 31 March 2027. This does not create a new constituency architecture. It applies commitments the IASC has already made and ensures that simplification does not remove youth from coordination, financing and accountability.

SEE	Direct the IASC Humanitarian Working Group (HWG) and OCHA to make youth visible in Reset metrics and coordination reporting, using practical age and youth-led-organisation disaggregation within existing diversity considerations and LNA categorisation under the Cluster Simplification Guidance.
SEAT	Direct that youth-led organisations are included in the representation and leadership provisions of the Cluster Simplification Guidance at parity with women-led organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities, including a named youth seat in relevant country coordination and pooled-fund governance structures.
FUND	Direct OCHA to make youth-led organisations explicit in Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) eligibility and to publish the share of allocations reaching them, using existing reporting platforms and country-appropriate targets.
DECIDE	Direct Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) to show how youth priorities influence needs analysis, response plans, monitoring and area-based coordination decisions, rather than recording participation alone.

Immediate quick wins

Three actions under these four directions can be taken immediately through work already underway:

- Add youth-led organisations to the existing leadership and funding language in Recommendation 2 of the Cluster Simplification Guidance alongside WLOs and OPDs.
- Include youth-led status in Reset metrics and OCHA coordination and pooled-fund reporting already under development.
- Require youth priorities to be reflected, or their exclusion explained, in the next HNO and response-planning cycle.

The accompanying reform package sets out 13 detailed implementation measures under these four directions, and not separate decisions for Principals.

¹ IASC Principals, Accountability to Affected People in Humanitarian Action, 14 April 2022

² IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises (2020); Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action; Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms (2021); IASC Guidance on Cluster Simplification and Standard Terms of Reference for Area-Based Coordination (March 2026); Humanitarian Complementarity Framework (June 2026).

What the evidence shows

Representation	Nigeria records no dedicated youth seats in strategic coordination despite c. 2.9 million young people in severe-to-extreme need (ActionAid Nigeria, 2026). Globally, 56% of young people surveyed report limited or no influence on strategic decisions (CTC, 2026). Registration-based criteria exclude many informal youth-led groups.
Data	Age disaggregation often stops at 18 or groups everyone over 18 as “adult”, so the 18–24 cohort is not visible in severity analysis, people-in-need figures, targeting or costing (ActionAid Nigeria, 2026; Save the Children et al., 2026).
Resources	Youth-led groups commonly operate without core or multi-year support, while existing humanitarian finance platforms do not consistently publish funding that reaches them directly. Fewer than 15% of young people surveyed report access to resources (CTC, 2026). In Nigeria, youth receive a single-digit share of youth-specific funding against roughly half the caseload. Experience from funding mechanisms in Myanmar, Mozambique, Chad, Bangladesh and CAR also shows that, where space is deliberately created for local and national youth-led organisations, resources can increasingly reach actors closest to affected communities³.
Accountability	Consultation does not guarantee influence. Plans and coordination reviews rarely show where youth input changed priorities, allocations or delivery choices (STC, 2026).

Prepared by #ChangeTheCode with ActionAid International Humanitarian Action and Resilience Team support. Evidence draws primarily on the Nigeria HNRP Youth Compliance Assessment 2026 and is triangulated with findings from Palestine, Ukraine and wider youth consultations. Detailed technical measures and sources are retained in the accompanying reform package.

³ OCHA, Private Briefing for Member States and Humanitarian Donors, Geneva, August 2026.