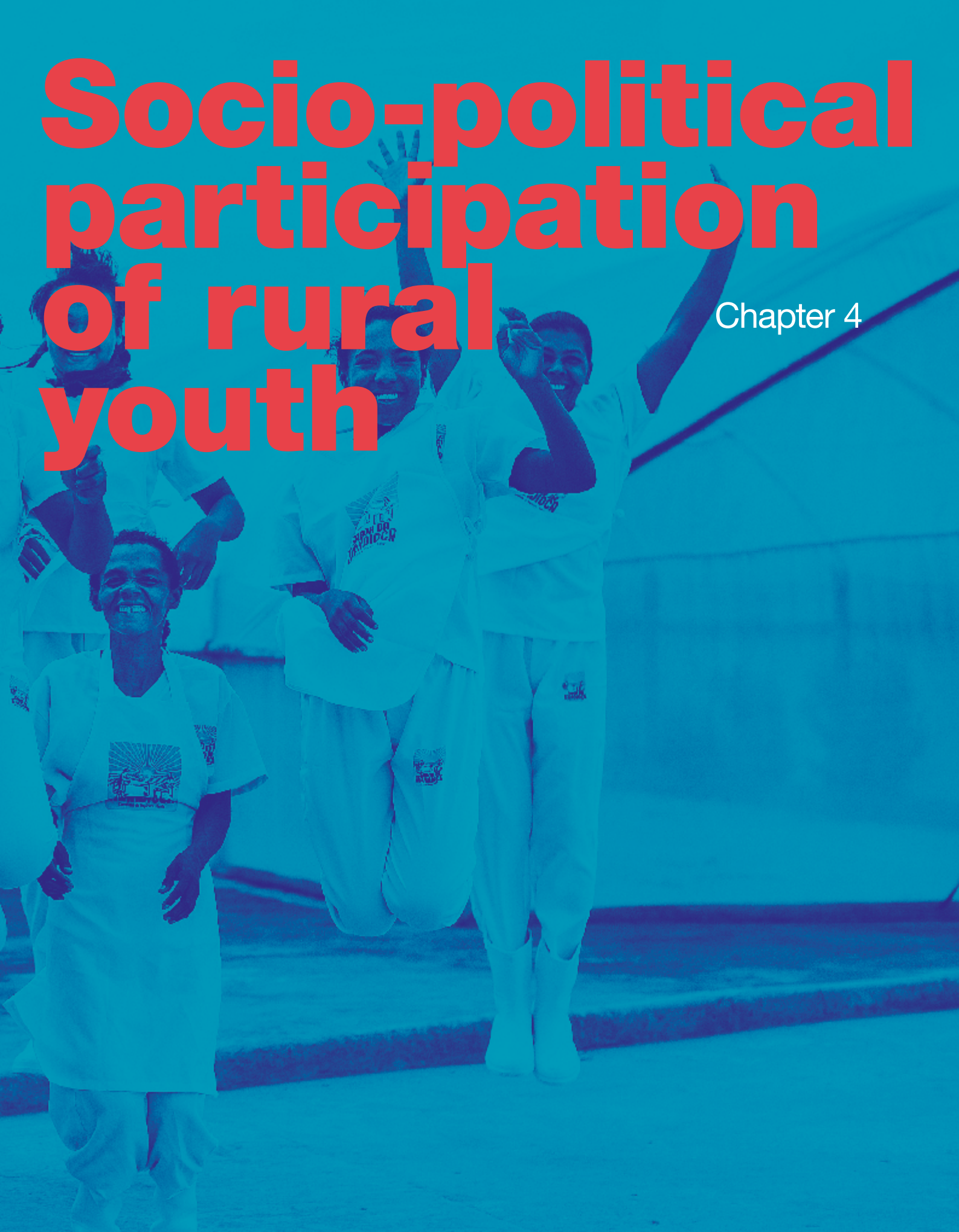




Socio-political participation of rural youth

Chapter 4



Rural youth participation matters

The three foundations for youth-centred transformation – productivity, connectivity and agency – can be effectively integrated into rural development policies only if rural youth have the opportunity to actively participate in the social, economic and political life of their communities and countries. Rural youth participation in decision-making is both a means to an end and an end in itself. It helps to make interventions more responsive to young people's needs and it helps to make interventions more effective by fostering greater ownership of policies and initiatives. At the same time, participation has been recognized as a fundamental right in several international conventions and declarations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Trivelli and Morel, 2018). In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the participation of young people is regarded as a way to enhance their agency by building and strengthening social and human capital, developing skills, boosting confidence and self-esteem and increasing their awareness of their rights (SPW-DFID-CSO, 2010).

Participatory mechanisms and strategies are needed at the national and local levels to ensure the active and effective participation of rural youth all along the policy and programme decision-making process. These mechanisms can either be State-driven (for instance, local assemblies) or stakeholder-driven (for example, youth advisory panels in development programmes run by international agencies or youth-driven local organizations). What is important is that they participate and are included in the framing, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes that concern them. This becomes even more important as youth lifestyles become more divergent as a result of young people's increasing connectivity to other places, people and ideas and as a consequence of the dynamics of change discussed in chapter 1, all of which makes it more challenging for decision makers to adequately address youth concerns and issues surrounding their well-being (UNDESA, 2003; YouthPower, 2017a).

Since rural youth development policy should be embedded in broader rural development strategies, participation mechanisms for young people should also be designed to fit into those wider frameworks. Governments usually engage youth, if they engage them at all, only in connection with "youth-related issues" (such as volunteering and sports) rather than involving them in discussions and decisions on a wider range of topics of concern to them (such as education, employment, and sexual and reproductive rights). As put by Jennings et al. (2006) young people should be integrated in activities that promote "meaningful participation", that is "activities relevant to their own lives, ones that excite and challenge them and 'count as real'". This can be done by creating a conducive environment that "encourages and recognizes youth while promoting their social and emotional competence to thrive" (YouthPower, 2017a). This is particularly important for rural youth, who face multiple constraints as they seek to make the transition to becoming productive and connected individuals who are in charge of their lives.

Why participation matters

Rural youth aspire to more and better things

Rural youth participation and inclusion are critical in situations in which there is a mismatch between the aspirations of young people and their social and economic realities; this is referred to as the “aspiration-attainment” gap, and it has been widely reported on in all developing regions (see White, 2012; Leavy and Smith, 2010; and OECD, 2017a). The increased flow of information that has been made available by widely accessible digital technologies may have also contributed to an increase in rural youths’ expectations about their future. This was clearly shown in a recent survey conducted via text messaging that was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. In that survey, 10,000 rural youth between the ages of 18 and 35 in 21 African countries were asked about their future prospects, visions and values (BMZ, 2017). The results of the survey indicated that 93 per cent of rural youth expect to see a big improvement in their lives in the next five years.

The aspirational gap among rural youth was also clearly evident in the results of another recent study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018). This study found that “the vast majority (76 per cent) of rural youth aspire to work in high-skilled occupations, but in reality few (13 per cent) are in such occupations. Urban youth also aspire to high-skilled occupations (82.4 per cent), but by comparison with rural youth, more of them get these positions (21.3 per cent). Additionally, less than half (39 per cent) of rural young workers have the level of education required for their current occupation” (OECD, 2018). The report also indicates that skill mismatches are a major issue for rural youth (compared to urban youth), with 17.9 per cent being overqualified and 42.7 per cent being underqualified. It also states that the mismatch is more prominent in agriculture than in other sectors (OECD, 2018).

Increased school enrolment has also played a part in rural youths’ rising aspirations and their expectations of better-paying and more secure employment, even while the economies of most low-income countries are still structured around production by household farms and firms operating with limited supplies of outside labour – especially in countries with low levels of transformation (Fox, 2018). Thus, the desire of rural young people to have a job that draws on the formal education or training that they have received contrasts with the actual opportunities that they have to put those skills and values into practice. Young people of both genders are confronted with an aspiration-attainment gap and may tend to become disillusioned when their opportunity space is such that they have difficulty in realizing their dreams and find themselves with no other option than to work on their family’s farm (Elias et al., 2018). It should be recognized that some rural youth (regardless of their level of education) aspire to a farming life but one that is positioned in spaces that are better connected and sustainable; they also find, however, that they do not have a voice in creating those spaces (Giuliani et al., 2017).

Increased participation by rural youth in socio-political decision-making is a powerful way to leverage their aspirations and to inform youth-related and wider rural development policies and programmes. Engaging rural youth in the construction of their own future will also help to bridge the aspiration gap and reduce poverty by helping to lessen their social exclusion (Rajani, 2000; Ibrahim, 2011). Participation, therefore, should not be just a minor add-on but a core component of broader development strategies.

Rural youth face obstacles to their effective participation

While their aspirations are high, rural youth are still one of the groups that is least engaged in the policymaking process. On the one hand, promoting young people's participation in rural areas is particularly challenging. As the structural and rural transformation processes unfold, rural settings in developing countries become increasingly diversified. On the other hand, there are biases and barriers that limit or even prevent the active and effective participation of rural youth.

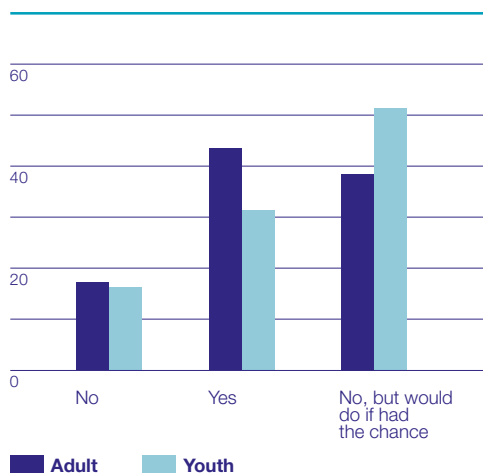
In remote areas (especially those situated in rural opportunity spaces subject to severe challenges), participation mechanisms are more complicated and more costly to implement because the necessary assets and skills to support those interventions are lacking and because their connections to urban centres, governments and other decision makers are poor. In these settings, youth can find a voice only at the community level. The results of a study based on 36 African countries indicate that youth are less likely than adults to engage in various forms of political participation, including voting and civic activism overall. Young people living in rural areas are 15 percentage points more likely to attend community meetings than their urban counterparts (see **FIGURE 4.1**). Yet their participation at the national level probably lags behind that of urban youth, although no empirical evidence is available on this point. Interventions designed to create mechanisms for improving rural youth participation at all levels of decision-making could be of significant help in enabling young people to shape policies that affect their lives, while also building non-cognitive skills.

A "hierarchy of exclusion" makes public participation difficult for rural youth. Living in a remote rural setting is a first level of exclusion which may then be compounded by a person's identity as a member of an indigenous people or another minority group, their youth and/or their gender. Different combinations of these factors of exclusion pose particular challenges in terms of participation. For example, engaging a young indigenous woman living in a remote rural area in any kind of participatory mechanism requires a great deal of effort and resources (Trivelli and Morel, 2018).

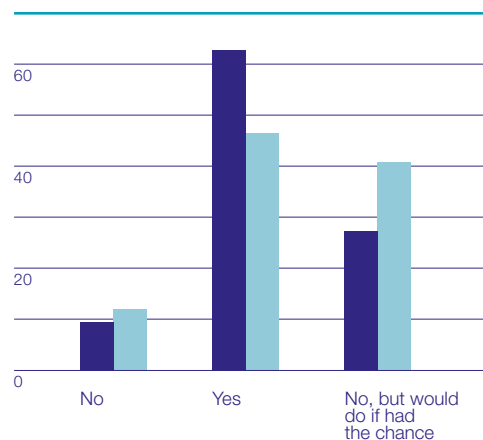
Gender may be the most widespread factor in the hierarchy of exclusion in rural areas, given the triple burden that young rural women are shouldering, as discussed in

FIGURE 4.1 Youth participate less than adults in general, but rural youth participate more at the community level

Percentage of urban youth and adults attending a community meeting in the past year



Percentage of rural youth and adults attending a community meeting in the past year



Source: Authors' own calculations based on Afrobarometer survey datasets covering 36 African countries.

chapter 3. Mobility constraints, lower literacy rates, lower levels of confidence, social norms and the persistence of gender inequalities at the household level reduce their visibility and opportunities for participation. For instance, although lately improvements have been observed in basic indicators of well-being for young rural women in Latin America (particularly those related to school attendance), rural women between 18 and 22 years of age continue to face challenges because institutional frameworks are biased against them (e.g. laws on land ownership that favour men and a lack of educational and training programmes for women in rural areas) (Trivelli and Asensio, 2014). To deal with these challenges, young rural women are taking positive steps in order to move forward. Trivelli and Asensio (2014) found that rural areas in four countries of Latin America are “defeminizing”, as women (particularly young women) born in rural areas move to urban settings. This process, which started at least 20 years ago, shows that women are resisting the current status quo by moving to locations where better “landscapes of opportunities” are achievable (Sumberg et al., 2018).

Hierarchies of exclusion are related to the urban bias which is discussed in the general literature on the promotion of youth inclusion in public policies, and this bias is increasingly being challenged by policymakers and experts.²³ In fact, the level of rural transformation, the opportunities for participation and the associated challenges in the rural opportunity space and the types of households in which rural youth live are rarely recognized as relevant elements to be factored in when designing participation mechanisms.

Economic, institutional and social barriers play a critical role in limiting youth participation. In the case of Nigeria, Nlerum and Okorie (2012) found that the lack of economic resources is a major impediment for participation in development projects. Specifically, “age, marital status, educational level and previous experience in rural development had [a] significant relationship with participation.” In addition, the fragility of the economic situation of rural youth can also limit their ability to engage in voluntary associations. As a consequence, rural youth organizations are few (OECD, 2018), and their limited connections with other social organizations, governments, development partners and donors (most of which are usually located in urban areas) make them prone to early dissolution (DFID, 2010). While this appears to be the most common type of situation, there are national initiatives that are aimed at providing a more accurate depiction of existing rural youth organizations. For instance, the National Secretariat of Youth in Peru maintains the National Registry of Youth Organizations, a comprehensive database of youth groups in the country. The database classifies organizations into 17 categories (for instance, sport associations, student associations, etc.) and includes information on location, main focus of work, point of contact, etc. (OECD, 2017b).

There are also institutional challenges associated with the application of existing policies on rural youth. The most important one is, as mentioned earlier, the urban bias of many youth programmes (OECD, 2017b). In addition, youth policies tend to be “youth-focused” rather than “youth-centred”. In other words, they tend to consider young people as objects²⁴ of public policies rather than as agents whose concerns and perspectives

²³ For a further analysis of the urban bias of employment programmes, see Microlinks (2017), which states: “Louise Fox, Chief Economist for USAID, opened the discussion, highlighting the customary categorization of youth employment as an urban issue, resulting in a lack of evidence for rural approaches. The invisibility of the challenges facing rural youth has, in turn, created blind spots for employment programming. The need to better understand youth’s role in rural economic development is particularly important, as government and donor agencies will increasingly need to ensure that programming improves rural, semi-urban, and peri-urban livelihoods for youth.”

²⁴ The terms “target groups” or “beneficiaries” are frequently used.

should inform the design and implementation of policies relevant to them (Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, 2009), and this is particularly true in the case of rural youth (Vargas-Lundius and Suttie, 2014).

Adult-centrism is another impediment to youth participation. For example, youth in South Africa cannot engage in HIV programmes because of a number of different factors: (i) reluctance on the part of adults in the community to recognize the potential value of youth inputs and an unwillingness to regard youth as equals within the framework of project structures; (ii) a lack of support for meaningful youth participation from external health and welfare agencies involved in such projects; and (iii) the failure of these projects to provide meaningful incentives to encourage youth involvement (Campbell et al., 2009).

These institutional factors exacerbate other social factors. The members of rural organizations lack a homogeneous set of organizational skills, and this results in the formation of pronounced social hierarchies inside these groups, as recognized in the first *World Youth Report* published by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2004). The report states that youth movements are often dominated by the most articulate and socially engaged members, while young people from more marginalized groups remain excluded (UNDESA, 2004). In other words, there is a danger that “participation advances the interests of the vociferous, articulate and confident at the expense of others” (Matthews, 2001). In fact, Head (2011) found that, in the case of youth platforms for political participation in Australia, “only the more confident young people are likely to become involved, and the vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups are overlooked. Thus, a focus on formal political or organizational forms of youth leadership could be seen as a rather traditional ‘adult-engendered’ political goal” (Head, 2011). In the case of New Zealand, one study found that participatory mechanisms for youth in local councils in rural and urban areas reached only those young people who exhibited polarized behaviours (i.e. “achievers”, or those with the potential to become leaders, and “troublemakers”, or those with perceived socialization problems). The selection was made entirely by adults and left “ordinary youth” (the “excluded middle” as described by the authors) outside of the councils’ scope of action. In fact, most of the youth population was not even aware of the opportunities for participation provided by local councils (Nairn, Judith and Freeman, 2006). These examples point to the fact that participatory mechanisms can have unintended effects, including the creation of a division between elite and non-elite youth.

All in all, it is clear that participatory mechanisms can be used in pernicious ways. Leaving aside lip service on the issue by governments, there is a risk that patronage mechanisms, tokenism (Hart, 1992)²⁵ and “instrumentalization for development”²⁶ may be employed by governments when they are supposedly promoting the inclusion of young people in decision-making processes.²⁷ Rural residents, including youth, are more likely to be involved in relationships marked by communal solidarity, and this is

²⁵ Hart (1992) defined tokenism as “those instances in which children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or the style of communicating it, and little or no opportunity to formulate their own opinions”.

²⁶ As defined in White (2018, p. 64): “There has indeed been a tendency for policy work, in the ‘human capital’ and ‘youth bulge/ youth dividend’ frame, to treat young people as objects of policy and instruments of development, rather than as active subjects and as citizens with rights. ‘Instrumentalising’ young people in this way parallels the much-criticised tendency to instrumentalise women in ‘economic efficiency’ (rather than social justice) arguments for gender equality.”.

²⁷ For instance, in the case of Afghanistan, youth political organizations – while indeed challenging traditional, adult-driven politics – are still very dependent on patronage mechanisms provided by “old guard political networks” in order to gain access to the political system, particularly outside of the capital (Hewad and Johnson, 2014).

often used by politicians who find “country folk” easier to mobilize as a voting bloc than diverse groupings of self-focused, independent-minded urbanites are (Bratton, Chu and Lagos, 2010).

Despite these challenges and the fact that there are no comprehensive descriptions of what a successful participatory programme for rural youth would look like (partially owing to the limited number of such initiatives to be found in rural settings), the opportunities for rural youth to gain agency and empowerment by becoming active participants are greater than in the past. Rural youth today are more educated than earlier cohorts of young men and women. They have access to information, communication and technology in a way no previous generation has ever had and, among other factors, they are increasingly more connected to urban areas (both physically and figuratively through ICTs). Last but not least, rural youth today live in a world where public participation and transparency are considered key tools for enhancing decision-making in the public arena – tools which need to be employed in order to promote a youth-centred rural transformation process.

Levels and mechanisms of youth participation

The various types of public participation mechanisms can be classified based on their purpose and on the level of influence that they enable citizens to have on decisions at any given stage in the policymaking process. A number of international organizations and experts rely on the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum to gauge the extent of public participation (Head, 2011; OECD, 2017c).²⁸ This incremental spectrum describes levels of public participation ranging from mechanisms for informing people about policies to mechanisms of empowerment that place final decision-making in the hands of the public.²⁹ In the case of rural youth, participation mechanisms can be divided into the following levels:

- i. **Information:** Young people are informed about policies, projects or other initiatives that have been conceived of and designed by adults. Thanks to this information, rural youth can understand the rationale, objectives and decisions behind those policies or initiatives. By definition, information mechanisms establish a one-way flow of information.
- ii. **Consultation:** Young people’s views are listened to and governments provide feedback on how consultations with them have shaped their decisions. Here, there is a two-way interaction, and the consultation can be active (initiated by youth) or passive (proposed by decision makers).
- iii. **Collaboration:** Young people are seen as active partners who share the responsibility for decision-making with adults. While collaborative mechanisms may still primarily be initiated by adults, young people can take self-directed action and can influence and challenge processes and outcomes. These mechanisms allow for iterative dialogues.

²⁸ IAP2 stands for International Association for Public Participation. Other classifications for youth participation include Hart’s classic eight-level “ladder of participation” for children: manipulation; decoration; tokenism; assigned but informed; consulted and informed; adult-initiated shared decisions with children; child-initiated and directed; and child-initiated shared decisions with adults (Hart, 1992, p. 8). Karsten (2012) has managed to categorize as many as 36 models developed between 1969 and 2012 for classifying youth participation, including Hart’s and IAP2’s. See also Lansdown and O’Kane’s (2014) series for Save the Children on the issue.

²⁹ The first level would be a form of involvement in which citizens work with officials, usually in a top-down model, to ensure the inclusion of the former’s opinions and governments provide justification for their decisions and actions to the public.

- iv. **Empowerment:** Young people take the initiative and conduct projects on issues that they themselves have identified. Spaces within existing structures, systems and processes are open to youth-led decision-making. Final decisions are enforced by governments as public policy.

This spectrum provides both goals for each level of participation and clear messages for the public about what each level means for them (see **TABLE 4.1**). Elaborations on this spectrum place youth participation at each level in the framework of different platforms and techniques for participation, as outlined by Head (2011). These levels reflect the idea that there are significant gradations of rural youth participation, something that Arnstein (1969) has referred to as rungs of a “ladder of public participation” whereby the power of citizens to influence decision-making increases as they move up that ladder (Arnstein, 1969).

TABLE 4.1 Levels of participation for rural youth

	Levels of public participation			
	Information	Consultation	Collaboration	Empowerment
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making power in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	<i>We will keep you informed.</i>	<i>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</i>	<i>We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</i>	<i>We will implement what you decide.</i>
Example techniques to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open house • Youth caucuses and observers in parliament • Transparent communication with policymakers: • Websites • Fact sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment mechanisms • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings • Workshops • Public hearings • Youth councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making • Youth advisory boards • Internship/fellowship programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-initiated and -led (peer) consultations or information campaigns • Youth parliaments • Small-scale youth-organized and youth-managed programmes
Promising practices in participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka's National Youth Services Council • Philippines National Youth Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional organizations' meetings • Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) of MERCOSUR and MERCOSUR workshops. • IFAD's grant to Slow Food for Empowering Indigenous Youth and their Communities to Defend and Promote their Food Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNFPA's Youth Advisory Panels • IFAD's Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project in Mali 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Youth Innovation Network • Restless Development initiative (Sierra Leone) • Sri Lanka Youth Parliament • IFAD's Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP)

Source: Adapted from IAP2 (2014); Head (2011).

When designing participatory mechanisms for policies or programmes related to rural youth, it is of key importance to consider which level will be the best fit for the objectives of the policy or project in question, the particular circumstances involved and the people whose participation is to be channelled through those mechanisms. A critical view of the examples of the different participation techniques presented in **TABLE 4.1** raises a question as to the extent to which these mechanisms are (or could be) effectively made available to rural youth. In some cases, it is difficult to imagine that citizen advisory committees or citizens' juries could serve as tools of participation for rural youth, particularly in developing countries where social norms are such that male adults are in charge of rural institutions. Moreover, depending on the availability of Internet access and digital capabilities, even simple informative mechanisms could be difficult to implement. This relates to Kelleher, Seymour and Halpenny's (2014) reference to the definition of seldom-heard young people as people "who do not have a collective voice and are often underrepresented in consultation or participation activities" (Community Network for Manchester, 2011).

Advantages and disadvantages of participation mechanisms

Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of participation mechanisms requires a careful review of the existing participatory programmes and initiatives that involve rural youth. Although there are many initiatives (such as workshops, councils, parliaments, etc.) that promote youth participation, none are primarily focused on rural youth. This is particularly striking given the broad consensus in the literature about the need to include "hard-to-reach young people". Therefore, the assessment presented here is based on a review of specific institutional arrangements for promoting participation and holistic interventions in other fields as a basis for determining what elements may facilitate youth inclusion.

Trivelli and Morel (2018) reviewed 54 mechanisms specifically related to youth participation in southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (see annex 4.1 for a list of the initiatives that they reviewed). They found that, while there are many mechanisms available for youth participation in the developing world (many of which have been promoted by regional or international bodies or development agencies), the vast majority do not have a specific approach tailored to rural youth. However, some of the most rural countries in the world – according to the most recent update of the World Bank (2018) – have national and regional institutions that are working with young people in participatory ways, including Papua New Guinea, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka (youth parliaments), Nepal (the United States Embassy Youth Council), Cambodia and Kenya (youth councils), to name a few. Countries that have recently undergone political transitions or in which armed conflicts have recently come to an end have been targeted by international organizations to promote youth involvement in decision-making processes. Initiatives of this sort include the work being done by of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Nepal, by United Nations agencies in Sri Lanka and by the International Republican Institute in the Gambia.³⁰ Sub-Saharan Africa, southern Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean have the most experience in this regard.

30 "National Youth Parliament Holds First National Sitting" *Daily Observer*, Monrovia, 13 July 2017.

There is no blueprint for participatory mechanisms for rural youth, as the type of mechanism that will be the best fit will depend on the desired level of participation, and all of them have both advantages and disadvantages. The strengths and weaknesses for each level of participation are discussed below.³¹

- i. **Information mechanisms.** As the focus of these mechanisms is information-sharing, the spread of information and communications technologies represents a major opportunity for supporting the engagement of rural youth in public life, even in the least connected areas and for the most excluded groups (see chapter 8). A study on rural women in Latin America found that, while there is a general gender bias in the use of the Internet, young rural women are not subject to any psychological barrier that would hinder their adoption of new technologies. This suggests that being young is a stronger “brand identity” than being rural or being a woman (Asensio, 2012). Some governments have undertaken efforts in this direction. In Sri Lanka, for example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has partnered with the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Cisco and Citi to conduct e-learning programmes in 20 locations to strengthen young people’s ICT skills.³²

Although face-to-face methods of sharing information (e.g. open houses, participation in youth caucuses) may be preferred by some groups, they pose challenges for young people in rural areas because of their high costs in terms of transportation, accommodations and time. Oral, written or digital means of communication may also have limitations when the objective is to reach isolated rural youth populations, particularly if the methods involved rely on Internet access and require that the target group has a given level of literacy. In addition, language barriers may be a problem when seeking to promote the participation of youth from indigenous communities and minority groups.

- ii. **Consultation mechanisms.** Face-to-face communication is frequently the form of interaction of choice when regional organizations seek to consult young people. National and international meetings among national youth representatives are common within the framework of international organizations or groups such as the Commonwealth, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Pacific Island countries. Still, as in the case of information-sharing mechanisms, forms of participation that require rural youth to be physically present in a given place at a specific time pose challenges for those living in more distant and poorly connected locations.

Youth councils offer another way of consulting young people. These councils provide an institutionalized forum where young people can make their voices heard to governments. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) describes them as “umbrella organizations that represent and co-ordinate youth organisations” across a given country (OECD, 2017c). Youth councils are present at the national level in countries such as Fiji, Rwanda and the Gambia and work at the subnational level in countries such as Pakistan, the Philippines and Peru, and many of them seem to have functions resembling

³¹ See Trivelli and Morel (2018) for a more detailed discussion.

³² See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Sri Lanka. *Youth Technopreneurship for Social Change*. At: <http://www.lk.undp.org/content/srilanka/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/04/25/youth-technopreneurship-for-social-change.html> (last updated 4 July 2018).

those of ministries or youth institutes. However, these consultative mechanisms are highly vulnerable to the effects of fluctuating political support, a lack of autonomy on the part of the agencies to which they are attached and budget constraints. In addition, they can easily be captured by urban youth, who do not always represent the voices of their rural peers, or by the most empowered rural young men or women. Representative branches of youth councils for hard-to-reach rural youth might be an option to overcome this constraint.

In addition, and particularly in traditional and less connected rural settings, opening up the arena of public participation to young people – even when that participation is limited to consultation – may meet with resistance from sectors of the society that have traditionally been the ones holding those conversations (i.e. adults, males, majority groups). More connected and integrated rural settings tend to facilitate such participation platforms more successfully.

It should also be noted that, while workshops and meetings are a common tool for youth consultation, they are sometimes conceived of as one-off interactions

and, as such, have no substantive impact on young people's lives unless they are attached to long-term programmes designed to promote leadership. One example of a long-term consultative mechanism is the one being used by the Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) (*Reunión Especializada en Agricultura Familiar* in Spanish). REAF, with support from several institutions, including IFAD and FAO, set up its own working group of young leaders to discuss issues related to family agriculture. REAF has provided courses via international meetings to train these youth leaders and to identify the main challenges to the continuity of this cohort in rural areas and the formation of an agenda to guide public action (REAF, 2016). According to REAF, young people who went through this programme are now assuming leadership positions and bringing up their own ideas about rural development and intergenerational approaches to the policy cycle in their countries.

BOX 4.1 Youth network mobilizes young people in El Salvador

Given the importance of actively engaging rural young people in decision-making processes, IFAD supported the development of the first National Assembly of Rural Youth in El Salvador. For 3,000 young people, this national youth network is paving the way to political and economic empowerment. By providing opportunities for partnerships, training and entrepreneurship, the National Assembly of Rural Youth of El Salvador, now known as AREJURES, is promoting a national agenda of democratic participation and economic opportunity for young women and men. With 13 departmental networks across the country, AREJURES is the leading youth network in this densely populated nation and has been recognized as part of the National Youth Institute (INJUVE) network. Sixty per cent of its members are women, and it includes the Committee of the National Council of Indigenous Youth of El Salvador (CONAJIS). IFAD funded the network's establishment and now supports its operations. In a country with marked inequality, AREJURES focuses on empowering its members through improved communications skills at the community, national and international levels. It advocates for young people to be included in community associations and municipal departments and has achieved rural youth representation on several national committees (IFAD Annual Report 2017).

- iii. **Collaboration mechanisms.** These mechanisms involve a joint working relationship between government and members of the young population involving ongoing interactions in which young people are co-implementers of a given policy. One of the main challenges for these types of participatory mechanisms in rural areas or for efforts to ensure the participation of rural youth is the fact that, because of their limited stock of human capital, young rural participants may be eclipsed by adult co-implementers and other better-prepared youth. Therefore, elite capture by people who are more empowered and more confident becomes a distinct possibility, and a focused effort must therefore be made to ensure the inclusion of all groups who are supposed to be represented.

Adult bias towards high-performing young men and women represents another common challenge, as adults tend to seek the involvement of “high-achievers” on panels, committees, events, etc., rather than young people who are more representative of their excluded communities. Thus, it is crucial for the adult co-participants in such mechanisms to be familiar with the challenges of participation, to be sensitive to those challenges and to genuinely see their role as one based on collaboration with excluded rural youth. As is true of the other types of participatory mechanisms discussed above, the cost implications of this type of initiative may prevent rural youth from engaging and therefore need to be addressed.

These challenges aside, collaborative mechanisms for participation can support rural youth inclusion by setting up long-term platforms for young people’s voices and the expression of their preferences. International organizations have been establishing these types of participatory mechanisms and, in some cases, have introduced specific provisions to ensure the participation of vulnerable groups. For example, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has its own Global Youth Advisory Panel (GYAP) as a means of engaging in a constructive dialogue with youth organizations and networks in order to better address young people’s needs. GYAP has made specific arrangements to ensure that it includes vulnerable youth populations,³³ and, in 2007, the UNFPA-Pakistan Youth Advisory Panel elected 10 young people from rural areas (out of a total of 17 members) to serve for a two-year period.³⁴

- iv. **Empowerment mechanisms.** While empowering mechanisms are the most comprehensive modes for youth engagement and foster a strong sense of ownership among participants, the levels of social, human and financial capital required by such complex programmes may not be available in all cases. The implementation of this type of participatory mechanism requires previous and/or parallel interventions to improve the human capital of rural youth so that they will be in a position to deal with the complexities of effective and active participation within this kind of framework, and this is particularly true in the case of young people who live in more remote communities. On the other hand, in more integrated and connected rural areas, the consequences of marginalization that are often associated with urban contexts (such as illicit economies or gang membership) may stop youth from participating.

While youth parliaments seem to be one of the most common features of policies for promoting youth participation in developing countries, most of them do not tackle the issue of rurality explicitly. Some of them appear to focus on informing youth populations rather than empowering them; in other words, they educate young people about how the “real” parliament works, rather than trying to involve them in creating a new structure that can inform policymaking.³⁵ At the project

³³ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/jahia-events/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/events/2009/gyap_09.pdf (accessed on 16 May 2018).

³⁴ UNFPA’s Youth Participation Guide is available at: http://nmd.bg/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/UNFPA-YOUTH-PARTICIPATION-GUIDE-11-Nov-08-_email_.pdf

³⁵ As put by Crowley when talking about children’s influence on decision-making mechanisms in the United Kingdom and India: “A critical review of the processes involved in turning children’s ‘voice’ into ‘influence’ in these case studies shows how traditional constructions of childhood work to ensure that formal participation structures and mechanisms (particularly those in the UK) have been much more about providing opportunities for children to practice ‘good’ citizenship, develop a responsible attitude, and to learn about public decision-making, than about their involvement in shaping public services or holding service providers or policy makers to account” (Crowley, 2013).

level, international organizations such as IFAD have also set up mechanisms for empowering rural youth (see **BOX 4.2**).

The above-mentioned mechanisms are effective ways to channel youth participation at different stages of the policymaking process. However, they cannot guarantee the active and effective participation of rural youth, particularly of those living in the least connected areas and those from minority or indigenous groups. There are other factors that should be taken into consideration when thinking about investments, strategies or programmes aimed at enhancing the participation of rural youth in the public affairs of their communities, countries and regions.

In addition to setting up specific participatory mechanisms, there are cross-sectoral types of interventions that do not focus specifically on participation but that do promote the engagement of young people in decision-making processes as part of their holistic strategies. These interventions are directed towards skills formation and asset provision, both of which can be expected to boost the agency as well as the productivity and connectivity of rural youth. Two areas in which interventions could complement – and leverage – efforts to promote the public participation of rural youth are non-cognitive skill development and intergenerational partnerships.

The term “non-cognitive-skills” refers to “a broad set of skills, behaviours ... and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals” (Lippman et al., 2015). These skills are applicable across sectors, complement the acquisition of other skills (Bentaouet Kattan, 2017), and contribute to the achievement of results in education and the labour market (Gates et al., 2016).

Educational systems in rural areas are a critical element in the achievement of higher levels of participation through the promotion of non-cognitive skills. Ideally, schools should help young people make the transition to early adulthood – that very special stage that people pass through when they are between 15 and 20 years of age where they begin to participate in society and in the market. However, the role of formal education, especially in rural areas, in building these kinds of skills needs to be buttressed by additional efforts from other quarters in order to offset

BOX 4.2 Empowering rural youth in IFAD projects

IFAD has recognized that investing in rural youth is crucial for dynamic rural economic growth, and its portfolio of investments increasingly focuses on them as a priority. Thus, it has committed to increasing youth representation in local and national policy processes and to recognizing the importance of giving youth a decision-making role in its operations.

The Global Youth Innovation Network (GYIN), for example, is a youth-led participatory platform in West and Central Africa for young entrepreneurs and rural microenterprises. Its mission is to “establish a global network of young rural and urban entrepreneurs, with the ultimate aim of contributing to poverty reduction by providing opportunities for young entrepreneurs to serve as agents of change through innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership and self-employment” (Vargas-Lundius and Suttie, 2014).

On the other hand, IFAD’s Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP) in Nigeria is also pointing the way to the constitution of a widely representative youth-led forum. It has “promoted the creation or the strengthening of youth-only groups. The project facilitated the creation of a youth forum called Youth Agriculture Foundation (YIAF). The YIAF was the first network of agro-enterprising youths in the region, with a nine-member Board of Trustees, one representing each state of the region. It became a platform for promoting and supporting sustainable youth agribusiness, a peer review forum among youth agroentrepreneurs, and a platform for youth engagement in policy dialogue with government and other institutions. At the programme completion date, the YIAF had 880 members” (IFAD, 2018).

In Sierra Leone, the Restless Development initiative describes itself as the “leading youth-led development agency placing young people at the forefront of change and development in Sierra Leone”. One of its specific goals is to focus on civic participation as “young people are included in the development process, resulting in government policies that are both beneficial and accountable to young people and all of its citizens”.³⁵ The initiative has worked on the issue of rural youth and participation and has found that the main problem in Sierra Leone is the early departure of the most articulate and innovative young people from rural areas as they move to the capital; this void is filled by adults over 35 years of age who feel less compelled to challenge the traditional gerontocracy of the countryside.³⁶

³⁶ https://www.oecd.org/derec/unitedkingdom/17_RestlessDevelopmentSierra%20Leone%20sYouthReproductiveHealthProgramme%2020072012.pdf

³⁷ See <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/youth-participation-in-council-decision-making-narrative-pdf>

BOX 4.3 Participatory youth budgeting in Argentina – Skills development through empowerment

As youth lifestyles become more diverse and the pace of change increases, a promising approach for addressing youth concerns and well-being is offered by participatory youth budgeting mechanisms.

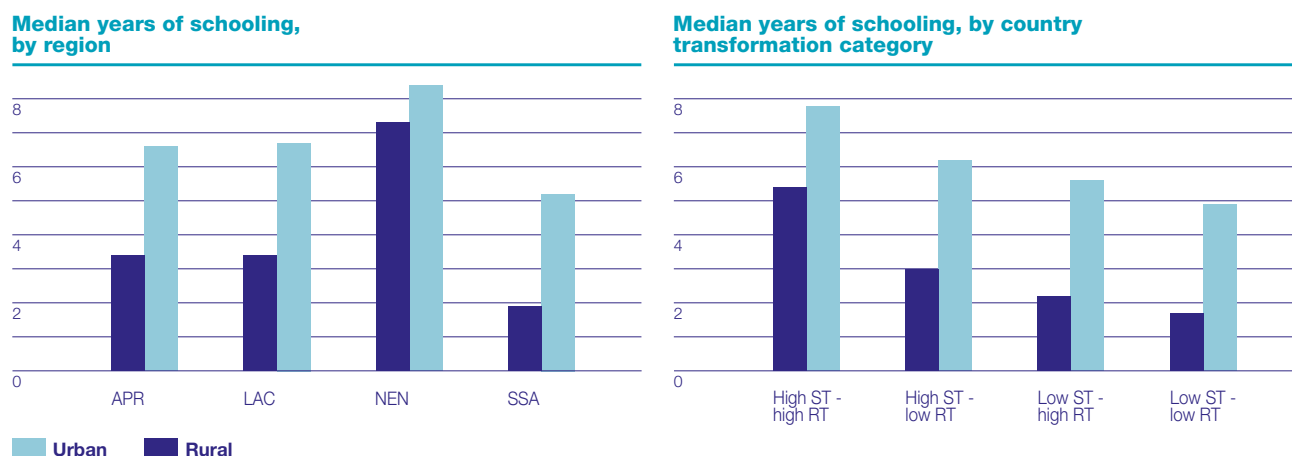
To engage youth as leading players in the design and implementation of local youth services, the Argentine municipality of Rosario undertakes an annual participatory youth budgeting exercise – Joven de Rosario (PPJoven) – that engages youth from across its six districts in democratic processes for selecting representatives and deciding upon budget allocations for youth services. In neighbourhood assemblies, people between the ages of 13 and 18 identify investment priorities and elect delegates to develop project proposals and present the projects and priorities in a round of district assemblies. Local youth then vote on which proposals to implement. During the entire project development process, there is a regular feedback loop with the technical units of the government that are equipped to evaluate the feasibility and costs of the projects proposed by the neighbourhood assemblies.³⁷

One broad objective of PPJoven is to enlarge the capabilities of the youth population as a means of facilitating their social and political inclusion. Delegates

who will participate in the budgeting rounds receive a full day of training that will allow them to familiarize themselves with the process involved in regular interactions with policymakers and peers aimed at supporting the development of new democratic skills, knowledge and attitudes.

The advantages of participatory budgeting are manifold, and other countries, such as Uruguay,³⁸ have adopted similar approaches involving collaborative relationships between youth and government officials that have strengthened their mutual understanding and enabled more equitable and effective forms of public spending. Nevertheless, engaging the least transformed and poorly connected communities, as well as socially excluded groups, such as rural and indigenous youth, is challenging and potentially requires further investments in these rural settings. Participatory budgeting requires not only a certain set of human capital and skills on the part of youth delegates, but also the infrastructure needed for regular assemblies and meetings. Problems such as elite capture need to be addressed and to be taken into consideration (SPW and DFID-CSO, 2010).

FIGURE 4.2 Rural-urban gaps in educational attainment are the widest in SSA and in the countries with the lowest transformation levels



Notes: ST: structural transformation; RT: rural transformation; APR: Asia and the Pacific; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; NEN: NEN: Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia; SSA: sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: DHS Statcompiler, most recent year available. The dataset covers 65 low- and middle-income countries (based on World Bank definitions and data for 2018).

the effects of the lower rates of school attendance seen in rural areas and the rural/urban gap in actual learning outcomes (see **FIGURE 4.1**).

The difficulties facing rural education systems compound the challenges involved in effectively developing non-cognitive skills. It is not clear “...how to gauge the interest within governments to integrate soft skills into basic education; and to what degree other sectors – such as education and health – should be engaged” (Microlinks,

³⁸ <https://participedia.net/en/cases/youth-participatory-budgeting-rosario-argentina>

³⁹ https://www.municipios.gub.uy/sites/default/files/buenaspracticas/publicaciones/SAN%20CARLOS_Presupuesto%20participativo%20joven.pdf

2017). Higher levels of participation – in such forums as assemblies and consultative bodies – require soft skills that a rural education may not provide (YouthPower, 2017b). Consequently, efforts need to be devoted to building and strengthening the development of rural young people's cognitive skills, whether as stand-alone initiatives or as part of broader development interventions, as this area of learning cannot be left entirely in the hands of rural education systems. These efforts will not only help to enhance rural youth participation in public life, but will also contribute to broader development outcomes.

Effective intergenerational partnerships bring down the barriers that limit active, effective collaboration between youth and adults by addressing the biased institutional environments that tend to place decision-making in the hands of (mainly male) adults. In Checkoway's words (2011), the key components of youth participation are "efforts by young people to organize around issues of their choice, by adults to involve young people in community agencies, and by youth and adults to join together in intergenerational partnerships".

Some organizations have developed frameworks to facilitate such partnerships. For instance, in its checklist for positive youth development practices in programme implementation, YouthPower includes healthy relationships and bonding both with adult role models and peers (YouthPower, 2017a). Another approach is used by the Mastercard Foundation in projects that form part of its Youth Forward Initiative. While this initiative's core issues are youth unemployment in Ghana and Uganda in the agriculture and construction sectors, it also uses a holistic approach that includes mentorships and coaching and close collaboration with youth organizations. In the same vein, the Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth (CORY) Consortium has developed a mentorship structure to develop entrepreneurial capacities and support peer-to-peer learning and access to complementary business development services.

Beyond mechanisms: further considerations for fostering effective rural youth participation

Political receptiveness to the implementation of participation mechanisms could be considered a first step towards success. While technical approaches to participation may achieve some degree of inclusion for rural youth, it is clear that the creation of an enabling environment for meaningful participation by rural youth requires political support – something that tends to be limited and to lack continuity in most rural contexts. This kind of conducive environment is needed not only in order to address youth-related issues, but also – and, in one sense, maybe even more importantly – to advance the broader development agenda.

The second condition for a successful participatory initiative is a clear definition of the purpose for which rural youth are being invited to participate in the policy cycle and, then, after that has been done, the determination of the mechanism to be used (i.e. informative, consultative, collaborative or empowering mechanisms) at a particular stage or stages of the policy cycle. Although the public participation spectrum discussed earlier in this chapter is incremental in terms of how influential of a role is played by the public, this does not necessarily mean that every instance of public participation should empower rural youth. Governments need to decide which level is a better fit for the objectives of the public decision in question in each case.

Careful consideration should also be given to the economy's level of transformation, the connectivity of the rural space and the sense of agency that rural youth have in each

particular context. Just as these three variables affect young people's economic participation, they also affect their participation in various types of mechanisms. In fact, in the least connected spaces in countries with low transformation levels, participation mechanisms are more complex and costly to implement owing to the absence of the assets and skills needed to support such interventions. Informative and consultative mechanisms face the challenges posed by difficulties in disseminating information and rigid social norms. In peri-urban areas, these constraints are likely to matter less, although other types of marginalization often associated with urban settings may create other challenges. Thus, the connectivity of rural, semi-rural and peri-urban areas needs to be enhanced by investing in both hard and soft infrastructure in order to facilitate information exchange and open up new opportunities for rural youth to participate and engage in economic, social and political spheres of life.

In addition, governments and organizations should recognize that young people do not belong to a unified, monolithic group. Thus, special measures should be taken to facilitate the inclusion of youth from rural areas, especially those who belong to the more disadvantaged groups, such as young women and members of indigenous communities. Measures to ease the inclusion of young rural women could include reducing their workloads, strengthening their soft skills, supporting women's organizations, setting quotas for young women's membership and inclusion in leadership positions in certain types of organizations, and sensitizing local leaders to the importance of young women's participation. Considerations relating to local languages, cultural identities and traditions are also of great importance in effectively promoting the inclusion of indigenous youth (Dockery, 2013).

In recent years, a significant opportunity for fostering rural youth participation has emerged with the increasing accessibility and use of information and communications technologies (ICTs). While participation has traditionally been associated with face-to-face interaction, the use of ICTs has ushered in new ways in which rural youth can obtain information and provide input and can make their voices heard in decision-making processes. ICTs are thus a powerful tool for overcoming some of the constraints that impede rural youth participation, especially those related to high transaction costs.

In sum, participatory mechanisms are tools that young people can use to realize rural transformation potentials and, in the process, build and strengthen their sense of agency. But in order for participation to be meaningful, it has to be built on a sustainable foundation. Some participatory mechanisms rely on young people already having sufficient assets to serve as that foundation. However, this is not the case for the majority of rural youth. For them, participation could come to be seen as nothing more than an illusion if it does not help to increase their economic, social and/or human capital in any meaningful way. Linking participatory mechanisms to broader development approaches is therefore critical in order to ensure their sustainability.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ YouthPower's Positive Youth Development Approach is one example.

SPOTLIGHT Indigenous youth

Indigenous youth are confronted with additional challenges on top of the manifold constraints that all rural youth face on their path to becoming productive and connected citizens in charge of their own future. Indigenous youth are oftentimes living in the least connected areas with poor access to productive resources and public services. As noted by ECLAC (2008), poverty levels among indigenous youth are higher than they are among the overall youth population in Latin America.

Indigenous youth in rural areas generally have lower levels of educational attainment than their non-indigenous counterparts in terms of both access to education and average years of schooling (World Bank, 2015). Most educational systems are not sufficiently inclusive of indigenous peoples' culture and histories. In particular, school curricula are often lacking in linguistic appropriateness, and indigenous youth rarely receive instruction in their own language (Trucco and Ullmann, 2015). These shortcomings result in low attendance rates and higher dropout rates for indigenous youth, which are then borne out in higher illiteracy levels, fewer employment opportunities and high poverty levels (ECLAC, 2014). Disproportionately high indigenous youth unemployment levels then put added pressure on them to leave their communities in search of employment and educational opportunities elsewhere (ECLAC, 2018).

The dispossession of indigenous lands brought about by resource-extracting industries and limited access to productive resources further pressure indigenous young people to migrate to urban areas in search of employment (ECLAC, 2014). The detachment from their communities occasioned by rural-urban migration, combined with accelerated cultural changes, may explain the high incidence of mental illness and high suicide rates among indigenous youth (ECLAC, 2014). Their difficulties in the area of social integration are then exacerbated by structural discrimination in urban settings against indigenous persons (ECLAC, 2014; World Bank, 2015).

In addition, the incidence of child and maternal mortality, unwanted pregnancy and chronic diseases are disproportionately high among indigenous youth, while economic, geographic, linguistic and cultural factors interfere with their access to sexual and reproductive health services (ECLAC and PAHO, 2011). Evidence from 15 Latin American countries suggests that the adolescent pregnancy rate is consistently higher among indigenous youth than non-

indigenous youth (with the differential ranging from nearly 12 per cent to 31 per cent in Latin America), even when controlling for educational levels. Since early childbearing increases the risks of maternal mortality and other health problems (Conde-Agudelo et al., 2004; Patton et al., 2009) and undermines long-term educational and economic prospects, it is also a cause of concern (see chapter 3). Furthermore, because early union and motherhood are deeply rooted cultural practices among some indigenous peoples, adolescent motherhood may not be regarded as an issue (Trucco and Ullmann, 2015).

Indigenous youth often have little voice on the national or international level or even within their own communities. As observed by ECLAC (2014), tensions between traditional institutions and the aspirations of young people are very common and create barriers for both groups. Many roles within indigenous communities are traditionally reserved for older men, with the result that young people are underrepresented in leadership positions and in decision-making processes within their communities (ECLAC, 2014). This type of situation impedes their empowerment, the development of their capacities and their participation in social, economic and political decision-making (UNDESA, 2013).

It needs to be recognized that indigenous youth are of central importance for the conservation and management of natural resources as well as inclusive and sustainable rural development. There are approximately 67 million indigenous young people globally (UN, 2015), and their territories are home to 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity (IFAD, 2016). With their deep and varied knowledge of the natural world and traditional land-use practices, they have made invaluable contributions to the conservation and management of ecosystems (IFAD, 2016). Their economies maintain a sustained interaction with and adaptation to particular locations and ecosystems, and their ability to use biological resources sustainably has historically protected them against crop failure, biodiversity loss, soil infertility and other threats (Kelles-Viitanen, 2008). To promote the biological, cultural and social continuity of indigenous peoples and ensure that the needs and rights of indigenous youth are recognized, investments which address their specific constraints are indispensable. In particular, policymakers need to:

- + *Empower indigenous youth.* A sustainable path towards ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity involves

creating an inclusive society with institutions, structures and processes in place that empower *all* groups in society, including traditionally marginalized groups such as indigenous youth (World Bank, 2013). Recognition of indigenous youth institutions, adequate funding and engaging indigenous youth in all levels of public decision-making are thus important steps towards ensuring their right to participation and to pursue a course of inclusive development. Fortunately, international awareness of the important role of indigenous young people is on the rise, and they are increasingly engaging in the activities of indigenous youth organizations (ECLAC, 2014).

✦ *Increase access to culturally inclusive education.*

A number of studies have shown that children who participate in intercultural and bilingual education classes perform better, both in their first and second languages (IASG, 2014). The use of indigenous languages and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the school curricula increase the interest of students and their families in their history and in their present and future learning and development opportunities (IFAD, 2016). Instruction at the basic education level of this type should be provided in indigenous communities in order to endow indigenous students with the cognitive and non-cognitive skills that will facilitate their inclusion in the rural development process and enable them to meet labour market demands.

✦ *Increase access to (reproductive) health services for youth.* Comprehensive intercultural health policies that

accord value to indigenous knowledge and practices, including indigenous medicine, need to be developed. Access to health, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive rights education is of critical importance for indigenous youth and needs to be promoted in accordance with their respective cultures and in appropriate languages (ECLAC, 2014).

✦ *Invest in rural infrastructure.* Many indigenous young people migrate to urban areas in search of employment and livelihood opportunities, as well as education (ECLAC, 2014). Broad-ranging investments in rural connectivity aimed at improving access to information, markets and financial services need to involve indigenous youth in order to pave the way for an inclusive and sustainable rural transformation process that will increase their income-generating opportunities and ease the pressure on them to migrate.

✦ *Engage with the private sector.* Highly transformed countries with indigenous populations have implemented successful policies to improve indigenous youth education, employment, entrepreneurship and civic participation. The fact that these interventions typically combine public and private investments underlines the importance of public-private partnerships (PPP) for the sustainable inclusion of indigenous youth (UBC, 2018; Westpac Group, 2014; Prosper Canada, 2015).

BOX 4.4 IFAD's engagement with indigenous youth

In India, IFAD's Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme is strengthening young indigenous people's capacities through placement-linked training and pre-recruitment training. In all, training has been provided to 3,044 young people, of whom 1,100 have been placed in business enterprises. Special emphasis was placed on the requirement that at least one fifth of the participants had to be young women. In Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Kenya, IFAD has partnered with Slow Food International to promote the social and economic empowerment of young indigenous people. The project targets indigenous rural youth between the ages of 15 and 34 living in communities where IFAD-funded projects are using a value chain approach to increase the economic value of food heritage products. The project is also designed to foster the social empowerment of indigenous young people by building on their leadership skills and capacity to strengthen indigenous youth participation through platforms that offer policy dialogue and knowledge exchanges.

Annex 4.1 Participation experiences reviewed

Global and regional initiatives

1. African Union Youth Division (<https://www.africa-youth.org/>)
2. ASEAN Youth Organization (<https://aseanyouth.net/>)
3. Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) (<http://www.aspbae.org/>)
4. Caribbean Regional Youth Council (<https://caricom.org/about-caricom/who-we-are/institutions1/caribbean-regional-youth-council>)
5. CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (<https://caricom.org/caricom-youth-ambassadors>)
6. Commonwealth Youth Council (<http://commonwealthyouthcouncil.com/>)
7. Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth (CORY) Consortium
8. Global Youth Innovation Network (<http://www.gyin.org/>)
9. Melanesian Youth Parliament
10. Nuevas Trenzass project (Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru) (<https://iep.org.pe/estudios-y-proyectos/nuevas-trenzass-mujeres-rurales-jovenes-del-siglo-xxi/>)
11. Pacific Youth Council (<http://www.pacificyouthcouncil.org/>)
12. Pacific Youth Development Framework Partnership (PYDF Partnership) (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=7597>)
13. REAF Mercosur (<http://fidamercosur.org/clah/>)
14. Restless Development initiative (<http://restlessdevelopment.org/>)
15. RIMISP Rural Dialogue Groups (https://rimisp.org/proyecto/jovenes_rurales/)
16. South Asian Youth Summit (<http://www.saarcyouth.org/>)
17. UNFPA Youth's Advisory Panels (country websites available)
18. Young Professionals for Rural Development (YPARD) (<https://ypard.net/>)
19. Youth Forward Initiative of the Mastercard Foundation

IFAD projects

1. Agricultural Value Chains Support Project
2. Promoting Young People's Entrepreneurship
3. Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project
4. Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP)
5. Empowering Indigenous Youth and their Communities to Defend and Promote their Food Heritage

Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Brazil – National Youth Council (<http://juventude.gov.br/conjuve>)
2. Peru – Rikolto's coffee chain project in Peru (<https://sudamerica.rikolto.org/id/node/1571>)
3. Peru – Youth Regional Councils (COREJU) (regional websites available)

Asia and the Pacific Islands

1. Afghanistan Youth Parliament
2. Azerbaijan Youth Parliament

3. Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia (<http://www.uyfc.org/home/>) (civil society organization)
4. Cambodia Asian Youth Council (civil society organization)
5. Cambodia – Commune Youth Group Project (https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_66659.html)
6. Fiji – National Youth Council (<https://www.facebook.com/NYCFiji/>)
7. India – Rural Empowerment Project of the Swades Foundation (<https://www.swadesfoundation.org>)
8. Jordan – Higher Youth Council (<http://www.youth.gov.jo>)
9. Jordan – Youth Participation in Local Governance (YPLG) project
10. Nepal – National Youth Council (<https://www.nationalyouthcouncil.org/>)
11. Nepal – United States Embassy Youth Council
12. South Asian Youth Summit (<http://www.saarcyouth.org>)
13. Pakistan Youth Parliament (<http://www.youthparliament.org.pk/>)
14. Pakistan – Punjab Parliamentary Youth Caucus
15. Philippines – National Youth Commission (<http://nyc.gov.ph/>)
16. Sri Lanka – Youth Parliament (http://www.nysc.lk/aboutParliament_e.php)
17. Sri Lanka – National Youth Services Council (http://www.nysc.lk/index_e.php)
18. Timor Leste – Youth Engagement to Promote Stability (YEPS) project

Africa

1. Botswana National Youth Council (<https://bnyco.weebly.com>)
2. The Gambia – National Youth Council (<http://www.nyc.gm>)
3. The Gambia – National Youth Parliament
4. Kenya – National Youth Council
5. Rwanda – Youth Council (<http://www.nyc.gov.rw/>)
6. Sierra Leone – GoBifo project (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTJSDF/Resources/EB-FINAL_Sierra_Leone_Jan5.pdf)
7. Somalia – Somali Youth Leaders Initiative
8. South Africa – National Youth Development Agency (<http://www.nyda.gov.za/Pages/default.aspx>)
9. Zimbabwe – Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe Project

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