

A group of young women, likely in Ethiopia, are shown from the waist up, wearing traditional patterned dresses and headscarves. They are all smiling and have their hands raised in the air, suggesting a moment of celebration or a group activity. The background is a clear blue sky with some white clouds.

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Youth Engagement Roadmap

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Introduction

Today's youth represents the largest cohort in history of which 90% live in developing countries¹. These young people, and the next generations, will be most affected by decisions made today and the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes those related to nutrition. Recognising young people as agents of change is essential to systematically include their perspectives and experiences in processes which address their health and (environmental) wellbeing.

“While nearly half of the world's population is under 30, only 2.6% of parliamentarians are under 30 and the average age of our political leaders is 62.²”



The United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, calls the UN to deliver with and for youth.

The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Lead Group³, appointed by the UN Secretary-General endorsed the SUN 3.0 Strategy in 2020. It states the following related to youth engagement: “Building on the success of the SUN Civil Society Network Youth Leaders for Nutrition programme by enshrining youth leadership across the Movement and incorporating youth into all SUN governance structures. This will be developed in the operationalisation phase in collaboration with young people, including the Youth Leaders for Nutrition”.

To make this a reality, in May 2022, the SUN Movement Executive Committee, including since October 2021 one youth representative, called for a roadmap to strengthen youth engagement in the SUN Movement led by the ExCom youth representative. SUN 3.0's strategic objectives call for more supported action at country level. Increasing the engagement of young people in the SUN Movement, particularly in the 65 SUN member countries can help empower them to participate in national multi-stakeholder multi-sectoral processes. At the national and global level young people have an important role in youth-led advocacy. This roadmap tries to connect the work of the SUN Global Support System related to youth engagement.

¹ UN Special Envoy on Youth - <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/> - Aged 10 to 24 years. Noting that there is no universally agreed international definition of youth and while recognizing that the UN Secretariat for statistical purposes defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, this Strategy considers other definitions in use by Agencies, Programmes and/or Member States without prejudice. [06-07-2022]

² UN Envoy on Youth Be Seen Be Heard Campaign - <https://beseenbeheardcampaign.com/> [06-07-2022]

³ The SUN Lead Group includes two youth representatives, Sophie Healy Thow and Pierre Cooke Jr.

Four key reasons to support youth engagement

- Young people have a right to be heard. The [Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) states that children and young people under the age of 18 have the right to participate in the decision-making processes that impact them. The same principle should also be applied to young people over 18.
- It has been recognized by the UN and others that [enabling youth engagement in formal political mechanisms increases the fairness of political processes](#) by reducing democratic deficits, contributing to better and more sustainable policies, and helps to restore trust in public institutions, especially among youth.
- Youth voices are essential to the discussion. Young people will be most affected by the consequences of climate change, and its impact on nutrition and food systems. With the most at stake, young people are often able to see the solutions that decision-makers cannot – or are unwilling to – see.
- Effective youth participation can help to build young people's capacity and networks to engage in these forums which they can pass on, expand and put to practice in future summits.

Building a community rather than individual leaders

The [Terms of Reference](#) of the SUN Movements' Civil Society Network Youth Leaders for Nutrition Programme sets the scope and the ambition for more inclusive youth engagement in the Movement. It presents a new model of youth engagement led by community organising which goes beyond the approach to support individual leaders. It encourages the development of local communities advocating for nutrition. The program aims to recruit National Youth Coordinators (rather than individual leaders) who will be responsible for setting up networks in their countries.

The SUN Business Network (SBN) 3.0 Strategy highlights the empowerment of youth entrepreneurs among cross-cutting priority areas needed to effectively implement its strategic approach to reduce malnutrition in all its forms. SBN aims to go beyond entrepreneurship to include deliberate strategies to support the creation of equitable employment opportunities for youth, along with supporting their development and filling gaps in their ability to launch and sustain businesses or find non-precarious employment within agriculture and food sectors, to deliver positive nutrition to communities.

The SUN Global Support System (CSN, SBN, SDN, UNN and SUN Movement Secretariat) as well as the SUN governing bodies, the SUN Movement Executive Committee and SUN Movement Lead Group have an important role to play to encourage and support the youth engaged primarily, but not limited to the youth in the Civil Society Network.

While youth engagement at the global level is increasingly well established, a focus of increasing young people in national processes is proposed. This roadmap suggests a closer collaboration for alignment of youth engagement between all SUN Movement Global Support Structure (GSS), to ensure that SUN has *better* and *more* youth engagement to make sure the absorption of young people in national processes is accelerated.

Inclusive and diverse youth engagement the SUN Movement will follow the definition of the UN Youth Strategy 10-24 years of age, but will focus on the engagement of young people from 18 - 24 and is flexible in considering young people up till 30 given the strong potential for peer-to-peer learning.

We will not just speak about "SUN Youth Leaders or Coordinators" as we recognise that SUN's power lies in connecting different youth groups leaving logo's behind and bundling strengths through collaboration. This

includes particularly youth groups which are doing “nutrition sensitive” work, related to non-communicable diseases, climate change, gender equality and other relevant cross-cutting topics for youth groups organised by sectors such as young farmers, health works etc. It can support and leverage their reach on social media and they can be important influencers to peers. The youth engagement work should strive to be inclusive and transparent. All are considered equal members in the SUN Movement in relation to other stakeholders in the Movement.



Objectives

This roadmap builds on 3 key objectives provided by the strategic direction of the strategy for SUN 3.0 and builds on the work of the SUN Civil Society Network and the recently launched SUN Business Network Women’s and Youth Empowerment Strategy.

- Increase the engagement and voice of young people in the SUN Movement Countries and national and local processes, including national Multi-Stakeholder Platforms, by the development of informal youth communities, primarily led by the SUN Civil Society Network in SUN Countries.
- Deepen the engagement of existing SUN youth leaders, new youth leaders for nutrition and youth entrepreneurs to strengthen their capacity to support SUN’s Nutrition objectives.
- Strengthen the collaboration between SUN GSS and construct its youth engagement in a multi-stakeholder fashion.

This roadmap is in support of the SUN Movement GSS work plan(s) and should not include any new activities which cannot be absorbed into the work plans of the respective networks or the secretariat. It is also recognised that all partners in the GSS have a different focus and added-value to youth engagement which they lead on themselves. The timeline of the roadmap is during the phase 3.0 of the SUN Movement (2021 - 2025).

SUN Entity	Contribution to Youth Engagement
CSN	<p>The SUN Civil Society Network is launching the next phase of its flagship Youth Leaders for Nutrition programme.</p> <p>This will involve recruiting a cohort of National Youth Coordinators who will be building national networks of youth activists in their country to community-organise and advocate for equitable nutrition policies at the local and national levels.</p> <p>These National Youth Coordinators will be supported by the SUN Civil Society Network Secretariat, program partner organisations, as well as other GSS stakeholders.</p> <p>The detailed program is laid out in the Terms of Reference and will include opportunities for training on fundraising, advocacy, campaigning, and mobilising around nutrition.</p>
SBN	<p>The SUN Business Network's Women's and Youth Empowerment Strategy aims to support the implementation of SBN activities with flexibility and innovation to create more opportunities and increase the reach to youth and women-led businesses or that drive women and youth employment and/or skill building.</p> <p>SBN will advocate to its members, and businesses at large, to hire and/or support youth-led businesses and will partner with organisations focused on youth employment/entrepreneurship to implement specific activities within nutritious value chains.</p> <p>SBN's priority actions for youth empowerment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing advocacy and equal opportunity for youth in and to businesses • Supporting context-specific empowerment approaches for youth-led businesses and workers • Supporting deliberate engagement with youth entrepreneurs and employees
SDN	<p>The SUN Movement Donor network has appointed a focal person for youth engagement and is happy to liaise in support of any specific requests from the youth in the SUN Movement where appropriate.</p>
UNN	<p>UN Nutrition which serves as the SUN Movement United Nations network has appointed a focal person for youth engagement and will liaise in support of any specific requests related to youth.</p>
SUN Movement Secretariat	<p>Support the development of a mapping of youth actors in SUN Movement Countries and at global level (mailing list and WhatsApp group) to share opportunities and facilitate communication between young people which can be used across the SUN Movement.</p>

	<p>Support partnership and collaboration of different youth groups at country and global level and connecting youth in SUN with existing partnerships and networks including with national multi-stakeholder platforms.</p> <p>The SUN Movement Coordinator, ExCom Chairs and Youth representative to include the vision of young people in their work.</p> <p>Support meetings with the GSS to foster youth engagement and lead on the implementation of the roadmap.</p> <p>Showcasing the work and contribution of Youth in the SUN movement on the SUN Social Media accounts and a webpage.</p>
SUN ExCom	<p>Enhance coordination of youths and ensure continued support from the SUN movements.</p> <p>Harmonise all youth nutrition activists and promote cross country learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration</p>
SUN Lead Group	<p>Advocate for and include young people in their advocacy for nutrition</p>

Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

There should be no separate reporting on youth engagement, however it is proposed to monitor the youth engagement in the Joint Annual Assessment (JAA) over the next 5 years and to report on youth engagement in the SUN Movement Annual Progress reports.

The youth representatives on the ExCom and SUN Lead Group should be able to report progress during quarterly/annual meetings on the work related to the roadmap.

Gaps and risk

There is a big demand to offer financial support to youth leaders to support their work and it would be relevant to discuss in what ways the SUN Movement could support, recognising it does not currently have a grant mechanism.

For more information:
www.scalingupnutrition.org

