



End of Mandate Report

SheDecides Youth Accountability Panel 2021 - 2023

Introduction

In 2021, SheDecides formed a new office of young people welcoming 9 global leaders from Asia and Pacific, Africa, MENA, Europe and Caribbean and America to The Youth Accountability Panel office. All the nine young leaders are aged under 28 years old and come from different backgrounds. This is a fully youth-led, brave new space for independent youth-led accountability in the SheDecides movement. The Youth Accountability Panel is an independent platform for young people in the SheDecides movement.

YAP mandates: To provide strategic guidance and direct the SheDecides Support Unit on ways to strengthen engagement and support for young people within the movement.

YAP Deliverables 2021 - 2023

Since inception, YAP has been engaged in different activities within the movement. Most of our work has been in development of different youth engagements strategy and structures to support the work of the movement and young people within the movement.

Reflection on the term

Gareth:

The term has had challenges in two ways; one in it being the first term of a YAP and two in the organisational situation that SheDecides has been in.

In relation to the first challenge, the YAP was rightly given a lot of freedom in how we wanted to work and set ourselves up. This allowed us to set working ways that

worked well for us. However, it did lead to a lack of accountability within the group with unequal effort being put in by different members. There was also sometimes a lack of communication which made ensuring deliverables were sent on time and meetings were held more difficult than if stronger regulations had been set by SheDecides which would have made it easier for YAP members to hold each other accountable.

The availability and lack of clarity on which SheDecides staff members to engage with on queries and work also led to delays which may have been avoided.

Recognising the limited capacity of the SDSU, Lewis was the focal point but often we would only find out that Lewis was on annual leave for a few weeks at a time after we had made decisions that had timelines attached which meant everything had to be revised. It was unclear whether or not we were able to engage with others and if they had the capacity to do so.

The YAP conceptually is a good idea and should be taken forward in some capacity, however there should be much stronger governance in place that is supported by either the SDSU or Guiding Group as well as clearer communication and regular meetings with a SDSU focal point.

Evelyn:

The two years YAP mandate just like any other pilot youth constituent within an organisation had its ups and down. As a pilot team, our work primarily revolved around institutionalisation of the YAP office within the movement. Through this, we developed structural documents/strategy that would be effective in positioning YAP as a central power holder and decision maker in the movement on issues of youth leadership and engagement. As the space continues to evolve, it's critical for the movement to intentionally have a youth decision making office that will support the effective movement building and young engagement and different levels including in spearheading political stands around young people's sexual health.

Rym:

First of all, I echo what was already shared by Gareth and Evelyn. The YAP is a positive step towards more effective youth representation within the She Decides movement. Despite the changes/ challenges SD as a whole faced, we were still able to build some structure that will be useful to the next cohort. I would qualify our term in a sense of error and trial. Moving forward, I would love to see more independence for the YAP and better accountability mechanisms within the YAP.

Pushpa:

The youth Accountability Panel can be a good example of how meaningful youth participation within a movement/organisation can be practised. As mentioned above, it is a trial and error process and I hope that learnings from this cohort is institutionalised in the next cohort and a more effective panel will be functioning. Looking ahead, I am filled with hope and anticipation for the continued impact of the Youth Accountability Panel. We hope that the resources we have contributed collectively as YAP will guide the SheDecides movement towards more effective youth engagement. I am happy that I was able to make friends here who shared the same vision as I for the SRHR movement; it was also a great opportunity to learn from each other.

Suggestions for Improvements of the YAP Structure

- The SDSU needs to intentionally prioritize capacity strengthening for the panel by establishing annual budgeting
- SDSU needs to intentionally ensure effective coordination between YAP and other existing institutions of power and leadership within the movement. This will facilitate effective collaboration
- Greater clarity on the power that YAP members have in terms of internal accountability is required and has been added to the

Improving MAYE within SheDecides

MAYE in SheDecides 2021 – 2023

During the process of developing the report on power dynamics, the review of the previous YES, development of the current YES, and upon review of reports from

SheDecides, the YAP in general feels that MAYE within SheDecides is advanced and much more forward thinking when compared with other organisations in the sector.

SheDecides has embraced young people as part of its governance and accountability structures, aligning itself with other leaders in the sector. During interviews with young people engaged with SheDecides there was consistent praise for the work of the SDSU engaging young people, and how it was felt that SheDecides truly leveraged its position to open doors for young people.

Improving MAYE

There are very few specific recommendations from the YAP to SheDecides in terms of improving MAYE within the movement. In general, within the current setup and functioning it works as well as it can. The YAP wishes to highlight that the most important actions for SheDecides to improve MAYE will be ensuring the legacy of the YAP lives in, with a particular focus on implementation of the Youth Engagement Strategy.

Based on a review of reports and wider knowledge of the sector, one thing SheDecides could do in terms of improving MAYE is to be more purposeful in who is engaged, with a particular focus on age. While within the sector some definitions of young may vary, within the spaces SheDecides occupies it is often <30yrs old that is classed as young, and SheDecides may wish to consider being stricter in terms of who they engage being under this limit, as well as ensuring that young people across the age spectrum are engaged, not just “older” youth.

The final recommendation for SheDecides in improving MAYE is perhaps unhelpfully relating to funding to support young leaders. Acknowledging the uncertain funding situation for SheDecides, it is still important that this point is highlighted.