

Establishing a Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank-IMF: A Policy Proposal for Structured Youth-Civil Society Participation

By: DMUN Foundation

Jaewon Choi, South Korea

Alexa Dominique Pascual, USA

Maria Lujan, Mexico

Jieru Shi, USA

Likitha Nadukula, India

Executive Summary

The proposal suggests creating a Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank to integrate young leaders from civil society organizations, experts in global development, and academics into policy conversations. The platform empowers youth voices to gain prominence in international governance through structured opportunities for young experts to participate in high-level development and economic policy discussions. This initiative responds to recent global policy changes like the “Pact for the Future” adopted at the United Nations General Assembly, which stressed youth involvement in governance by creating formal engagement channels for young professionals with the World Bank’s operations in areas such as women’s rights, international development, economics, digital transformation, infrastructure, global health and education.

The initiative follows a dual-track approach:

1. The initiative incorporates a rotating fellowship program which brings together young academics and policy experts to work alongside World Bank staff on joint projects.
2. The accreditation system enables youth-led organizations with members aged 18 to 35 to attend World Bank summits and engage with high-level officials, submitting formal policy recommendations.

The primary objective is to support youth-driven groups that educate emerging development leaders, who combine scholarly understanding with practical community knowledge. Through this platform, youth-led organizations can develop research-based policy recommendations informed by lived experiences, which they can then disseminate to global institutions and implement locally. The platform will enhance youth comprehension of the Bretton Woods Institutions while boosting capacity-building initiatives and improving understanding of the World Bank’s operations and their effects. This initiative could mirror the civil society engagement model of the United Nations, where youth-led organizations receive accreditation to

participate in high-level summits such as the United Nations General Assembly and the UN High-Level Political Forum. A similar model at the World Bank could involve accrediting youth-led organizations that focus on research and academia, rather than solely on advocacy. By establishing this platform, the World Bank would strengthen its partnerships with civil society, enhance the quality of its policy development processes, and support the next generation of leaders equipped to address the world's most pressing challenges. The World Bank would solidify their partnerships with civil society through institutionalized youth engagement, improving policy development and preparing future leaders to tackle global challenges.

Problem Statement

Although young professionals are increasingly viewed as essential players in sustainable development, their presence in organizations they lead during formal policy discussions remains minimal. Although civil society engagement has improved, young professionals remain excluded mainly from structured, research-based policy discussions at major institutions such as the World Bank. The World Bank could gain essential and progressive insights into next-generation challenges by focusing on young professional-led civil society organizations and research institutions. This engagement offers diverse perspectives on policy development and prepares future professionals to understand the functions and roles of the Bretton Woods institutions. The present structures for civil society engagement do not provide specific routes through which young professionals can significantly impact decision-making processes. Young professionals working in development and governance sectors and those involved in digital transformation and economic resilience often find that their practical insights and creative solutions are left out of the policymaking processes that shape their professional trajectories. Without integration from young professionals, global financial institutions face restrictions in developing inclusive policies ready for future challenges. The absence of official systems for engaging young professionals represents a lost opportunity to create informed leaders with global perspectives who can advance equitable and practical development outcomes.

Objectives

- Establish a program that engages young professionals in the World Bank and the IMF's policymaking process.
- Develop a system that accredits young professional-led organizations.
- Improve a research-based young professional's input.

- Promote inclusive and equitable representation.
- Improve policy innovation
- Improve policy innovation
- Enhance Transparency

Proposed Activities

1. Create a Youth Policy Fellowship Program Focused on Civil Society Engagement

This initiative would establish a competitive 6–12-month fellowship program for young academics, activists, and researchers. Fellows would collaborate with World Bank and IMF staff, enhancing youth participation in global policy spaces.

Activities:

- Assign fellows to specific policy areas that align with their interests and relevant research units.
- Mentorship sessions and policy briefings should be organized with senior World Bank and IMF staff to build institutional understanding.
- Participants must affiliate with youth-led civil society organizations to ground their research on community perspectives.
- Require fellows to publish a final policy paper or provide a strategic project input to contribute to ongoing World Bank initiatives.

This program would enhance youth-led research contributions to development policy and strengthen the talent pipeline for youth employment in global institutions.

2. Establish an Accreditation and Participation System for Youth-Led Civil Society Organizations

To promote structured youth engagement, the World Bank should develop an accreditation system for youth-led CSOs, modelled after mechanisms like the UN's "Major Group for Children and Youth."

Activities:

- Create a clear set of accreditation criteria and develop an online application portal.

- Provide capacity-building workshops for newly accredited youth-led organizations.
- Enable accredited organizations to participate actively in World Bank Spring and Annual Meetings, including policy interventions and advocacy sessions—not solely as panel attendees.
- Organize networking and partnership-building sessions with institutional stakeholders.

This system will facilitate deeper engagement and legitimacy for youth-led organizations in global development discussions.

3. Convene Global and Regional Youth Dialogues

This program would promote cross-regional collaboration among youth-led NGOS, fostering cooperation between the Global North and South on shared development issues.

Activities:

- Partner with governments, NGOS, universities, and research institutions to co-host events.
- Organize hybrid town halls and roundtables to ensure inclusive participation.
- Consolidate outcomes and insights into a "Global Youth Insights" report for presentation at major summits.

These dialogues will encourage global youth solidarity and inform evidence-based policy recommendations.

4. Enhance the Digital Engagement Platform for Youth Participation

Establishing a centralized digital hub would improve information sharing, collaboration, and visibility of youth-led initiatives aligned with World Bank objectives.

Activities:

- Invite digital influencers to participate in the World Bank summits to expand youth outreach.
- Enable youth-led CSO representatives to interview World Bank officials for dissemination via social media.
- Offer feedback channels for youth participants and encourage public reflections post-summit, shared via organizational social platforms.

This platform will increase accessibility and digital engagement, ensuring the next generation is informed and actively involved in development discourse.

5. Improve Policy Labs for Youth-Led Civil Society Organizations

Support innovation sprints where youth-led CSOs design policy solutions to urgent development challenges.

Activities:

- Form interdisciplinary teams to co-create actionable policy proposals.
- Have projects assessed by experts for potential integration into official World Bank “Youth and Governance” initiatives.
- Provide mentorship and feedback to strengthen selected ideas' policy relevance and implementation viability.

This approach fosters creative, youth-driven policy innovation that complements institutional development goals.

6. Establish a Youth Research and Innovation Fund

This dedicated funding mechanism would support research and innovation projects by youth-led CSOs aligned with World Bank priorities. Eligible organizations must be youth-led with members aged 18–35.

Activities:

- Launch annual calls for proposals to fund research and pilot initiatives.
- Provide financial support, mentorship, and implementation assistance to selected projects.
- Match youth-led projects with relevant World Bank teams for alignment and scalability.
- Host a "Youth Innovation Showcase" during major World Bank meetings to highlight impactful initiatives.

This fund would strengthen youth leadership in research-based policy development and create opportunities for long-term engagement with global institutions.

7. Launch a Knowledge Panel and Exchange Network for Youth-Led Civil Society

Create a global network for youth-led organizations to exchange knowledge, build partnerships, and contribute to policy discussions.

Activities:

- Include youth-CSO representatives in panel discussions to elevate the visibility of youth voices within the World Bank.
- Develop an interactive online platform featuring toolkits, case studies, discussion forums, and learning resources.
- Host virtual exchanges and peer-learning sessions between youth organizations across different regions.
- Facilitate mentorship opportunities pairing youth leaders with experienced development professionals.
- Collaborate with the World Bank communications team to host workshops on social media advocacy, article writing, and media outreach to promote youth-CSO initiatives and amplify World Bank–civil society collaborations.
- Produce digital newsletters and thematic publications curated by youth editors and contributors.

This initiative will cultivate informed, connected, and impactful youth participation in global development and policy-making spaces.

Target Audience

- Youth-led civil society organizations (ages 18–35) working in global development, economics, human rights, gender, and climate.
- Young academics and policy researchers specializing in global governance and economic development.
- World Bank and IMF staff engaged in civil society, stakeholder engagement, and sector-specific operations.
- Donor governments, philanthropic institutions, and multilateral development partners interested in youth and governance.

Expected Outcomes

This proposed project will improve communication between young professionals and senior World Bank officials, promoting the importance of international development. Young people worldwide will get the opportunity to be educated about the possibility of participating or working at the World Bank. This proposed initiative would also educate young people about what the World Bank does and the importance of engaging in development initiatives. This recommendation could improve policies that benefit young professionals either in the workforce or in civil society engagement, the initiative that is recommended could improve education

which can potentially increase the possibility of young professionals to be engaged in policies that support development, which can overall enhance the world's employment rate, which will benefit future leaders.

According to the “Pact for the Future” passed at UNGA79, the “youth and governance” section is greatly highlighted, promising the involvement of young leaders in policy making. Establishing a civil society youth space at the World Bank would greatly support that agenda, which will improve young professional participation in international development initiatives that can improve long-standing programs that help young professionals' issues regarding human rights, climate, women's rights, economics and digital transformation.

Anticipated Impact and Long-Term Outcomes

By establishing a Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank, this initiative will institutionalize meaningful youth participation in global economic governance, leading to more inclusive, transparent, and future-ready policy development. It will empower youth-led civil society organizations and young academics to contribute research-driven insights informed by lived experiences, resulting in innovative and equitable solutions to global challenges. The platform is expected to generate tangible outcomes such as adopting youth-submitted policy recommendations, creating new partnerships between youth organizations and development institutions, and enhancing youth capacity in international policymaking. Additionally, the program will strengthen cross-sector collaboration, improve representation of marginalized youth voices, and lay the foundation for a permanent structure that embeds youth engagement into the core of Bretton Woods institutions' operations.

Strengthening Implementation and Inclusivity

The Youth Engagement Platform will prioritize strategic partnerships, inclusive representation, and accountability mechanisms to ensure meaningful, sustained, and equitable engagement. Collaborations with academic institutions, youth networks, and donor agencies will support program design, fellow recruitment, and funding sustainability. The initiative will actively promote diversity by prioritizing youth from the Global South, marginalized communities, and underrepresented groups, including Indigenous, rural, and displaced youth. To avoid tokenism, the platform will incorporate youth into decision-making and policy review processes, supported by transparent feedback and evaluation systems. An Annual Youth Policy & Development Summit, held in parallel with World Bank and IMF meetings, will provide a high-level forum for showcasing youth-led research, presenting recommendations, and publishing an annual Youth Policy Paper. These measures will strengthen the platform's credibility, impact, and long-term viability.

Conclusion

This program aims to strengthen communication among youth-led NGOS to foster cross-cultural collaboration, advance innovative ideas, and bring diverse perspectives to the decision-making table. It will empower young advocates to have their voices heard and leverage their knowledge to improve global governance. Enhancing youth representation in governance and development is critical, as it improves national outcomes and inspires young people to pursue careers in diplomacy and international development. Because these youth led civil society organizations have access to their local community, they can use their partnership with the World Bank to raise awareness about the importance of involvement in development initiatives. Moreover, this initiative will raise awareness about the World Bank's work, encouraging a new generation to engage in shaping forward-thinking policy solutions. Incorporating a broad range of youth perspectives into policy discussions is essential for developing inclusive and practical human rights, infrastructure, economics, climate, and education strategies. Upholding the vision outlined in the *Pact for the Future* requires sustained efforts to advance youth inclusion and cultivate the next generation of progressive leaders. By creating space for youth-led civil society organizations to engage directly with policymakers—through lobbying senior World Bank officials, submitting policy recommendations, delivering interventions, and participating in working groups—this initiative will contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. It is strongly recommended that this effort be pursued in collaboration with the World Bank's Office of Global Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement to ensure institutional support and strengthen communication channels between youth-led NGOS and the World Bank.

ONE PAGER

Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank

A Policy Proposal for Structured Youth-Civil Society Participation

Overview

This proposal calls for the creation of a Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank to integrate young leaders from civil society organizations, experts in global development, and academics into formal policy development conversations and processes. It seeks to bridge the current gap in youth representation by creating institutional pathways for youth participation in global economic and development policymaking.

Why Now?

Global frameworks, such as the “Pact for the Future,” adopted at the United Nations General Assembly, emphasize the importance of youth involvement in governance. Yet, major institutions like the World Bank still lack formal dedicated systems to engage youth-led, research-driven organizations in a meaningful and sustained way.

Proposed Dual-Track Model:

1. Youth Fellowship Program: A rotating cohort of young academics and policy experts who collaborate with the World Bank on joint research and policy initiatives.
2. Youth Accreditation System: The accreditation system allows youth-led organizations (with members aged 18 to 35) to gain access to World Bank summits and engage with high-level officials, submitting formal policy recommendations.

Objectives / Impact

- Institutionalizes youth engagement at the World Bank, strengthening youth capacity in international governance
- Equips the next generation of global leaders with opportunities to participate in building civil society partnerships based on research, equity, and lived experiences
- Increases relevance, transparency, and inclusivity of World Bank policies

Conclusion

The creation of a Youth Engagement Platform at the World Bank is not just an opportunity, it is an imperative. As the global community faces compounding crises of inequality, climate change, economic instability, and technological disruption, the absence of young voices in key decision-making spaces undermines the credibility, relevance, and effectiveness of global development efforts.

This proposal offers the World Bank and IMF a historic chance to lead by example by embedding youth participation into the heart of their governance structures, amplifying research-driven solutions informed by lived experiences, and unlocking the creativity and leadership of a generation ready to confront the world's most urgent challenges.

By investing in this platform, the World Bank can help cultivate a new era of inclusive, transparent, and future-facing global governance, one where young people are not peripheral stakeholders but core partners in shaping resilient, equitable, and transformative development policies.

The time to act is now. Institutionalizing youth engagement is not only essential to fulfilling the promises of the “Pact for the Future” it is critical to building a world where no voice is left behind, and every young leader has the tools and access to help shape a more just, sustainable, and inclusive global economy.

Contact

For partnership opportunities or to learn more:

- Contact Email: alexadominiquepascual@dmun.org
- Website: www.dmun.com