

Future-Proofing:

The Professionalization of an Anti-Rights Youth Generation

Key Recommendations

Ipas
SheDecides.



Image: Protester at demonstration, Cologne, Germany (2020).
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The 80-page Ipas report, *Future-Proofing: The Professionalization of an Anti-Rights Youth Generation* examines the recruitment, funding, coordination, and mobilization of young people within anti-rights movements.

Using examples from the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, the report documents how anti-rights individuals, organizations, political parties, and billionaire donors have successfully scaled these strategies, with grave implications for universal human rights.

By building pipelines through education, legal training, and political mentorship and organizing,

young leaders are positioned to shape public discourse, influence legislation, and normalize far-right ideologies. These efforts are reinforced by right-wing media ecosystems and amplified by far-right youth influencers on social media.

This crisis requires deliberate responses that include planning beyond short-term policy wins. It demands intentional investment in youth-led leadership, infrastructures of care, and intergenerational solidarity to ensure that human rights advocacy remains resilient, inclusive, and visionary in the face of organized and increasingly younger opposition. With the support and input from youth human rights activists, we propose the following recommendations:

“To refuse to participate in the shaping of our future is to give it up. Do not be misled into passivity either by false security (they don’t mean me) or by despair (there’s nothing we can do). Each of us must find our work and do it.”

Audre Lorde, “Learning from the 60s,” 1982

1. Strengthen youth engagement and movement building:

- ▶ Support and fund youth programs that promote inclusive values, critical media literacy, and civic engagement to provide alternative leadership pathways.
- ▶ Fund pluralistic youth civic organizations and leadership programs that build young people’s skills and networks outside ideologically extreme pipelines.
- ▶ Support peer-to-peer mentoring initiatives that center rights-based approaches to identity, health, and democracy.
- ▶ Ensure these programs are co-designed and co-led by youth, with compensation.
- ▶ Invest in burnout prevention and mental health support for youth advocates.
- ▶ Strengthen youth recruitment in non-youth led organizations, beyond advisory roles.
- ▶ Prioritize multi-year, unrestricted core funding, flexible multilingual reporting, and support for operational infrastructure, such as salaries, rent, and secure digital tools.
- ▶ Embed leadership rotation and age-out policies and intergenerational tandems—youth co-leading with senior leaders—in organizations to ensure sustainability.

2. Monitor legal advocacy networks:

- ▶ Track anti-rights legal clinics and litigation efforts, especially those targeting reproductive and LGBTQI+ rights, but also climate change, gender equality, and other intersecting issues, to anticipate and respond to policy shifts.
- ▶ Fund legal training on progressive issues to continuously support progressive legal champions, including through progressive bar associations, fellowships, and other programs.
- ▶ Establish cross-regional rapid-alert systems between youth-led groups and legal champions to share intelligence on anti-rights litigation trends and co-develop progressive legal strategies.
- ▶ Pair these with a digital sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) charter and anti-backlash clauses that explicitly protect youth activists from harassment, lawsuits, and surveillance.

5. Foster interfaith and ecumenical dialogue:

- ▶ Build alliances with moderate and progressive religious groups to challenge extremist narratives and support pluralistic social values, tapping into youth religious leadership.
- ▶ Convene interfaith dialogues at community and national levels, invest in intergenerational faith leader programs supporting SRHR.
- ▶ Engage with the religious pro-choice community that can provide the moral, cultural, and political legitimacy to counter the misinformation and harmful narratives around abortion.
- ▶ Ensure youth religious leaders are funded and supported with mentorship networks and connect them to broader human rights coalitions and movements.

6. Support international and regional democratic norms and coordinate international policy responses:

- ▶ Engage with the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the Organization of America States, and other regional bodies with greater due diligence to ensure that conservative youth networks do not disproportionately shape international human rights agendas so that funding does not reach entities responsible for hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation.
- ▶ Invest in cross-border networks that support democratic youth movements, journalists, and educators resisting authoritarian ideologies.
- ▶ Leverage diplomatic and development tools to promote access to SRHR, comprehensive sexuality education, anti-racist education, and climate education globally.
- ▶ Expose transnational anti-rights education networks and build coalitions to challenge their influence in global policy spaces.
- ▶ Ensure binding youth participation in these global processes—statutory seats, stipends, and co-sponsorship of resolutions—rather than symbolic consultation.
- ▶ Institutionalize youth-led monitoring and evaluation of global processes, providing real-time accountability on participation, outcomes, and funding transparency.

3. Promote alternative narratives and cultural spaces:

- ▶ Fund arts, storytelling, and digital media projects that empower youth to reclaim their histories, identities, and futures.
- ▶ Support content creators and platforms that challenge extremist ideologies and offer space for young people's values-driven leadership.
- ▶ Invest in public media and youth journalism that amplify diverse perspectives and democratic debate, as well as infrastructures grounded in art, music, and archives.
- ▶ Ensure digital platforms protect youth-led content from censorship and shadow banning on social media platforms, reserve collective knowledge on movement building and feminist organizing, and pair cultural strategies with cross-movement campaigns in SRHR, climate, gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights, and anti-racism to broaden reach and resilience.

4. Enhance digital counter-messaging:

- ▶ Develop strategic communication campaigns to counter misinformation and disinformation consistently and reframe public debates on SRHR.
- ▶ Ensure that the right messengers—youth advocates—are capacitated to lead these efforts to engage new audiences, for example to counter the “womanosphere” and “manosphere” narratives.
- ▶ Provide secure digital infrastructure and localized language strategies for counter-messaging to effectively reach beyond English-dominant spaces and resonate with diverse youth communities.
- ▶ Fund digital security infrastructure, including encrypted platforms and servers, and support coalitions with shared toolkits and rapid-alert capacity across regions.

9. Hold the line and stay vigilant:

7. Invest in education and critical thinking:

- ▶ Learning from the billionaire and government-supported conservative education hubs, progressive donors, including private philanthropy, should invest in supporting public education and fighting the web of investment to change public-school curricula.
- ▶ In terms of medical education in particular, health- and education-focused nonprofit and philanthropic organizations should prioritize programs that support abortion training for residents in restrictive states and countries where knowledge and experiences for comprehensive care is being lost.
- ▶ Establish cross-movement curricula that integrate SRHR, equality, climate justice, anti-racist education, and digital literacy, recognizing the interconnectedness of these struggles through an intersectional lens.
- ▶ Support sabbatical programs for young leaders in education and healthcare fields to address burnout and retain expertise.

10. Protect youth activists from backlash and repression:

8. Ensure public support is not diverted to youth anti-rights groups:

- ▶ Build anti-rights language literacy to understand which groups advance exclusionary or authoritarian ideologies under the guise of "values" education.
- ▶ Block public subsidies, including by regional bodies, from funding organizations promoting hate and disinformation.
- ▶ Map anti-rights funding pipelines transparently and build watchdog monitoring initiatives to track misuse of public subsidies.

- ▶ At minimum, progressive actors must watch where funding is being cut by the US and other donors to education, health, and development, and explore where movements are missing in action and where anti-rights groups are actively on the attack.
- ▶ Institutionalize monitoring and evaluation systems that provide real-time data on movement health, threats, and gaps—ensuring funders and policymakers act on early warning signs rather than react after losses.
- ▶ Build cross-border coalitions that include youth-led entities, non-governmental organizations, healthcare providers, and progressive legal champions to coordinate rapid responses when threats emerge.

To read the full report, scan the QR code

