



**PUB 05**

## **Together for Justice: Our Collective Action on Youth as a Catalyst of Change**

### **COVER NOTE**

ACT Youth statement, led by ACT Youth Participation Community of Practice and Youth Members from ACT member organizations attending the Youth Pre-Assembly 2024.

### **TOPIC**

Young members of the global ecumenical community are facing challenges such as climate change, gender inequality, forced migration, mental health issues, and shrinking civic spaces. In addressing these challenges we, as the youth of ACT Alliance, highlight barriers to youth participation, including exclusion from leadership and limited mentorship opportunities. While appreciating efforts by ACT Alliance to increase youth involvement, we call for stronger representation, intergenerational leadership and partnership.

We, as youth, also advocate for mentorship programs, capacity-building initiatives, and a youth policy supported by dedicated funding. These measures aim to foster intergenerational leadership and empower young people to actively contribute to ACT Alliance's mission of justice and inclusivity.

# STATEMENT

## **Together for Justice: Our Collective Action on Youth as a Catalyst of Change**

Gathered from over 32 countries under the theme "Hope in Action - Together for Justice" at the 2024 ACT Assembly in Yogyakarta, we, the ACT Youth<sup>1</sup>, strive to address the urgent challenges our generation faces. We are grateful that we were able to come together as wars and conflicts are happening right now in our world.

As young members<sup>2</sup> of the global ecumenical community, we are united in our commitment to address the climate crisis, gender inequality, forced migration, mental health struggles, and the shrinking of civic spaces.

During our pre-assembly, we held deliberations around the challenges that youth face including but not limited to exclusion from leadership and decision-making spaces, lack of mentorship and capacity development initiatives. We also are thankful for the ACT Alliance and especially the governing board of 2021 in making sure that two young members were added to the board after the 2018 Assembly in 2021.

We are energized to raise our voices and collaborate on concrete solutions for youth inclusion within the ACT Alliance and beyond, embodying hope and justice through active engagement.

### **Youth Inclusion in Decision-making**

Youth inclusion in governance, leadership, agenda-setting, and decision-making is essential within ACT Alliance member organizations and also at the national, regional, and global levels within the ACT Alliance. We are gathered here in Yogyakarta and with many youth participants in the pre-assembly, but we are not seeing nearly enough youth as voting delegates. To correct this, we call for 21 elected youth delegates with voting rights at the next Assembly, ensuring fair representation from each region. Youth deserve an active role in shaping the future of ACT Alliance, not only in spirit but in decisive action.

### **Youth Representation Across all ACT Structures**

Representation in official ACT structures, such as the Membership and Nomination Committee (MNC) and regional forums, is critical for bridging generational gaps and fostering a vibrant intergenerational leadership for the Alliance. Youth voices ensure a greater diversity of perspectives to ACT's mission. By ensuring consistent youth representation in these key forums, ACT can strengthen its commitment to inclusivity and realize an Alliance that truly embodies intergenerational partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> ACT Youth: Youth representatives chosen by the ACT member organisations to represent during this 2024 Pre Youth Assembly and observe the General Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> During the ACT Alliance General Assembly in 2018, the youth governing board members were defined as 18-26 years old; however, a clear definition of youth in general will be defined in the coming standard participation Youth Policy.

### **Capacity and Policy Development for Youth**

Effective participation requires skills, orientation, and resources. We urge ACT members to establish mentorship programs, capacity-building, and accessible resources tailored to support the intergenerational leadership of ACT including youth, to best exercise leadership within the Alliance.

We urge the Alliance to adopt a standard of participation youth policy in collaboration with the Youth CoP and secure dedicated funding to support these training, orientation, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Establishing a robust intergenerational leadership program within ACT Alliance will ensure that young members are equipped with the skills and resources they need to fully contribute to ACT's mission.

### **Commitments & Recommendations**

We as ACT Alliance commit to:

- Include youth representatives in official ACT structures such as the Membership and Nomination Committee and national/regional forums.
- Adopt a youth policy in collaboration with the Youth CoP which includes the standard of participation and guidelines for youth inclusion.
- Secure dedicated funding for a full-time employed position for youth and to prioritize intergenerational youth training, orientation, and knowledge-sharing initiatives across ACT structures.

We recommend the ACT Alliance to:

- Allocate 21 elected youth delegates with voting rights in the Assembly with regional representation.

We call upon:

- Political leaders, governments and institutions to recognize and support youth as strong and important societal actors through creating opportunities for full, active, and meaningful participation of youth in all their diversity at all levels of decision-making processes related to human rights, gender equality, climate justice, peace and human security, sustainable development, and matters related to funding and financing. Tokenisation of youth involvement and youth movements must be avoided.
- Governments and institutions to encourage collaborative initiatives between youth and other stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, and civil society to co-create solutions for global challenges.
- All faith leaders, churches, and institutions to be part of the solution in ending all forms of injustice and providing sustainable opportunities to young people. Ensure the capacity building and engagement of youth and recognize the importance of youth-led spaces, initiatives, and decisions allowing them to not only be leaders of tomorrow but actively be leaders of today.

PUB 05 – PUBLIC STATEMENT

If approved with majority:

***A majority of the assembly has declared itself in agreement with the opinions expressed in this statement. While many ACT members agree with the public statement, there are members who have expressed differing perspectives on the content or tone. Their decision reflects the diverse viewpoints within our alliance, and we respect their choice to abstain or vote against. As always, we value the collective dialogue and encourage continued discussions on the matter at hand, recognizing the strength of our unity in diversity.***