

Because Youth ← ↓ → ↑ Perspectives Matter

UNESCO Toolbox
for youth policy
and programming



‘UNESCO will pursue a strategic programme in all areas of its mandate and at all levels of action that will not only address young people as beneficiaries but will also engage with them as change-makers, knowledge-holders, and partners.’

UNESCO’s Medium-term Strategy (2022-2029)

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Short summary

Placing trust in youth voices

Young people fear for their future. Pandemics, conflict, climate change, inequality – these are the issues defining their reality.

Yet their potential to provide solutions to the multiple crises is not realized. From low representation and tokenistic approaches, to institutional obstacles to participation and limited civic spaces, young people are disconnected from influencing decisions and actions that affect their lives. They need real opportunities to participate in decision-making and contribute to practical solutions.

Policy-makers, public officials and practitioners – as well as development sector and civil society actors – can and should create such opportunities for youth. This Toolbox is a **comprehensive go-to resource** to make that possible. It is intended to support these stakeholders in **designing and implementing effective policies and programmes to address the multidimensional needs of youth** at national and local levels.

It consists of:

- A **guide for participatory youth policy design**;
- **Intergenerational dialogue tools on holistic youth development and youth civic engagement**; and
- A **training tool on meaningful youth engagement**.

Together, we can prove that youth perspectives matter.

69%

of people agree
political systems
would be improved
if young people were
given more say in
shaping policies



unesco

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"



Because Youth Perspectives Matter

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Foreword



Young people are a significant force, and we all need to recognize and act upon that fact.

Some 50% of the current world population is 30 years old or younger, and by 2030, youth will constitute 57% of the total^[1]. Young people are at the forefront of social change. They engage in informal politics, use collective action to address such concerns as shrinking civic space, digital disinformation, corruption, and how to meet community needs. In the context of UNESCO's global 'Youth As Researchers on COVID-19' initiative, high levels of youth civic activity around relief projects were reported (e.g. by 74% of respondents in South Asia, 65% of respondents in Brazil).^[2]



**By Gabriela Ramos,
Assistant Director-
General for Social
and Human Sciences,
UNESCO**

Despite these signs of engagement, their potential roles as actors and partners in finding innovative solutions for today's problems are not adequately recognized. This is a missing link towards transforming our societies from societies that barely survive, into inclusive societies that thrive. As we face multiple crises, youth need tangible opportunities to participate in decision-making. They need opportunities to contribute to practical solutions that advance development. When given the chance to voice their opinions and play a meaningful role in decision-making, they consistently demonstrate their willingness and ability to foster positive, lasting change.^[3] As the Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network (YoU-CAN) member Curmira Gulston from Trinidad and Tobago states, 'Young persons have the potential and capacity to not only exchange ideas but to be the movers and shakers that will drive positive [...] action.'^[4]

UNESCO's Toolbox 'Because Youth Perspectives Matter' is a **technical resource to help make and apply much-needed changes in the ways in which national and international stakeholders interact with and work on behalf of youth**. It aligns fully with UNESCO's recognition of youth as key actors, leaders and partners, and with our own work to build alliances to advance youth interests and bring their voices to the fore. The tools in this Toolbox propose holistic and cross-sectoral approaches that build collective ownership by youth stakeholders and ensure the meaningful and effective engagement of youth throughout every level of society.

It is my hope that the use and application of this Toolbox will help make three fundamental shifts that need to happen in the ways youth are perceived, supported and engaged:

First, *acknowledging youth for who they really are, in their diversity*: full members of our societies having an inherent value and rights. For young people, this is also an age of rapid change and identity formation, reflecting the great diversity of youth realities in which they live, depending on background, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, class, ethnicity and location. For example, as opposed to young men, 650 million women alive today were married before the age of 18¹³, and 83% of those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual keep their orientation hidden and are much more likely to experience not having a home than their peers¹⁴. The realities of approximately 30% of youth living in fragile and conflict-affected countries¹⁵ are different to those in peaceful societies, as are the needs of young migrants (2.6% among youth globally¹⁶) compared to those of other youth.

Second, *moving away from work in silos to address the challenges facing youth*. Challenges in education, employment, rights, mental health and other factors interconnect to create a grim environment for youth. The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing protracted crises and conflicts have led to 38% of young people globally being uncertain of their future prospects, with high uncertainty in the jobs and education sectors.¹⁷

Anxiety and depression have increased by 200% amongst youth¹⁸, 60% of young people feel 'very worried' or 'extremely worried' about climate change¹⁹, and the concept of a 'COVID-19 or lockdown generation' has emerged to describe how they may be scarred for decades to come in terms of labour market and mental health outcomes²⁰. Effective responses to these challenges require a holistic approach to youth development and a cross-sectoral engagement that brings in expertise from different fields and policy areas.

Third, *making sure that youth engagement in public decision-making is ensured and meaningful*. Young people's right to participation is enshrined in three international²¹ and two regional²² instruments. At the same time, through the many crises being faced, they are already proving their capacity for resilience, inventiveness and positive change in communities. Yet, youth continue to feel ostracized from decision-making processes or tokenized, with 70% of respondents in a 2022 survey feeling that they should have more say²³. As evidenced by low voter turnouts and minimal representation in parliaments and decision-making bodies²⁴ along with tokenistic approaches and numerous institutional obstacles to participation, young people - who make up more than half of the population in many countries - are effectively disconnected from meaningfully influencing the decisions that affect their lives.²⁵

The UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector stands ready to collaborate with national and local public authorities, youth organizations and development actors in implementing the resources identified in this Toolbox. Together, we can improve youth policies and programmes on the ground, thereby ensuring that young people have the opportunities they need to participate and to be heard.

Because youth perspectives matter!



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory committee
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCA	Common Country Analysis
DG	Drafting group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FG	Follow-up group
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
HYD	Holistic youth development
IANYD	Interagency Network on Youth Development
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and others
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MYE	Meaningful youth engagement
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHRI	National human rights institution
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Q&A	Question and answer
SC	Steering committee
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
STI	Science, technology and innovation
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TWG	Technical working group
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YCE	Youth civic engagement

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Today, one out of every six people worldwide is between 15 and 24 years old. By 2030, the number is expected to grow by 7%. Beyond a mere – yet robust – demographic figure, youth constitute a highly diverse cohort of human beings having an inherent value and characteristics.

[UN General Assembly resolution 70/1](#), entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’¹⁸, affirms that youth in every society have rights and deserve recognition and inclusion. Wherever they live, they should be fully-fledged members of their communities and agents of change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the challenges that youth face, particularly in terms of education, economic empowerment and access to quality jobs, leading to declining mental health and difficulties in building their identities. As humanity emerges from this devastating pandemic, other crises like those brought on by climate change have combined with enduring conflicts, the spread of misinformation and hate speech at a time when civic space¹⁹ in which youth voices might be heard, is shrinking globally.²⁰

Nevertheless, youth-led research in the COVID-19 context indicates high levels of youth civic activity, illustrating how young people remain inventive in the face of adversity.²¹ Young people are also at the forefront of climate action. During the COP26, young leaders presented a Global Youth Position statement, representing the views of over 40,000 young leaders demanding that their rights be guaranteed in climate change agreements, and school strikes for climate have been recorded in over 150 countries, gaining widespread attention from the public and media.²² Youth are also entrepreneurial: they are 1.6 times more likely to want to start a business than adults.²³ The power of youth, as recognized in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)²⁴ and other internationally agreed development goals, such as the [2063 Agenda of the African Union](#)²⁵, is needed more than ever to bring better, more innovative and effective solutions to the table, for them and their communities.

Decisive collective action is necessary to restore hope and ensure that the prospects of the current and future generations are not jeopardized.



Youth through a policy lens: The starting point

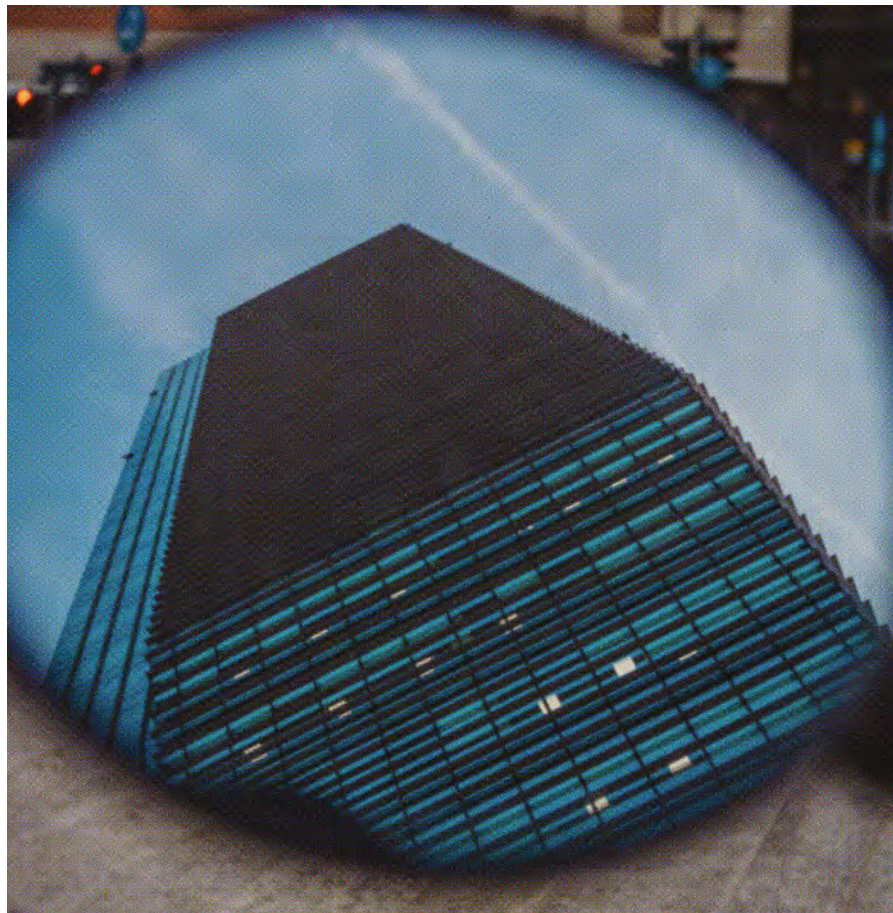
In policy, ‘youth’ (see [Working definitions](#)) is viewed as both an inherently diverse societal group and an interdisciplinary policy issue that requires intersectoral alliances and collaborations. Therefore, addressing youth issues and development needs while harnessing the potential of youth, requires holistic and context-specific approaches that draw on different policy sectors. These must be relevant to the complex, multifaceted realities of youth at any given time and in any given context.

Practically, what that means for policy-makers and practitioners is that approaches in which youth issues are addressed in silos, such as within individual sectoral policies and programmes that are themselves within a broader education or employment policy are simply not enough. These need to refer and connect back to a broader youth-focused framework that sets out a comprehensive vision of and for youth, and outlines how each sectoral policy can contribute to achieving it.

When properly elaborated, positioned and implemented, youth policies²⁶ can provide such a framework and are indispensable for ensuring that policy resources invested in youth reap benefits for society as a whole.

Inclusive and effective youth policies provide the building blocks that determine the position of young people in societies, directly affecting their well-being across every aspect of life. They are the cornerstone to building an appropriate enabling environment, one in which youth can thrive and engage meaningfully, realize their rights, and transform societies for the better. In a youth policy – regardless of its administrative or geographic level and scope – youth should find a concrete reference framework, based on which they can claim and realize their rights, assume responsibilities, develop their capacities, and engage in designing and delivering decisions and actions that benefit not only themselves, but also their societies.

Youth policies are also crucial for establishing the legal, institutional and administrative settings to strengthen the trust of young people of all backgrounds in government, and their relationships with public institutions. They should, for example, provide opportunities for youth civic engagement and youth participation in decision-making, promote youth participation in democratic processes, and establish spaces for intergenerational dialogue.²⁷



The importance of youth policies was already stressed in the 1990s, with the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the [World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond](#) (1995)²⁰ – the first global blueprint for effective youth policies. This was followed in 1998 by the [Lisbon Ministerial Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes](#).²¹ It was not until 2014 that governments finally realized that adequate legislation and policies are needed to respond to young people’s needs, aspirations and demands. As of April 2014, 122 countries had a national youth policy, up from 99 countries in 2013; 37 countries were either developing a new youth policy or revising their existing one and only 32 countries had no such policy.²² Marking that trend, the 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies (2014) adopted the [Baku Commitment](#) in which 700 stakeholders agreed that youth policies should be rights-based, inclusive, participatory, gender-responsive²³, comprehensive, knowledge-based, fully resourced and accountable.²⁴ These principles were later reflected in the [Youth 2030-UN Youth Strategy](#) (2018) and [Lisboa+21 Ministerial Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes](#) (2019) and, recently, the [OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People](#) (2022).

Meaningful youth engagement in decision-making: A strategic investment

Any action, including policies and programmes, to address the challenges facing youth, respond to their aspirations and harness their potential as active citizens, must be undertaken with the effective participation of youth in all their diversity.²⁵ This reflects the fundamental right of youth to be able to express their opinions and engage in decisions that affect their lives, which is recognized in international normative instruments.²⁶

Beyond respecting and fulfilling youth rights, the engagement of youth in decision-making about policies and programmes that affect them and the lives of their communities, has a triple benefit: it empowers youth themselves, by contributing to their well-being, building skills and competencies, as well as a sense of civic identity; it contributes to society by allowing youth to channel their creative and innovative ideas into solutions for their communities; and it contributes to efficiency by rendering any institutional action relevant and responsive to real needs.

Although the degrees and types of meaningful youth engagement may differ depending on the context (see [Module 3.A in Tool IV](#)), achieving engagement that is meaningful and not only tokenistic means respecting and effectively applying a set of fundamental principles outlined in [Module 2, Tool IV](#), as well as addressing any barriers in civic space (safety issues, limitations in access or freedom of expression, among others) and related capacity gaps of both youth and non-youth stakeholders, groups or institutions.



As the United Nations specialized agency on Education, the Natural and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information, UNESCO leverages know-how in all areas of its mandate to build on 25 years of expertise in working with and for youth in all their diversity.

Informed by emerging data and knowledge, particularly those generated by youth - for example, through programmes such as Youth As Researchers (YAR)³¹⁵ - UNESCO supports national and local authorities in formulating and updating youth policies and legal instruments on youth, with the meaningful engagement of young people at all stages of the process. UNESCO also provides spaces and opportunities for inclusive policy dialogue between policy-makers and youth. Targeted training of youth to engage effectively in such processes, as well as capacity-building of national authorities and other stakeholders on how to meaningfully engage them, are also facilitated by UNESCO. The Organization also invests in youth potential through its [Global Youth Grant Scheme](#) and associated Multi-donor Special Account, to strengthen youth capacities and support impactful youth-led action.

UNESCO's action is deployed in an integrated manner, connecting the strategic and policy design at Headquarters with tangible country operations, through its 53 Field Offices. With an extensive network of public and private partners, UNESCO convenes a diversity of stakeholders around collaborative actions to respond to youth concerns. Beyond sister UN agencies, UNESCO's action reaches an on-line community of over 339,000 youth, and a number of youth-to-youth networks; 11,000 UNESCO Associated Schools³¹⁶ and a network of UNESCO Chairs in over 850 academic institutions³¹⁷; as well as a global coalition of cities working on inclusion and non-discrimination³¹⁸. Added to these is UNESCO's active network of National Commissions that enable direct access to policy-makers and civil society actors in all 194 Member States.

Key aim:

Strengthen Member States' capacities to devise and prioritize public policies and interventions that create opportunities for youth to **meaningfully engage in policy-making** and to scale up **youth-led solutions to key challenges**.

Key recognition:

Throughout, young people are not only beneficiaries of UNESCO's work. They are recognized as experts, significant societal actors and change-makers, and **meaningfully engaged as partners and leaders** in UNESCO's work.



What is this **Toolbox** about?

The challenges that stand before young people today require urgent government responses, prioritizing effective policy actions that are designed together with young people. Yet, policy-makers and public officials currently lack all-inclusive policy guidance to support them in developing and implementing policies and programmes that can address the aggregated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other ongoing crises on the lives of youth.

In response, UNESCO provides this novel Toolbox that aspires to provide a comprehensive go-to resource to support policy-makers, public officials and practitioners, as well as development sector and civil society actors, in designing and implementing policies and programmes for and with youth in all their diversity. While, at present, the Toolbox does not provide dedicated tools for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting, it includes modules that offer guidance. At the same time, the intergenerational and multistakeholder collaborations that it can enable set the stage for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART), mutually owned and, therefore, more effective M&E.³⁹

The Toolbox can be used for interventions at every level of government, including in the context of interagency programmes and task teams on the ground.

The Toolbox does not offer one-size-fits-all solutions. Recognizing the vast diversity of realities and contexts across the world, it provides a set of basic and indisputable principles alongside flexible starting points and application routes. This means that every tool in this Toolbox can be adapted to context, while safeguarding the strict minimum standards relevant to working on youth in a meaningful and inclusive way.

Applications of the Toolbox will be monitored in line with UNESCO's regular monitoring and reporting processes and timelines. Case studies, practical examples and inspiring stories from its application will be featured regularly on a dedicated webpage and through social media.



Working definitions

Youth

There is no universal definition of ‘youth’. It is important to remember that it is a socially constructed category and that context-specific age brackets are identified in order to help design and monitor targeted policies and programmes.

For statistical purposes, the UN – without prejudice to any other definitions made by Member States – defines ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.⁴¹⁰ ‘Adolescents’ are globally considered those from 10 to 19 years old, whereas adolescents and youth are together referred to as ‘young people’, meaning those between 10 and 24 years old.⁴¹¹ Over the years, different definitions have also emerged within the UN System, across different entities, agencies, funds and programmes, as well as different UN bodies.⁴¹²

Beyond the UN, regional organizations and national and local authorities provide their own age-based definitions. For example, both the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States define ‘youth’ as those between the ages of 15 and 35, whereas the European Commission puts the upper age limit at 29. This speaks to the necessity of taking into consideration existing local, national or regional policies or laws, as well as historical, cultural, political and societal perceptions of what and who youth is, in order to properly determine this category.

To define youth in your specific context, see [Module 1](#).

Recognizing the diversity of youth

Youth is not a homogenous group. It is therefore equally important to understand and capture the broad diversity of life experiences for people during this period. Indeed, needs, aspirations and perspectives may be different for people depending on their specific age within the broad age range of youth (e.g. adolescents have different experiences than young adults), their gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, their cultural and social backgrounds, education, religion, abilities (physical/mental), context (urban/rural; humanitarian/conflict/development/other), political and economic status, or other characteristics. They may also be different based on their individual lived experiences. For example, how can we consider the development of, and engage with, young people who have experienced violence or abuse? All these groups have different needs, experience different realities and aspire to different goals that should be adequately captured and reflected in youth policies and programmes.

Particular attention should be placed on youth who are or could be in vulnerable situations, for example: those living in areas of armed conflict, living in poverty, in situations of working poverty or in jobs that have limited access to social protection and that do not provide adequate labour standards, or those belonging to groups that are, or have historically been, marginalized, including Indigenous youth, LGBTIQ+ youth, youth in rural areas, youth with disabilities and young migrants.⁴¹³

To understand the diversity and different characteristics of youth in your specific context, see [Module 1.3](#).

There is no universal definition of 'youth civic engagement'. It is understood in different ways based on the context in which it is defined, as well as on who is defining it. It changes depending on how 'youth', 'civic' and 'engagement' are perceived and positioned within a given society at a specific time.

That said, at its core, youth civic engagement is generally characterized by the agency of young people and their collective action to address issues of public concern and create social change.

It is a broad concept referring to a set of constructs such as civic skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, and goals.

In academia, policy and practice - as well as in this Toolbox - the term 'youth civic engagement' may be used interchangeably with 'youth engagement', 'youth participation' or 'youth civic participation'.

To understand youth civic engagement in your specific context, see [Module 2 in Tool III](#).



Endnotes

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- 24 UN. 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
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- 26 By 'youth policy' this document refers to any national/federal, state/provincial/regional, county/local/municipal integrated framework addressing youth issues which foresees youth-specific action within each of the different policy sectors that affect youth in all their diversity (e.g. education, labour, health, culture, sport, economy etc.). Such a framework may also be found under different names other than 'policy' (strategy, law, charter etc.)
- 27 OECD. 2022. Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People. <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0474>
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- 29 In the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Articles 20 and 21, applying to all human beings). <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 22 and 25). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>; Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12). <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>
- 30 UN. 1995. World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/202231>
- 31 https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/1998_Lisbon_Declaration_Eng.pdf
- 32 <https://www.youthpolicy.org/>
- 33 For a definition in a policy context, see Key principles underpinning a national youth policy in [Tool I](#)
- 34 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2015/10/1st-global-forum-on-youth-policies/>; and Baku Commitment to Youth Policies. <https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/baku-commitment-to-youth-policies/>
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- 36 <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet>
- 37 <https://www.unesco.org/en/unitwin>
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- 39 In a future update of the Toolbox - building on lessons learned from its application - specific tools on M&E and reporting will be added
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- 41 UNFPA. Adolescent and Youth Demographics: A brief overview. <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/adolescent-and-youth-demographics-a-brief-overview>
- 42 E.g., the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, at <https://youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction>, defines youth as those between 18 and 29 years old. For more examples, see also: UN DESA. Definition of youth, UN Factsheet. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>
- 43 It is important to consider that 'vulnerability' is not a static state or identity marker, and that it may or may not last over time



User guide

How to use the Toolbox

The Toolbox provides a collection of tools that can be used either separately from one another or in a combined way, depending on the context, audience and needs.

It starts with an introductory module, **Module 1 on Who is 'youth'**, which helps define and build a shared understanding of 'youth'. It is intended as an initial module for each of the four tools.

Tool I offers a **global guide for participatory policy design on youth**. It outlines key steps for how to design a youth-specific policy that is both inclusive and evidence based. This tool captures, in one document, advice from a variety of technical tools on youth policy design that have been published and tested by the development community during the last 25 years.

The three tools that follow are based on an extensive literature review on youth development and engagement and on lessons from practice.

Tools II and III focus on **capacity development** and **intergenerational dialogue** that can be used in the context of policy dialogue sessions. These bring together different stakeholders (policy-makers, development sector actors, civil society, academia and youth) to exchange knowledge and collectively design and implement action plans that promote **(1) holistic youth development** and **(2) youth civic engagement**.

Tool IV offers a step-by-step **training tool on meaningful youth engagement** to build capacities of institutional public, private or civil society actors to apply key principles and methods of engaging young people in policy design and programming.

In addition, a **Compendium of global and regional standards** in areas affecting youth is available in **Annex 1**. This can be a useful resource when drafting youth policy provisions, when designing performance indicators and results, or when evaluating outcomes of youth programmes.

Who are the intended Toolbox users

Policy-makers, public officials and practitioners from government, the development sector (including the UN System), the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs) including youth organizations, and other stakeholder groups responsible for, or involved in, youth policy-making and programming. See specific target audiences for each of the tools in the [Navigation Pane](#) overleaf.



WHEN TO USE THE TOOL?

Guide for participatory policy design on youth (Tool I)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on holistic youth development (Tool II)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on youth civic engagement (Tool III)	Training tool on meaningful youth engagement (Tool IV)
<p>To ensure a participatory and inclusive design or review of a public policy on youth, with the inclusion of youth at all stages of the process.</p>	<p>To stimulate reflection, intergenerational dialogue and exchange between different stakeholder groups within the context of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy design or review process - The tools can be tailored for application at different stages of the process. • A programme design process - The tools can be tailored to enable programming and action on holistic youth development and/or youth civic engagement. • Action research workshops - The tools can be tailored to collect evidence to inform action on holistic youth development and/or youth civic engagement. • Technical capacity development training - The tools can be tailored to strengthen capacity in understanding the various aspects of holistic youth development and/ or youth civic engagement, as well as how to engage other stakeholders in discussing and developing joint action on these areas. 	<p>To train institutional actors within the context of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical capacity development training - The tool can be tailored to strengthen the capacities of national and local actors in understanding and implementing approaches to meaningful youth engagement. • A national or local policy and legislation design, review or implementation process - The tool can be tailored for application at the early stages of a policy process to identify opportunities and mechanisms to enable youth engagement as well as develop joint actions with other national or local actors for the policy's implementation. • A national or local programme design process - The tool can be tailored for application during a programme development process to identify opportunities and mechanisms to enable youth engagement as well as develop joint actions with other national or local actors. 	

FOR WHOM?

Guide for participatory policy design on youth (Tool I)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on holistic youth development (Tool II)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on youth civic engagement (Tool III)	Training tool on meaningful youth engagement (Tool IV)
<p>Youth and non-youth representatives from among:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical staff of public authorities and institutions relevant to youth policy making at national and/or local level • Youth and/or youth organizations and constituencies including those representing youth in situations of exclusion or vulnerability • Members of political parties, including their youth wings • Members of academia and research institutions relevant to youth policy making • Development and civil society organizations relevant to youth issues • National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) • Other societal actors relevant to youth issues (e.g. media, private sector companies, teachers', parents' or employers' associations, among others) <p>Different actors can be selected to participate depending on the purpose for which the tool is being applied.</p> <p>N.B: In all work facilitated with these tools, the inclusive and meaningful engagement of youth is critical to ensure a representative outcome.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives and technical staff from government ministries and departments relevant to youth at national and/or local level, including UNESCO National Commissions • Representatives and technical staff of national parliaments engaging in youth-relevant legislative processes • Technical staff of other public authorities and institutions relevant to youth at national and/or local level including youth agencies • Foreign embassies engaging in youth policy and programme processes • Members of academia and research institutions involved in making youth policy and programmes • Youth and their structures, including formal and informal youth-led groups organizations, and networks or those that work on behalf of youth • Other national actors relevant to youth issues (e.g., the media, private sector companies, foundations, associations, think tanks, among others) <p>Different actors can be selected to participate depending on the tool's purpose.</p>



WHO APPLIES IT?

Guide for participatory policy design on youth (Tool I)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on holistic youth development (Tool II)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on youth civic engagement (Tool III)	Training tool on meaningful youth engagement (Tool IV)
National and local public authorities, with UNESCO staff.	UNESCO and UNESCO youth trainers.		

WHERE TO APPLY IT?

Guide for participatory policy design on youth (Tool I)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on holistic youth development (Tool II)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on youth civic engagement (Tool III)	Training tool on meaningful youth engagement (Tool IV)
These tools are primarily used at national/country level. However, they can also be adapted for processes at regional/provincial/departmental or local/community levels.			

HOW TO APPLY IT?

Guide for participatory policy design on youth (Tool I)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on holistic youth development (Tool II)	Capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tool on youth civic engagement (Tool III)	Training tool on meaningful youth engagement (Tool IV)
<p>Based on the steps outlined in the Guide, in consultation and agreement with the government and key stakeholders, prepare an adapted roadmap/ plan that is contextualized to the specific country/ local environment and conditions and outline the steps for youth policy design/review. Proceed to roll-out.</p>	<p>See the tool's section on 'How to use this tool'.</p> <p>See also the tool's section on 'The learning journey'.</p>	<p>See the tool's section on 'How to use this tool'</p> <p>See also the tool's section on 'The learning journey'.</p>	<p>See the tool's section on 'How to use this tool'.</p> <p>See also the tool's section on 'The learning journey'.</p>

Module 1

Who is 'youth'?

This module seeks to clarify and build an understanding of the diverse characteristics and experiences of youth (for a working definition of the diversity of youth, see the [Introduction](#) to this Toolbox) as well as of the transitions young people experience in a national context. This insight can be used to identify specific youth groups to engage in national or local policy development or programming processes, and to define how best to engage with them. It should therefore be used as the initial module before proceeding to Tools II, III and IV, and before embarking on youth policy design processes.

Reflection questions

What is the perceived age of youth in a specific context?

What are the characteristics of youth and how do these inform the experience of being a young person?

What transitions do youth experience during this life stage?

How do youth relate with other generations in society?
How do these relationships affect youth?

What are some of the different groups of youth and how do they relate to each other? How do these relationships affect youth?

<p>Module 1.A *</p> <p>Remember/describe your youth</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Module 1.B *</p> <p>The characteristics wheel</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Module 1.C *</p> <p>Youth transitions</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Module 1.D</p> <p>Intergenerational relationships</p> <p>60 minutes</p>	<p>Module 1.E</p> <p>Intragenerational relationships</p> <p>60 minutes</p>
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Although the module is designed to be delivered in its entirety, essential activities that can be used to reduce the training are marked with *.

1 Using a holistic lens to define youth

There are different lenses to look through when trying to define youth in your national context. These are summarized and reflected in the following approaches:

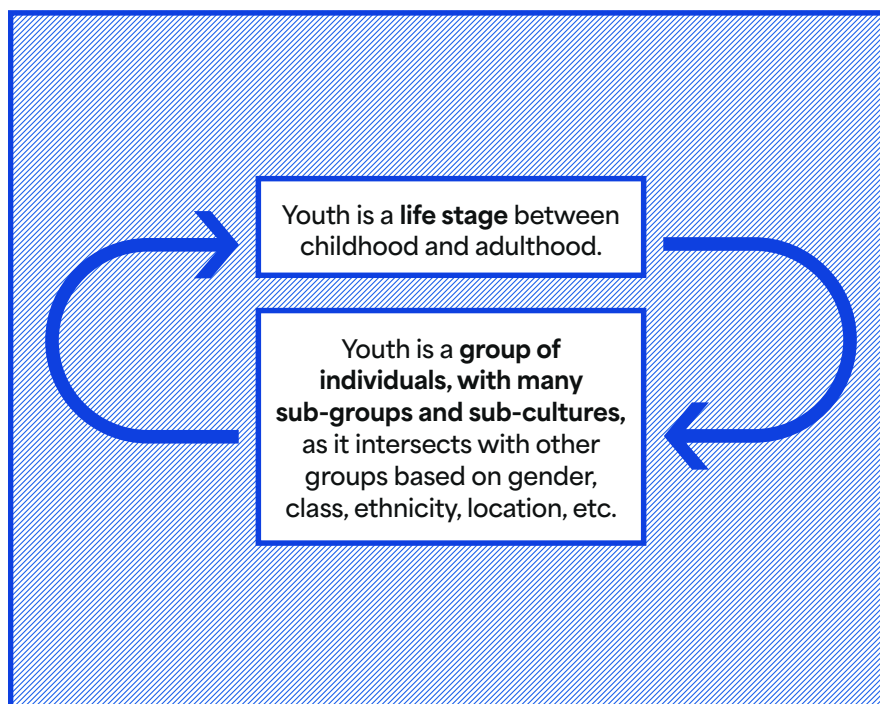


Figure 1. Approaches to defining ‘youth’

The above approaches complement each other and can be used together to build an understanding of the concept of ‘youth’. Based on this, the following sections explore five parameters that can, together, shape up a comprehensive picture of ‘who is youth’:

- The perceived age of youth ([Module 1.A](#))
- The characteristics and experiences of youth ([Module 1.B](#))
- The transition stages youth go through ([Module 1.C](#))
- Intergenerational relationships ([Module 1.D](#))
- Intragenerational relationships ([Module 1.E](#))



The perceived age of youth

What is the perceived age of youth a specific context?

There is no universal definition of 'youth'. When defining youth, it is important to remember that it is socially constructed and that context-specific age brackets are identified in order to help design and monitor targeted policies and programmes.

For statistical purposes, the UN – without prejudice to other definitions made by Member States – defines 'youth' as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.⁴¹⁴ 'Adolescents' are globally considered those from 10 to 19 years old, whereas adolescents and youth are together referred to as 'young people', meaning those between 10 and 24 years old.⁴¹⁵ Over the years, different definitions of youth have also emerged within the UN System, across different entities, agencies, funds and programmes, and different UN bodies.⁴¹⁶

Regional organizations and national and local authorities also provide their own age-based definitions. For example, both the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States define youth as those between the ages of 15 and 35, whereas the European Commission puts the upper age limit at 29. This speaks to the necessity of taking into consideration existing local, national or regional policies or laws, as well as historical, cultural, political and societal perceptions of what and who youth is, in order to properly determine this category.

Furthermore, when defining youth, it is equally important to understand and capture the broad diversity of life experiences during this period. Indeed, life experience, needs, aspirations and perspectives may be different for people depending on their specific age within the broad age-range of youth (e.g. adolescents have different experiences than young adults), gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities/state, socioeconomic, political and cultural background, ethnicity, religious and cultural beliefs among others.

Defining youth from a holistic perspective involves recognizing these diverse experiences, how specific characteristics and variables inform the experience of being a young person, as well as the transition stages experienced. Flexibility is essential when seeking to reflect the diverse definitions of youth in a given national context.

1.4 ACTIVITY IDEA: REMEMBER/DESCRIBE YOUR YOUTH *

Purpose

This activity can be used to share experiences of being a young person and explore how youth is currently defined by participants in the national context.

Instruction

- Divide participants into pairs.
- Ask them to think about what it was like to be a young person and:
 - » Share a personal experience of having their voice heard or ignored.
 - » Identify the age bracket they associate with being a youth.
- Ask pairs to share highlights from their discussion with all participants, using the debrief points below.
- Introduce the five parameters that can be used to define who youth is in a national context.

Debrief questions

- Did the group experience youth agency in different ways?
- How might participants' own youth experiences be different for young people today?
- Did the group identify different ages that represent youth?
- Do the identified age brackets accurately reflect the UN's definitions/the national definition?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

15 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

2

RESOURCES

None required



1. B

The characteristics and experiences of youth

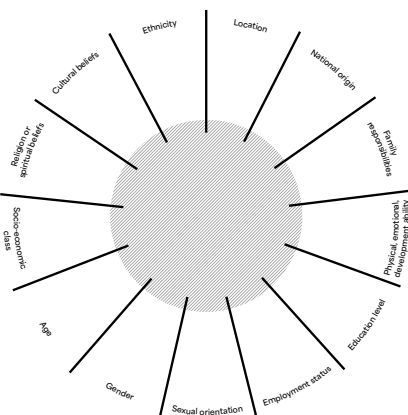
What are the characteristics of youth and how do these inform the experience of being a young person?

'Youth' is not a homogenous group and does not have the same characteristics over time in every generation. The experience of 'being a young person' is influenced by a number of factors. Different generations will experience youth differently. Youth of the same generation will also experience it differently. Diverse groups and subgroups at the same life stage will have different experiences based on their demographic, social, political and cultural characteristics as well as the context and conditions in which they live and grow up.

These characteristics do not exist in isolation from one another. To understand how they inform the experience of youth, it is also necessary to explore the intersections between them. For example, the experience of a young woman who lives in a rural location may be very different from the experience of a young male who also lives in a rural location. These intersections make the experience of youth vary widely and can explain how and why different groups of youth have different opportunities, face different challenges and express different needs.

Reflecting on these differences can lead to a deeper understanding of how the characteristics and intersections between them affect the status, rights and responsibilities that are attributed to different subgroups of youth in a national or local context, through legislation, policies and programmes.

Tool sheet



1.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: THE CHARACTERISTICS WHEEL

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore how youth have multiple aspects to their identity, including biological, demographic, social and cultural characteristics, and how the experience of youth is influenced by these.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask participants to select one of the youth profiles in the characteristics wheel below, and to identify the different characteristics and variables that are highlighted in the profile.
- Record each characteristic and variable on the characteristics wheel below.

Debrief questions

- What characteristics and variables did you identify?
- How do they influence the experience of youth?
- What reflections do you have on the intersections between the identified characteristics and variables?
- How do these characteristics and variables affect youth's status, rights, responsibilities and experiences in your context?
- What do the diverse experiences discussed tell you about the opportunities and challenges for youth in your context?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Youth profiles
Characteristics wheel tool sheet
Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





The transition stages youth go through

What transitions do youth experience during this life stage?

In global policy to date, there has been some work that sheds light on the transitions youth experience from childhood to adulthood.

The World Bank's landmark *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* proposed five key transitions:

- Continuing to learn
- Starting to work
- Developing a healthy lifestyle
- Forming families
- Exercising citizenship

While society mostly attributes these transition phases to youth, they do not reflect the experience of all youth, nor are they exhaustive. But they do provide a starting point to reflect on and understand transitions experienced by youth in a national context. Life trajectories are not linear, and the phases may be experienced intermittently or concurrently.

Different groups and subgroups of youth may experience similar transitions, but at different times. In addition, some of the categories defining these transitions can be understood or defined differently by different youth in different contexts. For instance, in some cases having meaningful relationships, can mean having a family. Therefore, it is important to understand that as a general rule, transition pathways cannot be pre-assumed or foisted upon youth. Rather, young people must be informed, capacitated, free and enabled to choose how and when to navigate the transitions to adulthood in the way that is most appropriate for their own development, and with an understanding of different options and avenues available to them.

Tool sheet



Continuing to learn	
Starting to work	
Developing a healthy lifestyle	
Forming families	
Exercising citizenship	
Other transitions identified	

1.© ACTIVITY IDEA: YOUTH TRANSITIONS

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the different transitions that youth experience in a specific context.

Instruction

- Place flipchart sheets with the different transitions in the room.
- Break into five groups with a representative mix of participants. One group per transition sheet.
- Ask each group to spend five minutes discussing and recording how the assigned transition applies to youth in their context, including any personal experiences they may have had when navigating this transition.
- After five minutes ask participants to rotate to the next transition sheet and repeat.
- Continue until each group has reviewed each of the five transition sheets.

Debrief questions

- Do the five identified transitions reflect the reality for youth in your context?
- Are there some transitions that are more pertinent than others for youth in your context?
- Are there additional transitions youth go through in your context that are not reflected through the basic five?
- Are there transitions that do not apply to youth in your context?
- What limitations does this framework have?
- What other considerations must be made when thinking about the transitions youth go through in your context?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

25 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
(one sheet for each of the five transitions)
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



1.D

Intergenerational relationships

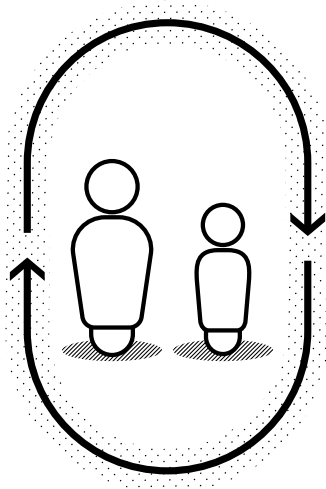
What are the relationships between youth and non-youth?

An important building block towards understanding youth from a holistic perspective requires reflecting on the relationship young people have with non-youth (from family, teachers and community members to public authorities, civil society and the private sector).

These relationships can determine:

- How youth are understood in society;
- The role and position of youth in society;
- The rights and responsibilities attributed to youth;
- The ability for youth to exercise their agency (barriers and opportunities);
- The living conditions and opportunities available to them.

Tool sheet



1.10 ACTIVITY IDEA: INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore how the relationships between youth and non-youth affect young people.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Using the debrief questions below for guidance, discuss the relationship between youth and non-youth in their context (country/city/community).
- Ask each group to present their responses with key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What are some of the non-youth groups in society?
- How do intergenerational exchanges and communication usually take place? What are the typical obstacles and opportunities to leveraging intergenerational communication?
- How does this relationship influence the way youth is understood in society?
- How does this relationship influence the role of youth in society?
- How does this relationship influence the rights and responsibilities that are recognized for youth in society?
- What are the power dynamics that govern this relationship?
- When and why are youth considered dependents, when – if at all – are they considered providers, and when – if at all – both? When and why are youth considered beneficiaries, when – if at all – are they considered equal partners, and when – if at all – are they considered leaders?
- How does this relationship affect youth agency and access to power or decision-making (for example, at family, community, national levels)?
- How does this relationship inform the opportunities available to youth?
- What are the characteristics shared by youth and non-youth such as those based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural beliefs and religion, among others?
- How do these shared characteristics influence the relationships between youth and non-youth?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

40 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



1.E

Intragenerational relationships

How do different groups of youth relate to each other? How do these relationships affect youth?

Youth is not a homogenous group. Their demographic, social and cultural characteristics, as well as the different ways and avenues through which they decide to engage with society, create different subgroups of youth. To understand youth from a holistic perspective, it is important to reflect on the relationships between the subgroups.

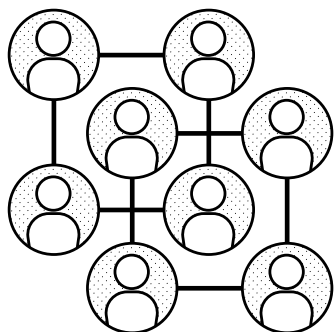
These relationships can determine:

- How some youth are understood by others;
- The role and position of different subgroups of youth in society;
- The way youth are able to construct their identities, in relation to other youth;
- The way in which youth engage with each other and in society.

Tool sheet



1.E



1.6 ACTIVITY IDEA: INTRAGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore how the relationships between different subgroups of youth affect the overall experience of being a young person.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants by age group and type of stakeholder.
- Using the debrief questions below for guidance, and inspired by the youth profiles constructed previously, discuss the relationships between different subgroups of youth.
- Ask each group to present their response with key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- Who are the different subgroups of youth?
- How do those subgroups perceive one another?
- How do they interact with one another, if at all?
- What are the power dynamics between different subgroups of youth?
- What is the role given to each of these subgroups by young people themselves?
- How do young people organize among themselves to interact with society?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

40 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



Endnotes

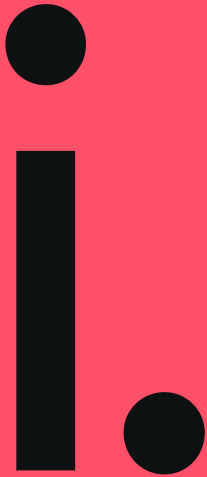
MODULE 1

44 UN. [Youth](#)

45 UNFPA. [Adolescent and youth demographics: a brief overview](#)

46 E.g., the [UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security](#) defines youth as those between 18 and 29 years old. For more examples, see also 'Definition of youth' in UN DESA. UN Factsheet. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>





Guide

Guide

Guide

Guide

Guide

Guide

on Youth
Policy Design



Overview



This Guide is designed to support youth policy development, whether this concerns the elaboration of a policy for the first time or the revision of an already existing youth policy. It provides an adaptable-to-context methodology that can be contextualized to specific national or local settings, realities and needs.⁴¹⁷ It suggests a series of flexible departure points to guide youth development planners and policy officers in formulating youth policies, in consultation with all major stakeholders concerned, in particular youth, in all their diversity (for a working definition, see the [Introduction](#) to this Toolbox, as well as [Module 1](#)). This Guide does not provide a one-size-fits-all, definitive solution to youth policy making and remains a work in progress, which can evolve based on new experiences, research and country-level practices.

Its application so far has demonstrated significant effectiveness in building a broad ownership of the youth policy, facilitating inter-ministerial collaboration, consolidating youth engagement, thereby improving the overall implementation prospects of the policy.

By ‘youth policy’ this document refers to any wide integrated framework addressing youth issues at whatever level of governance, which foresees youth-specific action within each of the different policy sectors that affect youth (e.g. education, labour, health, culture, sport, economy etc.). Depending on context, such a framework may also be found under names other than ‘policy’ (strategy, law, charter, etc.).

Developing inclusive and participatory youth policies is a complex task. It engages a multitude of stakeholders from different levels of governance, specializations, population groups and sectors (public and private); and it entails wide-based consultations, an effective and sustainable coordination among ministries and public authorities, and the integration of the youth policy into national development plans. At the same time, the effort to develop such policies is itself a long-term investment that opens up a series of opportunities for all stakeholders involved, individually and collectively. It takes time and resources, but the result helps ensure collective ownership and sustainability. It makes development activities and programme interventions more effective and their impact more sustainable, and it builds the capacity of all those involved.

According to the 2014 outcome document of the First Global Forum on Youth Policies held in Baku, youth policies should be:

Rights-based	Be designed and implemented within a human rights-based framework, in line with the country's global and regional commitments and recognizing young people as rights-holders. ⁴⁹
Inclusive	Ensure equal opportunities for every young person to achieve their full potential in life, including the elimination of barriers to inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups.
Participatory	Be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with the meaningful engagement of youth, in all their diversity, and with the involvement of all concerned stakeholders, in both rural and urban settings. This will ensure ownership and long-term viability.
Gender-responsive	Enable specific actions to promote gender equality and to address gender-based disparities in all settings, from political to socio-economic and cultural.
Comprehensive	Convey a clear vision statement and adopt a holistic approach to youth development (see Tool II), through increased collaboration across policy sectors, ministries and other relevant entities, and providing an integrated strategic framework that gives direction and guides legislation and measures affecting youth.
Evidence-informed	Be developed and regularly updated, based on the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information on the situation of youth, in all their diversity, in a given context.
Fully resourced	Have adequate, transparent and dedicated human and financial resources for implementation, capacity-building of involved actors and structures, monitoring, reporting and evaluation; and for maximizing available resources through coordination, multistakeholder partnerships and shared ownership.
Accountable	Be nationally and locally owned and led, and regularly monitored, reported upon (by policy-makers) and evaluated, against specific youth development targets and indicators, with the meaningful engagement of youth.

Table 1. Key principles underpinning a youth policy



In focus

A youth policy will remain purely symbolic unless it:⁵¹⁰

- Conveys **clear goals and a vision statement**, setting out what the policy is intended to achieve in the long run;
- Has an **overarching coordination role** and **provides direction** to all policies that directly and indirectly affect the development of youth, in all their diversity, as members of society;
- Is an **institutional** policy, and not merely of a specific government. As such, is conceived as a **long-term strategic instrument** and not out of short-term political expediency;
- Reflects an **integrated**, cross-sectoral and coherent approach, and is interdisciplinary, interministerial and multidepartmental;
- Is the product of multiparty, national **consensus**, based on **consultation** with all those concerned, **particularly diverse groups of youth**;
- Provides for the creation of youth-to-youth platforms and the **institutionalization of informal and formal consultation and feedback mechanisms** between youth policy stakeholders and members of these platforms;
- Ensures that key stakeholders, and particularly youth, **understand** fully the importance of the policy and are properly **capacitated, trained and sensitized** on how they can engage with it and benefit from it;
- Opens up **spaces for participation** of youth in all stages of the policy process, i.e. formulation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation;
- Sets out **priority areas of policy intervention**, as basis for the development of specific projects;
- Includes an **action plan** and a multisectoral **results-based framework** for monitoring, evaluation, documentation and reporting, to support implementation.



A Starting from the basics: Minimum standards

A.1 Quality and relevance

The quality of the policy design process is linked to applying rights-and gender-based approaches throughout the different stages of the process and looking into traditions, history and cultural norms.

Prerequisites for ensuring the quality of final results include:

- Undertaking a critical evaluation of relevant and existing policies;
- Analysing policy alternatives;
- Identifying recommendations/options that are clear, concrete and realistic.

Key questions to guide the policy design process are:

- Does the process adopt a people-centred analytical approach throughout, including analysis of gender issues and social, economic and political inclusion?
- Does the process convey concrete, sound and realistic policy messages?
- Has the process considered the social, economic, political, environmental and cultural dimensions of human development in both the analysis and recommendations?
- Do these aspects take into account gender dimensions that cut across all of them?
- Does the process draw on the diversity of experiences across the country?
- Does it draw on experiences in other countries?

This section focuses on the minimum standards to be maintained when developing a youth policy, to ensure its quality, relevance, legitimacy and shared ownership. It also provides suggestions to ensure multistakeholder participation throughout the policy process.

A.2 Applying a gender lens to the policy process

The policy process is informed by and shaped on the basis of the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive statistics relevant to youth development and civic engagement. Using the same perspective, the policy should consider and examine the differences, commonalities and interactions between youth in all their diversity, based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics⁵¹, so that it can identify and meet their respective needs and aspirations.

Proper gender analysis, across and within all policy sectors addressed by the youth policy, is conducted to ensure that it integrates and addresses specific activities, conditions, needs, aspirations and access to decision-making processes for youth in all their diversity. This exercise would also include identifying how particular aspects of the policy might affect youth having different sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and/or sex characteristics, and the need to adapt these aspects to achieve equality and equity.

The participation structures or mechanisms enabling youth participation in the development, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the policy should be gender-transformative. In order to ensure the equal and equitable representation of all youth, they should strive to identify, acknowledge and address the challenges as well as underlying causes that may adversely affect young people's participation for any reason.⁵²



A.③ Participation of all groups of stakeholders involved in and affected by the policy

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places particular emphasis on the promotion, protection and participation of all members of society in public affairs. Goal 16 includes targets to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7). It also seeks to ensure public access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (target 16.10). Beyond Goal 16, the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda as a whole depends on the meaningful participation of all actors in society, in particular those most at risk of discrimination and of being left behind.⁵¹³ Clearly, youth are a key stakeholder and not just because of their demographic weight. Their participation can bring significant benefits both for their own development and for the development of their countries and communities.

When it comes to youth policy, participation is both a means to develop a public policy that can be a catalyst for change and an end in its own right. It enables the advancement of all human rights, promotes inclusion, rule of law and democracy, and is essential for reducing inequalities, racism and social conflict. Participation is also crucial for empowering youth and enabling them to provide novel and creative solutions to public challenges. While the responsibility and accountability for taking decisions ultimately lies with public authorities, the participation of various sectors of society allows the authorities to deepen their understanding of specific issues; helps to identify gaps, as well as available policy and legislative options and their impact on youth; and balances conflicting interests.

As a result, decision-making is more informed and sustainable, and public institutions are more effective, accountable and transparent. This in turn enhances the legitimacy of states' decisions and their ownership by those who are most concerned by them: young people themselves, in all their diversity.⁵¹⁴

Participation cannot simply be proclaimed; it has to be vigorously promoted. It takes time, resources, understanding and perseverance, but the end result helps ensure collective ownership, sustainability and impact, and it builds the capacity of all those involved. Also, the right to participate in public affairs cannot be considered in a vacuum. Its effective exercise requires an environment where all human rights, in particular the rights to equality and non-discrimination, to freedom of opinion and expression and to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, are fully respected and enjoyed by all individuals.⁵¹⁵

At an operational level, youth participation in the policy process must be meaningful and inclusive at all stages. Depending on context, time and resources, such participation can take different forms. Tool IV ([Modules 2 and 3](#)) can be used in conjunction with Tool II ([Module 3.②](#)) as a guide for planning how to meaningfully engage youth at the different stages of the policy design process (stages B1 to C of this Guide).

Setting up multistakeholder groups:

While recognizing that each country will adopt methods that are suitable for its context, this section provides suggestions for institutionalizing multistakeholder processes using multistakeholder groups that have already proved successful in a variety of settings. These help build mutual trust, establish an appropriate information and communication system, and facilitate consensus-building throughout the process, ultimately ensuring greater ownership.⁵¹⁶

The multistakeholder groups suggested below can be set up or expanded at different stages of the policy design process (see the stages under section B below) depending on their respective roles and the availability of information on the core stakeholders that would need to participate in them.⁵¹⁷ Normally they would need to be defined from the very beginning of the process when adapting this Guide to the local context and preparing the roadmap for the policy design.

In all cases, as youth is a cross-cutting policy issue, a youth policy cannot be successful without true cross-sectoral collaboration involving ministries of education, labour, health and all concerned.

Meaningful youth engagement and gender balance are also crucial for ensuring the quality of the final product. In some cases, the youth policy may need to include additional support measures enabling the participation of disadvantaged young people. In Tools II and IV in this Toolbox you can find practical exercises to help (i) create such multistakeholder groups ([Tool II, Module 3.A](#)) and (ii) specify how to meaningfully engage youth throughout the process ([Tool II, Module 3.B](#), and [Tool IV](#) in its entirety).



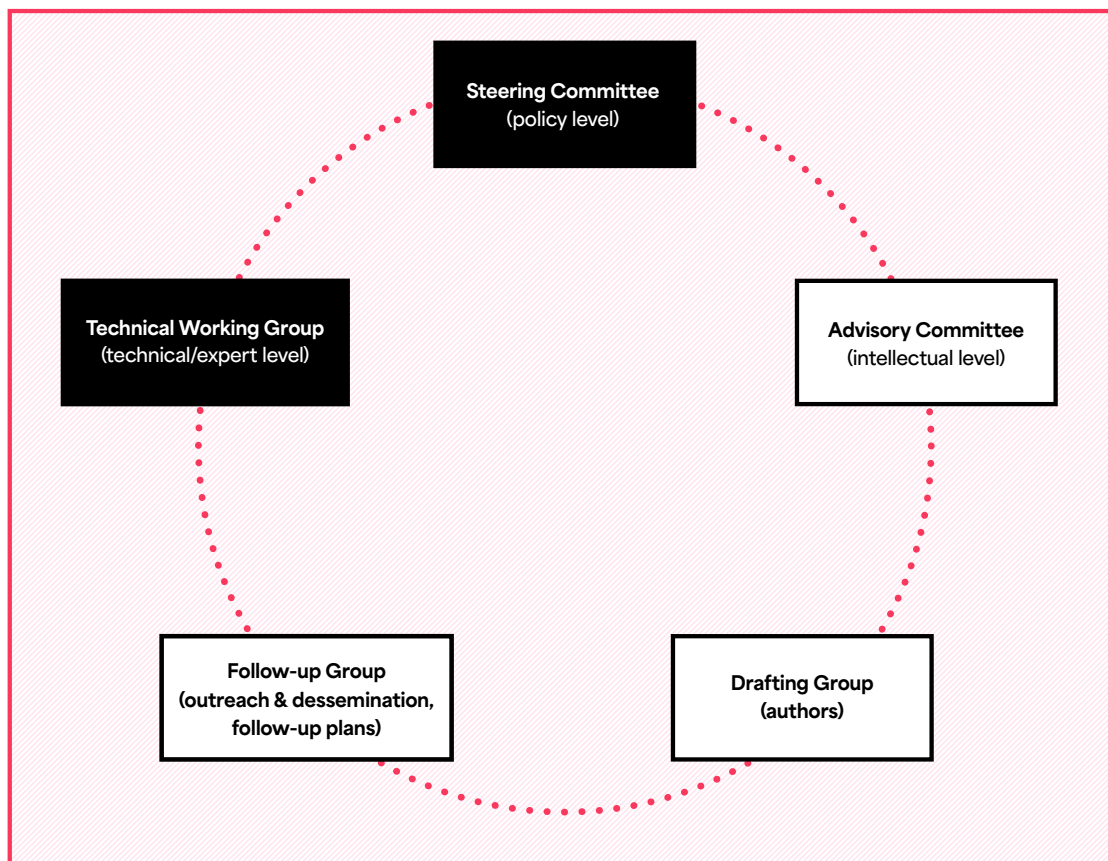


Figure 2. Participatory multistakeholder groups for the youth policy design process

The Steering Committee (SC) is the **highest policy level group**, with overarching responsibility for the final product. It mandates the policy process and validates the outcomes at each stage along the way to final recommendations. This group generally comprises representatives of each of the principal stakeholder organizations: representatives of government ministries and legislative bodies, major national organizations or groups - including youth councils and networks, as well as UN System entities, multilateral or bilateral donors and the private sector. Depending on the country context and data availability, the Steering Committee can be established either prior to the initial stakeholders' analysis or following a contextual analysis (section B.2 below).

The Advisory Committee (AC) is the **highest mechanism at the intellectual level**. It includes youth and non-youth academics, experts and opinion leaders in the country or region. The Committee advises on substantive content, along with its relevance to other national issues and ongoing debates. An important role besides that of quality control is to assure credibility by maintaining appropriate distance from politics. The Advisory Committee, in consultation with the Technical Working Group (see below), may also set up targeted task teams to advise technical experts as they develop specific thematic areas of the policy text. Like the SC, the Advisory Committee can be formed either prior to or following the contextual analysis (section B.2 below) depending on the context and availability of information.

The Technical Working Group (TWG) is the **technical and operational group** responsible for guiding preparation on a day-to-day basis. It brings together technical experts, stakeholder organizations including technical counterparts and representatives from the different ministries, and youth organizations involved in the policy process.

The Technical Working Group:

- Drives the day-to-day process and assumes responsibility for ongoing daily tasks;
- Meets regularly to coordinate preparation and production;
- Establishes and implements mechanisms to monitor the quality of data and analysis;
- Ensures that the various groups meet regularly, that they represent views of every sector of the national community, and that their criticisms are constructive;
- Guarantees that the necessary capacities for policy design are available, or builds these capacities through training if necessary;
- Provides leadership on follow-up and advocacy.

The Drafting Group (DG) consists of the **penholder(s)** of the policy document. In many cases, this may be just one person (consultant), or it may be a task team of experts from the TWG. The penholder(s) liaise(s) regularly with the TWG and, as required, with the AC.

A Follow-up Group (FG) could be constituted as a subset of the TWG, responsible for **implementing an outreach and dissemination plan** for effective follow-up, or it could incorporate representatives of each of the groups above, as well as leaders from various constituencies, such as the educational system, the private sector, the media and the arts.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some of the groups described above are suggestions only and can be created at any time throughout the policy development process, or not at all. However, the multistakeholder Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group form a necessary minimum.



B Formulating a youth policy: Key stages

B.① Preparatory stage

The first step towards initiating a policy process is to establish whether the conditions for such a process are favourable. The initial steps usually take place early on, even before the Technical Working Group is established. In such a case, UNESCO, in collaboration with other UN agencies or development actors might take the lead and the TWG, the SC and the other multistakeholder groups can take shape gradually in parallel, provided both the government and stakeholders have agreed to engage in the process.

The following questions should be examined during this stage:

- How much advocacy is required to ensure consensus of the main stakeholders responsible for a youth policy?
- Will they engage throughout the process and agree to a participatory and multistakeholder approach that follows the principles and steps in this Guide?
- What is the breadth of the mandate of the organization responsible for the policy? What kind of legal powers does it have?
- What are the existing capacities and levels of awareness among all stakeholders, including the specific population groups in the youth cohort that the policy would eventually address or focus on?
- What work have other multilateral or bilateral stakeholders already undertaken in the country, and how would UNESCO's approach and initiative add value to and leverage such work?

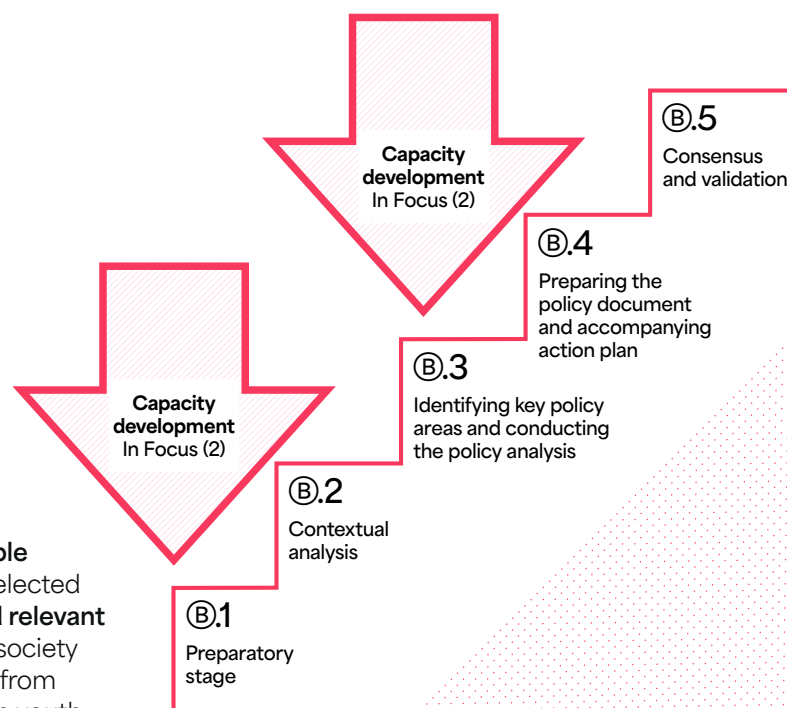
It is important to assess these elements carefully as the success and ownership of the whole process depends on adequate preparation.

This section outlines in detail the key stages of the youth policy process: from the preparatory stage through to the policy's endorsement.



GOOD TO KNOW

The policy provides a vision that should both inspire and point the way to its implementation across all sectors. If the starting point offers a vision that is too negative or narrow, it may be necessary to revisit the preparatory stage. It is important to spend whatever time is necessary to develop a strong, multidisciplinary youth policy with a positive outlook on youth.



Depending on the context, requirements at this stage may include:

- **Identification and mobilization of responsible authorities** (e.g. ministries or youth offices, elected officials, politicians and political parties) **and relevant stakeholders** (e.g. youth organizations, civil society groups, educational institutions or partners from the private sector). As the establishment of a youth policy and a budget for youth-specific action normally involve a redistribution of resources, the affected ministries and institutions, as well as elected officials and representatives of the political parties could be included in the planning process early on. In this process, it is sometimes beneficial (depending on context) to identify, from the outset, an institutional anchor for the policy, a clearly mandated leader or champion that will lead the design efforts; it is also advisable to have clearly mandated focal points in all ministries that will be involved in the policy design and its later implementation.
- **Desk research and consultations** to collect existing baseline data, identify gaps and determine which areas the policy development process will focus on (e.g. education, employment or culture). Any capacity gaps should also be addressed prior to launching the process.
- **Availability of human and financial resources** (from the government, the UN or partners) to enable a participatory process. This can be viewed as ‘seed money’ or as an investment that will lead to more substantive allocation of funds once the policy is adopted.

Figure 3. Key stages of youth policy design process

- **Advocacy and consultations with key stakeholders** who would be involved in the process to ensure consensus on the approach and methodology.
- **Establishment of the Steering Committee** and of other participatory mechanisms/groups as may be appropriate (see section A.3 above).
- **Training** on youth development concepts and applications, depending on capacity gaps. (In [Tool II, Module 3.0](#), you will find practical how-to exercises for collectively identifying capacity development needs in the context of a policy design or policy review process.)

In focus

2

Capacity development

The policy design process provides opportunities for capacity development of stakeholders as both duty-bearers⁵¹⁸ and rights-holders. This can occur at different stages. While [Tool II, Module 3.D](#), provides practical exercises on how to identify capacity development needs, it is useful to anticipate and plan for seven key capacity development areas:

For all stakeholders, including youth:

1. **Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA)** - to ensure that the policy moves beyond addressing symptoms and looks at the immediate, underlying and structural root causes.
2. **Gender equality** - to ensure the integration of gender equality perspectives into the policy's design, content, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.
3. **Diversity of youth** - to help understand the vast diversity of needs, perspectives and experiences within the youth cohort in a given context. [Module 1](#) can provide a good first basis for learning and reflecting on this issue.
4. **Holistic youth development and youth civic engagement** - to build capacities and enable inclusive and intergenerational dialogue explore what holistic youth development and youth civic engagement mean in a given context and how they can be promoted. [Tools II](#) and [III](#) can be used to this end.

For non-youth stakeholders, particularly institutions:

5. **Meaningful youth engagement and youth-adult partnerships** - to enable stakeholders to work and engage with young people at all stages of the process. [Tool IV](#) provides a training curriculum for this purpose.
6. **Administrative and technical capacities** to deliver **youth-responsive services** and address **age-based inequalities** through close collaboration across all levels of government.

For youth engaging in the policy process:

7. **Capacity development of youth and representatives of youth organizations** - to enable them to participate effectively in the policy process both in terms of content and of communication and advocacy, so as to present their views in the best possible manner and negotiate with other stakeholders.

B.② Contextual analysis (cross-sectoral, disaggregated, comparative and intercultural)

The policy design process and the final document should be context-specific to the country and linked to existing national plans and policies. To achieve this, it is important to have a strong contextual analysis from an HRBA perspective, one that looks into the underlying root causes of the situation of different youth groups in society. It should be conducted through a participatory approach to collecting and analyzing the data, which will also provide the first opportunity for meaningful participation of all stakeholders in the process.

To the extent possible, the contextual analysis should be conducted in an open and consultative manner, namely through surveys, workshops, focus groups (onsite or online). Depending on resource limitations, other mechanisms such as retreats, round tables, meetings, websites, or e-discussions can allow consultations with diverse groups - including, in particular, with unorganized youth. National statistical organizations must be solicited to provide available data and support further data collection, whereas, for UN common programming countries, where a UN Country Team (UNCT) is in place, the existing Common Country Analysis (CCA) should also be considered. More and more of these countries are also setting up Youth Advisory Groups to the UNCT that could be consulted as well.

The generic areas that the contextual analysis would need to look into include:

- The international and regional commitments of the country, particularly to human rights instruments;
- The strength and nature of the state itself;
- The nature of the political system;
- The broad political context and its impact on the realization of rights;
- The political and cultural attitudes towards youth development in general or in terms of health, employment, activism, learning, etc.;
- The strength of civil society and openness of civic space;
- The strength and agendas of existing movements;
- The consistency of the policy agenda on youth development or specific areas therein.

In addition to these, the contextual analysis would include both **a situation analysis and a stakeholders' analysis.**



Situation analysis

The situation analysis should be based on disaggregated socio-demographic data (including age- and sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive statistics), standards, experiences and technical expertise (practices, tools), as well as qualitative information, which should be cross-sectoral, comparative and intercultural.

In terms of **quantitative information**, the analysis requires gathering youth-relevant data on government budgets, social and economic living conditions, and demand and supply data on the different areas affecting youth development. These should follow an HRBA approach to data.⁵¹⁹

Moreover, as national averages can mask great disparities and pockets of deprivation, it is important to collect disaggregated data by going to the smallest possible units of measurement and getting as close to the individual as possible. Through disaggregating national data by different categories – gender, age, disability, income, ethnicity, cultural and religious beliefs, migratory status, groups left behind or at risk of being left behind, profile, type, geographic location/area and other grounds where relevant – the contextual analysis can already identify patterns of inclusion or exclusion. Indeed, defining the vulnerable groups based on the situation analysis is critical to identifying gaps and setting priorities accordingly.

Disaggregation can also be used to evaluate losses and gains in the short, medium and long term.⁵²⁰



Several basic questions guide the collection and use of disaggregated data:

- **Who are the most deprived - and how are their lives affected by policies?** In line with the Agenda 2030 pledge of Leaving No One Behind⁵²¹, disaggregation should strive to identify these social groups so as to be able to track change over time.
- **What disparities exist between groups?** This helps pinpoint current or historical discriminations, including their intersections, and shows whether current policies are reducing or exacerbating gaps.
- **How have past policies impacted specific sectors of society?** Answering this question requires access to (or production of) data and statistics that are frequently updated to provide responses for the short, medium and possibly long term. The lack of such data is a common challenge that needs to be addressed prior to launching the policy design.
- **What data gaps currently exist in the country and what is needed to address them?** The answers may reveal challenges that should be picked up in the policy itself, such as gaps in capacities of statistical authorities, underfunding or lack of research on youth, or a need for better national youth surveys.

The collecting of **qualitative information** refers to techniques for gathering non-statistical data using in-depth interviews, opinion polls, perception studies, focus groups or participant observation. Youth-led research – participatory qualitative assessments – can be a way to better understand young people’s perspectives on development within their own reality.

Stakeholders' analysis

A stakeholders' analysis helps identify both those who influence and those who can be affected by the changes to which the youth policy is aspiring.

Youth-related stakeholders are persons or organizations with vested interest in engaging in policies affecting young people. They may be divided into two groups: primary stakeholders, who have the authority to enact or approve policy change^{G2}, and secondary stakeholders, namely individuals and groups that can influence decision-makers, both directly and indirectly^{G3}. In a given setting, these can take on the role of beneficiaries (direct or indirect), agents and/or partners, depending on the configuration of power and the approaches adopted. It is therefore important to understand the roles and responsibilities of primary and secondary stakeholders in the particular context and, accordingly, to determine when and how they might best be engaged in the process.

Youth-related stakeholders (whether primary or secondary) might include: youth-led and youth-focused organizations; international donors; national, regional and local political leaders; public officials; economic actors; labour unions and associations; religious leaders; academic scholars; for-profit, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, cultural and other civil society actors; and representatives of socially excluded or marginalized groups and persons.

Typical questions the stakeholders' analysis might consider include:

- What are the key stakeholder groups for youth development in the country?
- What is the power balance between them? Which groups are empowered or disempowered?
- What is their knowledge of youth development issues and policy processes?
- What are their specific levels of interest and positions (support, oppose or neutral) vis-à-vis youth development or specific areas therein?
- What kind of influence do the different stakeholders have? Are they part of alliances or organizations that collaborate to support or oppose youth development or specific areas therein?



- What resources (human, financial, technological, political or other) are available to the different stakeholders and what is their ability to mobilize them?
- Are there any institutional or systemic gaps, and are there any institutional changes or changes in the bureaucratic culture that need to occur to be able to implement the policy?

Beyond a desk review and mapping exercise, the stakeholders' analysis should also include consultation with the different stakeholders, including, for example, through individual or group interviews, surveys, etc.

To ensure reliability of the information collected and to elicit responses without personal biases, two to four experienced interviewers should ideally conduct the consultations and remain available for the analysis that follows. In designing questionnaires, interviews or surveys that may involve sensitive topics (disempowered groups, institutional or systemic gaps), attention should also be paid to respondents' well-being, in addition to the quality of data.^{G4}

In this Toolbox, **Tools II (Modules 1, 2.B, 2.E)**, **III (Modules 2.B, 2.C, 4, 5.A)** and **IV (Module 2.B)** include helpful exercises and ideas for conducting different parts of the contextual analysis.



B.③ Identifying key policy areas and conducting the policy analysis

Informed by the contextual analysis, the TWG will identify the main policy areas that could feature in the policy. These could include both specific thematic areas such as education, culture or employment and transversal areas such as issues of inclusion and gender equality. The TWG should also agree on any other elements relating to the structure and content of the policy document: objectives, coordination, review, monitoring and evaluation. Once identified, all the above should be validated by the Steering Committee prior to moving to the policy analysis.

Policy analysis is defined here as a means of synthesizing information and research in order to assess current policy-making and produce policy options within identified thematic or transversal policy areas.

It involves closely scrutinizing the causes, consequences and performance of public policies and programmes, and developing models to predict future developments and prospects for change, based on the results and findings of the contextual and stakeholders' analysis. Throughout this process, it is also important to explore the experiences of other countries or localities grappling with similar issues under similar circumstances.

Gender analysis should be an integral component of the policy analysis process. Please refer to section A.2 for more details.



Basic components of the policy analysis

Identify the specific policy issues within each selected area that need strengthening or reorienting:

- What are the provisions in existing policies that move the government toward its stated objectives? How?
- What are the provisions in existing policies that that move the government away from its stated objectives? How?

Set objectives for the policy going forward:

- What are the desired goals and objectives for change?
- Do the goals address the roots of the problem, or only its symptoms?
- How will change be measured?
- How will new goals and objectives contribute to youth development, inclusion, participation?

Determine the types of performance indicators available to measure change:

- What evidence is currently available to inform analysis and planning?⁶⁵
- What information is critical to support decision-making?
- Are the indicators Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART)?
- On what basis is each indicator measured in terms of quality, quantity and time frame?

Identify, analyse and develop SMART options and provisions:

- Which options or provisions are most likely to address the identified problem effectively and best contribute to achieving the desired objectives and outcomes?
- How does each option or provision meet human rights standards?
- How will each option or provision affect the population groups or subgroups?
- What resources will be needed to implement each of the options or provisions?
- What are the risks associated with the options and provisions being considered and how might such risks be managed?
- Which are the preferred options and provisions, and why? What trade-offs do they involve?
- How could the preferred options and provisions be monitored and evaluated, if implemented, and how might monitoring, reporting and evaluation be funded?
- What would be a realistic time frame to implement these options or provisions?



Who contributes to the policy analysis and how?

The policy analysis should consider both expert contributions from the stakeholders involved in the policy design process, and also feedback from young people on the specific policy issues being addressed. This ensures that the results of the policy analysis are relevant, pertinent and pragmatic. Ideally, **two parallel and mutually informing exercises** should be ensured:

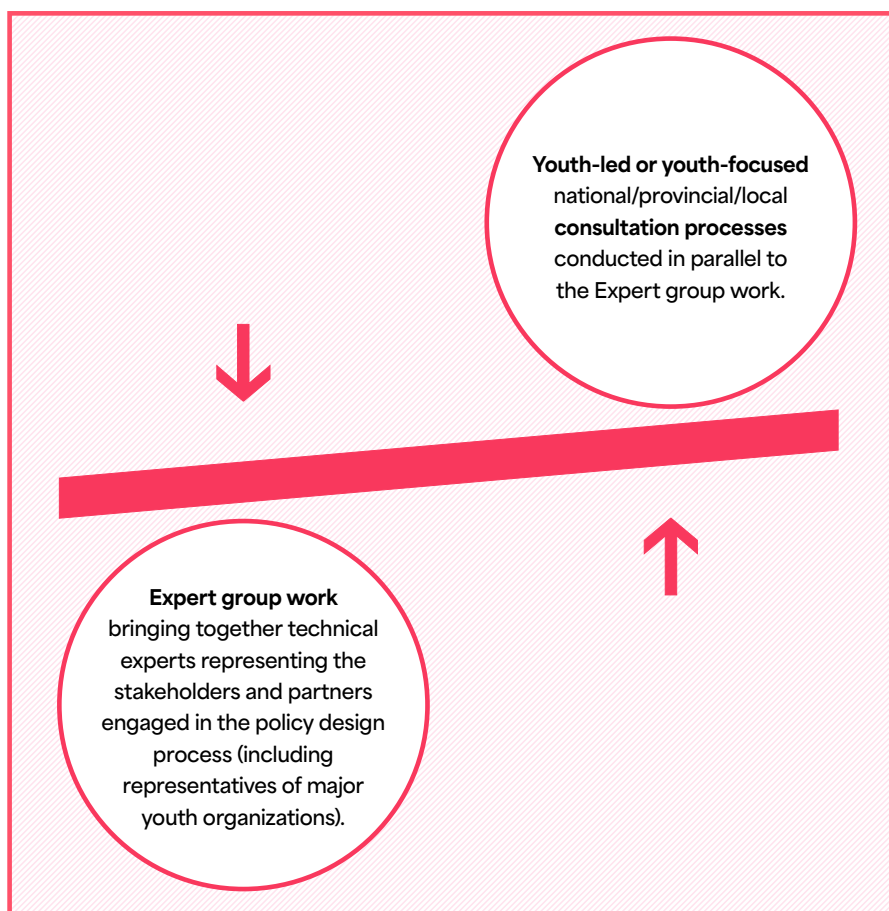


Figure 4. Key policy analysis processes



Depending on resources available, workshops, retreats, round tables, brainstorming, meetings, websites, e-discussion groups, among others, can be organized to allow consultations with various groups on aspects of the policy analysis. These should be conducted in an open and consultative manner.

Expert group work (guided and coordinated by the TWG):

The Expert group work could be organized around the following subgroups, individually or combined, depending on the context of the policy design process:

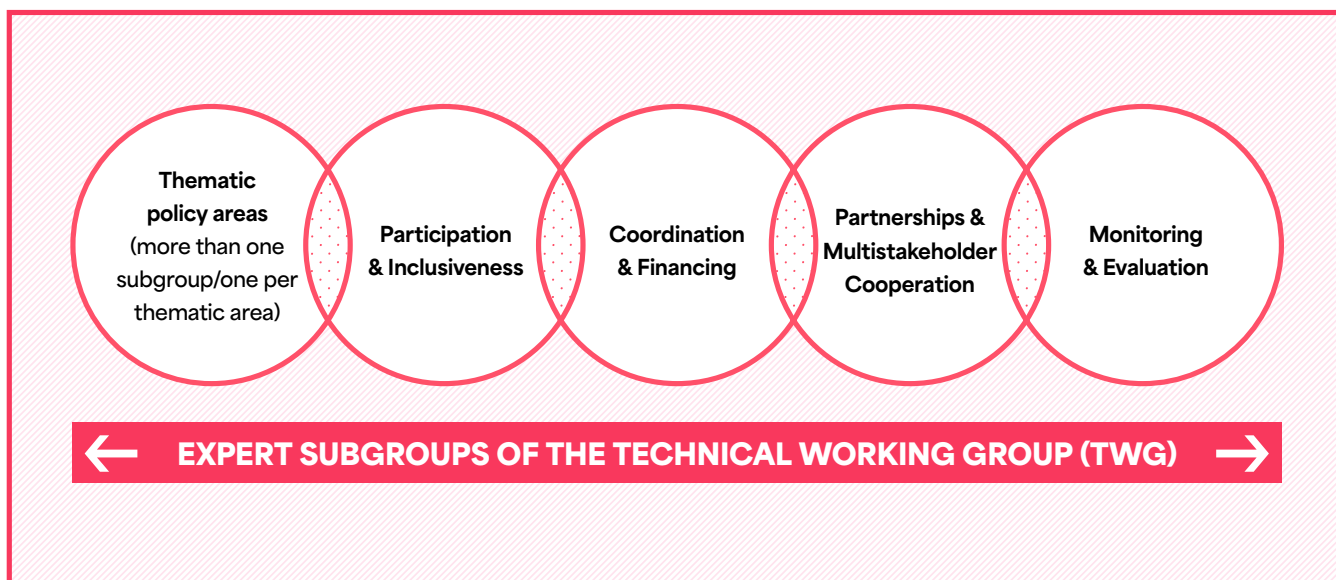


Figure 5. Expert subgroups of the Technical Working Group

Each of the subgroups addressing the **thematic policy areas** needs to examine the particular substantive area identified previously by the TWG, such as education, employment, gender equality, communication or health.

The subgroup on **Participation and Inclusiveness** assesses the levels of participation and inclusiveness of youth and proposes options or provisions that would:

- Ensure the inclusiveness of the policy;
- Address gaps and foster opportunities for inclusiveness and participation within each of the policy areas (in close collaboration with the thematic subgroups); and
- Promote or strengthen inclusive participation structures that enable youth to contribute to the design, implementation, review and evaluation of both the policy and of national and local programmes emanating from it.

The subgroup on **Coordination and Financing** examines and proposes options/provisions on:

- Interministerial collaboration for the policy
- Collaboration between national and local authorities
- Funding mechanisms
- Budget priorities for the different areas to be foreseen in the policy

It also contributes to preparing the budgeted plan/roadmap for the policy implementation. In line with the principles of participatory youth budgeting⁶⁶, it would be important to ensure that youth experts and/or representatives of youth organizations are included in this group and/or that this group organizes participatory youth budgeting exercises to engage them in co-defining budget ceilings and priorities.

The subgroup on **Partnerships and Multistakeholder collaboration** examines and proposes options/provisions on:

- How to strengthen and mobilize partnerships for the implementation of the policy;
- How to maintain multistakeholder collaboration throughout by identifying which mechanisms or practices are useful, which consultations by specific groups in dialogue with the ministries are appropriate, etc.

The subgroup on **Monitoring and Evaluation** proposes options and provisions on timeframes and processes for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the policy, including which stakeholders should be involved and what ways should be engaged to collect and analyse multidisciplinary, multi-sourced and disaggregated data. It also contributes to preparing the budgeted plan and roadmap for the implementation of the policy, namely the part on Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation.

IMPORTANT!

Composition and coordination

The TWG needs to agree and decide on the membership and composition for each of these subgroups, corresponding to the policy area the subgroup covers. For example, in the thematic subgroups it would be helpful to have technical staff from both the Ministry of Youth and the ministries responsible for the particular thematic area. In the subgroup for Coordination and Financing, it would be useful to also have technical staff from other ministries concerned by the policy development process. In addition, representatives of the National Youth Council or similar youth organizations should be present in the different subgroups. This is key in building consensus around, and ownership of, the policy development process.

Subgroups should also be multilevel and include different institutional profiles within the organizations that will later implement the policy (e.g. policy experts, line managers, administrators, legal experts, human resource). This mix is vital to ensure good implementation of the policy, once adopted. In the same vein, it is also important to ensure a diversity of stakeholders within and across the subgroups.

While working in parallel, subgroups should also be able to communicate among them and exchange knowledge and information, as relevant. The TWG should put in place a mechanism to ensure such interaction.



Youth-led or youth-focused consultations at local and national level (in parallel to the Expert group work):

In collaboration with youth groups, associations, councils at every level, the TWG would need to organize consultations throughout the country to identify key recommendations to feed into the policy process. Youth workers can play an important role in this stage, as multipliers, developers and supporters of the consultations, especially at local level. Once assembled, the recommendations would be submitted to the TWG for consideration for inclusion in the draft policy document.

Youth consultations can take different forms: from surveys to focus groups; from youth audits to dialogue workshops; from individual interviews to collective open-space exchanges. **Tool IV** outlines the key principles for meaningful youth engagement and provides practical exercises to help identify and reflect on the best ways to meaningfully engage youth in general and at this important stage.⁶¹⁷

GOOD TO KNOW

Although optional, there are advantages to having the TWG prepare a 'policy analysis document' that presents an overview of the situation, the main methods and results of the policy analysis, as well as a section with costed policy options. Ideally, this should be peer-reviewed by three peer reviewers who have not been involved in the policy process and who are equivalent in competence and expertise to members of the TWG. If possible, at least one should come from outside the country and should represent gender diversity. Once peer-reviewed, the policy analysis document would provide the analytical reference for the text of the policy.

B.4 Preparing the policy document and accompanying action plan

The purpose of this stage is to consolidate the work of the expert subgroups, informed by the results of the youth consultations and other surveys, into a draft policy.

The draft text of the policy should be accompanied by a fully budgeted action plan. Youth policies express the overall goals and visions for youth development, along with the political commitment to institutionalize appropriate services and processes. Youth action plans, on the other hand, are particularly useful for implementing the policy at local levels. They can be outcome- or activity-based, or a combination thereof. Whichever way, they are decisive planning tools helping to adapt national or international requirements to the situation and needs of the respective community.

While the policies are usually formulated at national level, youth action plans may incorporate inputs from the local, regional, national or supranational contexts.

They may present specific outputs or actions and measures, identify responsible and contributing actors, outline related costs and timelines while suggesting desired outcomes. They may include provisions on how to engage youth throughout the whole process (from implementation to monitoring, reporting, evaluation and revision) and how to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalized youth. They also incorporate provisions for communication and advocacy on youth, as well as a monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework.⁶¹⁸ In this Toolbox, **Tool II, Module 3.C** offers guidance on how to construct an action plan.

The draft policy and action plan could be developed by the Drafting Group (see section A.3) or, in its absence, by a national consultant. In this Toolbox, **Tool II, Module 2** provides exercises and guidance on what the content and the structure of a youth policy might look like.

Even if consensus was achieved during the preparatory process, it will still be necessary to continue consensus-building around the emerging policy.

The draft policy document and draft action plan need to be circulated for comments to all relevant stakeholders, including line ministries and youth organizations. Once they have provided comments, the drafts should be revised and feedback provided to the stakeholders on how their comments have been addressed or not. Then, the revised policy document and action plan should be submitted for discussion at validation meetings bringing together all concerned stakeholders at whatever level, including youth organizations. These would proceed to examine the results of the policy design process, work to get consensus on the policy text and action plan and agree on next steps.

Such validation meetings should include the participation of higher levels of government to ensure that the consensus will be implemented and that the policy provisions will be integrated within national sectoral and multisectoral plans. In this way, youth development can be mainstreamed into national development. The media can also play an important role in creating momentum and space for debate leading up to a national consensus on the policy.

Consensus-building culminates with the endorsement of the policy at the highest level. Depending on the context, the youth policy may be inscribed into law - which would increase its strength and sustainability beyond political shifts. The responsible authority needs to sign the document and to allocate a budget. Once the policy is adopted, the government has the responsibility to disseminate information on its content. Civil society groups may also play an important role in sharing information and popularizing it, particularly among marginalized youth.

GOOD TO KNOW

In preparing the policy document and the action plan, it is important to ensure that:

- They integrate the provisions agreed upon during the policy analysis;
- The action plan is focused, costed and budgeted, primarily through the government budgeting system but also supported with donor funding.



In focus ③

The role of the UN

Policy development is the responsibility of the government or public authorities.

The UN can support the process by:

- Promoting discussion and providing evidence, data, knowledge around the issues relating to a youth policy in the pre-formulation stages;
- Facilitating multistakeholder work in the context of the policy process;
- Providing technical input, knowledge and guidance at all stages;
- Ensuring that the standards of meaningful youth engagement are maintained, through technical support, training and financing;
- Promoting partnerships and alliance-building with strategic groups, such as civil society and non-governmental organizations, think-tanks and other stakeholders;
- Advocating for, sharing information on and popularizing the final policy and action plan.



© From policy to action

This section presents the actions to undertake once the youth policy document is validated by the appropriate authority. These transition steps are critical in maintaining the ownership basis and commitment of all stakeholders that would ultimately contribute to effective implementation. These steps are also important in ensuring that the policy will have cross-sectoral foundations and, as such, could survive and sustain itself beyond intervening political changes.

This work would be coordinated by the Follow-up Group (see section A.③) and would, again, engage all stakeholders involved in or affected by implementation of the policy.

©.① Development of sectoral and multisectoral strategies

This is the stage at which the overall vision gets translated into specific sectoral strategies and included within national development plans. If all stakeholders have been fully involved in the policy process, this exercise should be straightforward: discussions would already have taken place during the design, consensus-building and endorsement stages. What is critical here is as the sectors and line ministries take over, is to prevent participation fade-out, particularly on the part of those youth who played a key part in the process. Thus, there should be a renewed effort to expand youth engagement mechanisms across all sectors and ensure that young people are able to engage meaningfully in the discussions and decisions on operationalization. **Tool IV** provides practical exercises to help identify ways to do so.

©.② Development of implementation mechanisms

Clear mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that the policy is translated into practice. While this may have been covered in the formulation phase, additional capacity development may be required to enable ministries or structures responsible for youth to play their coordinating and facilitating roles, as well as for the further engagement of youth representation bodies or platforms. In all cases, the national coordinating body for the implementation of the policy would need to bring together and consult with all concerned line ministries, while working closely with the ministries of planning and of finance, as well as national statistical organizations. Depending on context and capacity, co-management and co-decision processes are highly recommended in order to meaningfully engage young people in the implementation of the policy.

It is also important that ownership of the policy be firmly anchored in the implementing ministries, and sufficient capacity must be ensured to this end. Also, each ministry should be prepared to share costed plans on how they will support implementation and how these plans align with and feed back into the policy and action plan. Finally, it is critical to maintain the broad-based participation built during the formulation phase, by establishing mechanisms that ensure the participation of concerned stakeholders, including youth, at all levels.





©.③ Resource mobilization

While a significant amount of resources may have been allocated to the formulation process, it should be anticipated that implementation of the policy will require far greater resources. If proper advocacy efforts were made during the formulation and consensus-building processes, this will facilitate a mobilization of resources for its implementation. Primary financing should come from the national budget itself, to ensure streamlining and sustainability. Some kind of legislative provisions earmarking a percentage of the national budget for youth development, or other mandatory appropriation or discretionary fund for youth, could also be foreseen.

Often, it is more efficient to identify clear budget lines for youth programmes in the different sectors and line ministries than to allocate an overall youth budget to the ministry or structure responsible for youth. The latter should, however, receive funds to fulfil its coordinating role and continue working with youth to monitor implementation. Targeted budget envelopes and funding mechanisms must also be put in place for youth civil society organizations and other constituencies of young people.

Public financing should then be backed up by private sector investment and donor support. An interesting option would be to enable participatory youth budgeting⁶¹⁹ which would also act as an additional accountability mechanism.

©.5 Communication - Inform, sensitize, mobilize

Communicating on and disseminating the policy once adopted and launched is central to informing the citizens, particularly young people themselves. Such information should cover policy content - the rights and responsibilities it conveys, how to benefit from it - and support its implementation, or explain how to access capacity development opportunities to do so. Investing in a digital interface of the policy and leveraging the power of digital tools could significantly contribute to informing everyone of its content, engaging with audiences, tracking implementation and sharing practices.

It is always helpful to identify jointly a common core messaging that is inclusive and can be relayed through the different stakeholders involved in the design process, in particular youth organizations and youth workers. While the primary target of communication campaigns and actions would be the young people themselves, such efforts must also seek to sensitize and educate other groups in society about the perception of youth conveyed through the policy, including parents, teachers, media outlets and the general public.

Communication actions could include educational campaigns on social media; the distribution of practical materials; rollout of training sessions; and media coverage comprising articles, interviews, opinion pieces and press releases. In addition, it could prove helpful to mobilize high-profile champions for the implementation of the policy or specific projects by sharing examples of tangible implementation actions that inspire; by organizing public debates or town-hall meetings, whether online or onsite, as well as targeted sensitization and awareness-raising activities with marginalized groups lacking access to mainstream information channels.⁷⁰ Grassroots youth organizations and associations, as well as youth workers, can also play a pivotal role in popularizing and raising awareness of the youth policy at local level, particularly among the most marginalized and vulnerable youth groups.

Finally, building bridges between formal and non-formal education to introduce the policy in schools would allow sensitizing youth early on about the value of a youth policy and how it can have a positive impact on their lives.

©.4 Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The monitoring, reporting and evaluation system should already be incorporated into the action plan for all stages of policy implementation, as well as into the sectoral strategies, based on clear outcomes, outputs and performance indicators. These should be linked with overall monitoring, reporting and evaluation indicators of national development strategies, as appropriate. While the government may decide to lead the monitoring process, this should also be backed by clear methodologies to allow civil society and youth groups to contribute and hold the government accountable.



Endnotes

TOOL I

- 47 Prior to applying the Guide in a specific context, appropriate contextualization and adaptation are needed, so that the process can address and respond to the specific situation, needs and issues
- 48 Adjusted from the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies, outcome document of the 1st Global Forum on Youth Policies. <https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/baku-commitment-to-youth-policies/>. To assess to what extent an existing policy fulfils some of these key principles, the European Youth Forum proposes the online tool '8 standards for a quality youth policy' at <http://tools.youthforum.org/8-standards/>
- 49 Rights-holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty-bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights-holders under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular contexts, there are often specific social groups whose human rights are not fully realized, respected or protected. UNICEF. 2017. Glossary of Terms and Concepts. <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1761/file/Genderglossarytermsandconcepts.pdf>
- 50 Updated from UNESCO, 2004, Empowering Youth Through National Policies - UNESCO's contribution. This document also informed the contents of the [2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policies](#), and the 2019 [Lisboa+21 Ministerial Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes](#)
- 51 For definitions of each of these, see IOM. 2022. SOGIESC: Full Glossary of Terms. <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/documents/IOM-SOGIESC-Glossary-of-Terms.pdf>
- 52 To help carry out a gender analysis and integrate a gender perspective into different areas, including policies, see <https://www.unesco.org/en/gender-equality/tools>, as well as <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis>
- 53 UN OHCHR. 2018a. Guidelines for States on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/GuidelinesRightParticipatePublicAffairs_web.pdf
- 54 Adapted from *Ibid*
- 55 *Ibid*
- 56 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH. 2008. Get Youth on Board - Youth Policies and Action Plans
- 57 For example, depending on context and resource availability, the Follow-up Group may be constituted from the beginning of the process and work separately from (yet in conjunction with) the Technical Working Group, or it can emerge once the policy design is completed to ensure the transition from design to operationalization of the policy

- 58 Duty-bearers are entities or individuals having a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. It is commonly used to refer to state actors, but non-state actors can also be considered duty-bearers. See <https://www.unesco.org/en/international-programme-development-communication/duty-bearers>
- 59 For more information on how to apply an HRBA approach to data, see UN OHCHR. 2018b. A Human Rights-Based Approach to Data. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>
- 60 For example, some groups may lose in the short run, but win from a medium or longer perspective
- 61 <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>
- 62 These could include a head of state or government, ministers and ministry officials, members of parliament, municipal authorities, donors, the private sector and others
- 63 They could comprise the media, the general public, marginalized communities, community groups, academia and research partners, trade unions, prominent figures in the arts and entertainment, opposition factions, speech writers, UN agencies, donors, the private sector and others
- 64 If it is expected that the interview might trigger stress, anxiety or negative thoughts or feelings, measures such as access to a well-being service or a follow-up email must be in place
- 65 Key questions to ask here: Who holds these data and how can they be accessed? Do the available data present any quality or relevance issues? What are the limitations to the data available? How have the statistics been compiled?
- 66 For more information and examples on participatory youth budgeting: <https://www.demsoc.org/blog/youth-led-participatory-budgeting> or <https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/youth-pb/>
- 67 In addition, for examples of methods for youth-led or youth-inclusive consultations that can be adapted and applied in different contexts, see Students Partnership Worldwide, DFID-CSO Youth Working Group. 2010. Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers. <https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/youth-participation-in-development-a-guide-for-development-agencies-and-policy-makers/>
- 68 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH. 2008. *Op. cit.*
- 69 For more information and examples on participatory youth budgeting: <https://www.demsoc.org/blog/youth-led-participatory-budgeting> or <https://sharedfuturecic.org.uk/youth-pb/>
- 70 Inspired by UNESCO. 2021a. How to influence the development of quality physical education policy: a policy advocacy toolkit for youth. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375423>





Development Holistic Youth

**Tool to support
multistakeholder
dialogue in the
context of holistic
youth development
policy design**



Why this tool

Recognizing that young people are whole individuals and members of their societies, holistic youth development focuses on their physical, social, educational, emotional, spiritual, ethical and psychological development and well-being.

Stakeholder groups with an interest in holistic youth development include young people, policy-makers, civil society, and community and development actors. These different groups do not always have a clear or shared understanding of what constitutes holistic youth development, and this tool should help.

The tool is designed to strengthen skills and facilitate dialogue and co-creation between different stakeholders involved in policy development at national or local level. Such policies include transversal and intersectoral public youth policies as well as sector-specific public policies in fields that affect youth. The tool allows different stakeholder groups to reflect collectively and generate knowledge useful to framing policy and then implementing it. With a shared understanding, efforts to enable young people's engagement in policy-making while also applying a holistic approach should lead to more successful youth policy outcomes.





HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

In each of the modules you will find:

- **Reflection questions:** These can be used as discussion points and as a framework for dialogue.
- **Knowledge content:** Each module includes information on the topic that can be shared by the facilitator to inform discussions between participants.
- **Activity ideas:** While these are mostly designed to be on-site, they can also be adjusted for on-line use. They feature ideas for interactive activities and exchanges.
- **Tool sheets:** For the majority of the activities, there is an accompanying tool sheet. Each can be printed as a handout for participants during the corresponding activity. They can also be replicated on a flipchart or an online interactive board. The tool sheets can be used by both participants and facilitator to capture the key insights generated through the activity discussions and to record them.



The learning journey

This tool has three modules, including the first module on Who is ‘youth’. Each module has been designed to take users on a learning journey, starting with gaining awareness and knowledge and progressing to design and application:

Module ①: Who is ‘youth’? (see [Module 1](#))

To understand who youth is from a holistic perspective requires exploring the different characteristics of youth and how they intersect; how they inform the experience and role of being a young person in society; and how they affect the status, rights and responsibilities that are attributed to different subgroups of youth. This module seeks to create a shared understanding of these complexities along with the transitions youth experience when living and growing in a specific context. This shared insight can be used to identify and target specific subgroups of youth within a policy integrating holistic youth development.

Module ②: A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - policy content

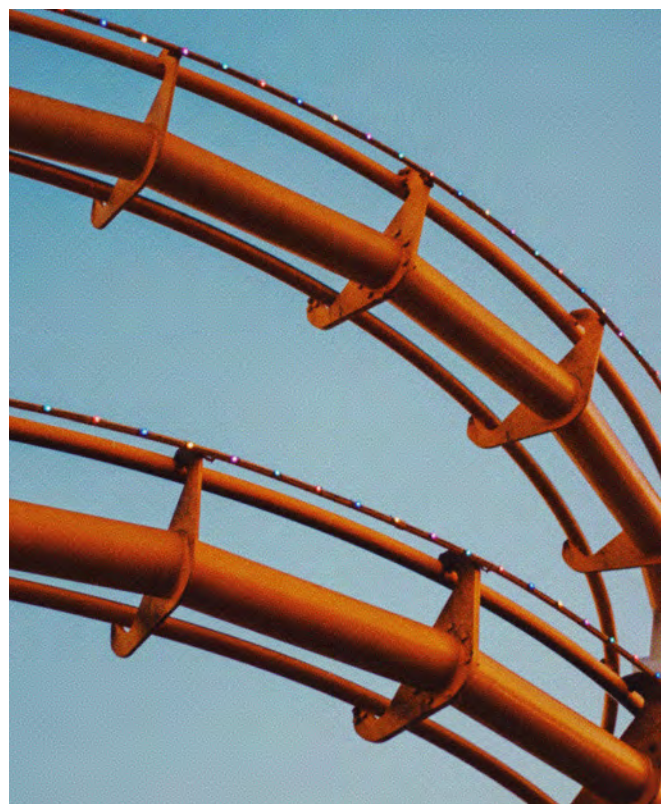
A policy based on holistic youth development should include a vision for youth along with clear actions for achieving it. It should outline the rights and responsibilities that the policy commits to upholding, identify relevant intersectoral policies and initiatives targeting specific youth groups, and ensure that all sectoral policy areas that may contribute to the delivery of their vision and objectives are considered. Finally, it should seek to clarify the roles and responsibilities pertaining to different stakeholder groups as they progress from policy formulation towards policy implementation applying a holistic youth development approach.

GETTING STARTED

What is holistic youth development?

The concept of 'holistic' recognizes that the parts of something are interconnected and are only fully comprehensible when seen as a whole. Holistic youth development therefore recognizes young people as whole individuals and members of society, with rights and privileges like any other. It considers the totality of their physical, social, educational, emotional, spiritual, ethical and psychological development.

Approaching youth policy development from a holistic perspective means recognizing the multifaceted nature of youth, the factors that influence the experience of being young and the prospects of youth, as well as the roles youth transition through as they evolve from childhood into adulthood.



Module ③: A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - policy formation and implementation

Within policy design, it is important first to consider which elements of the design process can contribute to enabling holistic youth development. This module provides a checklist to help identify and assess these essential elements. Fostering dialogue on the role of multistakeholder cooperation and the necessity of meaningful youth engagement are further steps in the policy design process. Others include reflection on financial planning and the capacity development needs of those involved in the design and implementation of a youth policy.

A checklist can be found at the end of this tool that summarizes the best ideas and approaches to develop a policy that enables holistic youth development.

Assumptions behind Holistic Youth Development

All young people and adults have inherent value no matter how they are identified by others.

There is value to allowing the whole person to emerge through all activities affecting youth.

Youth development approaches that are integrated, not fragmented, can benefit all people.

Youth development is a fluid, dynamic process that should never stagnate or be standardized.

All people have multiple facets and are part of a broader ecology.

Policies/Initiatives/Programmes can focus on different aspects of young people but they must also think holistically.

Source: Fletcher, 2014

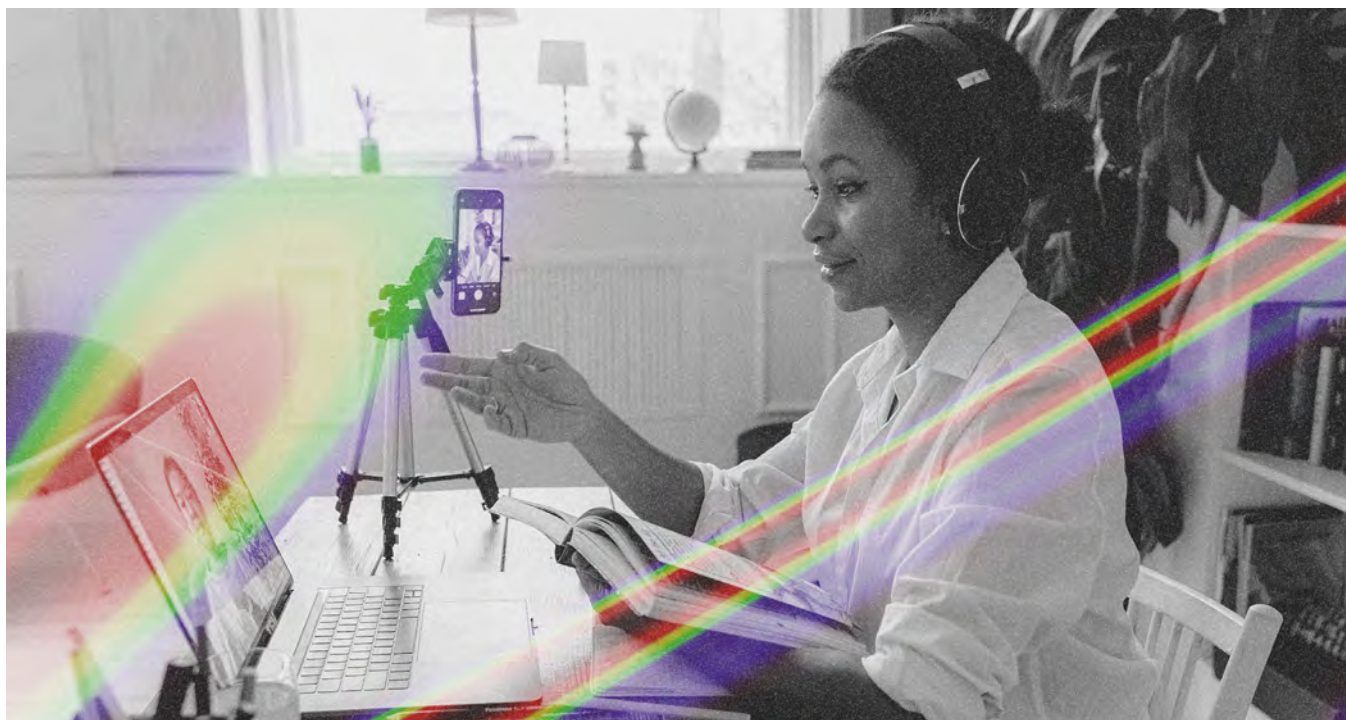


Module summary

The complete training runs 15 hours and can be delivered during a 2.5-day programme.

Although the tool is designed to be delivered in its entirety, it is also possible for each of the modules and the corresponding activities to be used independently. Essential activities that can be used to reduce the training to a 1-day programme are identified in the tool with *. This allows flexibility for the tool to be adapted to different settings and to select the relevant modules and corresponding activities based on:

- Where the tool is being used and for what purpose;
- Who is participating; and
- How much time is available for the session.



Module 1: Who is 'youth'? [\(see Module 1\)](#)

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 4 HOURS

Module 1.A * Remember/describe your youth 30 minutes	Module 1.B * The characteristics wheel 30 minutes	Module 1.C * Youth transitions 45 minutes	Module 1.D Intergenerational relationships 60 minutes	Module 1.E Intragenerational relationships 60 minutes
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Module 2: A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - policy content

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 7 HOURS

Module 2.A * Visioning a future backwards 120 minutes	Module 2.B * Rights and responsibilities 60 minutes	Module 2.C Intersectoral approach to holistic youth development 120 minutes	Module 2.D * Interventions for specific youth groups 60 minutes	Module 2.E Stakeholder motivations 60 minutes
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Module 3: A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - policy formulation and implementation

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 4 HOURS

Module 3.A Multistakeholder cooperation 60 minutes	Module 3.B Youth engagement plan 45 minutes	Module 3.C * Essential planning 45 minutes	Module 3.D Capacity development 45 minutes	Module 3.E Checklist 45 minutes
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Module 2



A holistic youth development approach to youth policy – policy content

Overview

A youth policy based on a holistic perspective should include a vision for youth, together with clear strategies and actions for achieving it. It should outline the rights and responsibilities that it commits to upholding, and describe which interventions apply to specific youth groups. It should also ensure all relevant sectoral policy areas are considered, and clarify the roles and responsibilities that different stakeholder groups have in the youth policy's formulation and implementation.

This module seeks to encourage a dialogue on each of these essential components and how they apply to ensuring a holistic youth development approach to a youth policy.

SUGGESTED TIME 7 HOURS

Module 2.A * Visioning a future backwards 120 minutes	Module 2.B * Rights and responsibilities 60 minutes	Module 2.C Intersectoral approach to holistic youth development 120 minutes	Module 2.D * Interventions for specific youth groups 60 minutes	Module 2.E Stakeholder motivations 60 minutes
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Vision

What is the vision for youth? What are the actions that will bring the vision to life?

Establishing a vision for youth should be developed with the young people themselves and be informed by what has already been learned from the previous exploration and analysis of youth's situation in the given context ([Module 1](#)).

Tool sheet



STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

Reflection questions

What is the vision for youth?

What are the strategies or actions that will bring the vision to life?

What rights and responsibilities are attributed to youth?

What policy areas concern or contribute to holistic youth development?

What interventions or provisions will be made for specific groups of youth?

Who are the actors concerned and what is their role in the development and implementation of the policy?

2.4 ACTIVITY IDEA: VISIONING A FUTURE BACKWARD *

Purpose

This activity can contribute to co-designing a common vision for youth and identify the key actions that can support the successful realization of the vision.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- On individual cards, ask groups to record:
 - » The current position/situation of youth in their country/ city/community
 - » The long-term vision for youth
 - » The actions needed to move youth from the current situation to the vision for youth.
- Ask each group to present their response using key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What are the challenges that youth face in your country/ city/community?
- What are the situations affecting youth that need to be changed or improved?
- Who sets the vision for youth?
- How is this currently being done? Is it sufficient? How could it be done better?
- How can the developed vision and objectives in this activity inform a youth policy vision and objectives?

SUGGESTED TIME

120 minutes

90 min group activity
30 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Cards



2.B

Rights and responsibilities

What rights and responsibilities are attributed to youth?

Human rights are indivisible and interdependent: progress in one area or set of rights can enable others, whereas restrictions or violations of certain rights have a negative knock-on effect on the enjoyment of others. Therefore, all youth-focused policies constructed from a holistic perspective recognize and articulate the fundamental rights of youth and the responsibilities conferred upon them. These rights may be informed by both international and national frameworks. The table below provides a non-exhaustive list of such frameworks that may be relevant to youth in your context (see the [Compendium in Annex 1](#) for a more complete list of international and regional frameworks).

Tool sheet	
2.B	
International frameworks	National frameworks
<p>Ep The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</p>	<p>Ep Existing national youth policy</p>
<p>• Who sets the rights and responsibilities for youth in your specific context?</p>	<p>• To what extent are young people able to exercise their rights? In which areas do young people face barriers accessing their rights?</p>
<p>• How is this currently being done? How could it be done more effectively?</p>	<p>• What changes are necessary in order for young people to access or exercise their rights?</p>



INTERNATIONAL**NATIONAL****Global Scope**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

International Labour Organization (ILO) resolutions concerning youthⁱⁱⁱ

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

The United Nations Convention Against Torture

The national constitution

The national codes and laws (such as the labour code)

Regional Scope

African Youth Charter

Ibero-American Convention on Rights of Youth

European Convention on Human Rights

Inter-American Convention on Human Rights

And others

Table 2. Key frameworks relevant to youth



2.ⓑ ACTIVITY IDEA: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the rights and responsibilities that are or could be (if not yet) conferred upon youth within a specific context, based on national and international frameworks.

NB: In preparation, participants could be encouraged to read the national framework (law, policy, strategy) and the international or regional framework(s) that are most relevant for their context. The facilitator could identify those documents and share them with the participants prior to the session.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to discuss their understanding of the rights and responsibilities conferred upon youth within:
 - » A national framework
 - » An international framework (whether global or regional).
- How do these match, or differ from, the 'Vision' that participants created in Module 2.Ⓐ? Anything missing?
- Ask groups to present their response using key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What are the rights and responsibilities recognized for youth at national level?
- What are the rights and responsibilities that are not recognized at national level, but are foreseen in international frameworks with which your country engages?
- Who sets the rights and responsibilities for youth in your specific context? How is this currently being done? How could it be done more effectively?
- To what extent are young people able to exercise their rights?
- In which areas do young people face barriers accessing their rights? What changes are necessary in order for young people to access or exercise their rights?
- Which rights are violated for youth and in what ways?
- Are there any systems or mechanisms in place to monitor the extent to which youth enjoy their rights? What mechanisms are available to youth in cases where their rights are violated? Are they aware of these? Are the mechanisms youth-friendly and accessible?
- Are youth aware of, capacitated and/or empowered to use mechanisms or tools that exist to promote and protect their rights? How is this currently being done? How could it be done more effectively?
- Why is it important to recognize the rights and responsibilities of youth in a youth policy?
- What additional research needs to be done to develop knowledge of the rights and responsibilities attributed to youth in existing international and national frameworks? How can this inform the rights and responsibilities outlined in a youth policy?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

45 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





Intersectoral approach to holistic youth development

What policy areas contribute to holistic youth development?

Tool sheet



Action	Intersectoral policy areas
①	
②	
③	

Youth-relevant policies may be:

- Public youth policies, at all levels from local to national, that are transversal/intersectoral;
- Public policies in fields that affect youth, such as education, employment, health, culture or sport. Ideally, the youth-specific provisions of such policies will be integrated into the transversal public youth policy (where it exists).

Public youth policies that are transversal enable holistic youth development when they incorporate all sectoral policy areas that may contribute to the delivery of their vision and objectives. These policy areas will vary based on the context and purpose of the policy, but may include:

- Education and training
- Employment and entrepreneurship
- Health, lifestyle and demographics
- Civic participation and engagement
- Political participation
- Environment
- Rights
- Gender equality
- Cultural participation and the arts
- Recreation, sports and leisure
- Science and technology
- Communication, media and information
- Other, as relevant for the particular context.

2.© ACTIVITY IDEA: INTERSECTORAL APPROACH TO HOLISTIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify the sectoral policy areas that contribute to holistic youth development with the aim of incorporating them within a comprehensive intersectoral youth policy framework.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Review the actions identified in activity 2.A.
- Ask groups to identify the sectoral policy areas relevant for each action that would be concerned by or contribute to the actions.
- Ask each group to present their response using key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- Why are the identified policy areas relevant to achieving the objective?
- What does this tell us about the involvement and collaboration of different sectors in the successful implementation of a policy?
- How can this activity inform the youth policy design process?

SUGGESTED TIME

120 minutes

90 min group activity
30 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



2.②

Interventions for specific youth groups

What interventions or provisions will be made for specific groups of youth? And which are those groups?

Developing a transversal youth policy that enables holistic youth development means providing a framework, inclusive of all youth without discrimination, that addresses youth in all their diversity and ensures that no one is left behind. As such, it involves identifying, at the outset, groups of youth with additional or specific needs, or youth in situations of exclusion and vulnerability, and working with them to understand their needs so as to design specific interventions and provisions for addressing them. This works to ensure that the policy supports all youth regardless of social, cultural and economic background and circumstance.

Tool sheet



<p>What is your vision for youth? (Activity ②.②)</p> <p>Ex Youth have access to meaningful employment.</p>	
<p>Opportunity and environment statement</p> <p>Ex Youth have access to employment information services.</p>	
①	④
②	⑤
③	⑥
<p>Select a subgroup of youth? (Activity ②.③)</p> <p>Ex Youth living in rural areas.</p>	

2.② ACTIVITY IDEA: INTERVENTIONS FOR SPECIFIC YOUTH GROUPS



Purpose

This activity can be used to identify the groups of youth who may require specific interventions and provisions outlined in a youth policy.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants and work in groups to:
 - » Review the policy vision identified in activity 2.①.
 - » Develop six statements that highlight the environment and opportunities needed to ensure the realization of the vision for a youth policy.
 - » Select one of the subgroups of youth identified in Module 1.
 - » Review each of the six statements.
 - » Discuss if the environment and opportunities outlined in the statements are available to the subgroup of youth selected.

Debrief questions

- Which subgroups of youth do not currently have the opportunities and environment identified in the statements?
- What does this say about the interventions and provisions needed for specific groups of youth in the policy?
- In what ways will an intervention affect different groups of youth, either positively or negatively, in the short, medium or long term?
- How can these groups be involved in identifying their own needs and designing interventions to address them?
- How can this activity inform the provisions and interventions outlined in a youth policy?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

45 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





Key stakeholders

Who are the actors concerned and what is their role in the development and implementation of the policy?

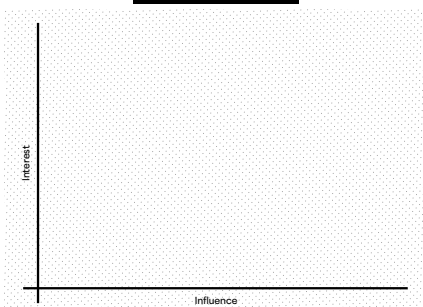
Stakeholders are people or organizations with an interest in engaging in policies affecting youth and youth development. They range from the family unit to individuals and groups from the public and private sectors along with civil society actors that interact with youth. The stakeholders relevant to a policy will be different depending on the purpose and scope of the policy but may include:

- Youth-led and youth-focused organizations
- National, regional and local political leaders (legislators, governors), including relevant ministries and government institutions
- Public officials
- Labour unions and associations
- Religious leaders
- Indigenous groups and associations
- Academics
- Commercial businesses
- Civil society organizations
- International development actors
- International non-government organizations and donors
- Representatives of socially excluded or marginalised groups
- Others.

Tool sheet



INTEREST AND INFLUENCE GRID



Identifying the concerned actors and articulating their role in the policy formulation and implementation is key to the development of policies from a holistic perspective.

2.E ACTIVITY IDEA: STAKEHOLDER MOTIVATIONS

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify the actors concerned by the policy and their respective interest and influence in it.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Identify as many stakeholders as possible that are associated with or have an interest in the policy.
- Map the stakeholders on the interest and influence grid (tool sheet 2.E).
- Ask groups to present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- Who are the stakeholders with an interest in engaging in the policy?
- What are their roles and responsibilities, as well as respective levels of influence in formulating and implementing the policy?
- Is it possible to categorize the stakeholders?
- Based on the above assessment and identification, what actions could be prioritized for each category?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

45 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



Module 3

A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - formulation and implementation

Reflection questions

What provisions need to be made to support multistakeholder cooperation?

What needs to be done to ensure meaningful youth engagement?

What financial and implementation planning needs to be considered?

What capacity development support is needed?

How to assess if a policy enables holistic youth development?

Overview

Within youth policy design, it is important to consider elements of the design process that contribute to enabling holistic youth development. This module seeks to facilitate a dialogue on the role of multistakeholder cooperation and the importance of meaningful youth engagement in policy design processes. It also encourages reflection on implementation and financial planning, as well as the capacity development needs for those engaged in the design and implementation of a youth policy. Finally, it provides a checklist to help identify and assess the essential elements of a youth policy that enables holistic youth development.



SUGGESTED TIME 4 HOURS

Module 3.A Multistakeholder cooperation 60 minutes	Module 3.B Youth engagement plan 45 minutes	Module 3.C * Essential planning 45 minutes	Module 3.D Capacity development 45 minutes	Module 3.E Checklist 45 minutes
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Multistakeholder cooperation

What provisions need to be made to support multistakeholder cooperation?

Implementing a youth policy that addresses multiple areas and involves multiple stakeholders needs clear and effective coordination mechanisms. Multistakeholder processes should encourage ownership and sustained involvement and commitment of all those involved at different levels, with emphasis on engaging youth and recognizing that such engagement is a prerequisite for holistic youth development.

Tool sheet



Areas for cooperation	Challenges	Opportunities	Mechanisms
Policy development			
Fund mobilization			
Interministerial cooperation			
Policy implementation			

3.A ACTIVITY IDEA: MULTISTAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the challenges and opportunities related to multistakeholder cooperation for youth policy design and to identify the mechanisms to support it.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to identify and list areas where stakeholder cooperation is needed.
- For each identified area, ask groups to list:
 - » The potential challenges for cooperation
 - » The opportunities available for cooperation
 - » The existing mechanisms available for cooperation
- Invite groups to present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- Where will stakeholder cooperation be needed?
- What are the potential challenges to multistakeholder cooperation for each area?
- What are the opportunities available to support multistakeholder cooperation (existing provisions, processes and relationships)?
- What mechanisms for coordination can be utilized or developed?
- How can this activity inform the considerations that need to be made for multistakeholder cooperation in the formulation and implementation of a youth policy?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

45 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-6

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



3.B

Meaningful youth engagement⁷²

What needs to be done to ensure meaningful youth engagement?

Holistic approaches require youth to have meaningful opportunities to engage and work with youth policy makers to influence and shape policy design and implementation, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation. For any or each of these purposes within a policy process, and depending on the context, young people can be engaged by consulting them, inviting them to contribute, enlisting them both as partners and as leaders (see [Tool IV, Module 3.A](#)). For engagement to be meaningful – as opposed to tokenistic – it needs to follow certain principles: be transparent, informative and accountable; be inclusive and voluntary, safe and respectful; be compliant with human rights ; be youth-friendly, as well as supportive (see [Tool IV, Module 2.E](#)). Opportunities should enable youth to engage in more than one way. However, this is only effective when youth voices are respected and young people are given the appropriate structure and support needed at every stage of the policy development cycle.

Tool sheet



Areas for youth engagement	Opportunities
Consulting	
Programming	
Operational	
Coordination	
Capacity-building	
Advocacy and outreach	

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore opportunities available for engaging youth in the planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of a policy.

Instruction

- Place flipchart sheets indicating the different areas for youth engagement in a youth policy in the room. These are listed on tool sheet 3.B and include: consulting, programming, operational, coordination, capacity-building, and advocacy and outreach.
- Break into six groups with a representative mix of participants. One group per flipchart sheet.
- Spend five minutes discussing and recording how youth could be engaged for each area.
- After five minutes, ask participants to rotate to the next sheet and repeat.
- Continue until each group has reviewed each of the youth engagement areas.

Debrief questions

- What is meaningful youth engagement? (For elements of response that define key principles and levels of youth engagement, see **Tool IV, Modules 2.C, 2.D, 2.E** and **3.A**.)
- How can it be best applied to a youth policy process?
- What are the major differences between the approaches listed (consulting, programming, operational, etc.)? Are they all equally meaningful or are some more meaningful than others?
- What is the culture and approach to youth engagement in a current policy process?
- What opportunities are available to engage the wider youth population?
- What opportunities are available to engage specific groups of youth?
- What changes may be needed to promote meaningful youth engagement in the policy process?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure these changes can be implemented?
- How can this activity inform the considerations needed for a policy design process?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
(one sheet for each of the six areas)
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





Implementation and financial planning

What financial and implementation planning needs to be considered?

Every effort to develop and implement a policy that addresses youth issues holistically should involve the elaboration and implementation of a fully-budgeted action plan with defined measures to evaluate its successful implementation, and with youth engagement throughout this process. It should evaluate the time dedicated by young people in the same way as that dedicated by non-youth stakeholders, especially regarding participation fees, travel, and other costs that youth often have to bear.

All effective policy action plans incorporate:

- Frameworks for monitoring, reporting and evaluation that include:
 - » Objectives
 - » Outcomes and outputs
 - » Measures and performance indicators to assess success
 - » Means of validation
 - » Reporting period and entities in charge of reporting
- Budgets
- Comprehensive timeliness of key activities for implementation.

Tool sheet		
Planning element	Key questions	Identified approaches
Comprehensive timelines of key activities for implementation		
Budgets		
Monitoring and evaluation framework		

3.© ACTIVITY IDEA: ESSENTIAL PLANNING *

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the provisions and approaches available for addressing financial and implementation planning needs.

While this activity can help in considering the essential elements for planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation, it is important that a comprehensive planning framework also be developed as part of the youth policy development process outlined in Tool I.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask each group to review the essential planning elements listed above.
- Invite them also to discuss the approach and provisions available for each element.
- Present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- How can this activity inform the considerations that need to be made for a policy?
- How can you promote and ensure meaningful youth engagement in implementation and financial planning?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

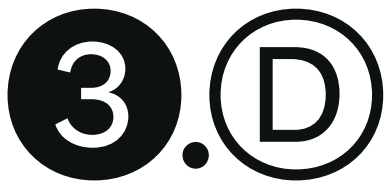
GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





Capacity development





What capacity development support is needed?

All staff and stakeholder groups involved in the formulation and implementation of youth policy should receive appropriate and regular training early on and before initiating the policy design process. Training should ensure that everyone involved, particularly youth, has sufficient awareness and technical knowledge of policy-making (what it is, its purpose) and an understanding of approaches and methods for ensuring meaningful youth engagement.

Different stakeholder groups will have different capacity development needs. For example, if the policy is being led by the ministry responsible for youth, then staff from other line ministries involved in its implementation should receive capacity development support to learn about approaches to holistic youth development and meaningful youth engagement in policy processes. Likewise, youth-led or youth-focused organizations that are engaged in the process should receive technical training in policy-making processes.

Tool sheet



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3.10 ACTIVITY IDEA: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify the capacity development needs of different stakeholder groups engaged in the policy-making process.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Review the stakeholder groups that were identified in activity 2.10.
- For each stakeholder, ask groups to identify the knowledge areas and technical skills needed.
- Invite groups to present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- How will you identify the staff or stakeholder groups that need additional training and capacity-building support?
- How will you identify the capacity gaps?
- How will you address the identified capacity gaps?
- Where in the policy process will this take place?
- How can this activity inform the considerations that need to be made for a policy?

NB: As a follow-up and depending on the specific context and themes covered, UNESCO may identify and recommend to participants specific online management tools to support them in addressing capacity development gaps identified through this exercise. These might include capacity gap analysis, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, causality analysis or Gantt charts.

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





Checklist

How to assess if a policy enables holistic youth development?

Developing a framework or checklist will help identify and assess the essential elements of a youth policy that enables holistic youth development. The checklist below provides an overview of the core elements of this tool. It can be used to help design or review a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess whether the policy and its implementation will enable the intended holistic youth development.

This checklist is, however, not a substitute for a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for a youth policy itself, which should be customized to include outcomes, outputs, activities, performance indicators, baselines, sources, means of verifications and targets relevant to a specific policy and its implementation.

Tool sheet



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⑥
⑦
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⑨
⑩



3.6 ACTIVITY IDEA: A CHECKLIST TO ASSESS A HOLISTIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Purpose

This activity can be used to develop a checklist to assess if a youth policy has successfully included all the essential elements to enable holistic youth development.

Instruction

- Recapitulate the core elements of the training, including ‘who is youth’, the essential elements of a ‘policy content’ as well as discussions from the ‘policy formulation and implementation’ activities.
- Invite participants to develop a checklist with up to 10 criteria that they could use to verify whether a policy has enabled holistic youth development.
- Review the group responses against the criteria listed in the checklist below.

Debrief questions

- What criteria can be used to ensure that a policy considers ‘who is youth’ from a holistic perspective?
- What criteria can be used to ensure the policy ‘content’ includes the essential components to enable holistic youth development?
- What criteria can be used to ensure the policy ‘formulation and implementation’ includes the essential elements to enable holistic youth development?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

All

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Post-its
Tool sheet



Developing a policy that enables holistic youth development - checklist

1. Define who the youth are, recognizing their diverse characteristics and experiences, and the different transitions young people go through.
2. Develop a clear knowledge of the social context in which youth is experienced and the relationships and roles youth have with and in society.
3. Articulate a vision for youth.
4. Develop a set of corresponding objectives from a youth-centred perspective.
5. Identify the rights and responsibilities attributed to youth.
6. Identify the sectoral policy areas concerned by and contributing to the policy.
7. Outline interventions or provisions for specific groups of youth.
8. Identify the actors concerned and articulate their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the policy.
9. Establish provisions for multistakeholder cooperation.
10. Commit to, and effectively ensure, meaningful youth engagement throughout the planning, formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the policy.
11. Develop an implementation and financial plan with clear outcomes, outputs and measures for success, budget lines and timelines of key activities for implementation.
12. Identify skills gaps for key actors and establish provisions for human capacity development.



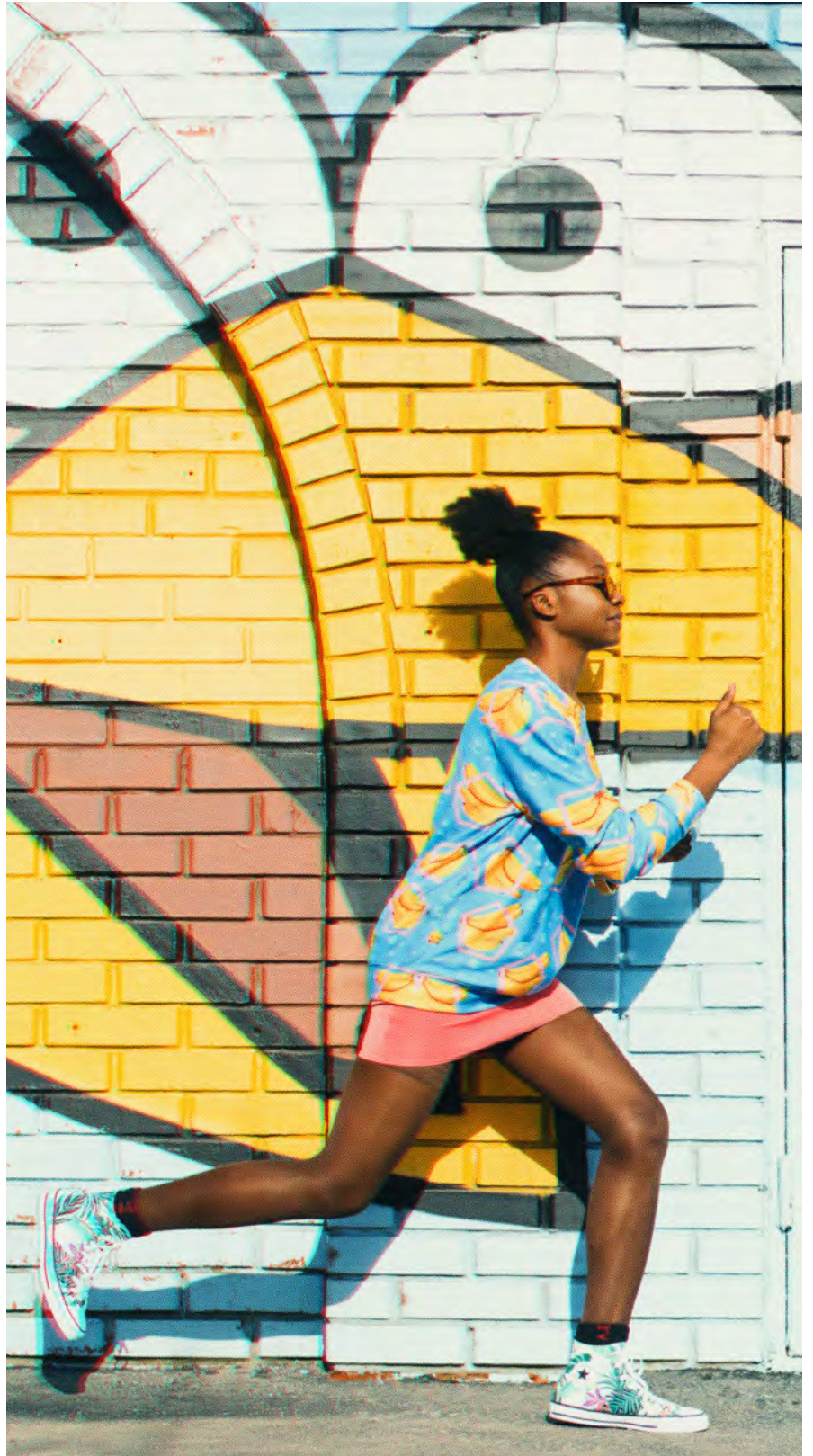
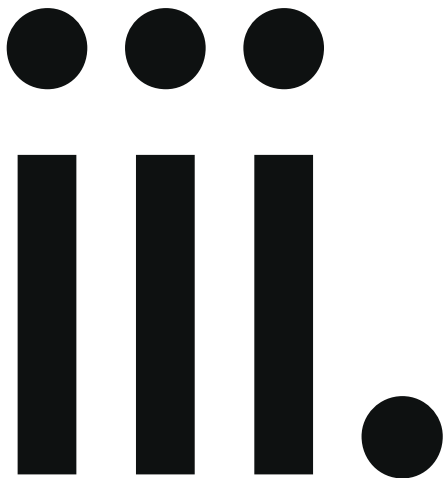
Endnotes

TOOL II

- 71 ILO. 2012. The youth employment crisis: A call for action. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_185950.pdf; ILO. 2021b. Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_806092.pdf
- 72 For a full set of training modules on this, see [Tool IV](#)



Tool to support multistakeholder dialogue in the context of policy and programme design on youth civic engagement



Youth Civic

Engagement



Why this tool

Youth engagement may be considered an end in itself, but it is additionally a means to achieve other objectives and benefits in society. Its potential to contribute to the personal development of young people, to improve their welfare, and to address social injustice also provides an impetus to promote civic engagement as a component of youth work and youth action. Interest in youth civic engagement is furthermore linked to increased public awareness regarding the right of young people to have their voices heard, as active contributors to social change⁷¹³.

Civic engagement is not a neutral concept, but rather encompasses a variety of forms and perspectives surrounding relationships between the individual, the community and broader society⁷¹⁴. At its core, it is characterized by the agency of young people and their collective action to address issues of public concern and create social change. However, the concept and approach to youth civic engagement is understood in different ways, based on the context in which it is defined and on who is defining it.



Different stakeholder groups with an interest in enabling youth civic engagement include youth, in all their diversity (for a working definition, see the [Introduction](#) to this Toolbox), public authorities, civil society and development actors. These groups do not always have a clear or shared understanding of what youth civic engagement is, nor of how to enable it.

Due to the context-specific nature of youth civic engagement, this tool provides a framework to strengthen skills and facilitate dialogue and co-creation between different stakeholders. Through this process, different stakeholder groups can be supported to collectively reflect, generate knowledge, and identify avenues for action on youth civic engagement. With a shared understanding of when, where and how to foster youth civic engagement in different contexts, efforts to enable it through policy-making or programming will be more successful.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Each module builds on the previous one to support participants through a step-by-step journey. Module 5 brings together the knowledge and insight generated in Modules 1-4 to explore the topic and build a comprehensive picture of youth civic engagement in a given context. In each module you will find:

- **Reflection questions:** These can be used as discussion points and as a framework for dialogue.
- **Knowledge content:** Each module includes information on the topic that can be shared by the facilitator to inform discussions between participants.
- **Activity ideas:** While these are mostly designed to be on-site, they can also be adjusted for on-line use. They feature ideas for interactive activities and exchanges that can be run to stimulate exchange between participants.
- **Tool sheets:** For the majority of the activities, there is an accompanying tool sheet. Each can be printed as a handout to share with participants during the corresponding activity. They can also be replicated on flipchart or an online interactive board. The tool sheets can be used by both participants and facilitator to capture the key insights generated through the activity discussions and to keep a record of discussion points.

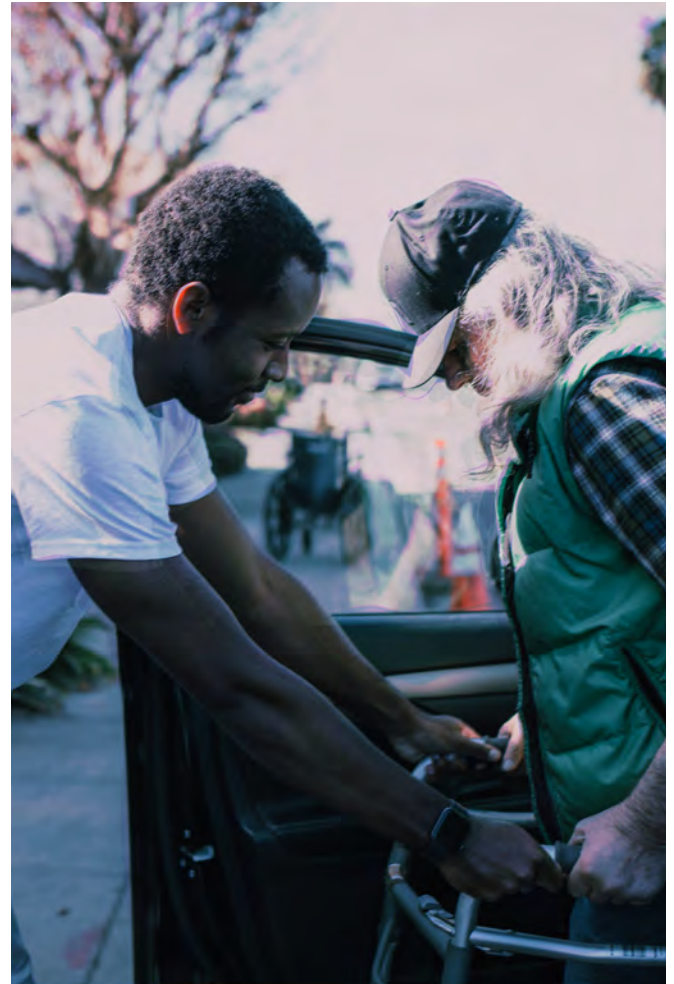


The learning journey

This tool has five modules, including the first module on Who is ‘youth’. Each has been designed to take users on a learning journey - from knowledge through to application - as follows:

Module ①: Who is ‘youth’? (see Module 1)

This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of the characteristics and experiences of youth, as well as the transitions they experience within a national context. This shared insight can be used to identify specific groups of youth to engage in national or local policy development or programming processes.



Module ②: What is youth civic engagement?

There are many discourses that can be used to understand the purpose of, as well as approaches to, enabling youth civic engagement. This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of how youth civic engagement is framed in a specific context. It also explores the types of youth civic engagement activities that can be encouraged and incentivized through youth civic engagement policy and programming.

Module ③: Why enable youth civic engagement?

Youth engagement in civic activities and actions not only benefits the young people who participate but also the communities and societies where they take action. This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of the value and benefits of youth civic engagement for both young people and society.

Module ④: Where does youth civic engagement happen?

Both policy and programme interventions are essential in creating enabling environments that incentivize youth civic engagement. This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of where youth civic engagement currently happens and where it could receive more support in order to better target policy and programme interventions.

Module ⑤: How can you enable youth civic engagement?

All the insights and ideas generated through the previous modules can be brought together here to co-design a framework for youth civic engagement. This framework can be used to inform the design of a youth civic engagement policy or programme in a specific context.



Module summary

The complete training runs 13.5-14 hours and can be delivered during a 2-day programme.

Although the tool is designed to be delivered in its entirety, it is also possible for each of the modules and corresponding activities to be used and facilitated independently from one another. Essential activities that can be used to reduce the training to a 1-day programme are identified in the tool marked with *. This allows flexibility for the tool to be adapted to different settings and be used with different participants. Facilitators and users can select the relevant modules (and corresponding activities), based on:

- Where the tool is being used and for what purpose;
- Who is participating; and
- How much time there is available for the session.

Module 1: Who is 'youth'? [\(see Module 1\)](#)

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 4 HOURS

Module 1.A * Remember/describe your youth 30 minutes	Module 1.B * The characteristics wheel 30 minutes	Module 1.C * Youth transitions 45 minutes	Module 1.D Intergenerational relationships 60 minutes	Module 1.E Intragenerational relationships 60 minutes
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Module 2: What is youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 2.5 HOURS

Module 2.A * Youth civic engagement is... 45 minutes	Module 2.B * Actions and activities 45 minutes	Module 2.C Discourses 45 minutes
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Module 3: Why enable youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME 1 HOUR

Module 3.A Value 30 minutes	Module 3.B * The double benefit 30 minutes
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Module 4: Where does youth civic engagement happen?

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 3 HOURS

Module 4.A * Whole of society approach 45 minutes	Module 4.B The characteristics of a supportive society 45 minutes	Module 4.C The attributes of youth who engage 30 minutes	Module 4.D * Youth and society 45 minutes
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Module 5: How to enable youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME 3-3.5 HOURS

Module 5.A Stakeholder motivations 45 minutes	Module 5.B * Youth civic engagement framework 30 minutes	Module 5.C * Policy areas 45 minutes	Module 5.D * Youth programming - ideas incubator 60-90 minutes	Module 5.E Action pledges 10 minutes
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Module 2



What is youth civic engagement?

Overview

There are many discourses on the purpose of and approaches to enabling youth civic engagement. This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of how it is framed in a specific context. It also explores the types of youth civic engagement activities that can be promoted and incentivized through youth civic engagement policy and programming.

Reflection questions

How can we define youth civic engagement?

What types of actions can be considered as youth civic engagement?

How is youth civic engagement positioned in your context?

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 2.5 HOURS

Module 2.A	Module 2.B	Module 2.C
Youth civic engagement is...	Actions and activities	Discourses
45 minutes	45 minutes	45 minutes



2.A

Defining youth civic engagement

How can we define youth civic engagement?

As the concept of youth civic engagement is socially constructed, it is understood in different ways based on the context in which it is defined and on who defines it. It changes depending on how 'youth', 'civic' and 'engagement' are perceived and positioned in a given society at a specific time.

At its core, youth civic engagement is characterized by the agency of young people and their collective action to address issues of public concern and create social change. There is, however, no universal definition.

It is a broad concept referring to a set of constructs such as:

- Civic skills
- Knowledge
- Attitudes and behaviours
- Goals

In academia, when discussing policy and practice, the term 'youth civic engagement' is often used interchangeably with 'youth participation' or 'youth civic participation'.

Tool sheet



Consider what constitutes 'youth civic engagement' in your context	
Review your definition in pairs and consolidate your ideas to come up with a new response	
Review your definition in a small group and consolidate your ideas to come up with a combined response	
Finally, as a whole group, consolidate your ideas to come up with a group response	

2.4 ACTIVITY IDEA: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS... *

Purpose

This activity can be used to develop a shared understanding of the term 'youth civic engagement' among participants.

Instruction

- Invite participants to individually:
 - » Think about what constitutes 'youth civic engagement' in their context.
 - » Complete the sentence: '*youth civic engagement is...*'.
- Once completed, ask them to pair up with someone and share your individual responses with each other. Drawing on both responses, ask them to consolidate your ideas to come up with a new response.
- Ask pairs to join with another pair to create a small group. Repeat this process consolidating all the ideas into one.

Debrief questions

- What are the common elements of how you each defined youth civic engagement?
- What are the differences between how you each defined youth civic engagement?
- What does this tell you about the diverse understanding and meanings of youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

Individuals, pairs
and groups

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



2.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES



Purpose

This activity can be used to identify and categorize the different types of broader actions and specific activities within them that constitute youth civic engagement for the participants.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to identify as many different actions or activities as possible that they think constitute youth civic engagement, and to record each of them on individual cards.
- Ask them to categorize the actions or activities into groups based on the different types or themes of youth civic engagement they represent, and to identify a subheading for each of the different categorized groups.
- Invite the groups to mark the cards that have actions or activities that are supported through formal structures.

Debrief questions

- What types of youth civic engagement actions are currently happening?
- Which of these apply to your specific context (now or potentially)?
- What enables these different types of action?
- What does this tell you about how youth civic engagement is understood in your context (country/city/community)?
- How do the actions relate to the rights and responsibilities of youth?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Blank cards
Tool sheet



2. ©

Framing youth civic engagement

How is youth civic engagement positioned in your society?

There are many lenses through which youth civic engagement can be understood and positioned in a given context. These are represented by the five 'discourses'.

Tool sheet



Discourse	Current position	Benefits	Limitations
Engaged citizen			
Positive youth development			
Belonging			
Care and resilience			
Social justice			

These discourses reveal the perceived relationship between youth and their societies. They can be used to reflect on how youth civic engagement is framed in your context. The list of discourses is not exhaustive. They can be complementary or overlapping in a given society.

'Engaged citizen'	Focuses on the capacity of youth to participate as political and social actors in society and development processes through political advocacy, activism, youth organizations and electoral participation.
'Positive youth development'	Focuses on individuals becoming stronger and more resourceful members of society, by developing key characteristics including competence, confidence, character, connection, caring.
'Belonging'	Focuses on the relationship between a young person and community to foster a sense of belonging through strengthened connections with others. Not only communities where people live but also online community spaces. Belonging is critical to fostering social cohesion.
'Care and resilience'	Focuses on vulnerable youth and the need to create caring and empathetic environments to ensure their rights and needs are met.
'Social justice'	Focuses on the socioeconomic challenges faced by young people and their potential to be active agents of change to address community problems and propose tangible solutions when given the necessary competencies.

Table 3. Discourses on youth civic engagement
Source: adapted from Shaw et al., 2014

ACTIVITY IDEA: DISCOURSES

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the different discourses through which youth civic engagement can be perceived and positioned in your context.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- In groups, select one of the five youth civic engagement discourses from Table 3.
- Invite groups to:
 - » Discuss the benefits and limitations of understanding youth civic engagement through this lens.
 - » Then discuss the status in their country/city/community of this discourse (if any).
- Ask groups to present key reflections and highlights from their group discussion to the whole group.
- As a whole group discuss and identify which of the presented discourses most closely reflects how youth civic engagement is perceived and positioned in your context.

Debrief questions

- Which of the discourses reflects how youth civic engagement is positioned in your country/city/community?
- Why is this discourse most representative of how youth civic engagement is positioned?
- What factors influence how youth civic engagement is perceived and positioned?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheets



Module 3



Why enable youth civic engagement?

Overview

Youth engagement in civic activities and actions benefits both the young people who participate and the communities and societies within which the young people are taking action. The aim of this module is to facilitate a shared understanding of the value and benefits of youth civic engagement for young people and societies alike.

Reflection questions

What is the value of enabling youth civic engagement?

How does youth civic engagement benefit youth and society?

SUGGESTED TIME 1 HOUR

Module 3.A

Value

30 minutes

Module 3.B *

The double benefit

30 minutes





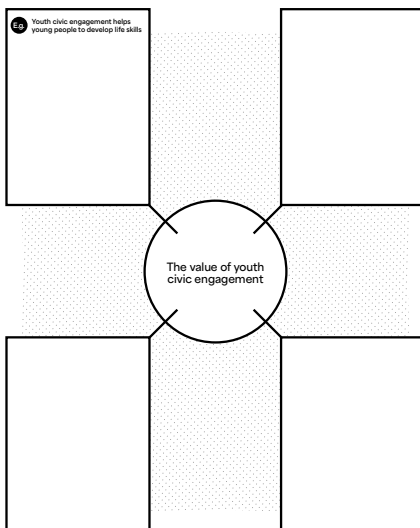
The value of youth civic engagement

What is the value of enabling youth civic engagement?

There is extensive research that highlights the value of enabling youth civic engagement. Reasons identified include but are not limited to:

- Youth civic participation is a fundamental right and enables the advancement of all the other human rights attributed to youth.
- Youth civic engagement enhances democratic participation.
- Youth civic engagement helps young people to develop life skills.
- Youth civic engagement contributes to (national/local) development and to peaceful and inclusive societies.

Tool sheet



🕒📌 ACTIVITY IDEA: VALUE

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the different reasons for enabling youth civic engagement.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Using creative resources, ask groups to make a visual representation that responds to the question: *'Why should we support and enable youth civic engagement?'*
- Invite groups to present their response using key reflections from group discussions.

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Creative resources
(Lego, crafts or playdough)
Tool sheet



3.B

The double benefit of youth civic engagement

How does youth civic engagement benefit youth and society?

Now that we have explored the value of youth civic engagement, let us consider the benefits that accrue to the young people who participate and to the communities and societies where they are participating. These are often discussed as the human and societal development benefits, and include but are not limited to:

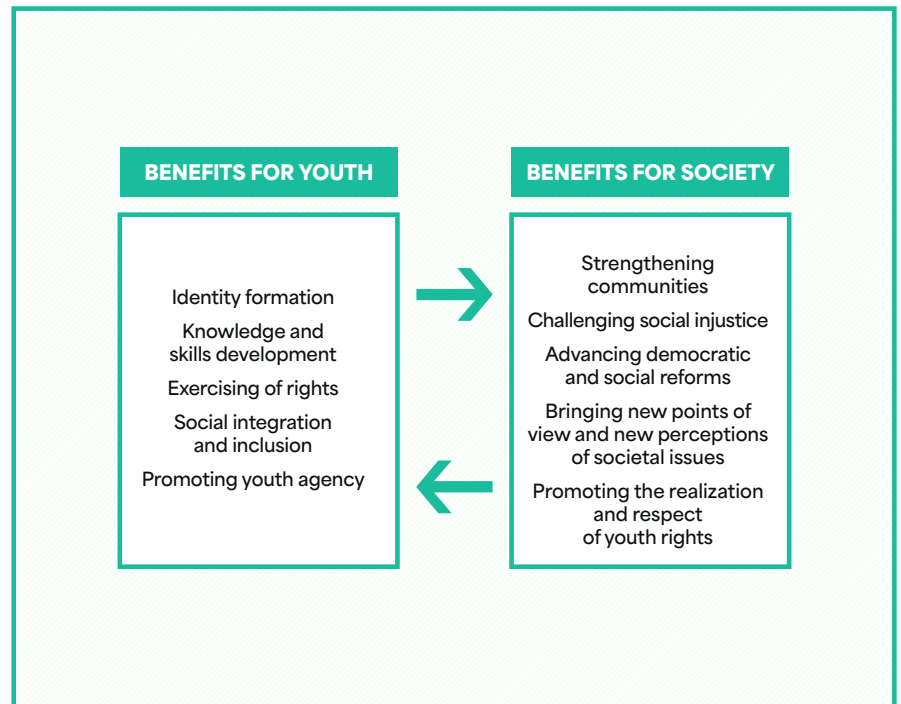
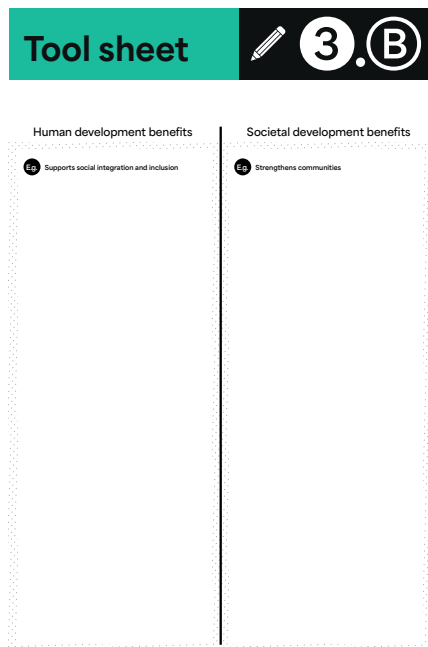


Figure 7. Benefits of youth civic engagement

3.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: THE DOUBLE BENEFIT



Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the social and human development benefits of enabling youth civic engagement

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to reflect on the:
 - » Human development benefits of youth civic engagement
 - » Societal development benefits of youth civic engagement
- Present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What are the human development benefits of youth civic engagement?
- What are the societal development benefits of youth civic engagement?
- How do youth civic engagement actions contribute to this?
- How are the benefits of youth civic engagement currently understood in your country?
- What is the value in recognizing and promoting both types of benefits when developing and implementing youth civic engagement opportunities in your context?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

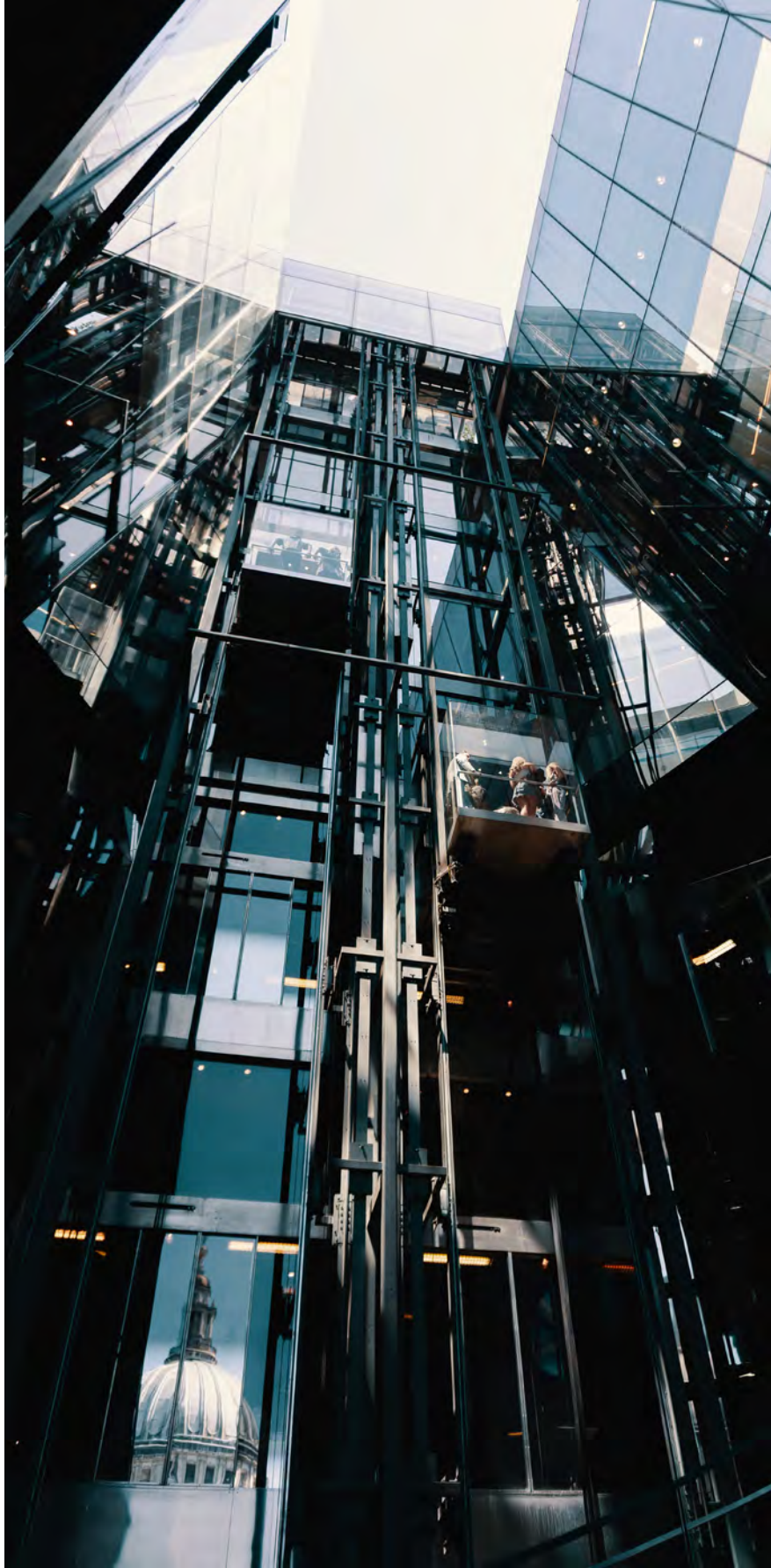
4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



Module 4



Where does youth civic engagement happen?

Overview

Both policy and programme interventions help create enabling environments that incentivize youth civic engagement. This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of where youth civic engagement happens and where it could be supported more in order to better target policy and programme interventions.

Reflection questions

Where does youth civic engagement happen?

What are the characteristics of a society that supports youth civic engagement?

What are the attributes of youth who engage in civic action?

How does the relationship between youth and society affect youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 3 HOURS

Module 4.A * Whole of society approach 45 minutes	Module 4.B The characteristics of a supportive society 45 minutes	Module 4.C The attributes of youth who engage 30 minutes	Module 4.D * Youth and society 45 minutes
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Whole of society approach to youth civic engagement

Where does youth civic engagement happen?

Tool sheet



4

A

Sectors	Activities
Political	
Social	
Economic	
Cultural	
Environmental	

Youth civic engagement can be activated in different sectors, including:

- Political
- Social
- Economic
- Cultural
- Environmental.

Some forms of engagement may occur in one sector only, while others occur across all sectors. How youth civic engagement is understood and positioned in a specific context will influence the sectors in which it is enabled. It is also important to consider the increasing influence of social media as a tool of mobilization and activism for young people. This is relevant across all sectors and creates a powerful opportunity for youth to shape their own civic ^{7B} space alongside traditional spaces.

4.A ACTIVITY IDEA: WHOLE OF SOCIETY APPROACH



Purpose

This activity can be used to explore where youth civic engagement happens.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to reflect on the different types of youth civic engagement actions identified in the previous module.
- Invite groups to then map the actions against the sector or sectors of society where they are happening.
- Invite them to present key reflections from groups discussions.

Debrief questions

- Where does youth civic engagement currently happen in your context?
- Does youth civic engagement happen more frequently in specific sectors?
- What types of youth civic engagement happen in each different sector and which happen across all sectors?
- What are the similarities and differences between how youth civic engagement manifests across the different sectors?
- What does this tell you about the notion of being a ‘citizen’ and how youth civic engagement is understood in your country?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



4.B

The characteristics of a society supporting youth civic engagement

What are the characteristics of a society that supports youth civic engagement?

Tool sheet



The social, cultural, political and economic characteristics of a society in any given country can enable or limit youth civic engagement. These change and evolve over time, affecting (and being affected by) institutions, infrastructure development and other types of structuring processes. The characteristics can include but are not limited to:

- The physical assets and infrastructure of a community or country;
- The learning environment, opportunities and platforms available to develop and practise civic skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of young people;
- The ways in which youth are perceived;
- The opportunities that are created for young people to participate in civic actions and activities;
- The political and social will and commitment to support youth civic engagement;
- Legislation or normative frameworks securing the exercise of rights enabling youth civic engagement (including, in particular, civic rights) and awareness of such rights.

Supporting policy and programming that foster these characteristics can work towards enabling youth civic engagement.

4.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUPPORTIVE SOCIETY

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the characteristics of a society or community that supports and enables youth civic engagement.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Invite groups to identify the characteristics of a community/society that enables youth civic engagement.
 - » E.g. The community has a space for young people to meet.
 - » E.g. The community has a school that teaches civic classes.
 - » E.g. The community has a volunteering centre or youth club.
- Ask them to create a visual map of the community with the distinguishing characteristics identified.
- Present the image with key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What characteristics have been identified in a community or society that supports youth civic engagement?
- What external factors influence the presence of these characteristics?
- What internal factors influence the presence of these characteristics?
- What role does policy-making play in supporting or limiting these characteristics?
- What role does programming play in supporting or limiting these characteristics?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet

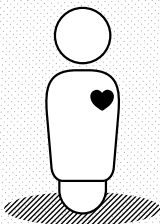




Youth who engage in civic action

What are the attributes of youth engaging in civic action?

Tool sheet



Supporting the development of political and civic knowledge and skills is important to increase youth participation in civic engagement activities. However, these attributes alone do not guarantee that a young person will engage actively. Other characteristics and attributes that are recognized to increase youth civic engagement include but are not limited to:

- Demographic characteristics⁷¹⁶
- Social attitudes
- Empathy for others
- Feeling a civic obligation
- Cultural practices
- Family values and culture
- Peer group values and activities.

Depending on these characteristics and attributes, some youth may have more opportunities and capacities to engage civically than others. Understanding these discrepancies is vital in identifying who those youth are who do not or cannot engage as civic actors. It is also key to taking targeted measures to address the challenges they face and create support and opportunities for them to engage.

4.© ACTIVITY IDEA: THE ATTRIBUTES OF YOUTH WHO ENGAGE

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the attributes of youth who engage in civic actions and activities.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants, and ask groups to:
 - » Identify the attributes and characteristics of a young person whom you believe contributes to increased participation in youth civic engagement actions and activities.
 - » Draw a young person. On the image, they should draw features that depict the attributes and characteristics they have identified. E.g. Large eyes to represent an awareness of social issues; friends around them to represent a supportive peer network; a big heart to represent empathy towards others.
- Invite groups to present the image using key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What characteristics and attributes have you identified that make youth engagement in civic activities more likely?
- What external factors influence the presence of these attributes and characteristics?
- What role does policy-making play in supporting or limiting these personal attributes and characteristics?
- What role does programming play in supporting or limiting these personal attributes and characteristics?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



4.D

The relationship between youth and society





How does the relationship between youth and society affect youth civic engagement?

The social and political characteristics of a society combined with the individual characteristics and variables of young people influence the levels of youth civic engagement in society. The conditions and level of opportunity for youth civic engagement may differ significantly from one group or subgroup of youth to another. Understanding and exploring these potential differences enables more meaningful and relevant programming and policy-design in support of youth civic engagement.

Tool sheet



4.D

4.④ ACTIVITY IDEA: YOUTH AND SOCIETY



Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the relationship between youth and society and how this influences youth civic engagement.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to reflect on the relationship that youth have with society.
- Groups should also identify:
 - » Different subgroups of youth
 - » Their relationship with society
 - » The implications of this on youth civic engagement.
- Invite groups to present key reflections from their discussions.

Debrief questions

- Do all young people and groups of youth have an equal or similar relationship with society?
- Are there groups and sub-groups of youth that have greater civic engagement opportunities? If so, who are they and what are their characteristics?
- Are there groups and subgroups of youth that have more limited civic engagement opportunities? If so, who are they and what are their characteristics?
- How do the relations of youth in society influence this?
- How does the status and privileges (or lack thereof) affect the opportunities and levels of civic engagement for different groups of young people?
- What can be done to address that situation and to encourage those that are under-represented to become civically engaged?
- What role does policy-making play in supporting or limiting the conditions that enable youth civic engagement for the groups identified?
- What role does youth programming play in creating the opportunities that enable youth civic engagement for the groups identified?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



Module 5



How to enable youth civic engagement?

Overview

In this module, all the insights and ideas generated through the preceding modules can be brought together to co-design a framework for youth civic engagement, which can be used to shape a youth civic engagement policy or programme in a specific context.

Reflection questions

Who are the actors who can enable youth civic engagement?

How to design a context-specific framework to enable youth civic engagement?

How can policy enable youth civic engagement?

How can youth programming enable youth civic engagement?

What actions will be taken to enable youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME 3-3.5 HOURS

Module 5.A Stakeholder motivations 45 minutes	Module 5.B * Youth civic engagement framework 30 minutes	Module 5.C * Policy areas 45 minutes	Module 5.D * Youth programming - ideas incubator 60-90 minutes	Module 5.E Action pledges 10 minutes
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5.A

Stakeholder motivations

Who are the actors who can enable youth civic engagement?

Different individuals and groups in society will have different levels of interest in and influence to enable youth civic engagement. They include but are not limited to:

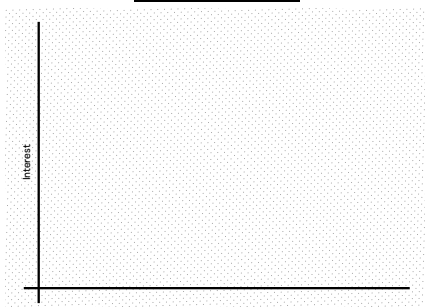
- Policy-makers
- Civil society organizations
- Youth organizations and groups
- Businesses, corporations
- Public sector bodies and agencies (including development actors)
- Media.

Tool sheet



5.A

INTEREST AND INFLUENCE GRID



Some individuals or groups may encourage one form of youth civic engagement but seek to limit it when it manifests in a different form.

Identifying the different individuals and groups in society that have an interest in youth civic engagement, understanding their motivations and the level of influence they have, can provide support to effectively position and further develop and diversify youth civic engagement.

Collaboration (and not competition) between all these actors is essential and can be a source and force for enabling youth civic engagement.

6.4 ACTIVITY IDEA: STAKEHOLDER MOTIVATIONS

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify the actors who can enable youth civic engagement in your context and to explore their respective interest and influence in doing so.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to identify the many stakeholders who are associated with or have an interest in youth civic engagement.
- Invite them to map the stakeholders on the interest and influence grid in the tool sheet.
- Present key reflections from group discussions.

Debrief questions

- What are the interests for enabling youth civic engagement for each identified individual or group?
- Do the different individuals and groups have the same levels of interest?
- How much influence do the different individuals and groups have to limit or enable youth civic engagement?
- What does this mean for assessing the current position of youth civic engagement in your country?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



5.ⓑ

Youth civic engagement framework

How to design a context-specific framework to enable youth civic engagement?

Developing a clear definition of youth civic engagement relevant to a given context, with an established typology of actions, can contribute to the development of youth-relevant policies and programmes that work towards enabling youth civic engagement within the agreed framework.

Tool sheet



5.ⓑ

<p>Definition</p>	
<p>Activities</p>	

6.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Purpose

This activity can be used to co-design a framework for youth civic engagement in a given context (country/city/community). The framework should draw on the insights shared and knowledge collectively generated in the previous modules.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to reflect on:
 - » Who is youth?
 - » What is youth civic engagement?
 - » Why is youth civic engagement valuable?
 - » Where does youth civic engagement happen?
- Invite each group to develop a basic framework specific for their context that includes:
 - » A definition of youth civic engagement
 - » A typology of activities.

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Youth profiles
Identity wheels
Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



5.© ACTIVITY IDEA: POLICY AREAS

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify sectoral policy areas relevant to youth civic engagement.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to identify and record key policy areas that could embed and promote youth civic engagement.
- For each of the policy area discuss:
 - » The link between the policy area and youth civic engagement;
 - » The opportunities available moving forward to enhance youth civic engagement practice in line with the policy area.

Debrief questions

- What are the sectoral but also intersectoral policy areas that could embed and promote youth civic engagement?
- Why is it important to take an intersectoral approach to youth civic engagement?
- What considerations need to be made to support an intersectoral approach to youth civic engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

30 min group activity
15 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



5.D

Youth civic engagement through programming

How can youth programming enable youth civic engagement?

Developing and implementing targeted programmes can create opportunities and platforms to enable youth civic engagement. This could include the development of new youth engagement programmes or adjusting and improving the existing ones.

Tool sheet



5.D

Purpose		
Targeted youth and subgroups of youth		
Actions and activities supported		
Societal benefits		
Youth benefits		
Stakeholders		
Aligned policy areas		

6.10 ACTIVITY IDEA: YOUTH PROGRAMMING - IDEAS INCUBATOR



Purpose

Building on the previous exploration and analysis of the situation in a given context (Modules 1 to 4), this simulation activity can be used to explore opportunities to enable youth civic engagement through programming. Note that this is only a simulation activity to inspire and generate ideas.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Ask groups to develop a 5-minute pitch with a basic outline of a youth civic engagement programme.
 - » N.B. This does not need to be a comprehensive plan. Any innovative ideas produced here can be further developed later.
- Invite each group to pitch their idea to the group.

Debrief questions

- What is the purpose of the programme?
- Who is the programme targeting?
- What activities and actions will the programme support?
- To what societal and youth-related benefits will the programme contribute?
- To which sectors of society will the programme be relevant?
- What actors will the programme involve?
- What policy areas will the programme be aligned with?

SUGGESTED TIME

60-90 minutes

55 min group activity
5 min pitch per group

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



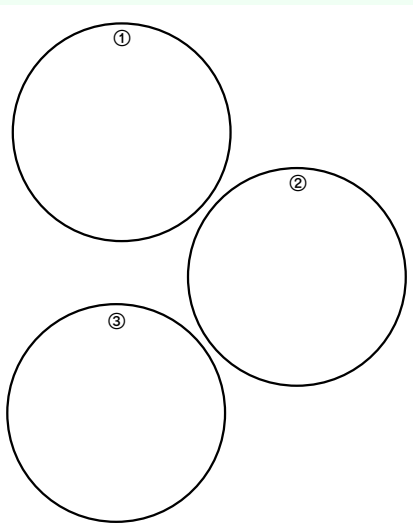


Action pledges

What actions will be taken to enable youth civic engagement?

All stakeholders can contribute to enabling youth civic engagement based on their own capacities.

Tool sheet



5.E ACTIVITY IDEA: ACTION PLEDGES

Purpose

This activity can be used to identify individual commitments to enable youth civic engagement moving forward.

Instruction

Ask participants to individually identify three actions they will take moving forward to enable youth civic engagement.

SUGGESTED TIME

10 minutes

GROUP SIZE

Individual participants

RESOURCES

Tool sheet



Endnotes

TOOL III

73 UN DESA. 2016. World Youth Report: Youth Civic Engagement. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/publications/2016/07/world-youth-report-on-youth-civic-engagement/>

74 *Ibid*

75 According to the UN, ‘civic space’ is the environment that enables people and groups - or ‘civic space actors’ - to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of their societies. UN. 2020. United Nations Guidance Note: Protection and Promotion of Civic Space. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/UN_Guidance_Note.pdf

76 E.g. Well-educated, urban youth could sometimes have more opportunities to engage than out-of-school or rural youth



iv.

Meaningful Youth Engagement



Engagement

A tool to support
meaningful youth
engagement in the
context of national
or local policy and
programme design



Why this tool

Meaningful youth engagement is an intentional partnership between youth and institutions in which young people are engaged in the youth-relevant programmes and policies spearheaded by such institutions. It is premised on the recognition of young people as partners, stakeholders and knowledge-holders in today's societies. It is a critical process through which young people build skills, exercise rights and develop a sense of belonging to their respective communities and societies. It makes it possible to harness the innovation and creativity potential that youth possess and to channel it in order to address societal challenges. Finally, it also helps keep institutions up to speed on current realities and on the needs and perspectives of youth.

Meaningful youth engagement is characterized by the agency of young people and their collective engagement in every part of a programme or policy development process, from agenda-setting and design through to implementation, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

Different actors from the national to the local levels with an interest in enabling meaningful youth engagement include national parliaments, national and local government ministries and departments, embassies, as well as non-governmental public and private actors, development practitioners and youth-to-youth or youth-led organizations. As decision-makers, advocates and enablers of youth engagement, these different groups all play a vital role. Yet they do not always have a shared understanding of what constitutes meaningful youth engagement, its benefits and what they can do to enable it, either individually or collaboratively.

This tool provides a framework for building awareness and strengthening the capacities of national actors to explore this topic in their own contexts, as well as to increase the understanding of meaningful youth engagement in policy and programming. With a comprehensive understanding of when, where and how to enable meaningful youth engagement at a national or local level, efforts to work with young people more effectively will be more successful.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Each module builds on the previous one to support participants through a step-by-step process. Module 4 brings together the knowledge and insights generated in Modules 1 to 3, in order to generate ideas and actions to enable youth engagement in a national or local context. Each module features the following:

- **Reflection questions:** These are relevant to the module topic, and can be used as discussion points and as a framework for learning.
- **Knowledge content:** Each module includes information on the topic that can be shared by the facilitator to inform discussions between participants.
- **Activity ideas:** Each module includes ideas for interactive activities that can be run to stimulate learning and exchanges between participants. While they are mostly designed to be on-site, they can also be adjusted for on-line use.
- **Tool sheets:** For the majority of the activities, there is an accompanying tool sheet. Each can be printed as a handout to share with participants during the corresponding activity. They can also be replicated on a flipchart or an online interactive board. The tool sheets can be used by both participants and facilitator to capture the key insights generated through the activity discussions and to keep a record of discussion points.



The learning journey

This tool has four modules including the first module on Who is ‘youth’. Each has been designed to take users on a learning journey - from knowledge through to application - as follows:

Module ①: Who is ‘youth’? (see Module 1)

This module seeks to facilitate a shared understanding of the characteristics and experiences of youth as well as the transitions experienced by them in a national context. This shared insight can be used to identify specific groups of youth to engage in national or local policy development or programming processes, as well as to determine the mechanisms for meaningful engagement with them.

Module ②: Making youth engagement meaningful

This module identifies the different elements that will ensure national or local youth engagement initiatives are meaningful. This includes building an understanding of the core principles that underpin meaningful youth engagement and exploring how national or local institutions enable them through their respective youth-relevant actions. It also articulates the reasons why engaging with youth is important, and considers different ideas to embed meaningful youth engagement approaches within youth-relevant initiatives and programming.



Module ③: Meaningful youth engagement in action

This module contains the different elements to help national and local institutions apply youth engagement in their initiatives. This includes building an understanding of the different degrees in which youth can be engaged and the types of activities to consider across youth-relevant interventions. It also introduces participants to the different stages of the programme and policy process in which youth engagement can take place and the types of youth and youth structures that might be enlisted.

Module ④: Implementing youth engagement initiatives

The final module brings together the core elements from the previous ones, to create an action plan for a meaningful youth engagement initiative, including ideas on how to measure its success. It concludes with common challenges that national or local actors may encounter when implementing initiatives with the meaningful engagement of young people, and ideas on how to address them.



Module summary

The complete training runs 11.5-13.5 hours and can be delivered during a 2-day programme.

Although the tool is designed to be delivered in its entirety, it is also possible for each of the modules and corresponding activities to be used and facilitated independently from one another. This allows flexibility for the tool to be adapted to different settings and to be used with different participants, also depending on how much time there is available for the session. Essential activities that can be used to reduce the training to a 1-day programme are identified in the tool marked with *. The learning activities can be adapted by the facilitator based on the needs of the participants. At the end of the tool section there are also some ideas for energizers, grouping and reflection activities that can be utilized at the discretion of the facilitator.

The tool invites participants to share and exchange ideas from both personal and professional experiences. This should always be voluntary and facilitated within a safe and supportive environment.

Module 1: Who is 'youth'? [\(see Module 1\)](#)

SUGGESTED TIME ABOUT 4 HOURS

Module 1.A * Remember/describe your youth 30 minutes	Module 1.B * The characteristics wheel 30 minutes	Module 1.C * Youth transitions 45 minutes	Module 1.D Intergenerational relationships 60 minutes	Module 1.E Intragenerational relationships 60 minutes
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Module 2: Making youth engagement meaningful

SUGGESTED TIME 4 HOURS

Module 2.A * Nine reasons why 30 minutes	Module 2.B Context assessment 90 minutes	Module 2.C * Co-shape or enable 15 minutes	Module 2.D * The core principles 60 minutes	Module 2.E * Make it meaningful 45 minutes
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Module 3: Meaningful youth engagement in action

SUGGESTED TIME 2.5 HOURS

<p>Module 3.A *</p> <p>The 'how' - four degrees of youth engagement</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Module 3.B *</p> <p>The 'where' - the stages of a policy or programme cycle where youth engagement can take place</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Module 3.C *</p> <p>The 'what' - actions and activities young people can do</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Module 3.D *</p> <p>The 'who' - the types of youth and youth structures that can be engaged</p> <p>30 minutes</p>
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Module 4: Implementing youth engagement initiatives

SUGGESTED TIME 2.5-4.5 HOURS

<p>Module 4.A *</p> <p>Pitch for youth</p> <p>60-180 minutes</p>	<p>Module 4.B</p> <p>Addressing challenges</p> <p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Module 4.C</p> <p>Measuring success</p> <p>45 minutes</p>
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Module 2

Making youth engagement meaningful



Overview

This module contains the different elements that will ensure that national or local youth engagement initiatives are meaningful. This includes building an understanding of the core principles that underpin youth engagement and exploring how national or local institutions can enable it through their respective youth-relevant initiatives. It also helps articulate the reasons why engaging with youth is important, and considers different ideas for embedding meaningful youth engagement approaches into policies, programmes and activities.

Reflection questions

Why is it important for national or local institutions to engage with youth?

How does the national or local context limit or enable meaningful youth engagement?

What are the key differences between approaches to youth engagement?

How are the core principles of youth engagement understood in a given institution?

What can be done to ensure youth engagement is meaningful?

SUGGESTED TIME 4 HOURS

Module 2.A * Nine reasons why 30 minutes	Module 2.B Context assessment 90 minutes	Module 2.C * Co-shape or enable 15 minutes	Module 2.D * The core principles 60 minutes	Module 2.E * Make it meaningful 45 minutes
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2.A

Nine reasons why

Why is it important for national or local institutions to engage with youth?

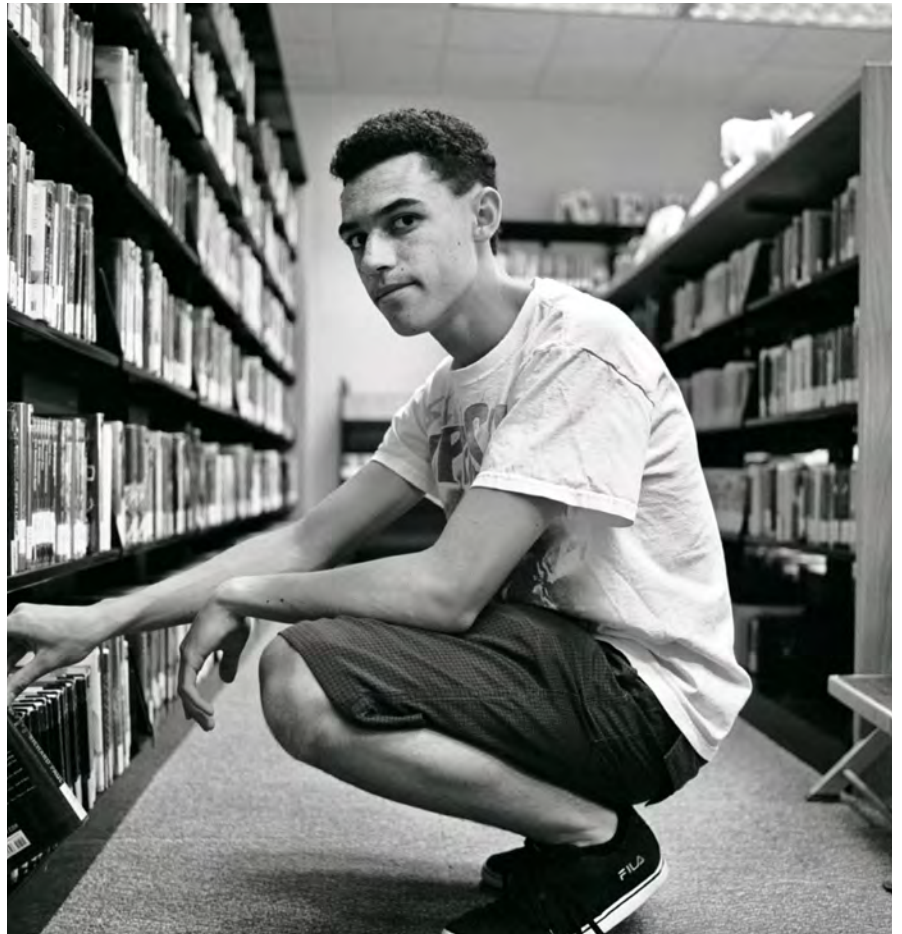
Engaging youth in a national or local institution's work relevant to or focused on youth has value in different ways. Listed below are nine reasons why national and local institutions should enable effective youth engagement.

Tool sheet



2.A

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2
3
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9



Addressing societal needs and challenges

1. Youth have innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to address societal needs and challenges.
2. The United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, also known as Agenda 2030, identifies youth as critical agents of change, with every Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) requiring youth action and participation to succeed. Young people understand better than anyone the challenges they are facing. Youth engagement is vital in translating the Agenda into national or local policies or programmes and thereby contributing to its achievement.
3. Investing in the engagement of this large demographic group ensures that new generations can express their ideas and contribute to national development and prosperity.

Harnessing the potential of youth

4. Youth engagement contributes to the identity-building of young people and to strengthening key life skills.
5. Participation is a fundamental human right. Engaging meaningfully with youth is a prerequisite to ensure that young people and their structures can exercise and fulfil this right. Youth engagement is a process that empowers and enables youth to understand, realize and claim their rights; to acknowledge and respect those of others; and to advocate for those whose rights are violated.
6. Youth engagement helps young people extend their agency towards active citizenship and express their voices and ideas.

Enhancing the institution's work

7. Youth keep a reality check on the work of national or local institutions. Engaging with youth ensures that such programmes stay informed, relevant, appropriate and responsive both to the needs and realities of young people and to the goal of transforming societies. They also ensure that programmes are sustainable by promoting ownership among youth.
8. Engaging with youth helps build support for the institution's work among the young people, who are influential actors in today's societies.
9. For institutions with a representative mandate, they also have an obligation to fulfil their role as duty-bearers¹⁷⁷ and ensure that all voices are heard and represented.



2.A ACTIVITY IDEA: NINE REASONS WHY



Purpose

This activity can be used to explore why it is important for national or local institutions to engage with youth.

Instruction

- Divide the participants into small groups and provide creative resources to each group.
- Invite groups to discuss the question ‘What is the benefit of engaging with youth?’
- Using creative resources, invite the groups to develop a visual response that reflects ideas from the group discussion.
- Ask groups to present the models and share highlights from their discussion.
- Introduce the nine reasons why.

Debrief questions

- How does youth engagement harness the potential of youth?
- How does youth engagement contribute to addressing national or local needs and challenges?
- How does youth engagement enhance a national or local institution’s work?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Creative resources
(Lego/playdough etc.)
Tool sheet



2.B

Context assessment

How does the national or institutional context limit or enable meaningful youth engagement?

Before designing and implementing any initiative that integrates meaningful youth engagement, it is essential to complete an analysis of the engagement environment for youth in the given context and use the findings to inform the design. This will allow building a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and limitations to enabling meaningful youth engagement within the national or institutional context.

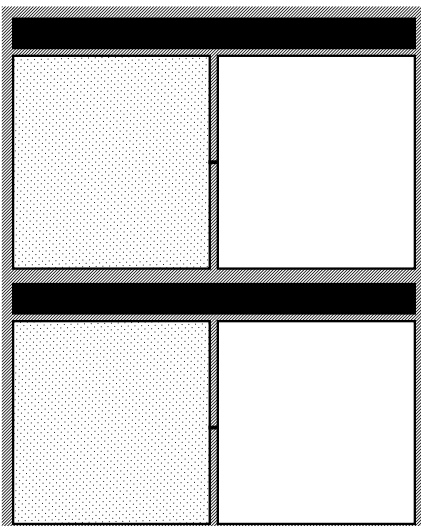
Six core elements to consider when completing a context analysis

1. Historical, social, political and cultural country or local context;
2. National or local youth priority needs and issues;
3. National or local stakeholders with an interest in or responsibility for engaging youth;
4. Existing international, national or local policies and laws that inform how youth are engaged;
5. Existing youth initiatives led by or delivered for youth;
6. Existing institutional culture relative to engaging with youth.

Tool sheet



2.B



2.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Purpose

This activity can be used to explore how youth engagement is enabled or limited, through a national and institutional context analysis, as well as to reflect on ideas of how to seize opportunities and overcome limitations for engagement.

In advance of the training, identify relevant national, local and institutional data that can be shared to inform discussions.

Instruction

- Place flipchart sheets in the room for each of the six elements of the context analysis. One element per flipchart.
- Break into six groups with a representative mix of participants. One group per flipchart sheet.
- Invite groups to spend 10 minutes discussing and responding to the questions based on their personal or professional experiences and perspectives. Include available data using the tool sheet.
- After ten minutes rotate to the next sheet and repeat.
- Continue until each group has reviewed each of the context analysis elements.
- Review and debrief the insights and ideas generated through the activity.

SUGGESTED TIME

90 minutes

60 min group activity
30 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart

(one sheet for each of the six elements)

Flipchart pens

Post-its

Tool sheet





Approaches to engage youth

What are the key differences between approaches to youth engagement?

There are two overarching approaches that a national or local institution can consider when engaging with youth. The first approach to engagement involves collaborating with youth to co-shape and co-deliver national or local programmes and policies. This involves equipping young people with information about the institution, their role and how national or local programmes and policies work. The second approach provides opportunities or enabling conditions to support the initiatives and actions of young people themselves, on national or local priorities.

APPROACH 1:

Co-shape & co-deliver institutional initiatives

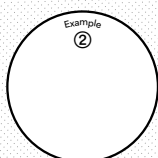
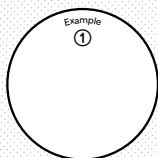
The institution works **with** young people, through different degrees of engagement (see [Module 3.A](#) of this tool). It involves youth and their structures in the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation stages.

APPROACH 2:

Enable youth initiatives

The institution supports young people and their structures, **as beneficiaries**, to help them design, lead and implement their own initiatives.

Tool sheet



These two streams are mutually reinforcing and can be combined. By engaging with youth and their structures using Approach 1 and supporting them to have a key role in shaping national or local initiatives, youth develop their knowledge and skills. This enables them to also lead their own initiatives. Taking Approach 2 enhances the agency of young people, including their knowledge and skills, as well as the diversity of young people taking action. (For a working definition on the diversity of youth, see the [Introduction](#) to this Toolbox.) In turn, this can contribute to addressing national or institutional priorities and objectives as through Approach 1.

National and local institutions have an opportunity and responsibility to facilitate Approach 1. This tool focuses on Approach 1, to accelerate the effort to shift institutional cultures and transform the way in which youth are considered and involved in co-shaping and co-delivering national and local initiatives. The purpose is to make youth engagement in the work of national or local institutions meaningful, whereby it becomes a sustainable part of their operations and culture.



2.© ACTIVITY IDEA: CO-SHAPE OR ENABLE**Purpose**

This activity can be used to distinguish between national or local policies or programmes that are co-shaped and co-delivered with young people, versus those that enable opportunities for youth as beneficiaries.

Instruction

- Share and review the examples on the 'Co-shape or enable' tool sheet.
- Invite participants to identify which youth engagement approach each example represents.

Debrief questions

- Why is it important to distinguish between the two different approaches?
- What is the benefit of engaging with youth and their structures using the first approach?
- How do the two approaches complement each other?

SUGGESTED TIME**15 minutes****GROUP SIZE****All participants****RESOURCES****Tool sheet**



The core principles that underpin youth engagement

How are the core principles of youth engagement understood in your institution?

Youth participation should be regarded as an essential part of all elements of a national or local programme or policy development process, and as such solicited and actively supported. Each national or local institution will have different priorities and objectives for their youth-relevant work. These priorities, and the specific initiatives in which they are reflected, will shape and inform how youth engagement is enabled.

Tool sheet



Name of the institution:	
①	What are the core objectives and priorities of the institution's youth-relevant strategy or policy?
②	
③	
④	
⑤	

The following principles can be used to underpin the institution's strategic approach to working with youth:

1. Agency of youth:

Youth are members of society in their own right, having an inherent value and characteristics. They have agency in society, manifested through their choices and actions, even when those are not always made consciously. Such agency influences society and is in turn influenced by the relationship of young people with other groups.

2. Youth as civic actors, knowledge holders and innovators:

Recognizing their agency means recognizing that young people take action in the transformation of society. As such, they are civic actors, knowledge holders and innovators. The institution recognizes the capacity of youth as the leaders of today and sees them not just as beneficiaries but also as active partners in its work.

3. Holistic youth development:

Holistic youth development respects young people as whole individuals who evolve in the context they live in. The institution recognizes the need to leverage resources, networks and expertise to address the diverse needs of youth, in order to create a more inclusive, participatory and contributive environment. (See [Tool II](#).)

4. Multistakeholder approaches:

These ensure the engagement of multiple stakeholders in youth-relevant initiatives, including youth and their structures⁷⁹, authorities and cross-sector partners. It is essential to have relevant national or local decision-makers, institutions and organizations committed to regular, systematic and meaningful youth engagement efforts.

5. Youth as rights-holders:⁷⁹

Recognizing youth as rights-holders promotes and facilitates transparency, accountability and responsiveness from duty-bearers towards them. As such, the role of national and local institutions is to support young people's participation in processes and decisions which affect their lives, and to promote the realization of their rights.

6. Sharing responsibility:

The institution supports youth to share responsibility and decision-making with non-youth. This requires power-sharing between non-youth and youth with respect to reciprocal and mutually beneficial exchanges that seek to equalize power and interests.

These principles are interlinked and should be viewed holistically.



2.② ACTIVITY IDEA: THE CORE PRINCIPLES



Purpose

This activity can be used to explore the key principles that underpin meaningful youth engagement and how they are considered in the priorities and objectives of a national or local institution's youth-relevant work.

Instruction

- Divide the participants into six groups.
- Assign each group one of the six principles.
- Invite groups to analyse their institutions' youth-relevant strategy or policy and discuss how the assigned principle is or is not taken into account.
- Encourage groups to record their reflections using the tool sheet for guidance.
- Ask groups to share their analysis through a debriefing.
- Encourage groups to reflect on each other's findings and identify shared objectives.

Debrief questions

- Were there any principles that were relevant to or applied in your institution's or national context?
- Were there any principles that were not relevant to or not applied in your institution's or national context?
- What actions will you take to incorporate these principles into your institution's work?
- Is there an additional principle that you think applies in your institution's or national context?

SUGGESTED TIME

60 minutes

30 min group activity
30 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-6

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Post-it notes
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet





How to apply the core principles

What can be done to ensure youth engagement is meaningful?

There is a big difference between ‘meaningful’ and ‘tokenistic’⁸¹⁰ engagement⁸¹¹. The latter can have negative impact on both the young people engaged and the initiatives in which they are engaged. For engagement to be meaningful - and not tokenistic - it must respect a series of principles and precepts. The following tenets should be considered to ensure that initiatives engage youth in a meaningful way:

1. **Advocacy** - Sensitizing other actors that engage with youth to value and adopt the principles of meaningful engagement. Challenging unequal power dynamics between youth and other actors.
2. **Age sensitivity and youth-friendliness** - Investing in youth-friendly and age-appropriate environments, processes, structures, mechanisms and materials. Ensuring there are adequate time and resources.
3. **Gender and sexual orientation sensitivity** - Making sure that the opportunities and ways of engagement are adequate to the individual characteristics of a young person considering their gender identity and expression as well as their sexual orientation, while ensuring her/his/their equal, safe, and flexible participation.
4. **Agency** - Ensuring that youth are equipped with capacities and tools, and that conditions are met for them to act and exert power or influence.
5. **Autonomy and self-organization** - Ensuring youth are free from outside control or pressure, including for decisions on the best structure and working style for them, based on their interests and capacities.
6. **Choice** - Giving youth the opportunity to choose the most appropriate area or form of engagement, or to discontinue it at any stage of the process.

Tool sheet



Things to do	Things to avoid
①	①
②	②
③	③

7. **Compliance with human rights** - Ensuring that the overall engagement of youth is led and designed in line with human rights. The promotion and protection of their social, political and cultural rights is the basis for supporting their engagement, and throughout their participation, the human rights of youth are respected while they also respect those of others. A focus is also put on special provisions related to minors, i.e. juvenile justice ; rights to education, protection of family life and personal convictions; the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, including access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to water and sanitation, etc.
8. **Designation** - Avoiding contexts where youth are made to compete with other stakeholders, parties or groups for space in the modalities and process of engagement. Ensuring there are specific designated seats available in mechanisms through which they engage.
9. **Inclusion** - Providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of cultural and social backgrounds, education, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, context, political and economic status, or other characteristics. Paying also attention to include a diversity of the lived experiences of young people. Where relevant, encouraging engaged youth to self-organize in inclusive, democratic structures that are informed by diverse views and experiences.
10. **Information-sharing and accountability** - Providing engaged youth with clear, accessible, diversity-sensitive, and age-appropriate information about their role. Clearly setting expectations at the outset. Explaining to youth how their inputs are used, interpreted, and have influenced results with transparency, establishing a communication feedback loop.
11. **Non-discrimination** - Absence of legal or actual measures discriminating against youth based on any inherent or external factor. Different needs of youth might demand their different treatment to address inequality. Nevertheless, implementation on international, regional and national commitments to tackle discrimination, as well as preventive measures and addressing the structural and root causes of discrimination are part of the process of ensuring meaningful youth engagement.
12. **Respect** - Respecting youth as contributors, innovators and knowledge holders on the basis of their perspectives and lived experiences.
13. **Safety** - Ensuring the physical and emotional security, as well as the mental health of the youth engaged, including based on their specific lived experiences (e.g. protecting youth with experience of violence or abuse where these are engaged). Following national or organizational safeguarding procedures as well as child protection rights and responsibilities for youth under 18.
14. **Support** (capacities and resources) - Enabling engaged youth and their structures to build their own capacities. Paying special attention to the capacity needs of traditionally undeserved youth and organizations and networks that work with them. Ensuring adequate financial resources are available and accessible.
15. **Value** - Valuing capacities and contributions of youth as much as those of adults. Encouraging youth to express views and ideas freely.



2.E ACTIVITY IDEA: MAKE IT MEANINGFUL



Purpose

This activity can be used to identify actions and ideas to make engagement a meaningful experience for youth and the institution engaging them.

Instruction

- Inform the group that there is a big difference between ‘meaningful’ and ‘tokenistic’ engagement.
- Break the participants into small groups.
- Invite groups to identify three ideas on things ‘to do’ to make engagement meaningful and three ideas on things ‘to avoid’.
- Ask groups to record each idea on a post-it and stick on relevant flipchart sheets.
- Review all ideas shared against the ideas in the tool.

Debrief questions

- What ideas and actions can we consider to ensure youth engagement is a meaningful process?
- Are all ideas of equal importance or are some more essential than others?
- Which ideas and action areas does the institution consider in its current youth engagement initiatives?
- Which ideas and action areas does the institution need to work on to make youth engagement meaningful in its initiatives.

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

25 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Post-it notes
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet

Module 3

Meaningful youth engagement in action

Overview

This module contains the different elements that help apply youth engagement in national or local initiatives. This includes building an understanding of the different degrees through which youth can be engaged and the types of activities that can be considered across youth-relevant interventions of national or local institutions. It introduces the different stages of the programme and policy process where youth engagement can take place and the types of youth and youth structures that can be reached out to.

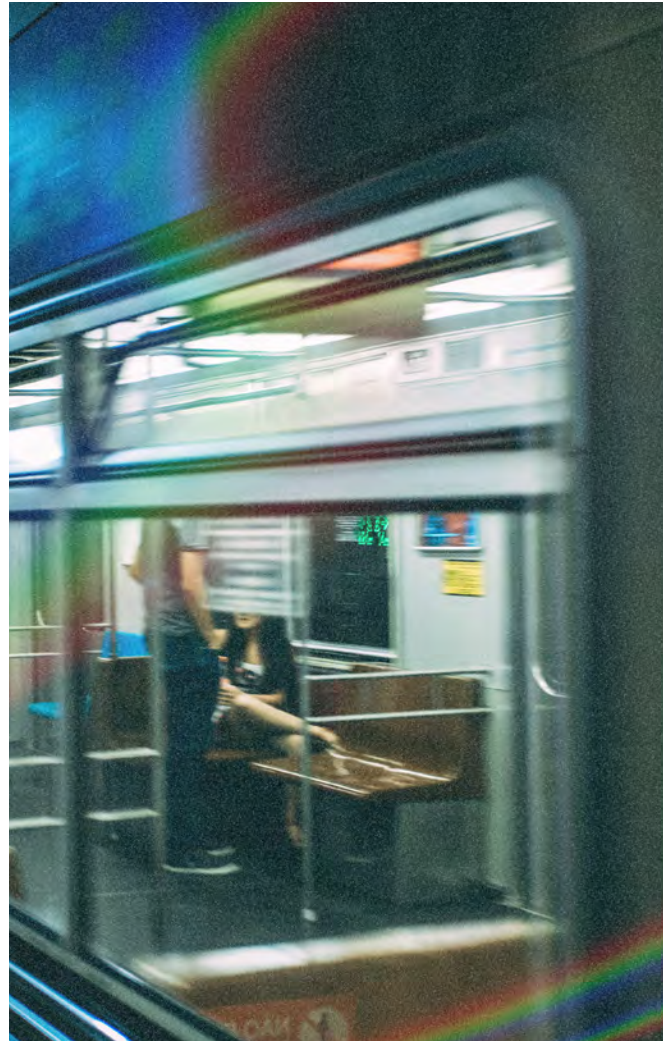
Reflection questions

How can youth be engaged in national or local policy and programming?

What can young people do when they are engaged?

Where can young people be engaged in a programme or policy process?

Who are the youth and youth structures that can be engaged?



SUGGESTED TIME 2.5 HOURS

Module 3.A *

The 'how' - four degrees of youth engagement

45 minutes

Module 3.B *

The 'where' - the stages of a policy or programme cycle where youth engagement can take place

45 minutes

Module 3.C *

The 'what' - actions and activities young people can do

30 minutes

Module 3.D *

The 'who' - the types of youth and youth structures that can be engaged

30 minutes



3.A

The 'how' – the four degrees of youth engagement

How can youth be engaged in policy and programming?

Tool sheet



The attitudes that non-youth hold towards youth and the relationships that they develop when engaging with them affect the extent to which young people are involved in programme and policy development processes, as well as the quality of the intergenerational partnerships established.

'Engaging with youth' is a term that can be interpreted in many ways and, thereby, give ground to different degrees of actual youth engagement. Some define it simply as enrolling young people as programme beneficiaries. On the other hand, some involve youth in more active and meaningful ways, as partners or leaders by including young people in decision-making, programme design, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, policy-making and advocacy efforts.

The degree of youth engagement depends on the context and the nature of the work undertaken within a programme or policy development process. While one degree may be more applicable than the others depending on the context, the preferences of youth or the availability of time and resources, it is important to note that **no one degree is necessarily better than another**.

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth consulted	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth consulted	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth consulted	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth consulted
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as partners
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as leaders	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth as leaders

POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Youth consulted

<p>Initiation</p> <p>Initiated and managed by the institution.</p>	<p>Engagement</p> <p>Youth are consulted for their ideas and perspectives in relation to the policy or programme, or a specific aspect of either. Youth make recommendations that are considered by adults.</p>	<p>Control over results</p> <p>Consultation enables youth to influence processes and results, without having direct control.</p>
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Youth contributing

<p>Initiation</p> <p>Initiated and managed by the institution.</p>	<p>Engagement</p> <p>Youth contribute in a limited role to a policy or programme, notably to the planning of, the implementation of, or the follow-up to a specific task.</p>	<p>Control over results</p> <p>Contribution enables youth to influence processes and results, without having direct control.</p> <p>Note that consultation of youth can be considered a type of youth contribution. However, the latter cannot be reduced to consultation only and can include other types of contributions by young people, such as designing or implementing specific aspects of a programme.</p>
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Table 4. The ‘how’ - four degrees of youth engagement



POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Youth as partners

Initiation	Engagement	Control over results
By the institution, by youth or together by both.	Youth are engaged in an active partnership and an open dialogue with the institution in all stages of strategic decision-making, initiative planning, implementation and evaluation.	Partnership enables youth to influence, challenge and engage with both the process and the result. Note that all initiatives (policy and programming) in which youth are the beneficiaries or that primarily concern youth should aim to include young people as partners or leaders in the process in order to avoid tokenism.

Youth as leaders

Initiation	Engagement	Control over results
Youth initiate action themselves.	Youth are responsible for all segments of a national project or programme: from initiation through to planning, implementation as well as monitoring, reporting and evaluation; or for specific segments of the policy process. ⁸¹²	Youth identify the issues of concern and control the process and results. Note that the institution plays the role of a facilitator, enabling youth to pursue their goals within programmatic objectives. To do this the institution can offer advice, provide spaces, give information, reinforce capacities, or establish links with other stakeholders.

Table 4. The 'how' - four degrees of youth engagement

3.Ⓐ ACTIVITY IDEA: THE 'HOW' - FOUR DEGREES OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Purpose

This activity can be used to reflect on the different levels young people can participate in national or local policy or programme processes and the factors that impede or facilitate their participation.

Instruction

- Introduce the four degrees of youth engagement model.
- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Give each group the tool sheet with mixed examples and hidden answers.
- Invite groups to identify to which level the examples refer.
- Invite groups to identify an example of a youth engagement initiative from their own practice and identify to which level their selected examples refer.
- As a group, review the insights generated and discuss why and how each group came up with the answers about the four degrees of engagement.

Debrief questions

- Did the activity help you think more clearly about the ways young people participate in your institution?
- Which degree of youth engagement is most commonly applied in your institution?
- Can you identify examples of youth engagement initiatives for each degree of engagement in your institution?
- What do you need to do to move from one degree of youth engagement to another?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

25 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Post-it notes
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



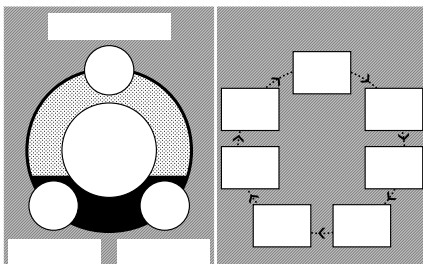
3.ⓑ

The 'where' - the stages of a policy or programme cycle where youth engagement can take place

Where can young people be engaged in a programme or policy process?

Following this introduction to the different degrees of youth engagement, the next step is to see where these can be applied in a programme cycle or policy process.

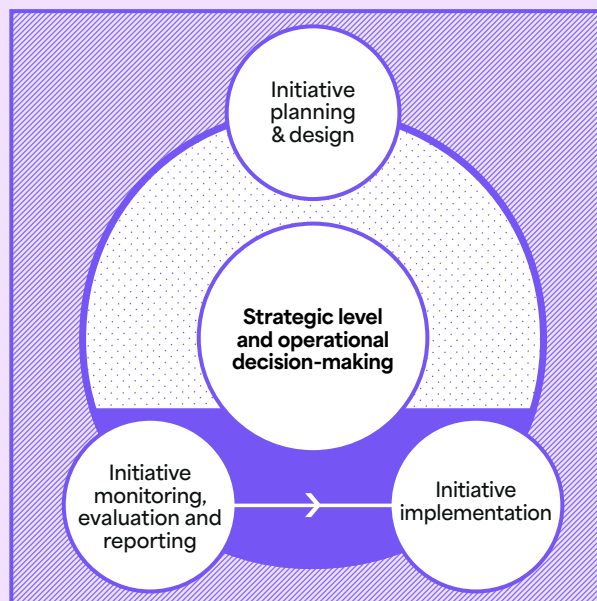
Tool sheet



For youth engagement to be meaningful, young people must have the opportunity to engage at any, and ideally all, of the stages of a policy or programme process.

Also, one initiative can combine different degrees of engagement at different stages of a policy or programme process.

There are four stages where youth engagement can take place within a programme cycle:



There are seven stages where youth engagement can take place within a policy or legislative process:

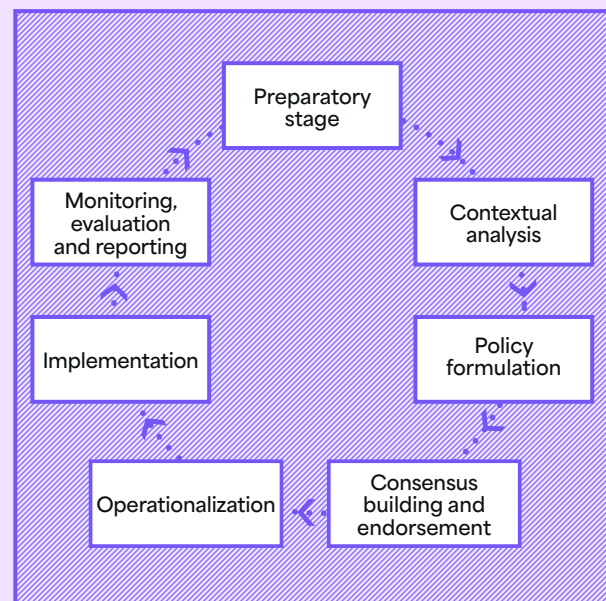


Figure 8. The 'where' - stages of a policy or programme cycle where youth engagement can take place

3.B ACTIVITY IDEA: WHERE CAN YOUNG PEOPLE BE ENGAGED IN A PROGRAMME OR POLICY PROCESS? *

Purpose

This activity can be used to consider what types of activities and mechanisms can be applied to engage youth at the different stages of a programme or policy process.

Instruction

- Introduce the policy and programme cycle models.
- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Invite groups to select the model relevant to their work and discuss and identify the different types of activities or mechanisms that could be used to engage youth at each phase. Encourage groups to review activities identified in activity 3.a to begin the process and provide specific suggestions.
- As a group, debrief the ideas generated using the questions below.

Debrief questions

- At which stage of the process is youth engagement happening most frequently?
- Where is there limited youth engagement?
- Is youth engagement taking place at the appropriate degree during each stage?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

25 min group activity
20 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Post-it notes
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



The 'what' - actions and activities of young people

What actions and activities can young people undertake when engaged?

Institutions that seek to engage young people may be responsible for establishing national programmes, designing and implementing national policies or overseeing legislative processes. While each of these areas of work will present different opportunities to engage with youth, there are some common activities and actions that youth can engage in across all areas.

Tool sheet	3 ©	
Action area	Examples from policy-making or legislative processes	Examples from programming
Sharing advice and technical assistance		
Providing education and training		
Producing knowledge and generating innovation		
Managing knowledge and raising awareness		
Establishing networks and partnerships		

Sharing advice and technical assistance	E.g. Youth share insights on a policy or programme area through a co-design process.
Providing education and training	E.g. A youth group designs and delivers capacity development trainings as part of an initiative.
Producing knowledge and generating innovation	E.g. Youth take on the role of researchers in a needs analysis for a programme or a situation analysis for a policy.
Managing knowledge and raising awareness	E.g. Youth lead a campaign to raise awareness on a specific issue or programme.
Establishing networks and partnerships	E.g. A youth organization establishes partnerships with local youth groups to help implement a national programme, including in the framework of youth policy implementation.

Table 5. The 'what' - actions and activities of young people

3.© ACTIVITY IDEA: THE 'WHAT' - ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Purpose

This activity can be used to identify actions and activities that youth can undertake within a policy or programming development and implementation process.

Instruction

- Introduce the five categories of action.
- Divide the participants into small groups based on their priority work areas (e.g. a group that works in policy and another group that works on programmes).
- Invite groups to review the categories and share examples that they are aware of youth engagement initiatives that correspond to each category.
- Ask groups to record their examples using the tool sheet.
- Review all ideas shared.

Debrief questions

- What examples of 'sharing advice and technical assistance' could you find? Which degree of engagement does the example represent?
- What examples of 'providing education and training' could you find? Which degree of engagement does the example represent?
- What examples of 'producing knowledge and generating innovation' could you find? Which degree of engagement does the example represent?
- What examples of 'managing knowledge and raising awareness' could you find? Which degree of engagement does the example represent?
- What examples of 'establishing networks and partnerships' could you find? Which degree of engagement does the example represent?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Post-it notes
Flipchart pens
Tool sheet



3. D

The 'who' – the types of youth and youth structures that can be engaged

Who are the youth and youth structures that can be engaged?

Let us now have a look at the types of youth and youth structures that can be engaged in youth-relevant initiatives. A youth structure includes all formal and informal groups, organizations, networks and representative bodies that work on behalf of youth or which are youth-led.

Young people can perform a variety of roles individually and collectively within a given initiative. The numbers and types of youth and youth structures engaged depend on the initiative being delivered and the degree of youth engagement therein. Consultative processes tend to involve larger and more varied groups of youth. Processes with a greater depth of youth engagement tend to involve fewer youth who may have specific skills or lived experiences.

Tool sheet



Type of youth or youth structures that could be engaged

Ex Young people with lived experience

①

②

③

Possible outreach and engagement methods

Ex Establish a partnership with a community-based civil society organization working with young people in the community

①

②

③

Inclusiveness is needed, while ensuring gender and geographical representation. In doing so, it is important to engage with disenfranchised and vulnerable youth groups as well as those with lived experiences, recognizing that ‘vulnerability’ is not a static state or identity marker. It may or may not last over time and young people active in civil society and public policy may also be in situations of vulnerability.

Table 6 below represents some of the different types of youth profiles and roles that engaged young people play. It should be noted that these intersect and overlap, and that young people active in public policy may also represent those active in civil society and vice-versa.⁸³

Young people active in public policy or legislative processes	Young people active in civil society and community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and local youth representatives including youth delegates, ambassadors, etc. • Youth advisory bodies • Youth councils • Young diplomats • Young legislators • Young officials (government) • Young politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school, university and technical education and training students • Young academics, researchers and scientists • Young leaders, activists and change-makers working on relevant issues or working in their communities • Young bloggers, influencers, journalists and reporters • Young entrepreneurs • Young experts and professionals • Youth groups (formal and informal) • Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) • Youth with lived experiences of issues within the institutions’ priority areas • Youth workers

Table 6. The ‘who’ - youth profiles and roles



The guiding questions below serve as a starting point to think about different youth and youth structures that can be engaged:

- What representative youth structures exist? Is there a local or national youth council?
- What youth-led initiatives, movements or organizations exist? For example, are there student associations, organizations or informal youth groups?
- What other youth structures exist that work on behalf of youth? For example, are there civil society or grassroots organizations?
- What are the main issues they prioritize? What are the most relevant priorities that they could collaborate on?
- Which groups of youth would be considered vulnerable in the local or national context?
- What additional support is required and that can be provided to support their engagement?

Youth who are or could be in vulnerable situations should also be engaged. They are not always well-represented and cannot always be found among the other youth categories or structures. To this end, grassroots organizations that are already working with these groups could be identified.

When considering the ‘who’, one should also think about the geographical scale and context:

- Is youth engagement taking place at national or local level?
- Are all regions, provinces and cities in the country concerned by the initiative properly and equally represented?
- Are both urban and rural youth engaged?



3.10 ACTIVITY IDEA: THE 'WHO' - YOUTH AND THEIR STRUCTURES



Purpose

This activity will help identify the types of youth and their structures to engage in a youth engagement initiative.

Instruction

- Divide the participants into small groups.
- Invite them to select a specific group of youth or youth structure and consider what methods could be used to engage them. Ask groups to record their insights on the tool sheet.
- Ask them to share their findings through a short debrief.

Debrief questions

- Do the selected young people or structures reflect young people active in the public policy or civil society sphere?
- Are they currently active in national or local programmes and policy-related activities?
- What methods and approaches can be used to reach out to and engage with these groups?

SUGGESTED TIME

30 minutes

20 min group activity
10 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Tool sheet



Module 4

Implementing youth engagement initiatives

Overview

This final module brings together the core elements from the previous ones to create an action plan for an initiative that integrates the meaningful engagement of young people. It includes ideas on how to measure success, and concludes with common challenges that national or local actors may come across when implementing youth engagement initiatives as well as ideas on how to address them.

Reflection questions

How can meaningful youth engagement be integrated in on-going or new initiatives?

What types of challenges could arise and how can they be addressed?

How to measure whether an initiative has engaged youth meaningfully?

Module 4.A

Pitch for youth

60-180 minutes



Module 4.B

Addressing challenges

45 minutes

Module 4.C

Measuring success

45 minutes





Action plan

How can meaningful youth engagement be integrated in on-going or new initiatives?

Following the elements on what meaningful youth engagement entails, why it is important, and how, where and with whom it can be implemented, it is time to plan a youth engagement initiative that combines them all and to create an action plan. As a reminder, a context assessment should be completed before designing the initiative.

Tool sheet



Who		
Why		
Scale		
Challenges		

4.A ACTIVITY IDEA: PITCH FOR YOUTH



Purpose

This activity can be used to plan an initiative integrating the meaningful engagement of youth, by combining all the elements covered in this tool.

Depending on the time and desired results, the activity can be used to generate ideas. With more time, it can be used to develop concrete plans, programmes or projects that meaningfully engage young people.

Instruction

- Break into groups with a representative mix of participants.
- Invite groups to work together to design an initiative that integrates youth engagement and that considers each element in the tool sheet.
- Invite each group to pitch their youth engagement idea in an agreed amount of time (5-10 min).
- As each group is pitching, record the identified challenges on a flipchart, to review later.
- After each pitch, encourage peer-to-peer feedback.

Debrief questions

- What opportunities are available to deliver this youth engagement initiative?
- What additional considerations or provisions would be needed for its delivery?
- What commitments could you make to implement this initiative?

SUGGESTED TIME

60-180 minutes

40-120 min group activity
20-60 min debrief

GROUP SIZE

4-8

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pen
Tool sheet



4. B

Addressing challenges

What types of challenges could arise and how can they be addressed?

Participatory approaches can be time-consuming and complex. They require considerable effort, resources, time and follow-up, as well as adequate administrative procedures. Some flexibility in processes is therefore essential when implementing youth engagement initiatives.

This Q&A proposes some solutions to some of the most frequently asked questions. However, they are not exhaustive and can be enriched based on lessons learned from on-going practice as well as the experiences of others.

4.8 ACTIVITY IDEA: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES**Instruction**

- After all groups have pitched, review the internal and external challenges that were identified in the pitch activity.
- As a group, consider possible ways of mitigating or addressing them.
- See this section on ‘addressing challenges’ for information on commonly asked questions.

SUGGESTED TIME**45 minutes****GROUP SIZE****All participants****RESOURCES****Flipchart paper
Flipchart pen**

Inclusivity and representation

Q: How can I ensure the representation and participation of youth that are or could be in vulnerable situations?

A: Identify and work with grassroots organizations that work with or represent the group of youth you wish to engage. Engaging with young people who live in vulnerable situations often requires that additional assistance be provided to them so they are able to consult and work with their wider community. Usually, a grassroots organization is best equipped to address these needs, run a specific engagement process with these groups and integrate the groups' ideas into discussions with wider groups. Working with grassroots organizations can also be an effective way to ensure language does not become a barrier to inclusion. Remember to consider the value exchange for their participation and adjust processes, structures, and materials to ensure they are youth-friendly and age-appropriate. Support online participation when geographical limitations might prevent inclusivity. In the absence of internet access, ensure other outreach options, including providing data allowances or adopting targeted measures designed specifically to allow young people to contribute despite connectivity challenges.

Q: How can I ensure that I am engaging with different youth groups and not always working with the same people?

A: Map different and additional youth spaces (communities, schools, groups) or ask for suggestions from youth already engaged in initiatives. You can also partner with youth-serving organizations or entities that already reach out to, and engage with, different groups of young people. Overall, create a variety of outreach strategies that will target these different spaces.

To see the working definition on the diversity of youth, see the [Introduction](#) to this Toolbox. To be reminded of the diversity and different characteristics of youth in your specific context, see [Module 1.3](#).

Mobilization and retention

Q: I have tried to reach out to youth and youth-led organizations to ensure their engagement, but they are not very responsive. What more can be done if they are not interested or do not have the capacity to engage?

A: If you are not receiving immediate or regular responses, that does not necessarily mean that they are not interested or do not have the capacities to engage. Provide sufficient time for communication and use youth-friendly communication methods, tools and platforms. Clarify the aims, scope and expectations of your initiative as well as how the youth or youth organization you are reaching out to will benefit from their invested time. Inquire about their capacity to engage and remain flexible and responsive to their needs.

Q: Young people engaged in the process are disengaging from it. What should I do?

A: Young people will often disengage from an initiative if they feel the engagement lacks purpose or transparency, or because they have competing commitments and activities. Review the key principles and pay special attention to transparency, accountability and communication. Ask them about times of the year when they have more time to contribute and about how they would like to contribute. Remember, youth engagement should be voluntary.

Operational and financial

Q: There is limited time to adapt my institution's processes, materials and environments to support meaningful youth engagement. What can I do about this?

A: Complete an analysis of the environment for youth engagement at the start of any youth-relevant initiative to ensure there is adequate time for planning and implementation of its youth engagement aspects. Consider partnering with youth structures that already have experience in adapting and implementing youth-friendly processes to support meaningful engagement. Where the existing youth development infrastructure is limited, consider what additional financial resources would be required to support the ongoing development and capacity strengthening of the sector as part of the initiative.

Q: What financial resources are available to support youth engagement initiatives?

A: Available resources will vary depending on national context. Estimate the cost of engaging youth in an inclusive and respectful manner. If your resources are not adequate to cover this, consider identifying and soliciting foundations and grant-making bodies that prioritize youth issues, as well as public funding available for these types of activities.

Cultural

Q: How do I respond to a cultural context that promotes hierarchical structures and respect for elders, where the value of youth engagement is not always understood or fully realized? How do I support youth who may not consider themselves capable or well-positioned due to this cultural perception?

A: Capacity development before and throughout the duration of a youth engagement initiative can both support youth to understand and believe in their capabilities and sensitize non-youth actors to the value of meaningful youth engagement.

Q: How do I respond to a cultural context that does not recognize LGBTQ+ youth or entrenches male dominance and patriarchy?

A: A human rights-based approach is central to all youth-relevant initiatives and should include gender main streaming and the promotion of rights for LGBTQ+ youth. The exclusion of young people based on their gender or sexual orientation among other characteristics can be addressed through the initiative's activities. Seeking balanced participation and using inclusive language in materials and communications can contribute to inclusion. It can also be helpful to complete a legal analysis and, where required, support awareness-raising and capacity development efforts in parallel to the initiative. In many contexts young people are themselves leading efforts to redefine social norms. The physical and emotional safety of all young people engaged in initiatives must be considered when their contributions could be considered politically or culturally sensitive.





Ensuring success

How to measure whether or not an initiative has engaged youth meaningfully?

Identifying measures of success before implementing a youth engagement initiative can provide a framework for monitoring progress. It also ensures that information is recorded, which is important to allow for continued learning. The questions below can be used to develop a checklist as well as performance indicators as applicable, to monitor and assess whether youth engagement within a youth-relevant initiative has been meaningful.

The checklist is not comprehensive. It can be used to reflect on the approach taken in the initiative and to develop customized outputs, outcomes, performance indicators and associated baselines, sources, means of verification and targets relevant to your initiative on the level of a specific policy or programme. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation tools and methods such as observations, surveys, focus groups and others should also be adjusted to be made youth-friendly.

Tool sheet



Question	
Performance Indicator	

Whom did I engage?

- Which youth and youth structures have I engaged? How many of them?
- Have I ensured that I have been inclusive when identifying the young people and their structures, providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of cultural and social backgrounds, education, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, context, political and economic status, or other characteristics? Have I also included youth that are or could be in vulnerable situations (for example, those living in areas of armed conflict, living in poverty, in situations of working poverty or in jobs that have limited access to social protection and that do not provide adequate labour standards, or those belonging to groups that are, or have historically been, marginalized, including indigenous youth, youth in rural areas, youth with disabilities and young migrants)?
- Did such young people or structures need to be representative of national youth needs and views, or have I engaged them based on their personal experiences?

How and where did I engage youth?

- At which stages of the process from strategic governance and decision-making and initiative design through to initiative evaluation, reporting and testimonies, did I consult, partner with, or enable contributions and leadership of youth?
- Were there specific stages or aspects of my initiative that were designed or implemented by youth?
- Have youth been engaged in an open dialogue with my institution at all stages of strategic decision-making, initiative planning, implementation and monitoring, reporting and evaluation?
- Did youth come up with the idea for the initiative? Have young people or youth organizations been responsible for leading the initiative, from planning and implementation through to monitoring, reporting and evaluation?



How did I ensure that engagement was meaningful?

- Have I adjusted opportunities and ways of engagement so that they are adequate for the age and other individual characteristics of the participating youth while also ensuring their equal, safe and flexible participation?
- Have I equipped engaged youth with the capacities, tools and conditions they need to act and exert power and influence?
- Have I provided engaged youth with clear, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their roles?
- Have I clearly set expectations at the outset?
- Have I given engaged youth the choice to select the most appropriate area or form of engagement, or to discontinue at any stage of the process?
- Have I invested in youth-friendly and age-appropriate environments, processes, structures, mechanisms, and materials?
- Have I effectively taken into consideration the ideas and proposals of the youth I have engaged with?
- Have I established a transparent communication feedback loop to explain to youth how their inputs have been used and interpreted to influence outcomes?
- Have I made sure that there is no pressure or attempts for control of the inputs youth may provide?
- Have I ensured there are specifically designated seats for youth in the institutional mechanisms through which they can engage?
- Have I ensured appropriate mechanisms for engaging under-served groups?

4.© ACTIVITY IDEA: MEASURING SUCCESS

Purpose

This activity can be used to develop a set of questions that provide the basis for performance indicators to monitor and evaluate if youth have been meaningfully engaged in an initiative.

Instruction

- Recap the core elements of the training, including the ‘ideas to make it meaningful’ and as well as reflections from the ‘how’, ‘where’, ‘what’ and ‘who’ activities.
- Invite participants to develop one question that could be used to develop a performance indicator to monitor and assess how effectively youth have been meaningfully engaged in an initiative. See example questions to use as guidance in Module 4.© above.
- Review the questions and debrief.

Debrief questions

- Why is it important to monitor and evaluate meaningful youth engagement?
- Will performance indicators be different depending on the degree of engagement?
- What opportunities are available to embed performance indicators on meaningful youth engagement into existing monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks?
- What other performance indicators can be used, based on what you now know about meaningful youth engagement?

SUGGESTED TIME

45 minutes

GROUP SIZE

All participants

RESOURCES

Flipchart paper
Flipchart pens
Post-its



Endnotes

TOOL IV

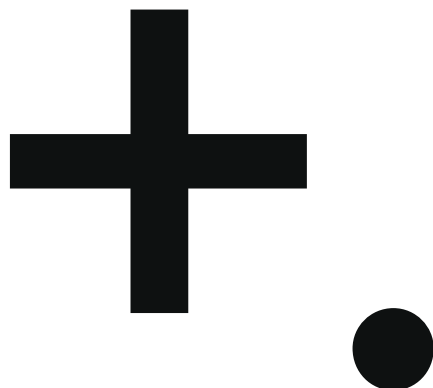
- 77 Duty-bearers are entities or individuals having a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. It is commonly used to refer to state actors, but non-state actors can also be considered duty-bearers. <https://www.unesco.org/en/international-programme-development-communication/duty-bearers>
- 78 A youth structure may include formal or informal groups, organizations, networks and representative bodies that work on behalf of youth or which are youth-led
- 79 Rights-holders are individuals or social groups that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty-bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights-holders under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular contexts, there are often specific social groups whose human rights are not fully realized, respected or protected
- 80 Tokenistic engagement is the apparent involvement of a group that hides a lack of real change or real impact on the work that is developed with the engagement of that group (Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire. 2021. What is tokenism and how to avoid it. <https://iod.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2021-10/what-is-tokenism-and-how-to-avoid-it.pdf>) and the superficial involvement of a group in the decision-making process in ways that keep them powerless, under-informed and unaccountable (<https://www.youthfriendly.com/tokenism>). Youth tokenism happens whenever adults put youth in formal and informal positions without any substance, purpose or power in order to say they have youth on board. See Fletcher, A. F.C. 2012. Are you tokenizing youth. <https://adamfletcher.net/2012/10/31/are-you-tokenizing-youth>
- 81 For examples, see 34 signs that youth are being tokenized in *Ibid*
- 82 The position of leadership for young people in policy processes may be more limited, but not impossible. As examples, one can think of young political leaders leading youth policy processes, or youth organizations leading the implementation of specific aspects of a youth policy
- 83 The listing is not exhaustive and can be further developed based on context



Annex 1 Compendium of global and regional standards in areas affecting youth

Annex 2 Note on methodology

References and further reading



Annexes

References and further reading



Compendium of global and regional standards in areas affecting youth

How can the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities shape a youth policy? What are the provisions in the African Union’s Agenda 2063 that relate to youth? What UN resolutions and documents frame youth policies across the world?

The Compendium of global and regional standards in areas affecting youth, available through the QR code below, provides links to instruments (conventions, declarations, recommendations, guidelines, etc.) in UNESCO’s areas of competence that can inspire the design of specific policy provisions when developing a youth-related policy. It includes both instruments that specifically concern youth (youth-focused) and instruments that are general in terms of their target population but provide standards in areas that are relevant to youth policy (e.g. education, culture, communication, science, labour, etc.).

As such, the Compendium is a useful resource when drafting youth policies, designing relevant performance indicators and results, and evaluating outcomes of youth programmes.

The Compendium is non-exhaustive and will be updated regularly with key instruments.



2

Note on methodology

This Toolbox brings together tools that were developed in different periods and to address different programme needs. All have been piloted in a variety of countries, and have been re-assessed and/or peer-reviewed individually, prior to the peer review of the full Toolbox.



The **Guide for policy design on youth** was first drafted in 2012, following a thorough mapping of all available tools, reports and guidance notes on youth policy development since 1995. The initial draft was peer-reviewed within UNESCO and by the members of the Interagency Network on Youth Development (IANYD). It was piloted for participatory policy design, in collaboration with national governments and youth organizations in eight countries: Cambodia, Mongolia, Saint-Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Sudan, Tonga, Viet Nam, Zambia. It was also presented and debated during international and regional policy meetings, including the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth 2019 and Youth Forum Lisboa+21 (Portugal, 2019), the Youth Policies and Inequalities in Latin America Meeting (Mexico, 2016) and the Global Forum on Youth Policies (Azerbaijan, 2014). The results from these peer reviews, debates and pilots have served to refine and update the Guide.

The two **capacity development and intergenerational dialogue tools** on **holistic youth development** and on **youth civic engagement** were designed in 2017 following a literature review and mapping of available knowledge in academia, policy and practice. They were peer-reviewed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and two UNESCO Chairs on youth ^{8.6}. They were piloted by enabling policy dialogue on youth in seven countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Jamaica, Nigeria, Sudan, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia) and training young trainers from 12 countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo, Türkiye, Viet Nam, Zambia). The peer reviews, as well as the results from and evaluations of these pilot applications, have served to refine and update the content of these tools.

The **training tool on meaningful youth engagement** was drafted in 2022, building on lessons learned from the internal application and assessment of UNESCO's (2017) ^{8.6}, and then IANYD's (2019) ^{8.6}, staff training tool on how to engage meaningfully with youth. To this day, UNESCO has built capacities of more than 350 staff both from Headquarters and the field, across all programmes and ranks. The tool endorsed by IANYD has been used to build staff capacities by several entities of the UN System, as well as in some UN County Teams (e.g. Egypt and Viet Nam). This tool was peer-reviewed by six youth organizations, five government officials and three civil society actors across all world regions.

The peer-review process of the **entire Toolbox** was conducted end 2022/early 2023. The Toolbox was peer-reviewed by five government officials, experts from four intergovernmental organizations, six experts from academia and civil society and seven UNESCO experts (see full list under '[Acknowledgements](#)').



Endnotes

ANNEXES

84 A UNESCO Chair on Children, Youth and Civic Engagement at the University of Galway (Ireland) and the UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development at Penn State University (USA)

85 UNESCO. 2017. [Meaningfully engaging with youth: guidance and training on UNESCO's work within the Operational Strategy on Youth](#) (2014-2021)

86 UNESCO. 2019. [Meaningfully engaging youth: Guidance and training for UN staff](#), endorsed by IANYD



Energizers and reflection ideas for facilitators



Takeaway circle

This is a simple exercise for groups to reflect on their learning and identify their key takeaway.

How to play

Invite participants to sit in a circle. In turn, invite each participant to share:

- One key learning takeaway;
- Why this learning was important for them;
- How they will apply the learning moving forward.

This exercise can be used at the end of each module or each day.

Candy game

This icebreaker is a simple way to help people introduce facts about themselves. It is very flexible and adaptable.

Setup

Pour multicolour candy into a bowl.

How to play

Invite everyone in the group to take as much or as little as they like from the bowl. Make sure that no one eats their candy right away.

For each piece of candy they take, participants must answer a question, depending on its colour. For example, you can designate:

- Red candy: favourite hobbies
- Green candy: favourite foods
- Yellow candy: favourite movies
- Orange candy: favourite places to travel
- Blue candy: wild cards that allow the person to choose any category they want

You can be creative and choose any questions you think would be fitting for your group.



Human bingo

This is a fun and engaging icebreaker that invites participants to wander around the room and get the names and signatures of people linking them to facts listed on the bingo sheet.

Setup

Prepare a bingo card which includes nine questions in a matrix box. Some of the example questions related to meaningful youth engagement could be:

- Are you a member of a local youth organization?
- Have you worked on a youth-related project?
- Have you participated in a youth-focused capacity-building programme?
- Have you done voluntary work?

How to play

Give each participant a bingo paper and a pen. Tell participants how much time they have for this activity, which is to mingle, introduce themselves and find people who match the traits cited in the questions. Participants must locate another participant who can answer 'yes' to a question. They must have that person sign their name in the square. Each person can sign only one square per bingo card. The participant who gets signatures in all the boxes is the winner. Invite them to the front to introduce themselves and share their interesting experiences in mingling.

Line-up

In this short group challenge, participants must organize themselves in a line according to a certain criterion (such as height) without speaking. The activity promotes non-verbal communication and teamwork. Simpler versions of the activity can be used in early stages of group development while more complex versions can be used to challenge more established groups.

How to play

Give the group the task to line up in order of height (tallest to shortest) without talking. Repeat the challenge two or three times with progressively more challenging tasks, such as:

- Line up by date of birth (youngest to oldest);
- Line up by place of birth (farthest to closest).

You can use this activity to divide participants into different working groups for the workshop activities.

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and further
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Because Youth Perspectives Matter UNESCO Toolbox for youth policy and programming

Young people fear for their future

Pandemics, conflict, climate change, inequality - these are the issues defining their reality. Yet at the same time their potential to provide solutions to the multiple crises is not fully realized. From low representation in decision-making bodies and tokenistic approaches to inclusion, to institutional obstacles to participation and limited civic spaces, young people are disconnected from influencing decisions and actions that affect their lives. They need real opportunities to participate in decision-making and contribute to practical solutions.

Policy-makers, public officials and practitioners - as well as development sector and civil society actors - can and should create such opportunities for youth. This Toolbox is a comprehensive go-to resource to make that possible. It is intended to **support these stakeholders in designing and implementing policies and programmes to address the multidimensional needs of youth**. It consists of a guide for participatory youth policy design; intergenerational dialogue tools on holistic youth development and youth civic engagement; and a training tool on meaningful youth engagement. It also includes a compendium of global and regional standards in the areas that affect youth.



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Because Youth Perspective Matter

UNESCO Toolbox
for youth policy
and programming

Tool sheets

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Module 1

Who is 'youth'?

Select one of the youth profiles.

Identify the different characteristics and variables that are highlighted in the profile and mark each on the characteristics wheel.

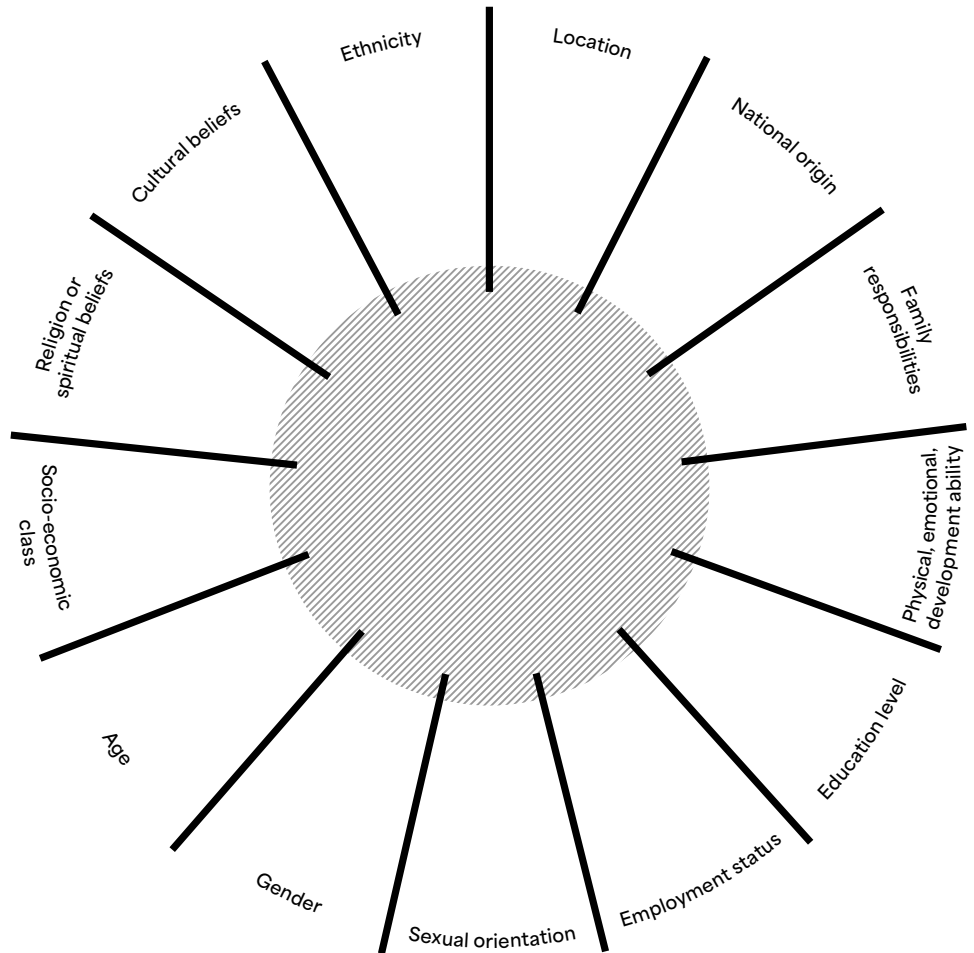
Profiles

A 22-year-old female university graduate, recently employed at one of the top companies in the country

A 24-year-old male wheelchair user living in the capital city with irregular employment

A 19-year-old male who has just set up a small business in the digital economy

A 17-year-old female who did not complete school living in a rural community with caring responsibilities



How do these characteristics and variables influence the experience of youth?

A large, empty rectangular box intended for a student's response to the question above.

How do the transitions apply to youth in your context, including any personal experiences you may have had if/when navigating this transition yourself?

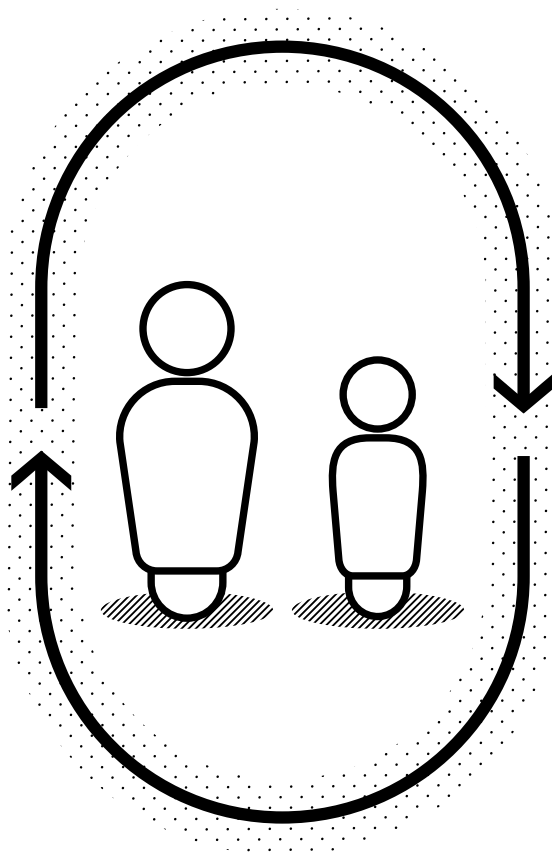
<p>Continuing to learn</p>	<p>E.g. Continuing to higher education or technical and vocational education and training.</p>
<p>Starting to work</p>	<p>E.g. Accessing employment or entrepreneurship opportunities.</p>
<p>Developing a healthy lifestyle</p>	<p>E.g. Developing agency on lifestyle choices.</p>
<p>Forming families</p>	<p>E.g. Relationships, families and family responsibilities.</p>
<p>Exercising citizenship</p>	<p>E.g. Forms of civic engagement, such as volunteering, community service and political participation.</p>
<p>Other transitions identified</p>	

What is the relationship between youth and non-youth in your context?

How does this relationship influence the way youth is understood in society?

How does this relationship influence the role of youth in society?

How does this relationship influence the rights and responsibilities that are recognized for youth in society?



How does this relationship affect youth agency and access to power or decision-making (at family, community, national, etc levels)?

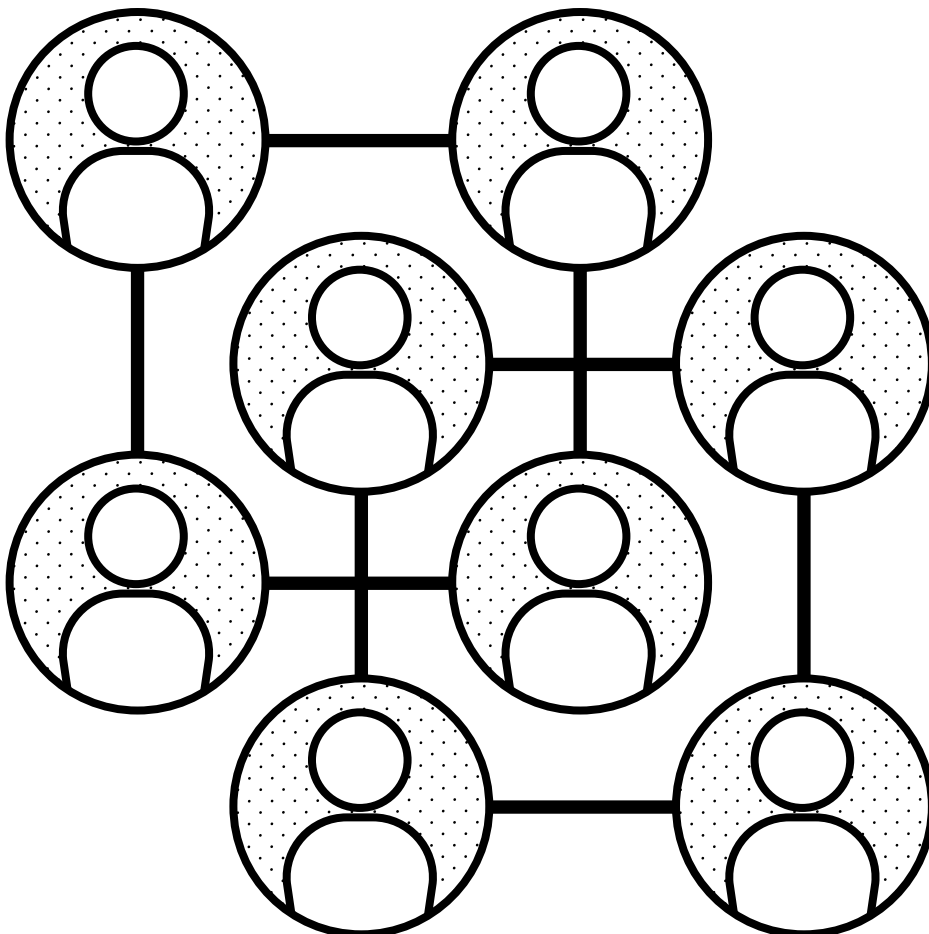
How does this relationship inform the opportunities available to youth?

What are the characteristics shared by youth and non-youth such as those based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural beliefs, religion, among others?

What are the relationships between different subgroups of youth in your context?

Questions to consider:

- Who are the different subgroups of youth?
- How do those subgroups perceive one another?
- How do they interact with one another, if at all?
- What are the power dynamics between different subgroups of youth?
- What is the role given to each of these subgroups by young people themselves?
- How do young people organize among themselves to interact with society?





Developmental Holistic Youth

Module 2

A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - policy content

What is the vision for youth in your context and what actions need to be taken to achieve it?

STEP

1

Needs

The current situation of youth:

Outline the current situation and needs of youth in your context that should be considered in a policy. Needs can be identified based on discussions in previous activities as well as captured through research and data.

STEP

2

Vision

The vision for youth:

Develop a vision statement for youth. A vision statement should be youth-centred, aspirational and long term. It should create a picture of what the policy will work towards achieving.

STEP

3

Actions

The actions:

Outline the actions needed to move youth from their current situation towards the vision for youth.

①

②

③

Identify and record the rights and responsibilities recognized for youth at national level or foreseen in international frameworks with which your country engages.

International frameworks

E.g. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

National frameworks

E.g. Existing national youth policy

- Who sets the rights and responsibilities for youth in your specific context?

- How is this currently being done?
How could it be done more effectively?

- To what extent are young people able to exercise their rights? In which areas do young people face barriers accessing their rights?

- What changes are necessary in order for young people to access or exercise their rights?

List the actions identified in activity 2.A.

Identify the different intersectoral policy areas and initiatives that are concerned by or contribute to each action.

Action	Intersectoral policy areas
<p>E.g. Mechanism for youth participation established</p>	<p>Education and training</p> <p>Civic participation and engagement</p> <p>Communication, media and information</p>
<p>①</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p>②</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p>③</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>

Which groups of youth may require specific interventions and provisions outlined in your vision statement?

Develop six statements that highlight the environment and opportunities needed to ensure the realization of the vision for a youth policy.

Read through each of your opportunity and environment statements.

- Does this subgroup of youth currently have the opportunities available and the enabling environment needed within each of the statements?
- What does this say about the interventions and provisions needed in the policy for specific groups of youth?

What is your vision for youth? (Activity 2.A)

E.g. Youth have access to meaningful employment.

Opportunity and environment statement

E.g. Youth have access to employment information services.

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⑥

Select a subgroup of youth? (Activity 1.E)

E.g. Youth living in rural areas.

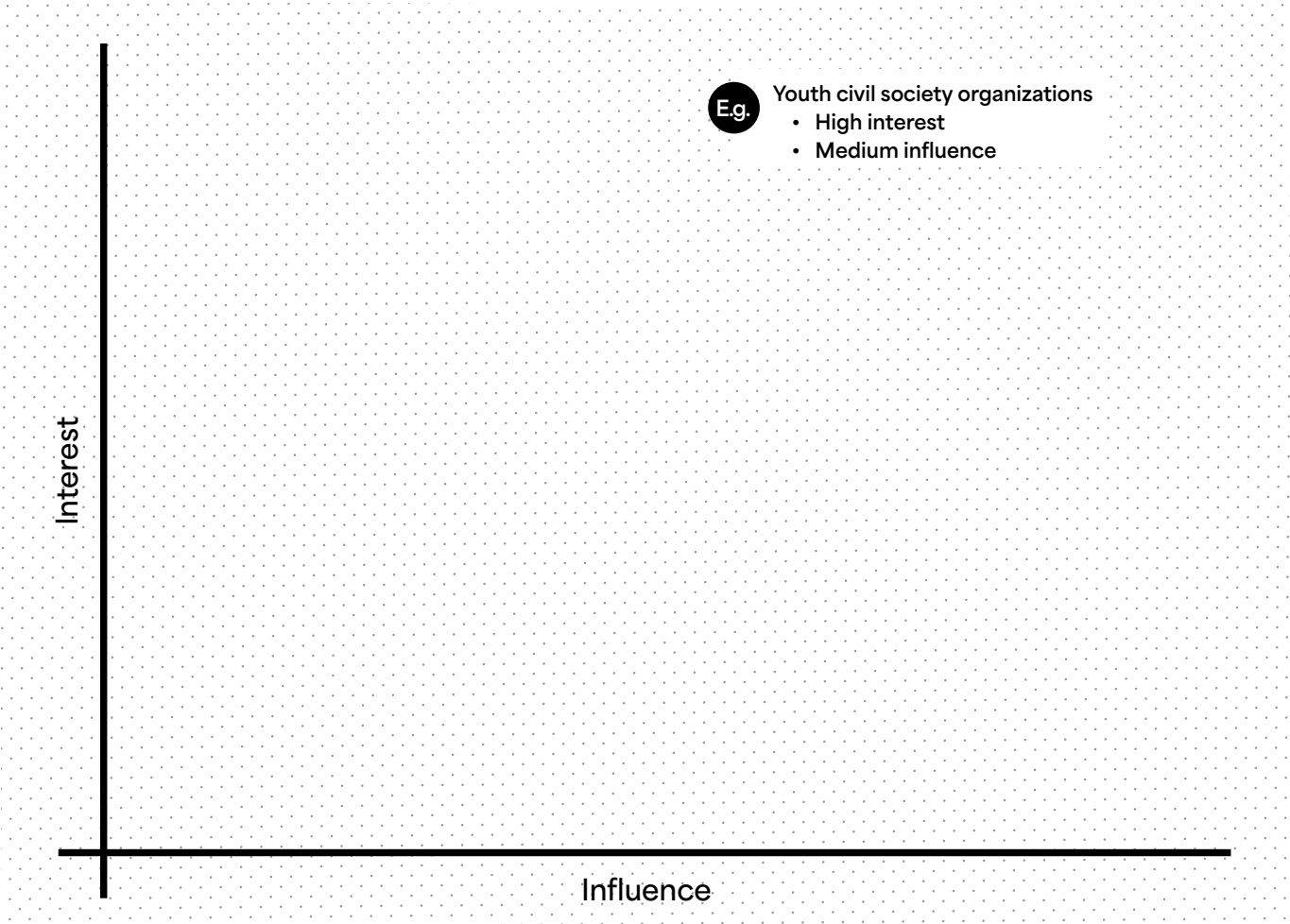
Identify as many stakeholders as possible that are associated with or have an interest in the policy. Map the stakeholders on the grid based on their relative interest in the policy and their influence on its successful development and implementation.

STAKEHOLDERS

E.g. Youth civil society organizations

①	④	⑦
②	⑤	⑧
③	⑥	⑨

INTEREST AND INFLUENCE GRID



Module 3

A holistic youth development approach to youth policy - formulation and implementation

3. A

Multistakeholder cooperation

Review the areas listed where multistakeholder cooperation is needed.

For each area discuss and record the potential challenges for cooperation, the opportunities available for cooperation and any existing mechanisms available that could support cooperation.

Areas for cooperation	Challenges	Opportunities	Mechanisms
Policy development			
Fund mobilization			
Interministerial cooperation			
Policy implementation			



Review the areas listed where multistakeholder cooperation is needed.

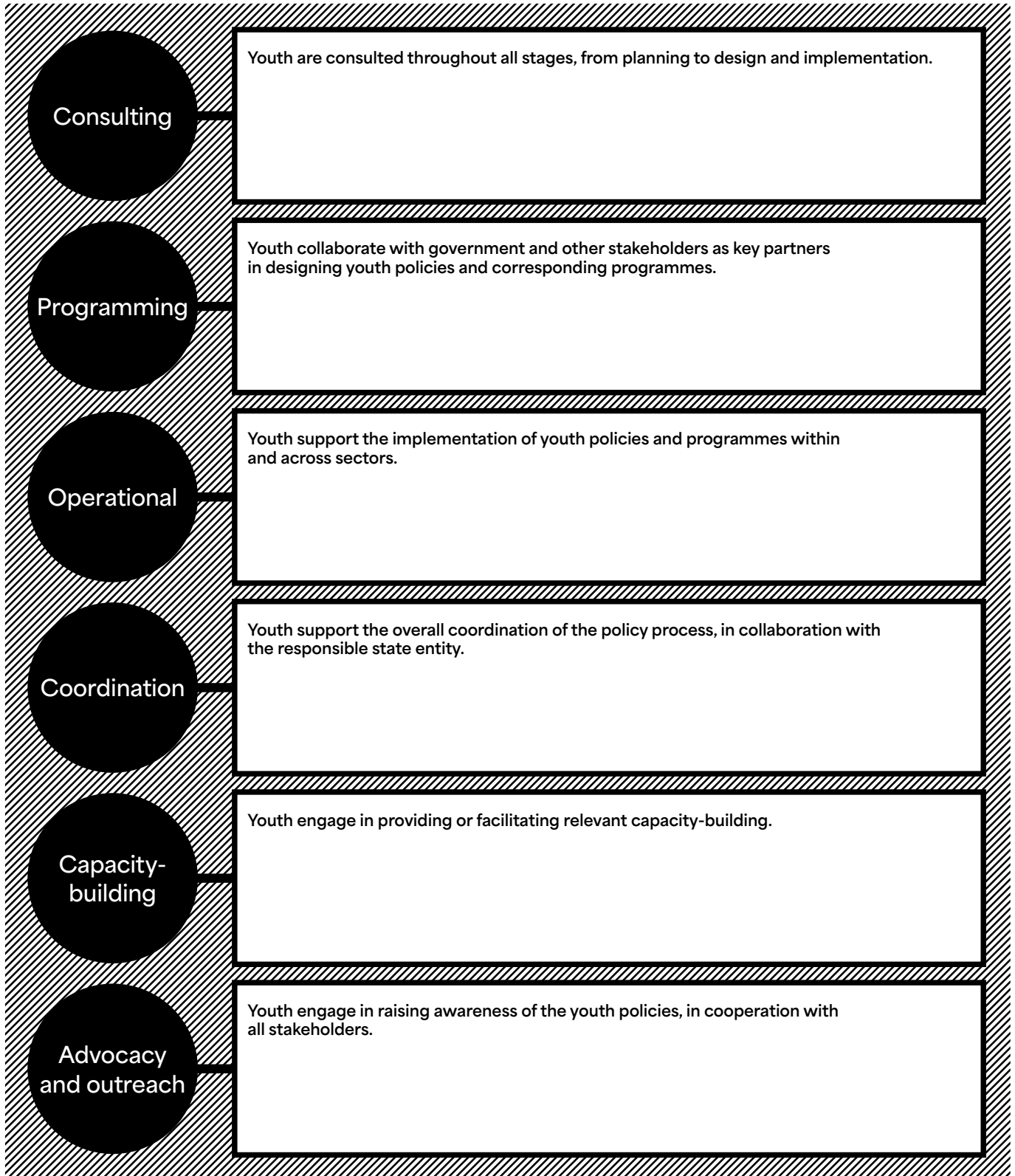
For each area discuss and record the potential challenges for cooperation, the opportunities available for cooperation and any existing mechanisms available that could support cooperation.

Areas for cooperation	Challenges	Opportunities	Mechanisms
Monitoring and evaluation of the policy			
Enabling youth engagement			
Capacity development			
Advocacy			

Review each of the areas where youth could be engaged, and identify opportunities, activities and mechanisms that could be harnessed to support their meaningful engagement in the process.

Areas for youth engagement

Opportunities



Review each of the essential planning elements below and identify approaches and provisions available to address financial and implementation planning needs.

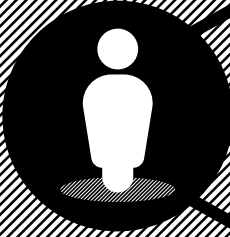
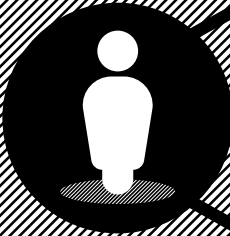


Planning element	Key questions	Identified approaches
<p>Comprehensive timelines of key activities for implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the implementation plan include? • How will it be monitored? • Who will be responsible for developing the plan and overseeing implementation? 	
<p>Budgets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the possible funding sources? • How can these funds be mobilized? • Who will be responsible for this? 	
<p>Monitoring and evaluation framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will identify and develop the outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and how? • How will the measures to assess success, including baselines and milestones, be identified? What will the reporting for this look like (including reporting period and responsible entity)? • How will the reporting data be collected and verified? • How will the policy be evaluated and by whom? 	

3. D

Capacity development

Review and record the stakeholder groups that were identified in activity 2.E

For each stakeholder, identify and record the knowledge areas and technical skills they will need to contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of the policy.

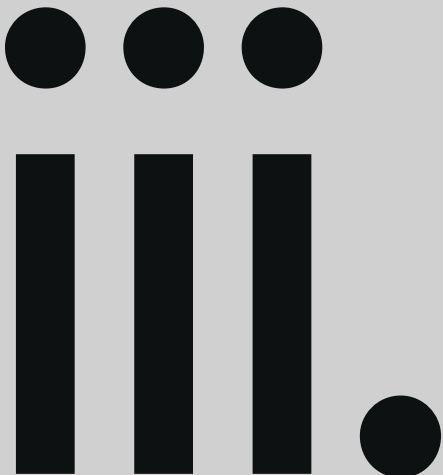
	Stakeholder			
	Subject knowledge needs			
	Technical skills needs			
	Stakeholder			
	Subject knowledge needs			
	Technical skills needs			
	Stakeholder			
	Subject knowledge needs			
	Technical skills needs			
	Stakeholder			
	Subject knowledge needs			
	Technical skills needs			

Recapitulate the core elements of the training:

- Who is 'youth' from a holistic perspective;
- The essential components of a 'policy content' that enables holistic youth development;
- The essential elements of 'policy formulation and implementation' that enables holistic youth development.

Develop a checklist with up to 10 criteria you could use to verify if a policy has successfully enabled holistic youth development.

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⑦	
⑧	
⑨	
⑩	



Youth Civic

Engagement

What is youth civic engagement?

Complete the sentence:

<p>Consider what constitutes 'youth civic engagement' in your context</p>	<p>Youth civic engagement is....</p>
<p>Review your definition in pairs and consolidate your ideas to come up with a new response</p>	<p>Youth civic engagement is....</p>
<p>Review your definition in a small group and consolidate your ideas to come up with a combined response</p>	<p>Youth civic engagement is....</p>
<p>Finally, as a whole group, consolidate your ideas to come up with a group response</p>	<p>Youth civic engagement is....</p>

Identify as many different actions as possible that you think constitute youth civic engagement.

Categorize and record the actions into groups based on the different types or themes of youth civic engagement they represent.

Category	Actions			
E.g. Political participation	Joining political youth group	Registering young people to vote	Influencing legislation or policy	Running for office
①				
②				
③				
④				
⑤				
⑥				
⑦				
⑧				
⑨				

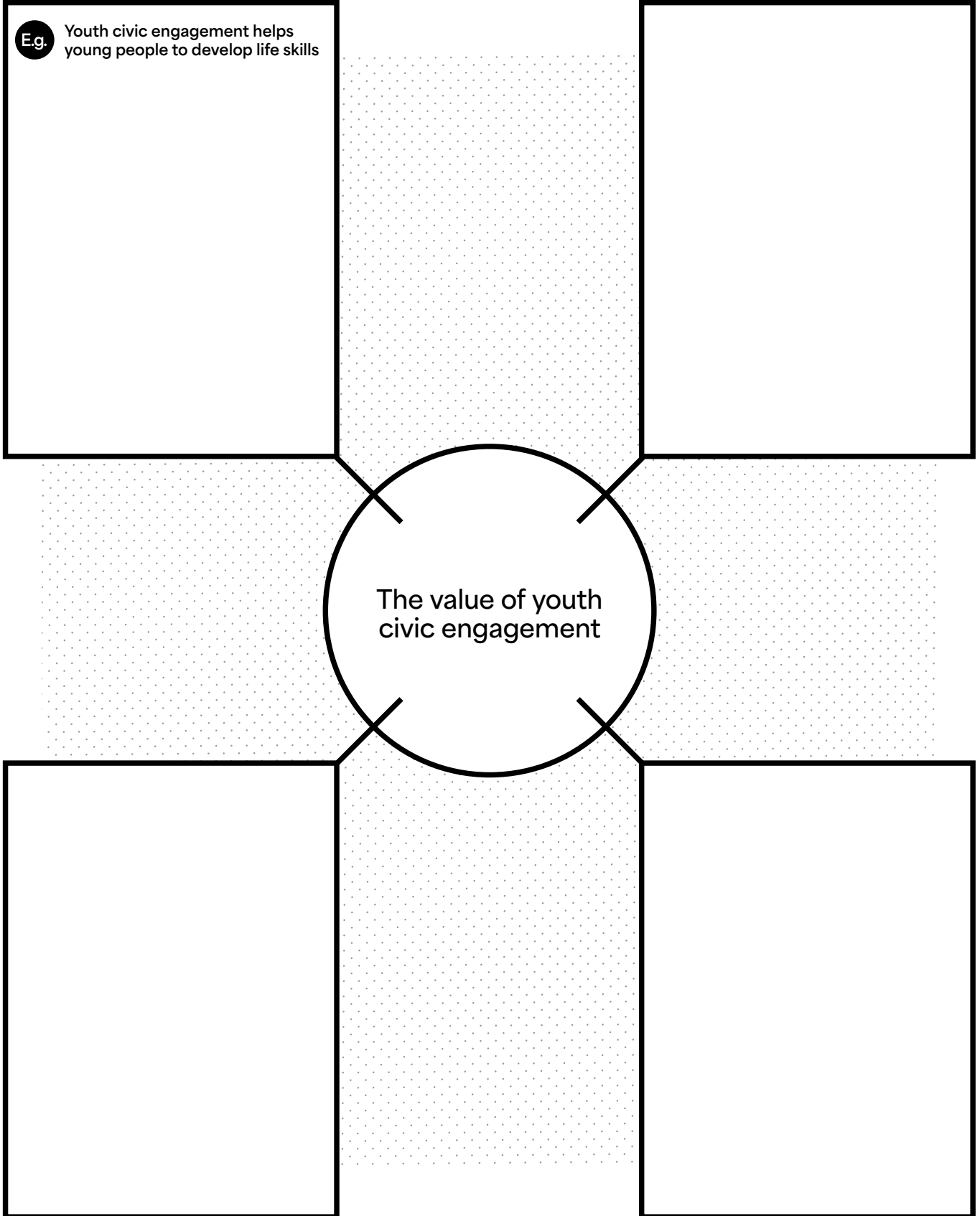
Review the different discourses through which youth civic engagement can be understood.

Discuss and record their current positioning in your country, as well as the benefits and limitations of understanding youth civic engagement through each of them.

Discourse	Current position	Benefits	Limitations
Engaged citizen			
Positive youth development			
Belonging			
Care and resilience			
Social justice			

Why enable youth civic engagement?

Discuss and record your ideas on why we should support and enable youth civic engagement.



Reflect on and record your ideas on the human and societal development benefits of youth civic engagement.

Human development benefits

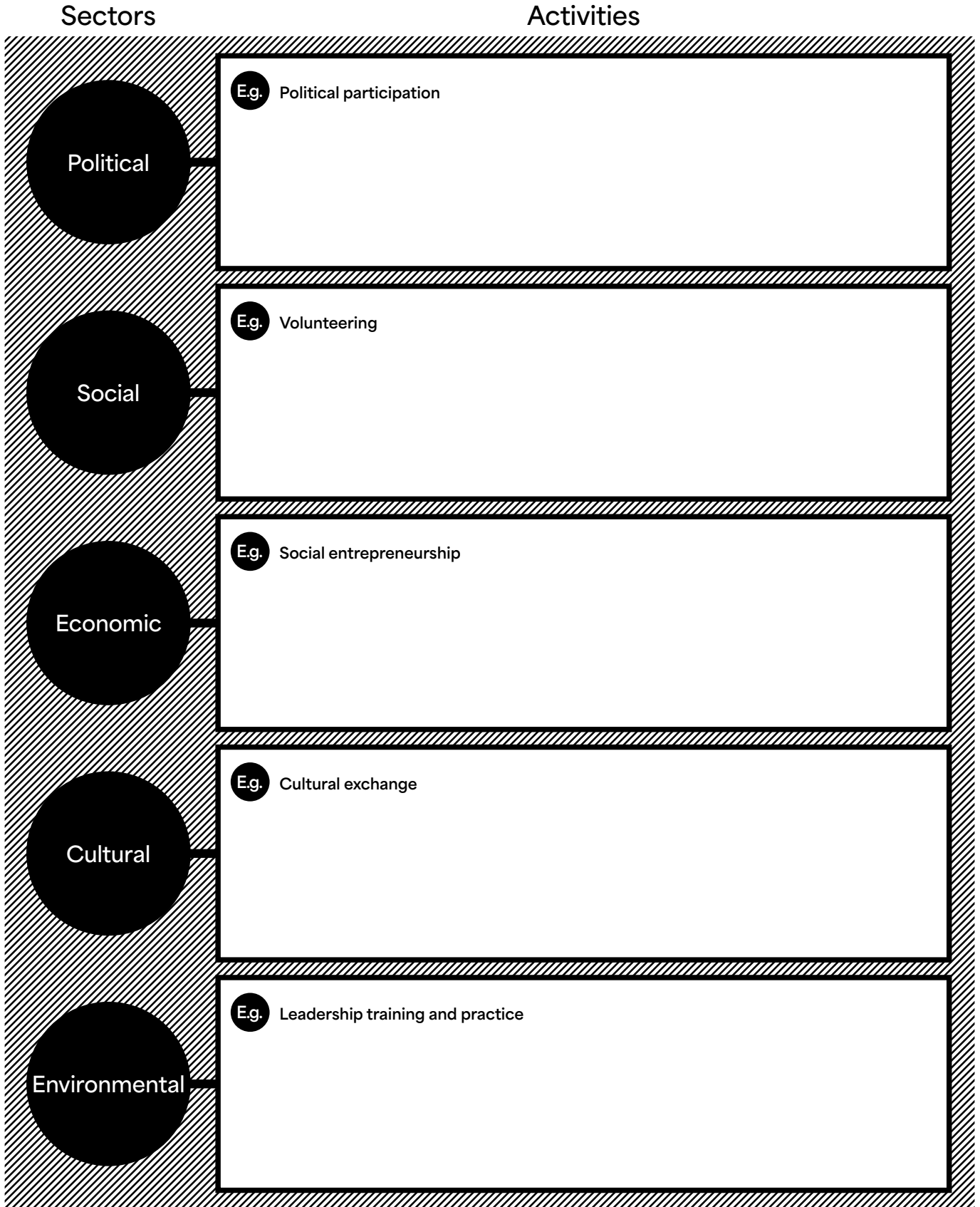
E.g. Supports social integration and inclusion

Societal development benefits

E.g. Strengthens communities

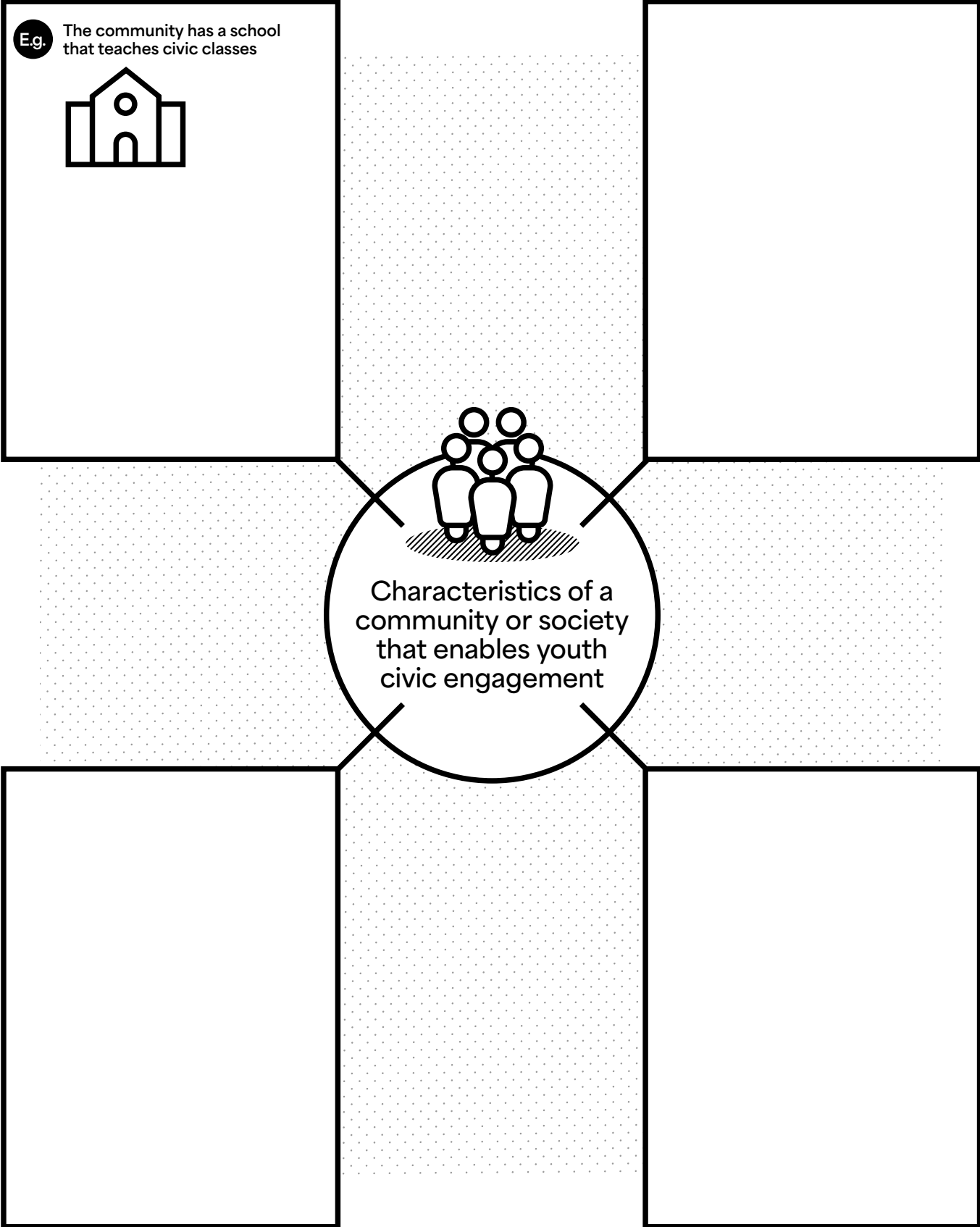
Where does youth civic engagement happen?

Reflect on the different types of youth civic engagement actions identified in the previous activities.
 Map the activities against the sector or sectors of society where the actions and activities are happening.

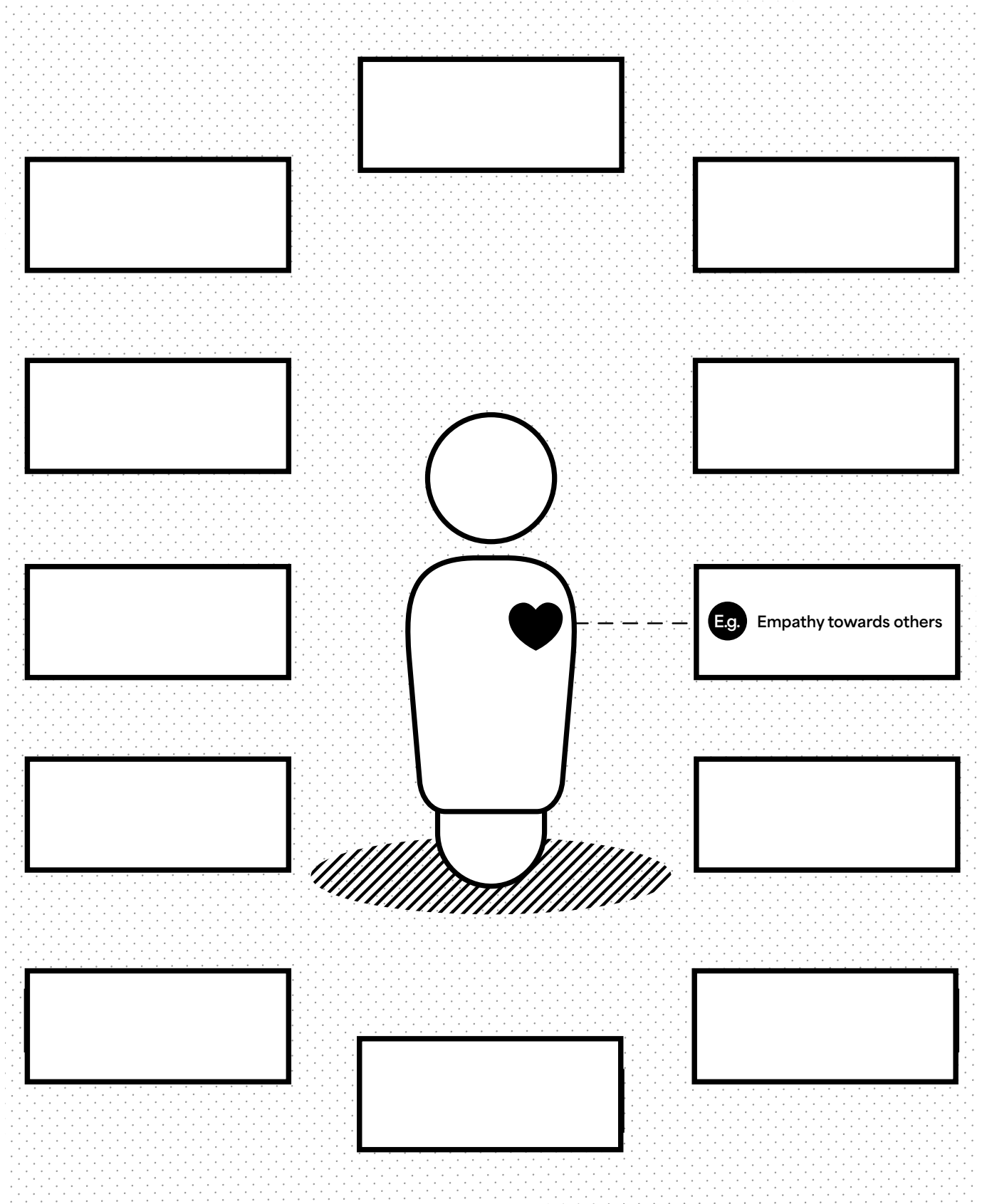


The characteristics of a supportive society

Use this space to map the characteristics of a community or society that enables youth civic engagement.

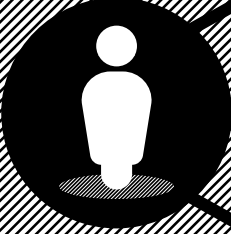





Use this space to map the attributes of youth who engage in civic actions and activities.



Reflect on the relationship that youth have with society.

Identify and record the different subgroups of youth, their relationship with society and the implications this might have on youth civic engagement.

	Group/subgroup of youth	
	Relationship with society	
	Implications	
	Group/subgroup of youth	
	Relationship with society	
	Implications	
	Group/subgroup of youth	
	Relationship with society	
	Implications	
	Group/subgroup of youth	
	Relationship with society	
	Implications	

How to enable youth civic engagement?

5. A

Stakeholder motivations

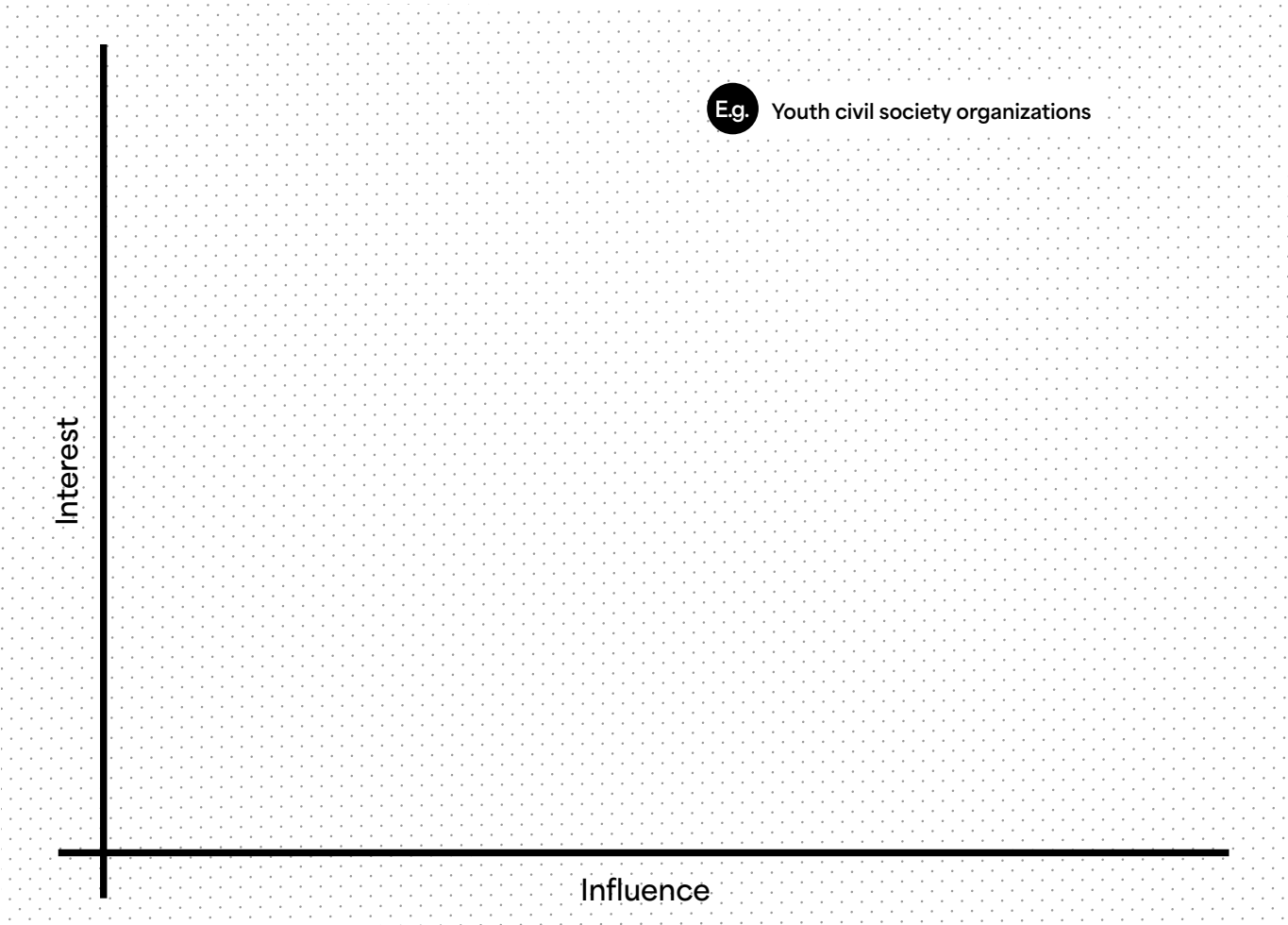
Identify as many stakeholders as possible who are associated with or have an interest in youth civic engagement. Map the stakeholders on the grid based on their relative interest in youth civic engagement and the influence they hold on enabling it.

STAKEHOLDERS

E.g. Youth civil society organizations

①	④	⑦
②	⑤	⑧
③	⑥	⑨

INTEREST AND INFLUENCE GRID



Consider how you have defined youth in your context, what you have agreed constitutes youth civic engagement, why it is valuable and where it happens.

Develop a basic framework specific for your context that includes:

Definition

Activities

Identify and record key policy areas that could embed and promote youth civic engagement.

Discuss the link between each policy area and youth civic engagement, and the opportunities available moving forward to enhance youth civic engagement practice in line with the specific policy area.

Policy areas	Links to youth civic engagement	Opportunities
E.g. Education	Develop civic knowledge	National civics curriculum
①		
②		
③		
④		
⑤		
⑥		
⑦		
⑧		
⑨		

Use this framework to develop a new idea for a youth civic engagement programme.

Purpose	What is the purpose of the programme?	
Targeted youth and subgroups of youth	Who is being targeted by the programme or activity?	
Actions and activities supported	What activities and actions will the programme support?	
Societal benefits	To what societal benefits will the programme contribute?	
Youth benefits	To what youth-related benefits will the programme contribute?	
Stakeholders	What actors will the programme involve?	
Aligned policy areas	What policy areas will be aligned with the programme?	

Identify three actions you will take moving forward to enable youth civic engagement.

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②

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iv.

Meaningful

Youth Engagement

Module 2

Making youth engagement meaningful

Record the reasons why you believe meaningful youth engagement is important.

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⑧	
⑨	

Consider your local, national and institutional context. Based on your personal or professional experiences, as well as available data, discuss and record your ideas for each element of the context analysis below.

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL COUNTRY AND/OR LOCAL CONTEXT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have youth been understood historically (age range, place in society, rights and responsibilities)? How do you think this informs opportunities for young people to engage meaningfully in the design of policies and programmes? • Have you ever faced a situation where you would have liked to participate or enable youth to participate but have faced social or cultural obstacles or challenges that limited participation? • From your experiences, do national or local political systems enable or limit opportunities for young people to participate? 	
NATIONAL OR LOCAL YOUTH PRIORITY NEEDS AND ISSUES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the current challenges and needs of youth in the country or locally? How are the needs different for different subgroups of youth and youth at different phases of transition? • How has this insight been generated? • What needs to be done to enhance further analysis of the needs for youth in the country or locally? • How have young people been involved in identifying their needs and issues? 	



NATIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS WITH AN INTEREST OR RESPONSIBILITY IN ENGAGING YOUTH

- Who are the key stakeholders that have an interest in and responsibility for youth in the national or local context?
- How much interest and influence do each of these stakeholders have in enabling meaningful youth engagement?
- What is the capacity of these stakeholders to engage meaningfully with youth?
- How effectively do these stakeholders work together to enable meaningful youth engagement? What could be done to strengthen this cooperation?
- How effectively and meaningfully do these stakeholders engage with youth?

EXISTING INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES OR LAWS THAT INFORM HOW YOUTH ARE ENGAGED

- What existing national and local policies exist that affect youth? Does a specific youth policy exist?
- What existing laws affect youth? Does a specific youth law exist?
- What international policies and agendas affect youth at a national level?
- How effectively do national and local institutions realize these policies and laws?
- How have young people been involved in these policies and laws?

EXISTING YOUTH INITIATIVES LED BY OR DELIVERING FOR YOUTH

- What initiatives (programmes and policies) exist that work with or on behalf of youth?
- Are young people engaged in shaping these initiatives and in what ways?

NATIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS WITH AN INTEREST OR RESPONSIBILITY IN ENGAGING YOUTH

- Does your institution have a history of engaging with youth in the design and implementation of its programmes?
- If not, why not?
- If yes, what have been the challenges to working with youth, as well as the opportunities provided?
- Are there opportunities to reinforce such youth engagement culture?

Review the youth engagement initiative examples below.

Select which example represents a co-shape initiative and which example represents an enable initiative.

Example

①

A national institution launches a national youth volunteer programme. The programme was developed and adjusted in partnership with youth-led organizations. These then took the lead in guiding key elements of the initiative's design, including mapping volunteering activities that were of interest to young people.

Co-shape & co-deliver

Enable

Example

②

The volunteering programme created opportunities for young people to volunteer. Those youth volunteers selected through the programme were able to develop their knowledge and skills in designing and implementing their own initiatives.

Co-shape & co-deliver

Enable

Identify the youth-relevant strategy, policy or approach to engaging youth within your institution and record its core objectives and priorities.

Using the framework below, review the five principles of meaningful youth engagement.

Discuss and record how each principle is currently reflected within the strategy or policy and what could be done to further embed each principle.

Name of the institution:

What are the core objectives and priorities of the institution's youth-relevant strategy or policy?

①

②

③

④

⑤

Principle

How is each principle reflected within the strategy or policy?

What else could be done to embed the principle in the strategy or policy?

Agency of youth		
Youth as civic actors, knowledge holders and innovators		
Holistic youth development		
Multistakeholder approaches		
Youth as rights-holders		
Sharing responsibility		

Identify and record three 'things to do' ideas and three 'things to avoid' ideas to make youth engagement meaningful.

Things to do

①

②

③

Things to avoid

①

②

③

Meaningful youth engagement in action

Review the youth engagement initiative examples below.

Select which degree of youth engagement each example represents.

Example
①

In a television company based in the capital city, new ideas for television programmes are sometimes designed in consultation with young people, who share their thoughts.
The project is designed and run by non-youth, but young people understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously.

- Youth consulted Youth as partners
 Youth contributing Youth as leaders

Example
②

A national youth agency organizes several consultative meetings to get input from young people about the youth centre that will be opened in the capital. The young people share with the agency their ideas for the look and activities to be implemented in the centre. Young people then support the communications and raise awareness about the centre.

- Youth consulted Youth as partners
 Youth contributing Youth as leaders

Example
③

A municipal coordinator organizes a youth fest event in partnership with a local youth organization. They jointly consult other local young people about ideas for the event, who suggest one of the activities should be a football tournament.
The coordinator works together with the local youth organization, they jointly make decisions and look for ways to finance the activities.

- Youth consulted Youth as partners
 Youth contributing Youth as leaders

Example
④

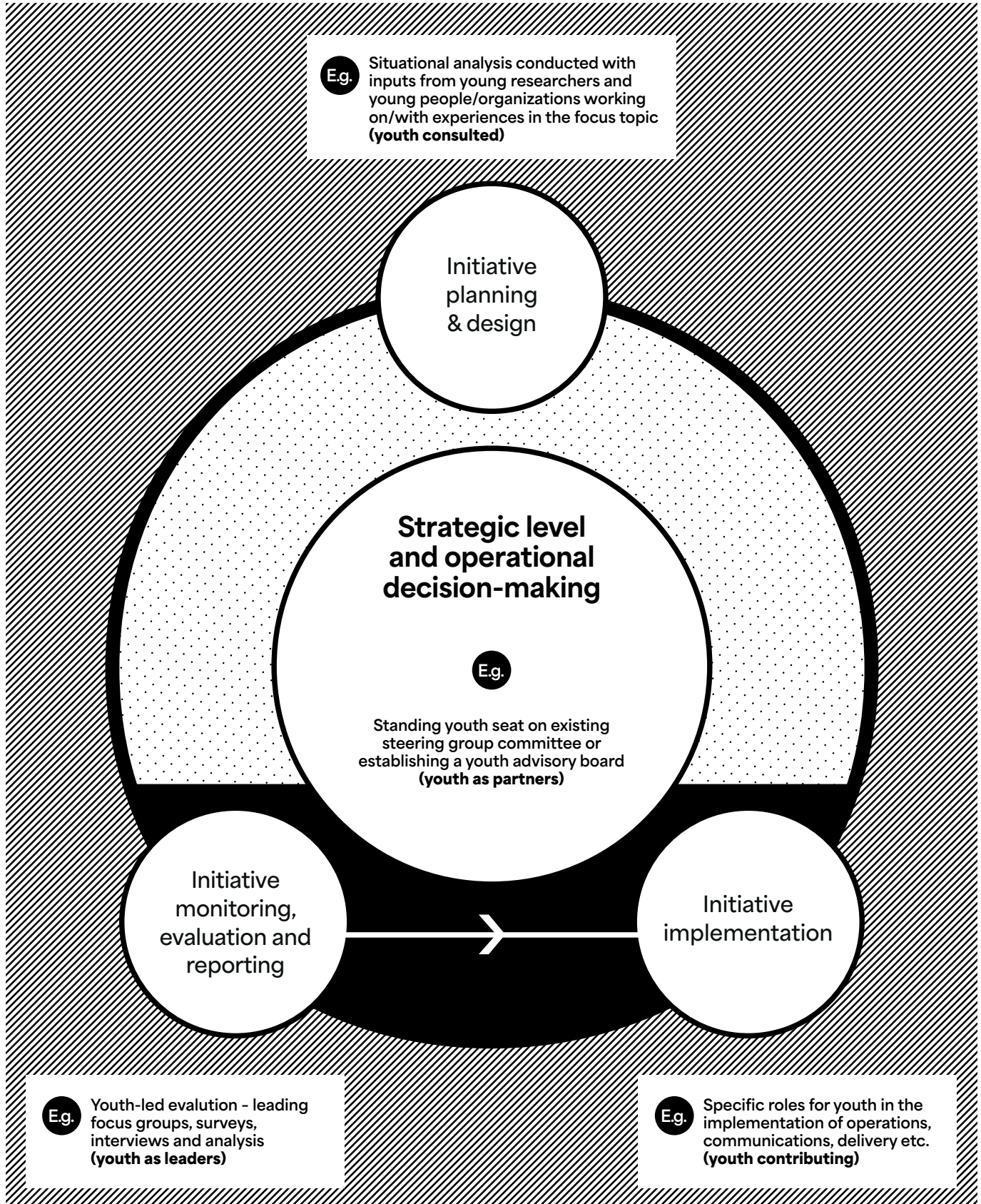
Young people decide that they need more bike paths in their municipality. They lead efforts and establish partnerships with non-youth who share advice and provide backstopping support as they lobby for resources.

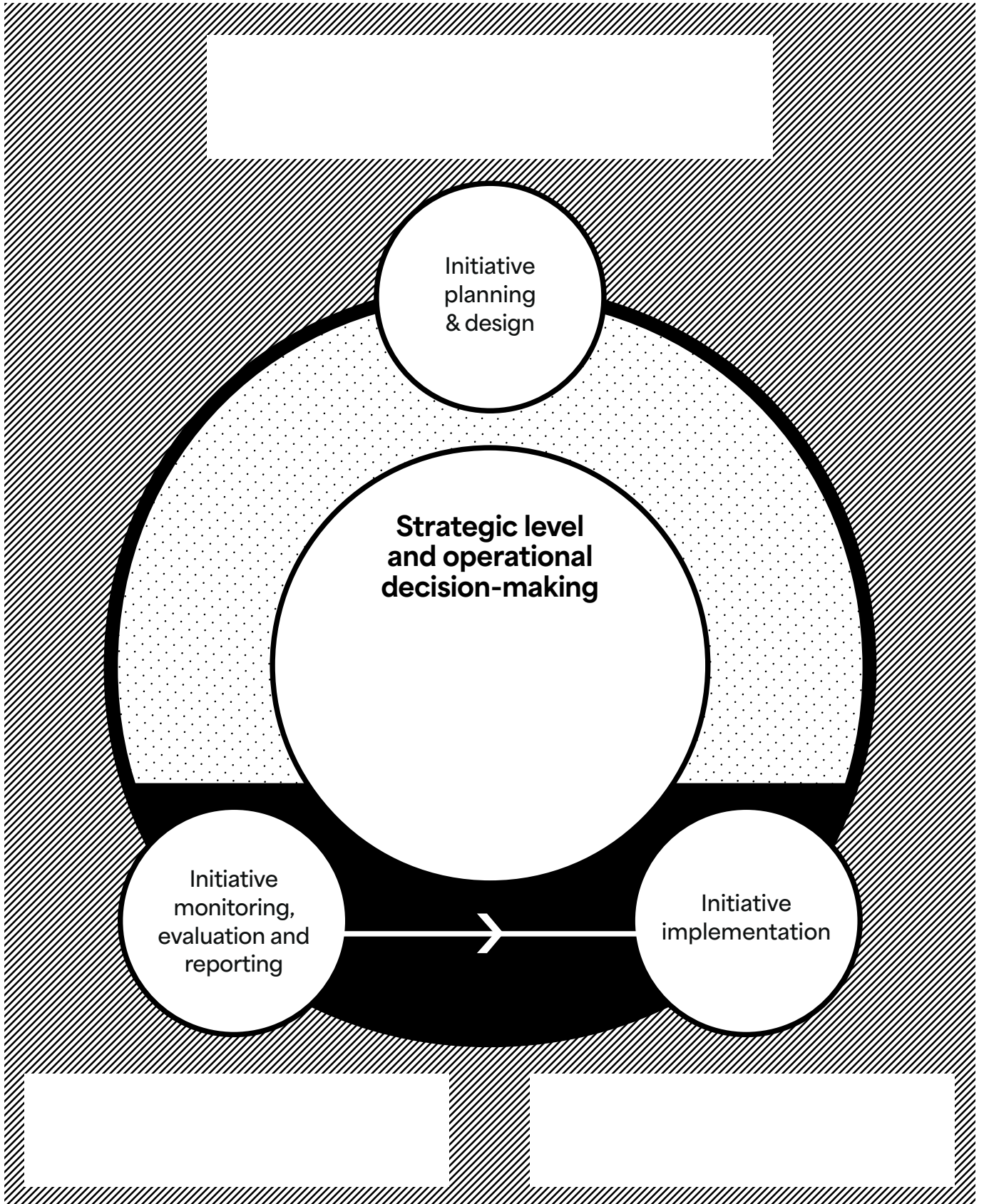
- Youth consulted Youth as partners
 Youth contributing Youth as leaders

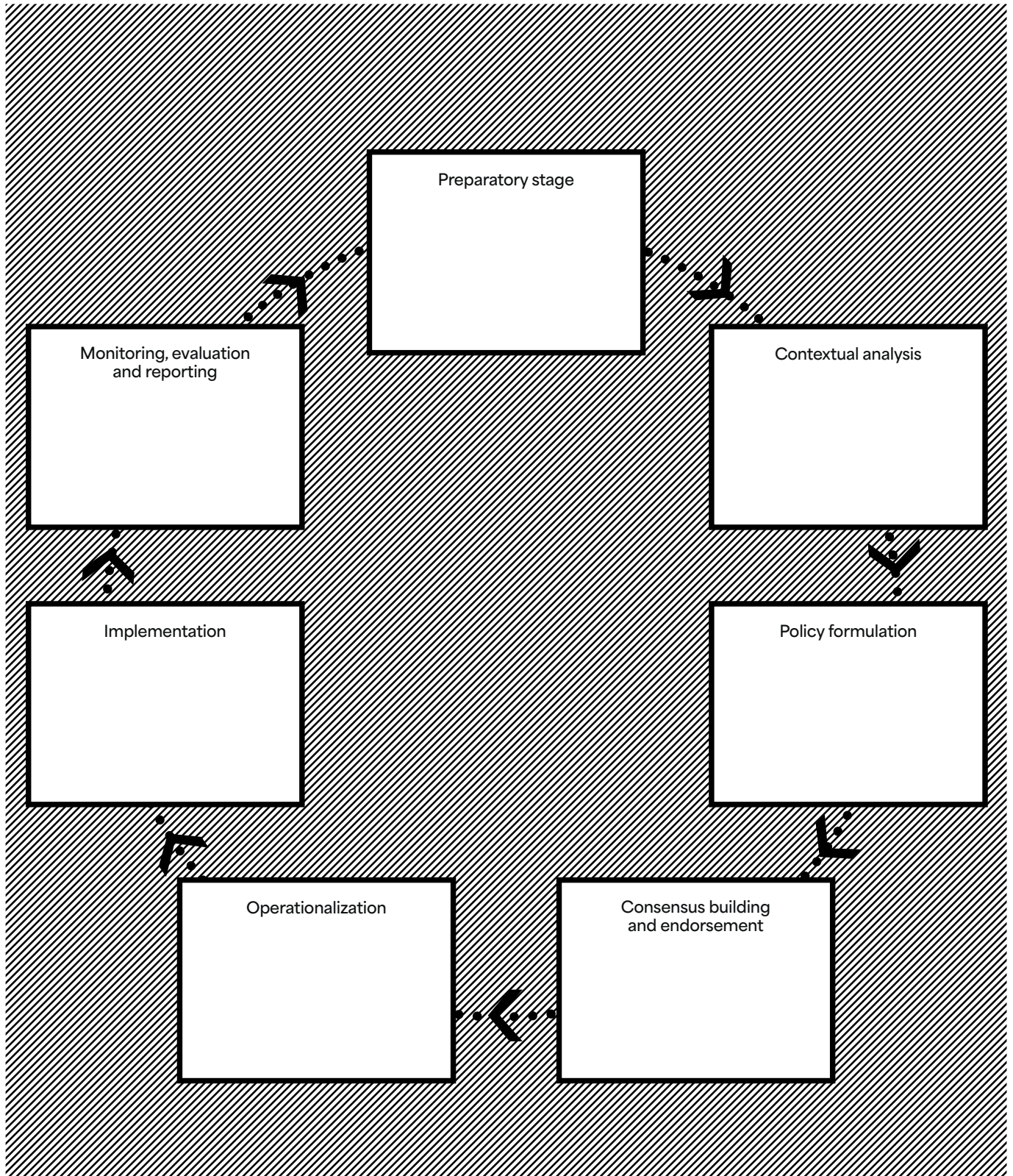
3. B

Where can young people be engaged in a programme or policy process? *

Discuss and record the different types of activities or mechanisms that could be used to engage youth at each stage of the project or policy cycle. See some examples from the first graph below.







Review the five action areas. Identify and record examples of youth engagement initiatives that correspond to each area.

Action area	Examples from policy-making or legislative processes	Examples from programming
Sharing advice and technical assistance		
Providing education and training		
Producing knowledge and generating innovation		
Managing knowledge and raising awareness		
Establishing networks and partnerships		

Select and record three types of youth or youth structures identified in previous activities.

Identify and record different approaches or methods that could be used to reach out to and engage with each type respectively.

Type of youth or youth structures that could be engaged

Possible outreach and engagement methods

E.g. Young people with lived experience

E.g. Establish a partnership with a community-based civil society organization working with young people in the community

①

①

②

②

③

③

Implementing youth engagement initiatives

Develop an idea for an initiative that integrates youth engagement considering each of the essential elements to make the engagement of young people meaningful.

Use the questions below for guidance.

<p>What</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What initiative that integrates youth engagement will you deliver? • What actions or activities will young people undertake? 	
<p>How</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you engage youth based on the four degrees of youth engagement? • Why have you chosen this degree or degrees of engagement? 	
<p>Where</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where in the initiative's process (at what stage) will you be engaging with youth? • Why have you selected to engage youth for this stage of the process? 	

<p>Who</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which youth or youth structures will you engage in the initiative and why? • How will you consider diversity, gender equality, geographical context and the engagement of underserved youth? • Which other stakeholders will be engaged to work on the initiative? 	
<p>Why</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the 'nine reasons why' justify this youth engagement initiative? 	
<p>Scale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At which geographical scale(s) and in what context will the activity take place? National or local? 	
<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What internal and external challenges do you anticipate when planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating or reporting on the youth engagement initiative? • How do you think you could address these challenges? 	

Develop one question that could be used to develop a performance indicator to monitor if an initiative has engaged youth in a meaningful way.

Think of a possible performance indicator stemming from this question.

Question

E.g. Did young people or youth structures contribute to my initiative's decision-making structure or process?

Performance Indicator

E.g. Percentage of young people as members of the project's Steering Committee.



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