

# Working with and for YOUTH

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MAINSTREAMING

**Working**  
with and for  
**YOUTH**

**Guidelines for youth mainstreaming**

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## PREFACE

Working in **partnership** with state institutions and civil society, the OSCE Mission to Serbia assists the host country build strong, independent, accountable and effective democratic institutions, with the goal of Serbia attaining **full domestic ownership** of reforms in the key areas of: rule of law and human rights; security co-operation; democratization; and media development. **A significant component of our work in Serbia is also the promotion of youth engagement**, ultimately contributing to enhanced peace prospects, security and a strong democracy.

Young people have an enormous potential to shape the way their societies function and impact change. Enabling youth participation is crucial for their sense of belonging, and to foster enthusiasm about contributing to the development of their communities. Youth perspectives are indispensable for sustaining conflict prevention efforts in diverse societies and for developing inclusive policies in the fields of education, language, participation, to name but a few.

The significance of youth involvement is enshrined in three OSCE Ministerial Council Declarations on youth and security - 2014 Basel Declaration on Youth (MC.DOC/3/14), 2015 Belgrade Declaration on Youth and Security (MC.DOC/5/15); and 2018 Milan Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security (MC.DOC/3/18) - as well as in a number of other commitments across the three OSCE dimensions.

The toolbox before you is created to support the integration of youth perspectives in a systematic and practical manner, strengthening the democratic principle we live by: “**nothing about youth, without youth**”.

*These guidelines have a great potential and are an indicator of the Mission's strong commitment to the youth and security portfolio. The Office of the OSCE Secretary General will continue to facilitate the exchange of these good practices across Executive Structures and promote a harmonized approach to work with and for youth in the OSCE.*

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Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General*



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**PART I**

**Working  
with and for  
Youth**

**CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORKS**

# OSCE: Working with and for Youth

- The OSCE's commitment to promote the role and inclusion of youth in its peace and security agenda dates back to the Organization's founding document, the Helsinki Final Act, in which participating States committed to furthering the development of contacts and exchanges between young people



Since then, a number of commitments have been adopted across all three dimensions, including those related to the freedom of the media, non-discrimination, countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism, education, and national minorities, which explicitly recognize the importance of the role of youth in the Organization. More recently, participating States have adopted Ministerial Council Declarations focused exclusively on youth and their ability to contribute to the implementation of OSCE commitments, as well as on their constructive role in peacebuilding:

- 2014, Basel – The Ministerial Council *Declaration on Youth* (MC.DOC/3/14) reaffirms the contribution of youth in the implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions.
- 2015, Belgrade – The Ministerial Council *Declaration on Youth and Security* (MC.DOC/5/15) stresses the importance of promoting the implementation of OSCE commitments on youth, particularly in

the field of education, and the role young people can play in supporting participating States in implementing commitments in all three dimensions. It affirms the recognition that youth and children require particular attention and that their needs, concerns, and interests should be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

- 2018, Milan – The Ministerial Council *Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security* (MC.DOC/3/18), making note of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) on youth in the maintenance of international peace and security, recognizes the role youth can play in contributing to a culture of peace, dialogue, justice and peaceful coexistence, trust, and reconciliation.

Over the years, OSCE participating States adopted a number of high-level commitments, recognizing the role of young people across the three different dimensions of its work: politico-military, economic-environmental and human.

In January 2019, the OSCE issued the first edition of *Youth and Security, Education: A Compilation of OSCE Commitments* specifically related to education. Examining documents emerging from OSCE/OSCE summits, follow-up meetings, conferences, Ministerial and Permanent Council meetings since 1975, as well as Parliamentary Assembly declarations and resolutions (which are adopted by majority vote and stimulate dialogue on important international issues), this publication focuses on commitments related to the Organization's engagement with and for youth. Through the dissemination of this publication, the OSCE Secretariat seeks to promote better knowledge and understanding of OSCE commitments related to youth and security, as well as on education, among governments, civil society, and citizens in the OSCE region.



Several mechanisms have been established to promote the role of youth in the OSCE's comprehensive security approach/model strategy:

- The annual appointment<sup>1</sup> of the Chairmanship-in-Office's Special Representatives on Youth and Security, who advise the OSCE Chairmanship on youth-related issues and highlight the views of young people on areas such as human rights, gender equality, tolerance and non-discrimination, mediation and conflict prevention, preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, youth economic participation and entrepreneurship, cyber security, and digitalization. The Special Representatives also support

youth-related initiatives throughout the OSCE area and co-operate closely with the OSCE Youth Focal Points Network.

- The establishment of the OSCE-wide Youth Focal Points Network in 2016, as a result of efforts by the Special Representatives on Youth and Security. The Network, built on the work of Field Operations in South East Europe and ODIHR who had previously appointed Youth Focal Points, meets and communicates regularly to discuss joint initiatives and share best practices and lessons learned.
- The Group of Friends of Youth, which serves as a forum for OSCE delegations and structures as well as youth representatives to exchange views and ideas.

Nevertheless, as the OSCE's Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) synthesis report on OSCE's work with and for youth states:

The OSCE does not have any official organization-wide agreed strategy or plan for the work with and for young people. An internal Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security of the Secretary General was developed in 2018-2019. It is expected "to lay the foundation for a more unified and coherent OSCE approach to working with youth and for youth" and offers recommendations to executive structures supporting the implementation of youth-related commitments.

Check out <https://www.osce.org/youth> or follow #OSCEyouth on Twitter for the latest information on the OSCE's activities and efforts to promote the role and inclusion of youth in its comprehensive security agenda.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that appointment of the Special Representatives is not mandatory; this decision lies with the Chairperson-in-Office. Since first introduced in 2015, all Chairpersonships appointed at least one Special Representative on Youth and Security.



# Why Youth?

## Young people are the future?

Public discourse frequently encourages to view youth work solely as an investment in the future, since they will one day replace today's adults as decision makers. Moreover, young people are frequently framed in terms of their roles as either perpetrators or victims of crime, terrorism, or other violent, extremist, or anti-social behaviour. These conventional perspectives fail to take into account that young people may also provide vital contributions to their communities and society as a whole *today*.

Youth should be understood as a



heterogeneous, diverse group, in the life phase of transition from childhood to adulthood, whose members deserve special attention to the fulfilment of their potential and the enjoyment of their rights, and who have the potential to positively contribute with their perspective on security to the OSCE's work in all three dimensions. Due consideration should be given to the gendered experiences of young women and men, the specific challenges facing young women, as well as the specific situation of youth from disadvantaged groups.

A youth perspective should be taken into account in decisions that affect their own lives and beyond because it...

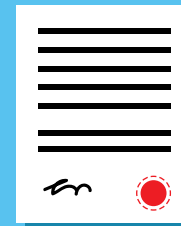
### ▶ *Rights-based reasons:*

- is a critical component of pursuing a democratic and egalitarian world.
- avoids the marginalization of young women and men.
- challenges the stigmatization of young people as deviant, criminal, incapable and similar.

### *Benefits-based reasons:*

- maximizes the positive impact of policies and programs on young women and men.
- promotes inter-generational transfer of knowledge and positive cultural values.
- contributes positively to policy development in a rapidly changing world due to young people's knowledge, ideas, creative contributions, and innovative approaches.
- promotes efficiency by weeding out policies and programmes that will not appeal to or positively benefit young women and men.

Last but not least, young people have the right to participate in decision-making! This includes youth under 18 years of age, as this right is enshrined in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



### **No policy is neutral to young people!**

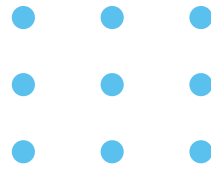
Every public policy has an impact on young people - be it defence, economic, fiscal, social, or environmental policy. The impact might be different for young women and men. Policies that prioritize high defence spending, for example, may result in funds being displaced from education, health, or the arts, which may disproportionately affect outcomes for youth.



### **Keep in mind!**

There are differences in outcomes for different *cohorts* of young people. Outcomes for youth are influenced not just by their age, but also by their gender, their backgrounds and experiences, which are in turn influenced by their different social identities.

# The Globe: Youth at a Glance



According to the latest United Nations estimates of the world's population, in 2019 youth numbered 1.2 billion persons between ages 15 and 24 years, or around one in every six persons worldwide. The number of young people in the world is projected to grow by 7 per cent to 1.3 billion by 2030. Young people from all walks of life make up approximately one-quarter of humanity, but in many places, especially in South Asia and Africa, one in three people is a young person. However, although many developing countries have significantly young populations today, overall, the world population is ageing. In fact, only sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to have a younger population in 2050 than it does today.

The potential of young people to contribute to their communities and societies is undermined by a wide range of obstacles they face, including a lack of decent work opportunities, ineffective and undemocratic political participation structures, violent conflicts, natural disasters, and poor health.

To illustrate, in every part of the world, young people are at least twice as likely to be unemployed. Youth unemployment rates for young women are higher than for young men. Due consideration should always be given to young men and women alike, as well as youth from vulnerable or marginalized backgrounds.

Approximately 38 per cent of the population in the OSCE region is under the age of 30.

The Commonwealth's 2016 Global Youth Development Index<sup>2</sup> measures five distinct domains of youth development in 183 countries: education; health and well-being, employment and opportunity; political participation; and civic participation. Some highlights:

- Germany achieved the top rank for youth development on the index, while the Central African Republic had the lowest score.
- The research confirmed that inequalities in health, education and employment of young people are still deep and widespread, and prospects for girls and young women are much worse in comparison with their male peers
- Full democracies and high-income countries have the highest levels of youth development, while authoritarian regimes recorded the lowest average score.

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/the-commonwealth-youth-development-index/>

The 2017 Youth Progress Index<sup>3</sup> ranks 102 countries according to the three dimensions of basic human needs, foundations of well-being, and opportunity for young people. Co-developed with OSCE/ODIHR, the Youth Progress Index is one of the first tools developed to explore the status of youth, independent of economic indicators. In addition to the ranking, it also aims to provide various stakeholders with a roadmap for designing and implementing policies and programmes to propel forward sustainable youth progress.

To learn more about how young people are faring in the European Union, to which several OSCE participating States are candidate countries, see the 2018 European Commission Staff Working Document, *Situation of Young People in the European Union*:  
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b6985c0c-743f-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1>



<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/399857>

# Youth Priorities

Youth priorities refer to those areas of development in which specific improvements should be made in order to advance the lives of young people. Priorities can be identified at the community, local, regional, national, or even global levels through targeted consultation, research, and analysis conducted by youth organizations, governments, multilateral organizations, and others.

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)<sup>4</sup> provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of youth. It contains proposals for action, aiming at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihoods among young people. In its original form, the WPAY outlined 10 priority areas to be addressed; however, at the ten-year review of its implementation, Member States agreed to the addition of five additional issue areas:

- 1. Education
- 2. Employment
- 3. Hunger and poverty
- 4. Health
- 5. Environment
- 6. Drug abuse
- 7. Juvenile delinquency
- 8. Leisure-time activities
- 9. Girls and young women
- 10. Youth participation in society and in decision-making
- 11. Globalization
- 12. Information and communications technology
- 13. HIV/AIDS
- 14. Armed conflict
- 15. Intergenerational issues



<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

To read the text of the WPAY as it appears in UN resolutions 50/81 (1996) and 62/126 (2008) and their respective annexes, visit the following link: <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf>

▶ The priority areas of the new UN Youth Strategy 2030<sup>5</sup> are:

- 1. Engagement, Participation and Advocacy - Amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable world
- 2. Informed and Healthy Foundations - Support young people's greater access to quality education and health services
- 3. Economic Empowerment through Decent Work - Support young people's greater access to decent work and productive employment
- 4. Youth and Human Rights - Protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement
- 5. Peace and Resilience Building - Support young people as catalysts for Peace and Security & Humanitarian Action

The most mentioned priority topics that young people want the European Union to focus on are:

- 1. Education and skills (53%)
- 2. Protection of the environment and the fight against climate change (50%)
- 3. Employment (42%)
- 4. The management of migration and integration of refugees (40%).

The national youth strategy and accompanying action plan of a country, if developed in an inclusive and participatory manner, should accurately capture the priorities of youth in that country. If you would like to learn more about the youth priorities of a particular country, the national youth strategy is a good starting point.



<sup>5</sup> See: [https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080\\_UN-Youth-Strategy\\_Web.pdf](https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf)

# What is Youth Policy?

## Youth policy is...

a strategy implemented by public authorities to provide young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of society and agents of change.<sup>6</sup>

### What are the key components of youth policy?

#### Legal acts

- A youth law – the most comprehensive legislative framework; defines youth and identifies main stakeholders and their fields of action.
- A national youth strategy and accompanying action plan.

#### Body with formal responsibility to co-ordinate youth policy and an example of an OSCE participating State using that model

- Youth affairs at the center of government – Canada, where the prime minister is also the minister of youth.
- Youth affairs organized within a ministry of youth – Germany has a Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth

- Department or office within a ministry in charge of combined portfolios – The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth falls under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport.

- No single national authority responsible for youth affairs – in Belgium, the Flemish, French, and German-speaking communities each have separate ministries with offices/agencies that co-ordinate youth policy for their area of responsibility.

The hardest part of managing youth affairs is the co-ordination among different ministries or government bodies. In most countries, the responsibility for youth affairs changes quite frequently. Youth issues do not always enjoy sufficient attention.

## Other key governmental and non-governmental bodies

- Youth service centers;
- Ombudsperson in charge of children and youth;
- National, regional, or local youth councils;
- Other formal associations or professional bodies (youth workers' associations, youth office associations);
- Working groups for implementation of strategies and action plans;
- Youth CSOs or CSOs working for youth.

### Other individuals or bodies contributing to youth policy implementation and development

- Youth researchers, teachers, social workers, journalists, medical staff;
- Formal and informal youth groups, faith groups, schools.

#### Co-ordination of youth affairs

- Horizontal co-ordination: inter-ministerial or inter-departmental co-ordination bodies, working groups, and focal points;
- Vertical co-ordination: the relationship between the central and subnational levels is shaped by the general organization of state competencies, i.e., decentralized versus centralized.

Youth policy is, by nature, cross-cutting. Effective horizontal and vertical co-ordination across a multitude of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in delivering youth services and programmes is thus essential.

## What makes a good youth policy?

### Council of Europe's youth policy principles:

The Final Declaration of the 6th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers<sup>7</sup> responsible for youth (Greece, November 2002) stipulates that: “Youth policies

need to be as comprehensive as possible, taking into account the overall needs of young people and recognizing their diversity and their many facets and resources. In particular, youth policies should:

- be anchored in universal values of plu-

<sup>6</sup> (Council of Europe CM/Rec(2015)3)

ralist democracy and human rights and pursue objectives such as justice, respect for identities, access to one's own culture, equal opportunities, including therein men and women, and social cohesion;

- have a cross-sectoral dimension as well as a local, regional and national dimension;
- integrate the educational dimension in a long-term perspective, taking into consideration young people's aspirations; promote their access to autonomy as well as their sense of responsibility and commitment, through, notably, voluntary youth work;
- facilitate active participation of young people in decisions which concern them, and encourage them to commit themselves in their community life;
- facilitate the access of young people

to the labour market, by means of appropriate projects and training schemes which are likely to increase their professional opportunities;

- facilitate the access of young people, notably from disadvantaged groups, to information which concerns them, and in particular, to the new communication technologies; promote youth mobility by reducing administrative and financial obstacles and encouraging the development of quality projects;
- promote non-formal education/learning of young people as well as the development of appropriate forms of recognition of experiences and skills acquired notably within the framework of associations and other forms of voluntary involvement, at local, national and European levels;
- promote co-operation between Child, Family and Youth policies.”

#### Standards for a quality youth policy

European Youth Forum has developed set of standards for a quality youth policy<sup>8</sup>, including:

- Standard 1: Rights-based approach to youth policy
- Standard 2: Evidence-based youth policy
- Standard 3: Participatory Youth Policy
- Standard 4: Multi-level youth policy
- Standard 5: Strategic Youth Policy
- Standard 6: Availability of resources for youth policy
- Standard 7: Political commitment and accountability in youth policy
- Standard 8: Cross-sectorial youth policy

Another important set of principles is the 2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policy<sup>9</sup>. It outlines guiding principles for national youth policy-making and promotes a rights-based approach for youth policies. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Baku-commitment.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> See: <https://rm.coe.int/16807072de>

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://tools.youthforum.org/8-standards/>

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Baku-commitment.pdf>



# International Policy Framework

There is no binding legal framework specifically for youth, but rather only for children (defined as any person under the age of 18). However, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Commonwealth, and their respective subsidiary agencies or organizations have adopted numerous resolutions, declarations, commitments, and strategies which politically commit member states to improve the lives of young people.

#### United Nations (in chronological order)

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the twin covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) affirm rights for all people, including youth.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) outlines the civic, political, and social rights of children, including adolescents.
- State parties who have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) are further committed to promoting equality for women and girls.
- The World Programme of Action for Youth (1995 and re-affirmed in 2007), provides a policy framework and plan of action for strengthening national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the opportunities available to young people to participate in society. *See the Youth Priorities page for more information.*

- The Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (1998), reaffirmed in the Lisboa+21 Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (2019), commits nations and the international community to taking actions in areas such as youth participation, development, peace, education, employment, health, and drug and substance abuse.
- Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes the important and positive role of young people and delivers a clear message that active measures should be taken for the participation of youth in promoting a culture of peace, as well as in conflict prevention and resolution. The Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security, commissioned by the Resolution, paved the way for the adoption of Resolution 2419 (2018), which recognizes the role youth can play in conflict prevention and resolution, and calls for taking their views into account in security-related discussions and facilitating their equal and full participation in decision-making. The

Resolution adopted in 2020 calls on Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations system, including peace-keeping and special political missions, to co-ordinate and increase their engagement in the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020).

- The 2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policy lays out guiding principles for national youth policy-making and promotes a rights-based approach for youth policies across the globe.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) provides the overarching framework for global development

through 2030. Although the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not specifically mention young people, the needs and role of youth are addressed in some of the SDG targets and indicators. There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six SDGs: Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality), and Goal 13 (climate change).

- Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy (2018) aims at guiding the entire UN system as it accelerates its work to empower young people to realize their full potential.

Youth mainstreaming does not rely on a specific set of human rights instruments, such as for example the Beijing Platform for Action which is a powerful tool for promoting gender equality. Promoting youth mainstreaming thus requires assessing and abiding by relevant legislative or regulatory frameworks.

### Council of Europe

- The revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life aims to promote youth participation at the local and regional levels. Although it is not legally binding, member states have a moral responsibility to implement the revised charter.
- Agenda 2020 (2008) is a medium-term strategic document on youth policy approved by the youth ministers of member states. It declares the following issues as priorities for the Council of Europe youth policy and action: human rights and democracy; living together in diverse societies; and the social inclusion of young people. Based on evaluations of the implementation of Agenda 2020, a new

youth sector strategy, formally adopted by member states on 22 January 2020, has been developed for the period 2020-2030. Based on the organization's core values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the strategy provides policy guidance and a broad political roadmap for the youth sector.

- The Declaration on the Second European Youth Work Convention (2015) addresses member states, multilateral organizations, other European institutions, and political structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local level, the youth work field and young people themselves. The declaration underscores the contribution of youth work to the development of young people and society and the need for greater support to youth work in Europe.

### European Union

In May 2018, the European Commission published its proposal for a renewed EU Youth Strategy – a new framework for co-operation on youth for the period 2019-2027. Building on the achievements of the previous EU Youth Strategy, the Strategy focuses on three areas of action:

- Engage: Encourage young people's participation in civic and democratic life
- Connect: Connect young people across the EU and beyond to promote volunteering, opportunities to learn abroad, solidarity and intercultural understanding
- Empower: Support youth empowerment through boosting innovation in, as well as the quality and recognition of youth work.

The Strategy was approved in November 2018.



**Youth rights refer to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by young people.**

### Why youth rights (human rights of youth) specifically?

There is a clear discrepancy between the rights young people have according to the law and the extent to which they are able to enjoy those rights in practice, as evidenced globally.

Although human rights apply to everyone, including youth, certain groups of people face particular barriers. In addressing such barriers, international instruments were developed over the years, dedicated to the rights of certain groups including women, children and persons with disabilities. While some young people are protected by default with existing instruments on the intersection of disabilities, gender, race and other factors, the UN Convention on

the Rights of the Child applies to individuals under the age of 18. Therefore, based on age above 18 there is no separate/dedicated international instrument that would guarantee the rights specific to them and their life circumstances.

### Towards access to rights

The challenges and discrimination faced by young people when trying to access their rights have been recognized by the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR). Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 35/14, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report<sup>10</sup> in 2018 on youth and human rights (A/HRC/39/33). The report documented the discrimination and some of the challenges for young women

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1640929?ln=en>

and men in accessing civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

The report also notes that the European Network of Equality Bodies found that age limits are employed as a mechanism to discriminate against young people, for example in employment, legal capacity and voting. The UN recognizes young people as rights-holders, too. Within its Youth Strategy that acts as an umbrella framework to guide the entire UN, it aims to advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world.



Find out more:

PROMOTING YOUTH RIGHTS:  
How to harness the power of human rights instruments  
<http://tools.youthforum.org/youth-rights-info-tool/>

# Youth Mainstreaming in Focus

Youth mainstreaming is a strategic approach to systematically and meaningfully integrating youth perspectives into all three dimensions of security. It follows a comprehensive youth responsive approach by:

- Engaging young women and men in policy discussions and programmatic processes;
- Responding to the needs of youth and taking them into consideration in any area and stage of a policy or project; and
- Assessing the impact on young people of any planned action.

Youth mainstreaming is a *strategy* to achieve the *goal* of equality for all: the ultimate end-goal of youth mainstreaming is social equality with adults.

## A brief history of youth mainstreaming in organizations/agencies

The seeds for youth mainstreaming among international organizations were planted at the beginning of the twenty-first century by the Commonwealth, UNESCO, and the World Bank. Since then, the African Union Commission, UNDP, USAID, and now the OSCE, among others, have come to recognize the need for youth mainstreaming within their own programmes.

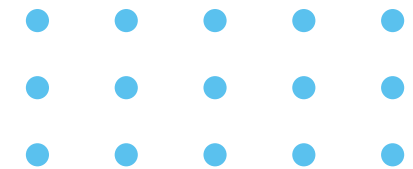
Youth mainstreaming is not the same as implementing youth-targeted activities, initiatives, or even programmes; rather, it incorporates young women's and men's capacities, perspectives, needs, and rights in the analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of any action, initiative, or programme. Successfully undertaken, it should result in changes in the distribution of human and natural resources, as well as financial and political power, in ways that better serve both youth and non-youth populations.

## What does youth mainstreaming for governments mean?

- Introducing a youth empowerment perspective to the work of all relevant sectors/departments;
- Setting up appropriate mechanisms for youth participation in policy-making;
- Systematically monitoring and reporting progress made in youth development;
- Allocating a proportion of all relevant departmental budgets to youth development;
- Building the body of knowledge on youth affairs.

Equality for youth can be reached only through systemic, co-ordinated efforts at these four levels:

- 1. Government at national/local levels
- 2. Sectoral level
- 3. Institutional level
- 4. Project level



Sectoral, institutional, or project youth mainstreaming can be the way forward where national mechanisms are absent. Such initiatives can also inspire related policies at the national level. In addition, this sort of action can benefit from co-operation with and support from international organizations, such as the OSCE, which have a mandate to promote good governance, human rights, and institution building in host countries.

## What can youth mainstreaming do for society at large?

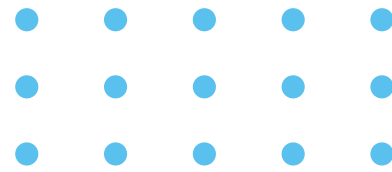
- Inspire long-term transformation for everyone – youth development benefits society across generations;

- Create efficiency and growth – planning that is responsive to young women's and men's needs enables a more efficient allocation of resources;

- Reduce poverty – youth empowerment and development leads to poverty reductions overall enhance social cohesion – engaged and empowered youth create collaborative and positive relations with other members of their communities.

When organizations such as the OSCE undertake youth mainstreaming, they are not only improving efficiency, planning, and outcomes in their own programmes, but also in those of the host country!

# More on Youth Participation



In recent years, youth participation has often been referred to as a right, i.e., a rights-based approach to youth participation. UNICEF, for example, sees participation as a human right, with the Convention of the Rights of the Child underlining children's right to participate. The Council of Europe perceives youth participation as "the right of young people to be included and to assume duties and responsibilities in daily life at local level, as well as the right to influence the processes of their lives democratically".<sup>11</sup>

When talking about youth participation, one can ask a very legitimate question: "Participation in what?" The UN General Assembly<sup>12</sup> distinguishes the following areas of youth participation:

- economic participation – relates to employment and work, economic development, and poverty elimination;
- political participation – relates to authorities and governments, public policies, and exercising power, among other;
- social participation – relates to involvement in a local community, addressing local problems and challenges;
- cultural participation – relates to different forms of art and expression.

▶ The most common forms of youth participation observed in contemporary European societies are:

- youth councils, parliaments, boards, and other bodies – a traditional way of participating in decision-making processes in the framework of international, national, regional or local authorities, schools, clubs, NGOs
- voluntary work
- participating in different forms of non-formal education
- peer education – involvement in educating their peers (e.g., awareness-raising campaigns)
- being active in an organization/club and taking responsibility for some areas of its work

- co-management systems in some institutions where decisions are taken by representatives of young people or youth organizations and representatives of the authorities on an equal basis (e.g., Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe)

- consultations – used in decision-making processes to voice concerns and make proposals

- participating in projects and activities

- campaigning activities

- membership of political parties, unions, interest groups

- taking part in elections – voting or running for office

Research indicates that the number of young people choosing to involve themselves in the more traditional forms of participation is decreasing in favor of new forms of participation:

- peer-to-peer networks
- online discussion forums
- signing petitions
- participation in "new social movements"
- support groups
- boycotting of products
- demonstrations
- international meetings
- using the Internet/social media to learn, express views, or influence decision-making processes.

## New social movements

Over the course of one week in late September 2019, nearly eight million people across the globe took part in the youth-led #Climatestrike to demand an end to the age of fossil fuels and climate justice. It was estimated to be the biggest day of climate demonstrations in history. Greta Thunberg, at the time a 16-year-old climate activist from Sweden, helped organize the strike and has become the face of this new social movement led by young people to demand government action on climate change.

For scenes from the #Climatestrike in Europe, visit:



<sup>11</sup> Boubkoza, E. (1998) *Keys to participation. A practitioner's guide.* Council of Europe. p. 10

<sup>12</sup> See: [https://www.youthpolicy.org/basics/2001\\_WPAY\\_Implementation\\_Report.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/basics/2001_WPAY_Implementation_Report.pdf)



What positive change can meaningful youth participation bring to society?

- Makes a positive difference in the lives of young women and men;
- Makes young people heard;
- Stimulates young people to develop new skills and gain more confidence;
- Helps adults to recognize young people's contribution, talents, and potential;
- Stimulates young people to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions;
- Improves young people's understanding of democracy;
- Helps adults to understand the needs and the point of view of young women and men;
- Makes the decision-making process more representative;
- Stimulates new approaches and ideas in solving local and regional problems.



Have you ever heard of a co-management system? It is a system whereby decisions are taken by representatives of young people or youth organizations and representatives of the authorities on an equal basis. This type of management system takes young people and their ability to make decisions and accept responsibility seriously. Co-management systems exist in some institutions, notably in the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. Are you aware of any such system in your own country?

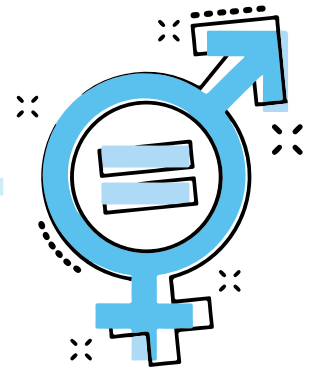
#### Further Reading

*Minimum Standards of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes at the Local Level*, published by the National Youth Council of Serbia: <http://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Minimum-standarda.pdf>

*Capacity Assessment of Youth Organizations and Youth Offices and their Associations (KOMS, NAPOR and the Association of Youth Offices) for the Social Inclusion of Marginalized Youth*, published with support from the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ministry of Youth and Sport, and Belgrade Centre for Human Rights: <http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/ISTRAZIVANJE-Procena-kapaciteta-udruenja-i-kancelarija-za-mlade.pdf>

*Results of the Open Method of Coordination in the Youth Field 2010-2018*, published by the European Commission. Presents a widely known method of youth participation. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0168&rid=3>

# Youth and Gender



When pursuing youth mainstreaming – or gender mainstreaming, for that matter – it is important to always keep in mind the intersectionality of youth and gender: the inclusion and participation of young women is a condition for youth development and empowerment overall.

Research shows that inequalities in health, education, and employment of young people are not only deep and

widespread, but that lifelong prospects for girls and young women are worse than those for boys and young men. The evidence is clear: empowering girls and young women – especially disadvantaged girls and young women – is an effective pathway to addressing poverty, reducing violence, improving access to health, education, and sanitation, and making societies more inclusive and democratic.

There are currently around 900 million adolescent girls and young women in the world – the largest generation in history. The multiple challenges faced by young women include:

- According to 2015 data from the European Start-up Monitor, 82.8% of start-up founders are men;<sup>13</sup>
- Young women and girls are less likely than young men and boys to enrol in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM). According to UNESCO, only 35% of STEM students in higher education globally are women, and differences are observed also within STEM disciplines. For example, only 3% of female students in higher education choose information and communication technologies (ICT) studies;<sup>14</sup>
- Young women are more likely to experience online forms of violence and harassment<sup>15</sup>;
- Adolescent girls in conflict zones are 90 per cent more likely to be out of school<sup>16</sup>;
- Adolescent girls in conflict zones are 90 per cent more likely to be out of school when compared to girls in other, conflict-free, countries;
- Except for a few exceptions, young women, and also young men, rarely take a meaningful part in formal conflict prevention and resolution and peace processes and/or the post-conflict leadership roles.

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.startupmonitor.eu/>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://en.unesco.org/news/new-unesco-report-sheds-light-gender-inequality-stem-education>

<sup>15</sup> See: <https://www.osce.org/VAWSurvey/publications>

<sup>16</sup> See: [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fixing-broken-promise-efa-findings-global-initiative-oosc-education-2015-en\\_2.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fixing-broken-promise-efa-findings-global-initiative-oosc-education-2015-en_2.pdf)

Commented [AM4]: References for every one of these points is needed in the footnote.

## The OSCE and gender equality

The OSCE's approach to gender equality is rooted in its commitments and the international human rights framework, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and its follow-up resolutions. As the largest regional security organization in the world, the OSCE strives to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are integral and indispensable to the concept of comprehensive security. This is reflected in a series of commitments, including the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The OSCE also supports participating States in their efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

[The OSCE, gender equality, and youth](#)  
*The 2018 Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality Towards Gender Equality in the OSCE concluded that the Organization made notable progress in addressing gender issues in cross-cutting fields of work in 2018. It highlighted the “need to move from *ad hoc* approaches to a programmatic vision and work on the engagement of men and boys, as well as the integration of a gender perspective in work with young people, by providing practical guidance and tools for OSCE structures and stakeholders.”*

One of the observations of the Office on Internal Oversight 2018 report, *Thematic Evaluation of the Implementation of the OSCE's 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality* is that there is little exploration in project proposals of how gender and other statuses intersect. For example, many proposals for projects focusing on youth do not address the differences between young women and men as beneficiaries, but speak of youth as a homogeneous group. Activities for women and youth are also frequently combined and objectives are not sufficiently defined for each group.

“Emphasizing the moral and pragmatic imperative of taking women and youth

into account, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and sister resolutions on women, peace, and security, and more recently Resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security have boosted the production of policy guidelines, planning toolboxes and lessons learned reports. Gender and youth mainstreaming are increasingly understood as important instruments for planning and implementing inclusive and effective peacebuilding interventions.” *Berghof Foundation*

Just as gender mainstreaming was built around a lobby for equal male-female relations, youth mainstreaming advocacy is built around equitable intergenerational relationships and the fostering of mutual respect between adults, young people and other age groups. When working with and for youth to ensure their meaningful participation and inclusion, it is essential to take into account the perspectives of young women and young men as distinct and diverse.

For more information on OSCE and gender you may contact: OSCE/Gender Issues Programme: [equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)

# Republic of Serbia: Youth at a Glance



Youth comprise approximately 18 per cent of the total population of the Republic of Serbia. The National Youth Strategy's aforementioned nine strategic goals (*see the Republic of Serbia Policy Framework section*) aim to address identified problems faced by young people, a few of which are briefly mentioned here:

- Lack of practical knowledge, skills, and competences required for the labour market;   
▷ An estimated 29.7 to 32.2 per cent of young people aged 15-24 are unemployed.
- Unequal access to education;
- Insufficient recognition and support for gifted and talented young people
- Youth participation and activism not encouraged by the legal and policy framework and lack of efficient mechanisms for integrating youth perspectives into public policy;
- Increasingly risky behaviour and deterioration of health among young people and lack of access to adequate prevention programmes;
- Insufficient physical activity among young people and lack of support for initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles.
- Lack of sufficient knowledge about the environment and the importance of environmental and sustainable development;
- Presence of bullying and violence between fan groups, against the LGBT population, in intimate relationships, and towards persons from other countries;
- Unfavourable conditions for mobility, both domestically and internationally
- Low participation in the creation of media programmes and negative portrayal of youth in the media;
- Insufficient support for the participation of youth in cultural activities.

In August 2019, the National Youth Council published its annual *Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia*<sup>17</sup>. The report is based on information gathered from desk research, focus groups, and an on-line questionnaire completed by over 1,200 young people. Key findings reveal that Serbian young people are overall dissatisfied with the current state of affairs in their country:

- More than half (64 per cent) intend to move out of Serbia, preferably to Western Europe (47 per cent)
- One-third think that Serbian foreign policy should lean on Russia, compared to 21 per cent for the European Union;
- Support for Serbia's integration into the European Union is at a low point: 40 per cent do not support Serbia's accession and only one-quarter believe Serbia would be better off in the European Union
- Every fifth young person is uninterested in politics. Among those that are interested, boys/men are more interested than girls/women;
- Young people are increasingly dissatisfied with the educational system (44 per cent);
- In comparison with previous year, nearly 20 per cent more youth believe they have no influence in decision making (67 per cent). More than half are in favor of introducing quotas for youth in institutions to ensure participation;
- They predominantly do not believe in any politician (more than 4/5). Trust in institutions is also low, with the most trust expressed towards the army and the least in political parties and media;
- Fifty-nine per cent believe that Serbia needs a strong leader to be followed by the people;
- The vast majority do not believe in the existence of free media (71 per cent);
- The vast majority do not know that there is a Law on Youth in Serbia (81 per cent);
- Sixty-seven per cent claim they have been exposed to physical or verbal violence; strikingly, almost 1/5 say that violence may be justified;
- Only 0.09 per cent of the Republic's budget is allocated toward youth. The budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports foresees 22 per cent for youth (and the rest for sports). One-quarter of all municipalities in the country do not have any budget for youth.

<sup>17</sup> See: <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Alternativni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-o-poloz%CC%8Caju-i-potrebama-mladih-2019-1.pdf>

However, viewing the status of young women and men in Serbia from a global perspective reveals a more positive picture. On the 2017 Youth Progress Index<sup>18</sup>, Serbia ranks 39, right behind Bulgaria and before Mauritius. From a regional perspective, this places Serbia behind Slovenia (16) and Croatia (29) but ahead of Montenegro (44), Albania (48), and North Macedonia (49).

The Commonwealth's 2016 Global Youth Development Index<sup>19</sup> yields roughly similar results: it places Serbia at number 48, just behind Estonia and just ahead of Mexico. This is far ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina (80) and Montenegro (84), but far behind Slovenia (12), and slightly behind North Macedonia (39), Albania (42), and Croatia (44).



The National Youth Council's *Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia 2020* <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Alternativni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-o-poloz%CC%8Caju-i-potrebama-mladih-u-RS-2020.pdf>

*Youth Study Serbia 2018/2019*, published by the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung. This study sheds light on the perceptions, expectations, and approaches toward social-political realities of young people from Serbia. Questions such as "Are young people trustful of their fellow citizens and tolerant of minorities and underprivileged groups in Serbian society?" and "Are young people supportive of democracy, willing to participate in politics, as an active and assertive public arena?" are explored: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/15269-20190411.pdf>

# Republic of Serbia Policy Framework

The Law on Youth<sup>20</sup>, adopted in 2011, legally guarantees and financially ensures support for improving the social status of youth. The scope and purpose of the law is as follows:

"The Law regulates measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, and local self-governments aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and at creating conditions for addressing young people's needs and interests in all the areas of interest for young people. The Purpose of the Law is to create conditions for supporting young people in organization, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential for their own and for the benefit of the society."

<sup>18</sup> See: <https://www.youthforum.org/youth-progress-index>

<sup>19</sup> See: <https://thecommonwealth.org/youthdevelopmentindex>

<sup>20</sup> See: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf>

The Law defines youth or young people as those persons ranging from 15 to 30 years of age (inclusive).

The adoption of a national strategy is envisaged by the Law. In 2014, the Government established a working group to develop the national strategy and its action plans, followed by a broad consultative process. The Government appointed 53 members of the working group – representatives of relevant public authorities/institutions, representatives of youth organizations, organizations for youth

and their associations, and youth policy experts. Eight thematic groups were formed, and a situational analysis was conducted to determine the current situation in regard to areas of concern for youth and key challenges. During the process, thousands of young people participated in roundtables, debates, and public hearings throughout the country. Feedback from these activities informed the final version of the National Strategy, which was adopted in February 2015 and covers the period 2015 – 2025.

The successful implementation of the Strategy should result in improvements in the areas of these nine strategic goals<sup>21</sup>:

- Employability and employment of young women and men;
- Quality and opportunities for acquiring qualifications and development of competencies and innovation of young people
- Active participation of young women and men in society;
- Health and well-being of young women and men;
- Conditions for the development of youth safety culture;
- Support to social inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion;
- Mobility and scope of international youth co-operation and support for young migrants;
- System of informing young people and knowledge about young people;
- Consumption of culture and participation of youth in the creation of cultural programme.

The accompanying Action Plan 2018-2020 defines the activities to be implemented in the two-year period and provides direction to institutions, organizations, individuals, and other stakeholders to implement the goals of the Strategy. The Strategy and Action Plan are implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the involvement of bodies in charge of specific areas in the youth sector and all other youth policy actors at the national, provincial, and local levels.

The main national youth policy actors in Serbia are:

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports, established in 2007;
- The National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), the highest representative body of youth in Serbia, consisting of a network of 108 organizations of youth and for youth;
- The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR), the vocational and representative union of over 50 organizations which aims to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work;
- The Association of Youth Offices (Association KZM), the association of the 110 towns and municipalities which have established youth offices that actively engages in the development of local youth policy.

Ministry of Youth and Sport: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/>

National Youth Council: <http://koms.rs/>

National Association of Youth Workers: <http://www.napor.net/sajt/index.php/sr-yu/>

Association of Youth Offices: <https://www.asocijacijakzm.org/>

English version of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025:

<https://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Nacional-na%20strategija%20za%20mlade%20-%20ENG.pdf>



<sup>21</sup> At the moment of issuing of this publication, revision of the National Youth Strategy is announced

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**PART II**

# **TOOLBOX**

**PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR PERFORMING YOUTH  
MAINSTREAMING IN EVERYDAY WORK**

## Reflection time



Reflection time is a self-reflection exercise envisioned to prompt you to think about the context and characteristics of your work – from the macro picture of your entire Organization, to the micro level of any of your activities.



Take a few minutes to go through the questions and assess to which extent they correspond to your reality and your current knowledge. While there is no one-size-fit-all approach, it is important to understand from where and how you are starting your youth mainstreaming journey. From that point on, you may select specific aspects to tackle in more detail.

### Let's jump to it:

The Organization	Yes/No/I don't know
Is youth participation an important value for the organization?	
Does the organization clearly define youth (age limit, affiliation)?	
Has the organization formalized any objectives related to youth participation and its strategy for pursuing youth mainstreaming?	
Is there communication about youth participation or mainstreaming within the organization?	
Is working with and for youth a visible part of the organization's external identity and self-portrayal?	
Does the organization have a youth mainstreaming support structure or framework in place?	
Is senior management's commitment to youth mainstreaming/participation/equality secured and made known to staff across all departments?	
Has senior management pledged funds towards the implementation of youth mainstreaming across programmes/sectors?	
Does middle management demonstrate its commitment to youth participation or mainstreaming?	
Do all relevant staff members have the expertise and skills they need to fulfil their responsibility for including youth perspectives?	
Does the organization provide capacity building to relevant staff members to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities related to youth mainstreaming?	
Is information on youth issues available and easily accessible for relevant staff members?	
Are statistics produced by the organization disaggregated by age group? Does the capacity to do so exist?	

Your department/section/unit	Yes/No/I don't know
Is youth participation/equality an important value for the department?	
Is the department aware of the priorities of youth in the (host) country/(-ies) in the scope of its work?	
Is the department aware of the youth policy priorities in the given geographical scope? Is the policy in line with the priorities referred to in question 2?	
Is there consensus on the broader rationale for, and the benefit of, youth mainstreaming across the department?	
Are there youth-related objectives, outputs, or indicators in the current or next year's version of the department's UBP?	
Does the department have sufficient tools or capacity for analysing youth-specific concerns in each activity/daily work?	
Does the department have sufficient tools or capacity to analyse the positive and negative implications for youth in each activity/daily work?	
Does the department regularly (i.e., at least once per year) implement an activity that promotes youth participation?	
Do projects/activities in the department generally reflect sensitivity to socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender, disability, nationality?	

Your project/activity	Yes/No/I don't know
Is youth participation/equality an important value for you?	
Do you hold regular or occasional consultations with youth groups/organizations/institutions, including young women?	
Does your project/activity have any youth groups/organizations/institutions as partners?	
Do you have a project/activity that is specifically youth-targeted? If yes: <i>Is it developed FOR young people, WITH young people, or BY young people?</i> <i>Are the young women and men involved in the project/activity already holding leadership positions?</i> <i>Are the youth involved in the project/activity a homogenous or heterogenous group?</i> <i>Are gender considerations taken into account?</i>	
Do you have sufficient tools, capacity, resources, knowledge, and support to analyse youth-specific concerns throughout the entire cycle of your project/activity?	
Do you take into account the needs, concerns, priorities, or added value of young men and women when identifying and designing your project/activity?	
Do youth/youth organizations have opportunities to participate in your project/activity?	



### What did you learn from your Reflection time?

I am successful with:

I recognize there are some obstacles:

The following three aspects require more focus:

When assessing support to a particular counterpart, following guiding questions suggested by the OECD<sup>22</sup> may also help:

Every authority, agency and organization with the intention of including young people in the policy-making process has to assess its capacity **before planning any form of youth participation**. These questions are intended to guide that assessment:

- Is the right for youth to participate included in guidelines, national laws or the constitution?
- Does the authority's staff value young people's contributions and take them into consideration?
- Is the authority's staff trained in working with young people (e.g. using language easily understood by young people)?
- Is the authority ready to support youth participation actively? Are there already forms of youth participation in place? Do young people have access to resources needed for participation?
- Has the authority allocated budget and staff to ensure, oversee, develop and sustain youth participation?
- Does the authority recognise youth participation as a long-term commitment?
- Is the authority prepared to build in changes long term (not just as a one-off undertaking)?

<sup>22</sup> OECD (2017), *Evidence-based Policy-making for Youth Well-being: A Toolkit*, OECD Development Policy Tools, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264283923-en>



# ENTHUSIAST MODE

The Enthusiast Mode section of the Toolbox operates on the analogy of a video game: at the beginning, you will be introduced to a new logic and conduct trial and error runs to familiarise yourself with it. As you move up the levels, you will be met with tasks and logic of progressive difficulty, allowing you to gradually gain more confidence in your understanding of youth mainstreaming. In this mode you can:

- o Examine your personal views on youth, refresh your inclusiveness, be met with your biases and learn how to overcome them;
- o Climb the ladder (or pyramid) of participation and begin applying decades of youth work experience in your own work;
- o As a proper enthusiast, dive into organizing youth-sensitive events, meaningful consultations and start benefiting more from youth agency.



## FACING BIAS

### Tool: Enthusiast #1

Carefully read and reflect on each statement in the table. Tick every statement you agree with.

Statement	✓
1. Young workers often lack loyalty and respect.	
2. All young people are digitally proficient.	
3. Older adolescent boys are more prone to interpersonal violence.	
4. I can't imagine putting confidence in a psychotherapist who is under 30 and has not accumulated enough life experience.	
5. It would be a bit awkward for me to have a supervisor who is very young.	
6. The most important things in life happen during adolescence and young adulthood.	
7. Somebody who is only 16 years old is not yet ready to vote at elections.	
8. A young person can hardly be called an expert.	
9. Young women are still naive and can't always make good choices for their own good.	
10. Millennials are easily bored and crave instant gratification.	
11. Successful men are likely to mentor young women.	

How many boxes did you tick?

Check your perspectives below against facts and evidence suggested by research.

There is more than a century-long accumulated scholar research on *bias* and therefore various, sometimes contradictory explanations for it. Here, the term bias is treated as a tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against something or someone. They are often based on stereotypes and may lead to rash decisions or discriminatory practices. Often they are not operating from the area of conscious awareness and no human is free of bias.

## Youth & Work

### 1. Young workers often lack loyalty and respect.

In a cross-cultural study spanning across 28 European countries, Ayalon (2013) reported more negative views of young than of older employees. Similarly, in the United States, Finkelstein, Ryan, and King (2013) found that only 48% of the stereotypes that older and middle-aged workers held of younger workers were positive.

A King's College London's study is suggesting that organizations should try to increase interactions between workers of different ages, and minimise group formation in order to decrease ageist attitudes, improve intergenerational working relationships and enhance the well-being of employees of different ages<sup>23</sup>. Some of the proposed methods for this are through regular team building and mentorship programmes.

### 4. I can't imagine putting confidence in a psychotherapist who is under 30 and has not accumulated enough life experience.

While ultimately the choice of a psychotherapist is a highly personal process and depends on many factors, it is good to know that age is not a determining condition of quality. Perhaps the same may be concluded for a range of other professions?

According to the Harvard Business Review<sup>24</sup>, one study showed that psychotherapists with advanced degrees and decades of experience are not more successful in their treatment of randomly assigned patients than novice therapists with just three months of training.

### 5. It would be a bit awkward for me to have a supervisor who is very young.

Collins, Hair, and Rocco (2009) reported that older workers viewed their supervisors' leadership more unfavourably if the supervisors were young (in their 30s) versus if they were older (in their 50s); in contrast, young workers' expectations of their supervisors' leadership abilities did not vary as a function of the supervisors' age.

### 8. A young person can hardly be called an expert.

The understanding of what qualifies someone as an expert has been widely discussed over decades – from formal degree not always being the best indicator to watering down the term and provisional self-promotions. Nevertheless, we assume that “expert” stands for an individual with relevant education, work experience, peer recognition and authority in some field.

For example, criteria for persons employed by the OSCE Mission to Serbia on a Special Service Agreement defines an expert/consultant in the following categories:

- NP1 (minimum two years of professional experience): basic training, presentations, preparations for activities, writing papers of technical nature, delivery of lectures of technical nature, technical support to project implementation.
- NP2 (three to four years of professional experience): advanced training, research, facilitation, moderation, participation in working groups, writing papers of procedural nature, delivery of more advanced/specialist lectures, project management/co-ordination.

- NP3 (five and more years of professional experience): working group chairing, writing analysis and policy papers of specialist nature, needs assessment, evaluation, original research.

In 2019, more than half of university graduates in Serbia were 21 to 26 years old<sup>25</sup>. According to OECD<sup>26</sup>, graduation average age for a bachelor's degree is approximately 23 years old in OSCE participating States, such as France, Belgium and UK, with the master's degree average age being as low as about 24 in Turkey. Even the average graduation age for Doctoral degrees (30-31) in countries like Slovenia, Netherlands and Italy is indicating there are graduates in this category younger than 30.

With this in mind, and taking into account the pre-degree experience many young men and women obtain (through internships, traineeships, volunteering, short-term assignments, part time), it is safe to say that a young person has the chance to develop an expertise and gather more than 5 years of relevant experience.

### 10. Millennials are easily bored and crave instant gratification.

Contrary to the common layperson impression that young workers are constantly job-hopping, studies in the US and UK are showing they are just as committed as their elders were at the same age, if not more so.

Even qualitative analyses done in non-profit and human services sector<sup>27</sup> show that a majority of older employees (over 60%) describe their young colleagues negatively, and that young employees (close to 30%) experience reverse age discrimination. These results illustrate how the seemingly benign conversation about generational differences escalates into a serious issue—reverse age discrimination experienced by today's young employees, the Millennials, researchers warn.



REVERSE AGEISM or ADULTISM refers to ageism<sup>28</sup> directed at young people. Primarily young employees are in focus of a still limited research. Nevertheless, equal treatment legislation, across Europe, tends not to define the ground of age or young people, as Equinet<sup>29</sup> states.



23 Patel, J., Tinker, A., & Corna, L. (2018). Younger workers' attitudes and perceptions towards older colleagues. *Working with Older People*, 22(3), 129-138. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WWOP-02-2018-000424> Ericsson, K. A., Prietula, M. J., & Cokley, E. T. (2014, August 1). *The Making of an Expert*. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2007/07/the-making-of-an-expert>

24 Ericsson, K. A., Prietula, M. J., & Cokley, E. T. (2014, August 1). *The Making of an Expert*. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2007/07/the-making-of-an-expert>

25 According to the Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia: <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2019/Pdf/G20196011.pdf>, Retrieved on 18 January 2021.

26 OECD.stat: <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=79474>, Retrieved on 18 January 2021.

27 Raymer, M., Reed, M., Spiegel, M., & Purvanova, R. K. (2017). An examination of generational stereotypes as a path towards reverse ageism. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 20(3), 148-175. <https://doi.org/10.1037/mgr0000057>

28 Ageism is the stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. Ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs. (definition by WHO, 2020)

29 Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies (2016) *Opening up the Issue. Equality bodies combating discrimination against and promoting equality for young people*

## Youth and decision-making

### **7. Somebody who is only 16 years old is not yet ready to vote at elections.**

While eighteen is the most common minimum legal age for voting across the globe, corresponding usually to legal adulthood, in a number of administrations the minimum was lowered to 16 in regard to all elections or partially (e.g. local or particular referendum). Examples across the OSCE region include: Austria, Estonia, Malta, Scotland, Wales, and a number of federal states in Germany.

“To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will: (7.3) guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”, Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE<sup>30</sup> states. Definition of legal adulthood is however a subject of discussions from circles of developmental psychologists to the World Economic Forum. For example, as the UK’s Electoral Commission<sup>31</sup> Consultative paper discusses, there are justifiable reasons for not setting a fixed age at which all rights are acquired. Any standard age of majority for all legal purposes would inevitably err on the side of caution, and potentially impose unnecessary prohibitions on young people’s activities.

It seems that most arguments for lowering the voting age come from the comparison with other social responsibilities that may be applicable to 16-year-olds, such as right to a full-time job (and tax paying), joining the army, and criminal responsibility. Supporters of a reform argue<sup>32</sup> that lowering the voting age would have a positive impact on electoral participation, that a higher level of participation at a young age may then facilitate the early devel-

opment of a habit of voting, as well as that it would ensure that the interests of young citizens are represented in the political system.

The current multi-sector response in majority seems to be that the process of becoming an adult involves gradual increases in social responsibility. In today’s ever-evolving tech-world, it is safe to assume that the debate around the minimum voting age will continue.

## Skills of youth

### **2. All young people are digitally proficient.**

‘Digital natives’ is a term coined by Mark Prensky in 2001 used to describe the generation of people who grew up in the era of technology, as “native speakers” of the language of computers, video games and the Internet. While the term took strong root and technology usage habits evolved for all generations, it would be at least an overgeneralization to assume that all young people as digital natives are equally skilled in the digital world.

Proficiency in some digital skills may not necessarily imply competence in ‘purposeful’ digital skills, for example related to safety. This may be connected to life habits and choice, but also to inequality, which limits vulnerable youth from acquiring even basic digital skills. There are also gender divides in digital skills: as UNESCO maps, women are 1.6 times more likely than men to report lack of skills as a factor impeding their use of the internet.

Many may associate “digital” primarily with social media. While professionally managing social media is a complex skill set on its own, the range of digital skills is much wider. In this regard, pos-

itive bias towards young people being natural connoisseurs in this area may be counterproductive.

## Youth and gender considerations

### **3. Older adolescent boys are more prone to interpersonal violence.**

The perpetration of violence is a risk-taking behaviour that can increase the likelihood of low educational attainment, injury, and involvement with crime or death. Interpersonal violence was ranked the second leading cause of death of older adolescent boys in 2016, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Male adolescents are identified as most at risk when it comes to some other risk-taking behaviours, such as episodic drinking<sup>33</sup>.

Mental health may sometimes be a neglected aspect in the human rights, peace and security discourse. Nevertheless, a recent study<sup>34</sup> foreseen by UNSC Resolution 2250 recommends prioritizing the mental health and well-being of young people through increased funding and the provision of age- and gender-sensitive, non-discriminatory and comprehensive health services.

Young women are more at risk of experiencing specific forms of violence, such as sexual harassment and online violence.

### **9. Young women are still naive and can’t always make good choices for their own good.**

Only 14 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men worldwide have no gender social norms biases, 2020 UNDP’s Gender Social Norms Index concludes, based on data from 75 countries, covering over 80 per cent of the world’s population. Worryingly, it also implies

that there are other surveys which have shown that younger men may be even less committed to equality than their elders.

Moreover, stereotypical self-perceptions and peer pressure for conformity to gender roles may intensify during adolescence for both males and females (“gender intensification hypothesis”<sup>35</sup>).

Although still under-researched, it is indicative that young women and men may experience prejudices discounting their abilities and rights due to their age and gender, and in combination/intersection with other aspects of their identity. Underlying prejudices and prevailing gender stereotypes may load discriminatory practices, which are sometimes hard to recognize, as they can be implicit and deeply rooted as a cultural norm.

**INTERSECTIONALITY** is a paradigm that addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and social systems as they intersect with one another and relate to inequality such as racism, genderism, heterosexism, ageism, and classism, among other variables (APA, 2017b).



<sup>30</sup> Link: <https://www.osce.org/odhr/elections/14304?download=true>

<sup>31</sup> The Electoral Commission (2003). *How old is old enough? The minimum age of voting and candidacy in UK elections.*

<sup>32</sup> Voting at 16: Turnout and the quality of vote choice. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257086945\\_Voting\\_at\\_16\\_Turnout\\_and\\_the\\_quality\\_of\\_vote\\_choice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257086945_Voting_at_16_Turnout_and_the_quality_of_vote_choice) [Retrieved on 18 January 2021]. <sup>33</sup> WHO: Adolescent mental health: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>, Retrieved in March 2020 <sup>34</sup> Simpson, G (2018). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security*. <sup>35</sup> Koenig A. (2018). *Comparing Prescriptive and Descriptive Gender Stereotypes About Children, Adults, and the Elderly.* *Frontiers in Psychology.*

## 11. Successful men are likely to mentor young women.

Evidence shows that women are significantly more likely to be mentored by a female mentor. At the same time, male mentees are equally likely to be mentored by male or female mentors (University of Ottawa, Telfer School of Management). Moreover, LeanIn.org study finds that 60% of managers who are men are uncomfortable participating in a common work activity with a woman, such as mentoring.

Such a situation is not without consequences. For instance, studies<sup>36</sup> are indicating that successful women were less likely than successful men to report that mentoring facilitated their advancement. The Harvard Business Review<sup>37</sup>, in analysing a Catalyst study of more than 4,000 high potentials, also concludes that although women are mentored, they're not being promoted. Their findings show that more women than men have mentors—yet women are less likely to advance in their careers. It is argued that the explanation for such a situation is (among other) in the fact that more men occupy senior, leadership and decision-making positions, thus enabling young men as mentees climbing the leader faster.

Having this in mind, together with gender equality as a vehicle for more productivity and other benefits, it is recommendable to pay more attention to mentorship practices with gender considerations, as well as to overall hiring practices promoting gender equality.

## Youth bias

### 6. The most important things in life happen during adolescence and young adulthood.

The youth bias is a type of cognitive bias that holds that the most notable experiences of one's life, whether private or public, occur in young adulthood.

Researchers<sup>38</sup> are noting that objectively important personal events are randomly distributed over the lifespan – even if their psychological effect on the individual varies – meaning that there is no empirical or rational basis to imagine that such events will disproportionately occur in young adulthood.

There is no human being free of bias, prejudice and assumptions, that may be wrong even if at times they seem logical. Once we become aware of these biases, we can put conscious efforts into challenging them without blaming or shaming. Responsible work with and for youth calls for such efforts.

## PARTICIPATION MODELS

### Tool: Enthusiast #2

The International Youth Foundation's study of 'what works in youth participation?' acknowledges that "every model of youth participation has to be adjusted to the local social, geographical, cultural and political circumstances, and there is no standard model that can be replicated everywhere".<sup>39</sup>

However, following the two models may well serve as a discussion foundation and creative reflection on how different layers of participation work, thus how organizational culture and programming can be enriched with these frameworks in mind.

### LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

Roger Hart, author of the Ladder of Participation (1992<sup>40</sup>), maintains that participation is a fundamental right of citizenship because it is a way of learning what it means to be a citizen. The Ladder of Participation presents a classification of interaction between children/young people and adults as rungs on a ladder: the higher the rung, the higher the level of participation. It is one of the most well-known tools to facilitate better understanding and layers of what is referred to as participation.

Adult facilitators of projects should not be made to feel that they must always support their participants to operate on the 'highest' rungs of the ladder, but they must manage to communicate to youth that they have the option to operate with these 'higher' degrees of engagement, Hart warns<sup>41</sup>.

### Where does your project, activity, or other work stand on this ladder?

Two minus levels represent a modification of the original model, as suggested by Reddy and Ratna (2002<sup>42</sup>), while the other rungs are adapted from Hart (1992):

#### - 2 Hindrance

Adults block opportunities for children/youth and discourage them from participating, intentionally or unintentionally.

#### - 1 Active resistance

Adults actively work against youth participation because they feel that they should not be burdened with participation, or that they do not have the capacity or that they can be easily manipulated to further adult agendas.

#### 1 Manipulation

Adults lead children/young women and men in accordance with a scheme known only to the adults. Children/young people do not understand what is happening, and they are not free to explore or act on their own thinking. Adults use some of their ideas but do not provide children/youth with recognition on what influence they have. It happens also when there is no understanding of the issues and hence participants do not understand their actions.

#### 2 Decoration

Children/young people take part in an event, e.g. by singing, dancing, wearing T-shirts with logos, but they do not really understand the issue or goal. The reason this is described as one rung up from 'manipulation' is that adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by children.

35 Koenig A. (2018). Comparing Prescriptive and Descriptive Gender Stereotypes About Children, Adults, and the Elderly. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

36 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10740959>

37 Why men still get more promotions than women. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46168700\\_Why\\_men\\_still\\_get\\_more\\_promotions\\_than\\_women](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46168700_Why_men_still_get_more_promotions_than_women) [accessed 23 March 2020].

38 Koppel, J., Berntsen, D. (2013) Does Everything Happen When You Are Young? Introducing the Youth Bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 67:3, 417-423

39 Golombok, L. (2002). *What Works in Youth Participation: Case Studies from Around the World*, p. 44.

39 Golombok, L. (2002). *What Works in Youth Participation: Case Studies from Around the World*, p. 44.

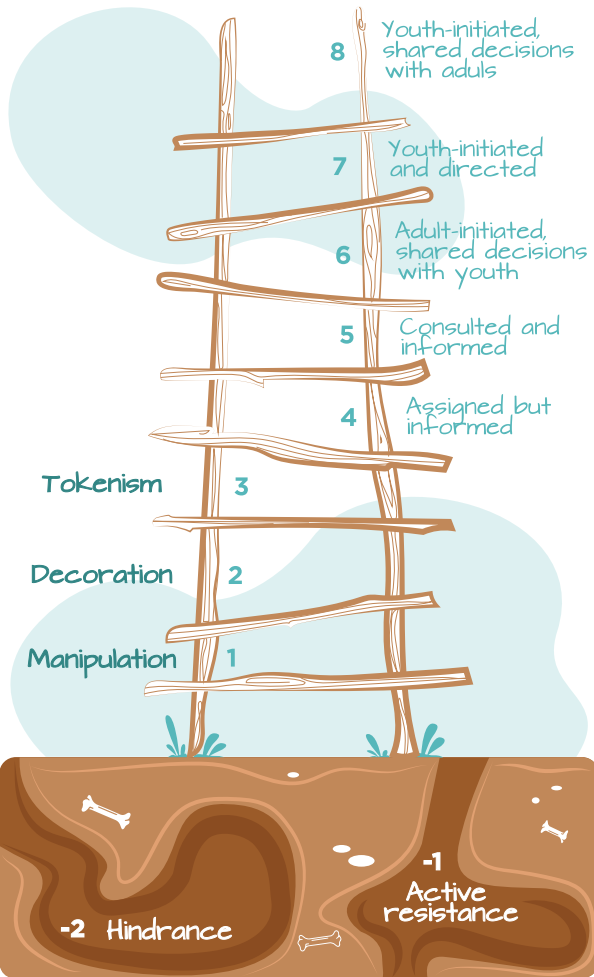
40 First published in *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship* by UNICEF in 1992

41 Hart, R. (2008) Stepping back from "The ladder": Reflections on a model of participatory work with children in book: *Participation and learning: developing perspectives on education and the environment, health and sustainability*. Sage

42 Reddy, N. and Ratna, K. (2002) *A Journey in Children's Participation*. Vimanapura: The Concerned for Working Children.

### 3 Tokenism

Children/young people are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.



### 4 Assigned but informed

Adults decide on the project and children/young people volunteer for set roles within it. Adults inform them adequately and respect their views.

### 5 Consulted and informed

The project is designed and run by adults, but children/young people are

consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.

### 6 Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth

Adults have the initial idea, but children/young people are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Their views are considered, and they are involved in taking the decisions.

### 7 Youth-initiated and directed

Children/young people have the initial idea and decide how the project is carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.

### 8 Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults

Children/young people have the ideas, set up the project, and invite adults to join with them in making decisions.

While the tool has proven as very useful over the decades, in Hart's assessment (2008) it is important to acknowledge The Ladder's limitations:

- It is not a comprehensive tool to evaluate how participatory a programme is, but rather a developmental model;
- It emphasizes individual agency, which may not be appropriate to all cultures;
- It focuses on programmes or projects rather than on everyday informal participation in children's/young people's communities;
- It is largely limited to describing the varying roles adults play in relation to children's/youth participation.



## THE TYPE PYRAMID

The Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) Pyramid was designed in 2010, to contribute a framework for understanding different ways young people and adults can interact and how this interaction affects youth and eventually community development. Authors<sup>43</sup> are building on youth-focused participation models by incorporating intergenerational linkages and considering research developments in youth-adult partnerships.

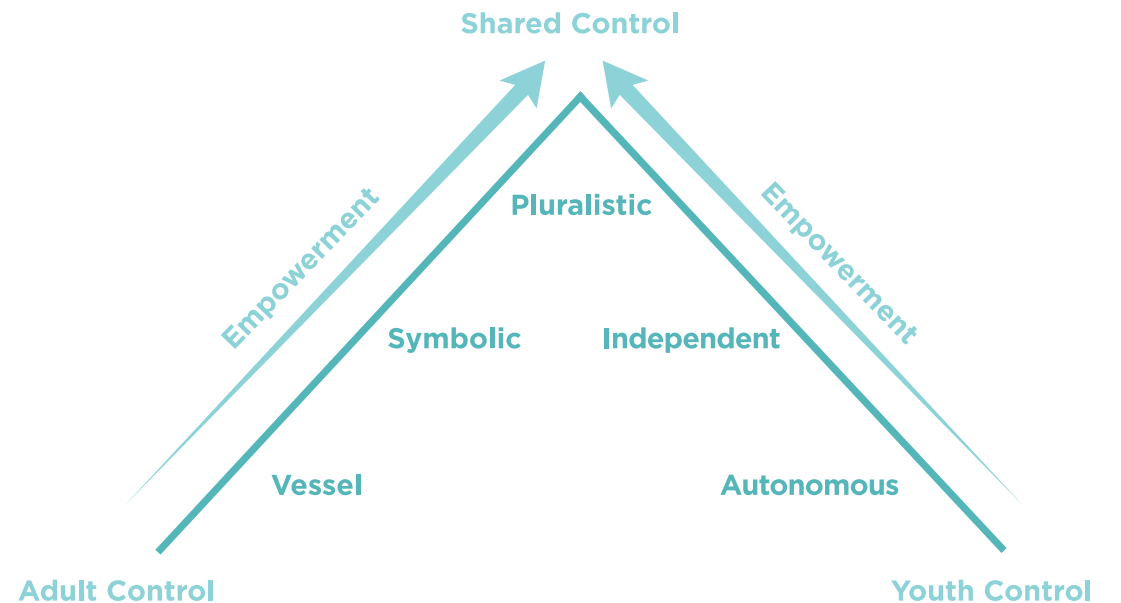
They start from the premise that youth participation is a democratic practice of young people actively engaging with their social environment. The point of engagement can therefore be initiated by three basic approaches: adult-driven, shared control, and youth-driven, avoiding the assumption that youth-driven participation is ideal. The degree of control can differ within these types.

Another concept introduced in this model is the empowerment process, which as the authors explain, implies a shared co-learning relationship where both respective groups raise the level of collective critical consciousness.

In this model, Wong, Zimmerman and Parker describe five types of participation that delineate various levels of youth-adult involvement in an inverted V schematic:

### Vessel

This type refers to a traditional youth-adult relationship that is adult-driven, demanding little to no input from young people. Due to a lack of youth involvement, there is low empowerment potential. Although youth may be able to learn skills and acquire useful knowledge, little opportunity exists for young people to contribute their own ideas. In effect, this limits potential for co-learning with adults.



<sup>43</sup> Naima T. Wong, Marc A. Zimmerman, Edith A. Parker (2010). A Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment for Child and Adolescent Health Promotion. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 46(1-2):100-14

### Symbolic

In this type of participation, youth have the opportunity to voice their perspectives about problems and their potential solutions, and be heard by decision makers. Adults may, for example, set up formal or informal structures for youth to express their opinions and experiences. Youth positions on organizational boards, advisory committees, research projects, and in advocacy work often fall into this participation type. The participation arrangement is symbolic or representative of democratic processes; however, in the end, youth often do not have much power in the decision-making or agenda setting process.

### Pluralistic

The pluralistic participation type recognizes the strengths of both youth and adults working in partnership to create and sustain both healthy youth and community development. In this type, the relationship between youth and adults is reciprocal. That is, youth and adults share planning and decision-making responsibilities to achieve goals. In this type, adults are involved at a level where the purpose of their presence is to maximize conditions and opportunities for youth to engage in pro-social activities, yet are not overly dominant or under-involved to a point where they hinder youth development or empowerment. Youth-adult partnership research is beginning to suggest that Pluralistic type participation may be ideal for both empowering youth and community development.

### Independent

As a response to traditional Vessel youth participation types, some adults have taken the approach that they must give up their power for youth to gain power. Although this approach has been recognized for enhancing youth independence, it has also been criticized for lack

of adult involvement. The empowerment potential within this type is not as optimal as in the Pluralistic type, because youth are provided with limited guidance.

### Autonomous

This type describes scenarios where youth have taken measures to create their own spaces for voice, participation and expression of power regardless of adult involvement. Oppositional youth culture, such as youth gangs, can illustrate how this type of participation may impede positive youth development. In cases when youth may not be able to benefit from knowledge of adults, the opportunity to pass along intergenerational memory is lost, diminishing young people's abilities to connect their circumstances to the historical narratives of their communities.



### Try it out yourself

Write down some of the activities you or your colleagues were implementing in the past or plan to do in the future to assess what kind of participation of youth they are enabling:

Activities	TYPE pyramid	Ladder of participation

Looking at the list and having in mind participation models, are there trends you can observe? Having in mind OSCE context, what can be done differently in the future? Is there a practice you would choose (not) to continue in the future?



## YOUTH PARTICIPATION PRACTICE STANDARDS

### Tool: *Enthusiast #3*

When organizing activities or projects for youth, how do we ensure that they are done *with* youth? In order to enable meaningful participation of young men and women, you may consider multiple aspects in your planning, as identified by youth workers and youth organizations as good practice standards:

This tool is created based on a consultative process with National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), National Association of Youth Workers of Serbia (NAPOR), South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) and representatives of civil society organizations with a good track record related to participation practices and youth engagement from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro: Vojvodina Environmental Movement, MUNJA – Incubator of social innovations Sarajevo, Young Researchers of Serbia, Educational Center Kruševac, BalkanIDEA Novi Sad (BINS), Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid, European Youth Parliament Serbia, Centre for Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), Belgrade Open School (BOS) and Centre for youth work (CZOR).

- ✓ **NEEDS-BASED APPROACH & PURPOSEFULNESS**
- ✓ **COMMUNICATION: TRANSPARENT, CLEAR, ADJUSTED TO TARGET GROUP**
- ✓ **ENSURING SECURITY: PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL**
- ✓ **ENGAGING METHODOLOGY**
- ✓ **ACCESSIBILITY & DIVERSITY**
- ✓ **YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP BEYOND**
- ✓ **ONE-OFF ACTIVITY**

### Sample practice:

#### City of Helsinki's Participation game<sup>44</sup>

The participation planning game was developed in 2017 under the direction of the Helsinki City Executive Office. By the beginning of 2018, the Participation Game has been played by more than 2,000 city employees.

The City of Helsinki's Participation Game helps city employees consider how the operations and services could be planned in even better co-operation with the residents. At the same time, it helps introduce Helsinki's participation model and build a concrete participation plan with contributions from the entire personnel. The Participation Game is a board game that can be played by anyone who is interested in the operations of the City and their development. The material is available on the web.

The Participation Game starts with the identification of elements and gains of participation. When playing, the players evaluate which things are currently done well to enable the participation of citizens, and in which areas there is room for improvement. In the last phase of the game, the players agree upon concrete measures. The developers have also come up with documentation and a follow-up tool for the game, which is used for documenting the participation plans generated during the game, producing extensive data of the realisation of the participation and collecting information on the use of the game and its development needs.



## MY YOUTH-TARGETED INITIATIVE

Standard	My activity/project/programme
<b>NEEDS-BASED APPROACH &amp; PURPOSEFULNESS</b>	
How is my initiative corresponding to the actual needs of the target group in its diversity? Am I in a position to inquire about the needs in some innovative manner?	
How can I map interests and/or concerns of youth? Which particular cohort/group of young women and/or men? Are separate consultations needed for women and men, or other groups, in order to create a safe space?	
What is the current level of competencies in my target group? What are their learning needs?	
Is this initiative about participation or education about participation?	
<p><i>Tip: Activities that gather groups of young women and men to create recommendations, documents and resolutions that have no advocacy implications or further implementation can be observed as primarily educational. They can have participatory qualities nevertheless.</i></p>	
How can I address the mapped needs of young women and men in a meaningful way? What can I do to demonstrate the purposefulness of the initiative from the get-go?	
<b>COMMUNICATION: TRANSPARENT, CLEAR, ADJUSTED TO TARGET GROUP</b>	
How can I communicate goals and activities in a clear and transparent way? How formal, how horizontal? Oral or written? Visual?	
What will be the result of youth engagement? How can my participants see their contribution?	
How will I adjust my communication to the specific target group?	
<p><i>Tip: The term 'youth-friendly' is often used, referring to the content that youth are able to obtain, which is meeting their expectations and needs. In terms of language and communication this can mean adjusting channels, visuals, wording, motives that youth use and can connect with.</i></p>	
<p><i>Nevertheless, attention should be paid to prevent slipping from youth-friendly to oversimplification, and thus underestimating the addressed people.</i></p>	

<sup>44</sup> See: <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/participate/channels/participation-model/participation-game/>



Are the values we promote communicated effectively?

*"Honesty matters to me. Don't say it will be fun, if it won't be." Consultations participant*

### ENSURING SECURITY: PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL

Which are the preconditions for a safe environment for all participants? Which steps can be taken to prevent any sort of violence from happening?

*Tip: Security procedures can sometimes be an obstacle to participation. It helps to clearly communicate why certain procedures are needed, who will have access to any data, and how it will be used. Being transparent and treating young people as rights-holders who are able to understand the rationale behind decisions certainly contributes to building trust and partnership.*

How can I ensure the security of any disadvantaged young woman or man participating in the initiative? How do I create an environment that is free from any form of discrimination or (sexual) harassment?

Do I plan to check if participants are fine with video and photo taking?

Can I guarantee that personal data of participants will not be used for other purposes but this initiative by any parties involved?

### ENGAGING METHODOLOGY

What kind of innovative methods I can use, especially towards ensuring interactivity?

*Tip: Developing Youth Work Innovation eHandbook published by Helsinki's Humak University of Applied Sciences, brings experiences from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The approaches covered include Design Thinking, Humour Techniques, Learning Experience Design and others. You can find it here: <http://futurelabs.humak.fi/ehandbook/>*

How can this initiative demonstrate trust in youth and offer them space to experiment?

What kind of digital tools may be possible to use during this initiative?

*Tip: For the inspiring list of digital tools compiled by South East European Youth Network (SEEYN) and how to use them in youth work and non-formal education in general, including evaluation, assessment, project management, and group work, visit: [http://digiyouh.seeyn.org/digital\\_tools](http://digiyouh.seeyn.org/digital_tools)*

What can I do to ensure that the initiative is age-appropriate for the specific group of youth I intend to work with?

What sort of qualifications and knowledge do the implementors of the initiative need?

How is concrete and measurable contribution of youth ensured? How will they know that their opinion counts?

### ACCESSIBILITY & DIVERSITY

What steps can I take to reach various groups of youth for the initiative, especially disadvantaged ones?

Can I make sure that the initiative is accessible on all grounds to young women and men? What special measures should I take to ensure young women can participate?

*Tip: Depending on the type of the initiative one may think of the following examples: securing sign language interpretation, having materials in multiple languages and in larger fonts, organizing gatherings and accommodation in venues accessible to disabled participants, using a diverse range of communication channels including face-to-face, securing resources for presence of personal assistants.*

How do we ensure people feel accepted, equal and comfortable to participate freely?

### YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP BEYOND ONE-OFF ACTIVITY

Is it possible that my initiative produces Level 7 of participation on a Roger Hart's scale?

What kind of follow-up is applicable?

In which ways can the young participants of this initiative and the experience obtained be engaged in the future?

*Tip: Plan to use Hero mode tool #6 from this Toolbox for evaluating youth activities and learning more closely what can you further improve, how can you follow-up and where do you excel in your work for and with youth.*

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING

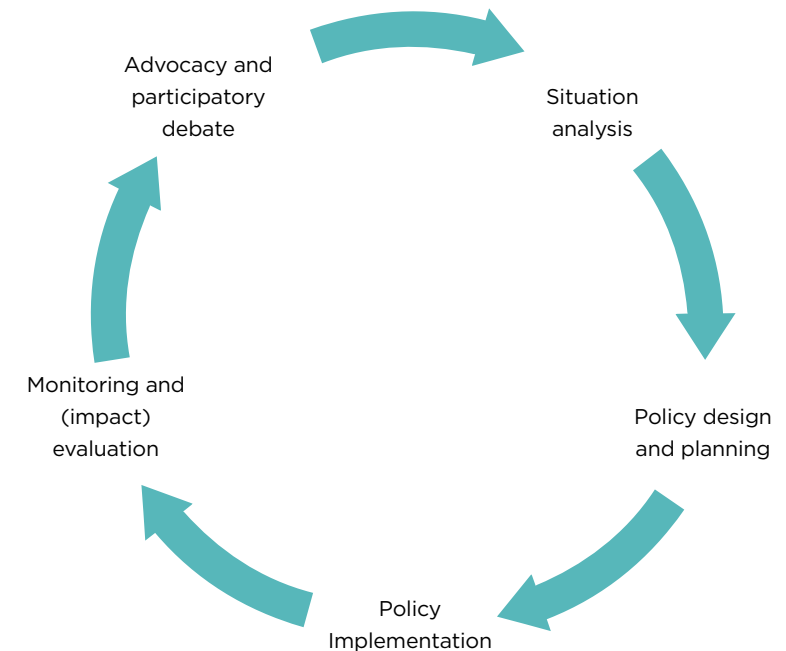
While overall youth participation standards are applicable in any programme involving young people, additional angles can be mentioned for the policy-making context. This is especially important when the initiative is not youth-targeted, but rather youth mainstreamed. Here is a brief overview of what matters to youth and youth organizations in such processes:

### What to insist, what to avoid

What to insist on?	What to avoid?
✓ Bottom-up creation	✗ Creation of new documents before evaluating previous ones
✓ Proper understanding of needs, normative framework and policy beneficiaries as a precondition for process	✗ Classic polling
✓ Piloting period	✗ Insufficient time period for the process
✓ Gender parity in working groups and overall representation of different sectors	✗ High-level decision makers leading operational level processes
✓ Empowerment of youth actors (on particular skill <sup>45</sup> , process, theme) to enable informed youth contribution	✗ Processes without secured budget for implementation
✓ Formal co-operation with youth entities and young people	✗ Presence of media, which sometimes can be counter-productive in terms of inhibited or modified behaviour
	✗ Consultations on solely national level/ with national stakeholders



<sup>45</sup> Skills and competences needed for active youth participation in policy-making processes according to European Youth Forum (via OECD, 2017) are political literacy, critical thinking, and democratic attitudes and values.



For example, National Youth Strategy can be co-created with formal ownership of line ministry and national youth council (or other main youth policy actors)

- ✓ Consultant with prominent research experience
- ✓ Use of an interactive approach, such as Design thinking or Policy lab
- ✗ Traditional meeting forms which may not be working for all youth

***“Young people should be partners in creation, rather than merely executing them”***

Consultations participant

According to the OECD (2017), the forms and levels of participation differ throughout the policy cycle (see figure on the right). Although youth participation is a valuable and desirable process, legal and political frameworks may impede young people from engaging in all steps, at all levels. Moreover, in practice, youth participation is never limited to only one step or one form of participation.

**Sample practice:**

**Policy Labs<sup>46</sup>**

The Policy Lab is a methodology for conducting controlled experiments with new data sources and new technologies for creating data-driven policies. Policymakers experiment with new policies in a safe environment and then scale up successes.

The Policy Lab approach has three phases:

- (1) Exploration of new data sources and technologies, and their impact on policy,
- (2) Joint setting up of experiments and involving different stakeholders, and
- (3) Implementation, expansion and monitoring of data-driven policy.

For instance, a pilot has been carried out in collaboration with the Municipality of Rotterdam. The goal of the experiment was to arrive at a better policy model aimed at developing socio-emotional skills and preventing young people from ending up without education or work.

Policy Labs are also emerging structures that construct public policies in an innovative, design-oriented manner, in particular by engaging citizens and companies working within the public sector. Currently, a number of Policy Labs exist in a handful of Member States of the European Union.

For instance, in the UK, Policy Lab<sup>47</sup> is a creative space where policy teams can develop the knowledge and skills to develop policy in a more open, data-driven, digital and user-centred way.

Policy Lab supported the UK Cabinet Office's Constitution Group and Government Equalities Office to develop a youth engagement toolkit for MPs and peers.



## GATHERING YOUTH PERSPECTIVES THROUGH MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION

**Tool: Enthusiast #4**

Meaningful consultation with young men and women can be described as a method for collecting their perspectives, opinions, and feedback, on activities or proposals that will affect them directly or indirectly. Meaningful consultation is a two-way process and should take place when the collected perspectives, opinions, and feedback can still inform the final design of the action or proposal.

This tool has been consulted with three youth policy pillars in Serbia: National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) gathering 108 member organizations, National Association of Youth Workers of Serbia (NAPOR) gathering 54 organizations that practice youth work, and National Youth Office (AKZM) gathering 110 cities and municipalities with the Local Youth Office.

It should be kept in mind that consultation has its limitations: it is perceived as a process in which youth are afforded the opportunity to express their views, but ultimately the final decision rests with those in positions of higher authority. Nevertheless, it is important to remain accountable on how information given by young women and men is used, and how their contributions will benefit them and other members of their community.



<sup>46</sup> See: <https://www.tno.nl/en/focus-areas/strategic-analysis-policy/expertise-groups/strategy-policy/policy-lab-developing-data-driven-policies/>

<sup>47</sup> See: <https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/about/>

**Sample practice:**

In 2014, a year prior to Serbia assuming the OSCE Chairmanship, a wide campaign was conducted by the National Youth Council of Serbia, supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and OSCE Mission to Serbia, on informing and engaging young people on security related topics. At the same time, through approximately 15 peer-to-peer workshops, young men and women were also asked on their views on security challenges and their solutions on a local and national level after becoming familiar with the OSCE's comprehensive security concept. The collected inputs were compiled and used in the making of the new National Youth Strategy, specifically the chapter on security. In this way, voices of various cohorts of youth, who perhaps would not contribute to such a policy document otherwise, were acquired. The following elements made a difference in their participation:

**- Partner-up with young people:** Exceptional young leaders were selected through an open call based on pre-defined criteria, and were thoroughly trained and prepared to conduct their own workshops. They actively participated in the making of all educational materials, outreach letters, and overall logistics. Furthermore, they independently organized a unified series of workshops in urban and rural areas of Serbia.

**- Making the topic accessible:** Well-prepared peer-to-peer approach contributed to accessibility of the topic to youth. The inclusion of different young men and women relied on multiple outreach options, including social capital of the facilitators.

**- Using innovative methodology:** Implementation of 4-hour long workshops included a combination of theoretical inputs with active participation through digital tools, group work and gamification. Young participants were not simply asked to comment on topics they were perhaps not familiar with, but were first given sufficient information and context. By making the approach interesting and by using informal language, the activity prompted their authentic ideas.



<p><b>HOW YOUR TEAM AND YOU CAN CONSULT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?</b></p>	<p>Organize meetings at which potential young beneficiaries, including marginalized youth, can learn more about your work/activity/proposal and express their perspective and views.</p>	<p>Attend meetings of youth representatives - youth councils, boards, caucuses, or other structures - to listen to their perspectives, solicit opinions, and identify other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Organize meetings with youth CSOs to gather opinions and feedback, and identify other stakeholders.</p>
<p>Solicit feedback through traditional methods, e.g., e-mails and phone calls.</p>	<p>Seek feedback through on-line surveys, questionnaires, or polls.</p>	<p>Soliciting feedback and perspectives through social media.</p>	<p>Form a focus group on a particular topic made up of a diverse range of young people and/or experts on the topic.</p>
<p>Meet with young experts on a particular topic to gather their views and opinions.</p>	<p>Hire young experts and/or experts on youth policy/youth work to perform more complex consultative activities.</p>	<p>Invest in staff capacity building to advance knowledge relevant topic-wise, as well as skills for working with youth.</p>	<p>Ensure that the content and format of consultation is adjusted for the appropriate youth age group, e.g. teenagers versus youth in their late-20s!</p>
<p>Insert your idea</p>	<p>Insert your idea</p>	<p>Insert your idea</p>	<p>Insert your idea</p>

Consider a few upcoming activities you and your team plan to implement in the near future. Which of the aforementioned consultations methods can you use to complement your activities?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips for **Talking** to Young People!

- ✓ Use accessible, diversity-sensitive, and age-appropriate language.
- ✓ Inform them of their right to freely express their views and opinions, and that those views and opinions will be given consideration and respect.
- ✓ Inform them of their right not to be coerced into expressing their views against their own wishes.
- ✓ Leave enough space and time for young people to express themselves.
- ✓ Be aware of your own prejudices.
- ✓ Adjust the conversation to their developmental level
- ✓ **Do not patronize - and avoid using patronizing terms, such as kiddos, kids, teens, or youngsters.**
- ✓ Do not judge or lecture.
- ✓ Be open, supportive, and involved.
- ✓ Be honest about what you need from them.
- ✓ Avoid using “students” or “children” interchangeably with youth and/or young women and men.
- ✓ Avoid saying “you are the future” or similar clichés that recognize the value of young people’s contribution only in terms of their future, rather than their present roles in society.
- ✓ Distinguish to the extent possible the target group of youth in the project, reflecting their heterogeneity
- ✓ Listen, and ask questions!

#### DIGITAL TOOL

##### **Sample practice:** U-Report

U-Report is a free and anonymous digital tool, created by UNICEF, where young people can freely and safely speak out on topics that are important to them.

U-Report directly interacts with young people, with a focus on those ages 15 to 24, who sign up to become U-Reporters. Governmental and non-governmental U-Report partners can develop polls to gather information on young people’s level of satisfaction and perceptions of specific policies or programmes important to young people and their communities. The polls are then sent via Facebook Messenger or Viber to U-Reporters, where they can state and discuss their opinions and satisfaction with regards to the particular policy or programme.

U-Report is active in approximately 60 countries, including the following OSCE participating States: Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Ireland, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. A sub-regional U-Report for the Western Balkans includes Albania, Kosovo<sup>48</sup>, and Montenegro.<sup>49</sup>



#### POLICY-MAKING

##### **Sample practice:** The Structured Dialogue

**... is a means of making young people’s voice heard in the European policy-shaping process.** It is a consultative process, implemented by the European Commission, in order to increase co-operation with civil society, and to get direct input from young people.

It is called “Structured Dialogue’ because it happens in a very concrete frame which has been set by the European Commission together with the European Youth Forum. It brings together young people and policymakers across the EU to jointly discuss and feed into youth policy at the local, regional and European level. It lasts for 18 months involving consultations with young people and youth organizations in EU Member States and during EU Youth Conferences. Representatives of line ministries and national youth councils from EU-candidate countries usually also join these conferences<sup>50</sup>.

#### How do you view and treat young people in your professional and personal life?

William Lofquist (1990) described three categories of adult perceptions that affect adult-youth interactions:

- Youth as Objects: Adults know what is best for young people and control situations in which they allow them to be involved.
- Youth as Recipients: Adults allow young people to take part in decision-making because they think the experience will be “good for them.”
- Youth as Resources: Adults respect young people as having something significant to offer and youth are encouraged to become involved.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

<sup>49</sup> UNICEF Office of Innovation. U-Report Western Balkans: <https://westernbalkans.ureport.in/v2/about/> UNICEF, U-Report: <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report-U-Report-Dossier>

<sup>50</sup> See: [www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org)

<sup>51</sup> Shelley Murdock, Carole Paterson, Mary Claire L. Gatmaitan. (2008). “Youth in Community Decision-Making: A Study of Youth-Adult Partnerships”. *Journal of Youth Development*, p. 3.

## YOUTH-SENSITIVE EVENT MANAGEMENT: TIPS FOR OSCE WORKSHOPS, ROUNDTABLES, CONFERENCES

### Tool: *Enthusiast #5*

The tips below are particularly relevant for youth-targeted events, but can also be applied to events in which youth make up a large or even a small fraction of the participants. Many of the tips are also relevant for event management striving to cherish equality and diversity in general.

#### When choosing participants...

1. Ensure that young people's participation is voluntary. See also the *Youth Participation Practice Standards tool*.
2. Choose young women and men to participate not just as beneficiaries or attendees, but also as speakers, presenters, moderators, facilitators, experts, advisors, and registrants, keeping in mind equal participation of all groups.
3. Pursue diversity of the group according to gender, geographic origin, ethnicity, age, attitudes, and other intersectional factors.
4. To find young participants, you can contact: schools and universities; youth networks or councils; youth-led organizations; and youth-focused institutions or bodies.
5. If issuing an open call for participants, place it in youth-friendly media outlets or other places where youth, including marginalized youth, may find it more easily (e.g., university message boards, through youth networks, youth centres, youth service centres, and similar).
6. When applicable, suggest to counterparts/delegations/partners to include at least one young person in their representation.
7. Make good use of digital tools in reaching different cohorts of youth (and familiarize yourself with benefit-

ing from digital analytics).

8. Avoid tokenism – choosing young participants as a performative or symbolic effort.
9. Keep costs of participation for potential participants at either zero or as low as possible.
10. Avoid always inviting the same young people.
11. If possible, include a proportionate percentage of young people in relation to their percentage in the population (e.g., 18 percent in Serbia).
12. Expect to take special measures to facilitate participation and access of young women, as well as persons with disabilities.

#### When choosing the format of event sessions:

1. Ensure that moderators/facilitators treat attendees of all ages with respect.
2. Encourage moderators/facilitators to activate, inspire, and support young or marginalized attendees to actively participate in discussions.
3. Keep the event youth-friendly by avoiding formality, including a high number of speeches and presentations at the expense of inter-active sessions or small group work, and by encouraging presenters to be creative in their presentations (e.g. use video, music, multi-media, digital platforms such as Kahoot, Mentimeter). Innovative formats are often more engaging for all people, not only youth.
4. Be aware of any cultural norms that may preclude young men and women from traveling or overnighting together, or sitting next to each other: create a safe space where women and men can participate on equal terms.
5. If there are certain protocols or procedures in place for the event, provide instructions or guidance to ensure that young participants are aware and understand those protocols and procedures.

#### When choosing specific topics for discussion:

1. Touch upon ways in which people of different ages, genders, and backgrounds are affected or will be impacted by the topic at hand.
2. Ensure that moderators/facilitators are aware of and can deal with the greater context of age-specific roles and relations within society as potential risks to inclusive discussions (i.e., stereotypes about youth, social hierarchies, or power dynamics that may obstruct or inhibit youth participation).
3. Involve young people in selecting the topics to ensure they are relevant, useful, and interesting to them.
4. When discussing problems or obstacles related to the topic at hand, touch upon ways in which young people may be positive agents of change.

#### Sample practice:

In addition to striving to have young people in active roles such as speakers at your events, you may advise other speakers in the preparation phase to include youth angles in their interventions, to the extent applicable and possible.

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) used this approach in organizing event *Preventive Diplomacy in the Changing Landscape of Modern Conflicts: The Role of Regional Organizations*, alongside Slovak Permanent Mission to the UN, on the margins of the 2019 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York. Guiding notes for panellists, involving a number of high-level career diplomats, suggested a few leading questions to reflect youth roles, too (*How can youth be empowered to be at the forefront of conflict prevention efforts? Do you have any success stories to showcase? How do we foster the participation of girls and women specifically?*).

#### When enabling respect and equality:

1. Do not actively separate young from senior guests, decision makers or others in general. Strive to enable intergenerational exchange.
2. Assess the speaking order – is there a good reason for the youngest speaker to be given the floor last?
3. Strive for sitting arrangements that reflect your tendency to promote equality and participation. For example, do not sit a young speaker at the corners by default.
4. Give the same time to young men and women who wish to speak as to any other participant.
5. Do not identify young people (as speakers or similar) only and/or primarily by their age, if their primary role is not that of a (elected) youth representatives. They have other qualities, skills and/or identities. You may invite a young woman as a researcher, without labelling her as a 'young researcher' or a 'female researcher'.

#### When choosing a venue:

1. Examine the accessibility – both outside and inside the venue – for participants with disabilities, including wheelchair accessibility, equipment for hearing-impaired participants, and similar.
2. Examine the youth-friendliness of the venue, such as the safety and security of the location, the absence of age-inappropriate entertainment (casinos, bars that serve alcohol to minors), whether religion or faith can be practiced without fear, and safety especially for women.
3. Explore the variety and types of food or meals offered, such as vegetarian/vegan, halal, and gluten-free.
4. Request a youth-owned venue from procurement, if possible.
5. Consider quality aspects: have you assumed that youth are fine with shar-

ing accommodation, staying in cheaper hotels, eating cheaper food, or traveling longer distances in less comfortable modes of transport?

**When choosing the dates for the event:**

1. Confirm that the events are not scheduled during periods when the participation of young people would be very difficult to ensure, such as exam time, school/university holiday periods, and religious or national holidays.
2. Check that no other large youth-targeted events are occurring at the same time.



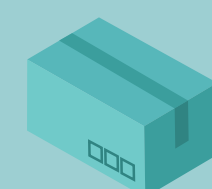

**When considering visibility of the event:**

Provide pre-, live, and post-coverage of the event on social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) in order to reach a more diverse range of audiences, including youth.

**Ask yourself: The Three Rs<sup>52</sup>**

1. **Reach:** Are you reaching the right audience or target group?
2. **Resonance:** Does the content of the activity resonate with young people? In other words, can young people recognize and understand the benefits of the activity, and apply the gained skills and knowledge?
3. **Response:** What measures have been triggered by the activity, among participants or other stakeholders.



YOUTH-SENSITIVE EVENT-PLANNING TEMPLATE		
TEMPLATE	Questions	Notes
EVENT DATE	Can I consider the suitability of these dates for young people envisioned to participate?	
EVENT TYPE	Conference, seminar, workshop?	
PREPARATION PHASE	Can I consult someone, such as the Youth Advisory Group/Board, on event aspects from a youth angle?	
LOGISTICS 	<b>VENUE</b> Is the venue appropriate, accessible and safe for various groups, including youth?	
	<b>ACCOMODATION</b> Did I foresee sponsored accommodation of the same quality for all participants? Or same per diem %?	
	<b>TRAVEL</b> Did I foresee the same travel modalities for all?	
PARTICIPANTS 	<b>OUTREACH</b> Is there an open call for the event? What outreach efforts can I make toward marginalized youth?	
	<b>DIVERSITY</b> Can I include young men and women in active roles and on the basis of equality? Can I aim for representational diversity, including age for participants?	
FORMAT 	<b>METHODOLOGY</b> Are there out-of-the-box, innovative methods I can use?	
	<b>PROTOCOL</b> Is the protocol going to be familiar/clear for everyone?	
	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b> Does it make sense to hire someone under 30 for facilitation or other tasks?	
VISIBILITY 	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b> Can I have a catchy hashtag for the event? How can I use social media to engage audiences actively (live stream, Tweet wall, Instagram live)? For youth-targeted events you can use #OSCEyouth	
	<b>MEDIA</b> Did I foresee press releases and youth quote/angle within it?	
POST-EVENT PHASE	Can I evaluate my event against youth-sensitive aspects?	

<sup>52</sup> Adapted from Search for Common Ground's Three Rs Framework

# HERO MODE

Once you have grasped the logic of the game, you will make progress towards more advanced levels.

The Hero mode presents a higher level, aiming to help you gain more confidence in reaching greater quality youth mainstreaming in programming and project cycle management. In this mode you can:

- o Take a ride through the five phases of project cycle management and discover new paths in introducing youth to your project;
- o Refresh at the World Café and become a master of needs assessments, learning to periodically introspect in your game evaluation;
- o As a Hero of youth mainstreaming, counter resistance to leave the game when a level seems too difficult to pass.





## YOUTH IN THE FIVE PHASES OF OSCE PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

### Tool: Hero #1

At each and every phase of the OSCE project management cycle, you can ask yourself:

1. Have youth perspectives been integrated into all five phases of my project?
2. Have I considered how the design

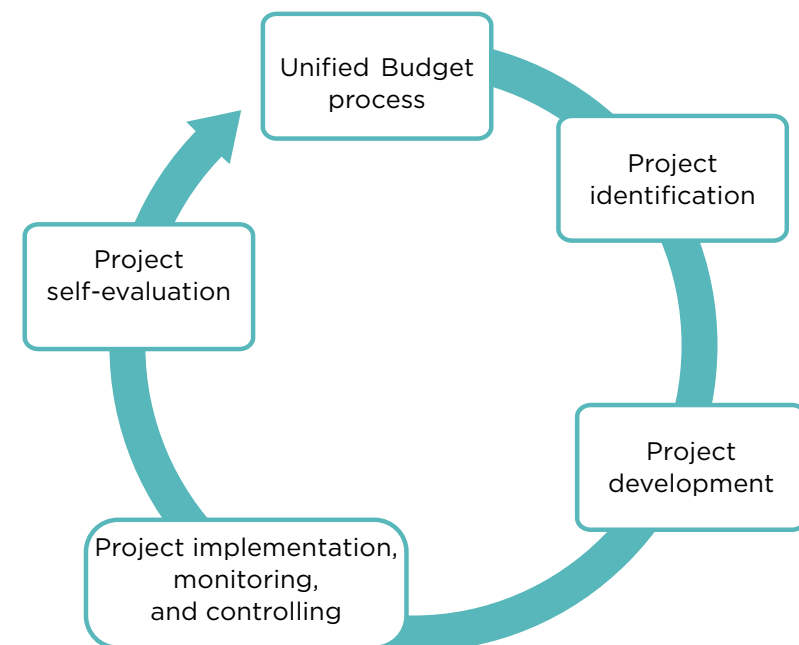
and implementation of all five phases of my project could impact the lives of young people?

3. Have I explored how all five phases of my project could benefit from the inclusion and participation of youth?

4. Does my project motivate, enable, or inspire other stakeholders and partners to re-examine their own attitude towards youth participation?

5. Does my project recognize and reinforce the inter-sectoral or cross-dimensional nature of youth participation?

See also Tool in Hero mode #3: Project Youth Check, in particular the implementation modalities, budget, the project objective and monitoring and evaluation sections.



For more information on OSCE project cycle management see *Project Management in the OSCE - A Manual for Programme and Project Managers*

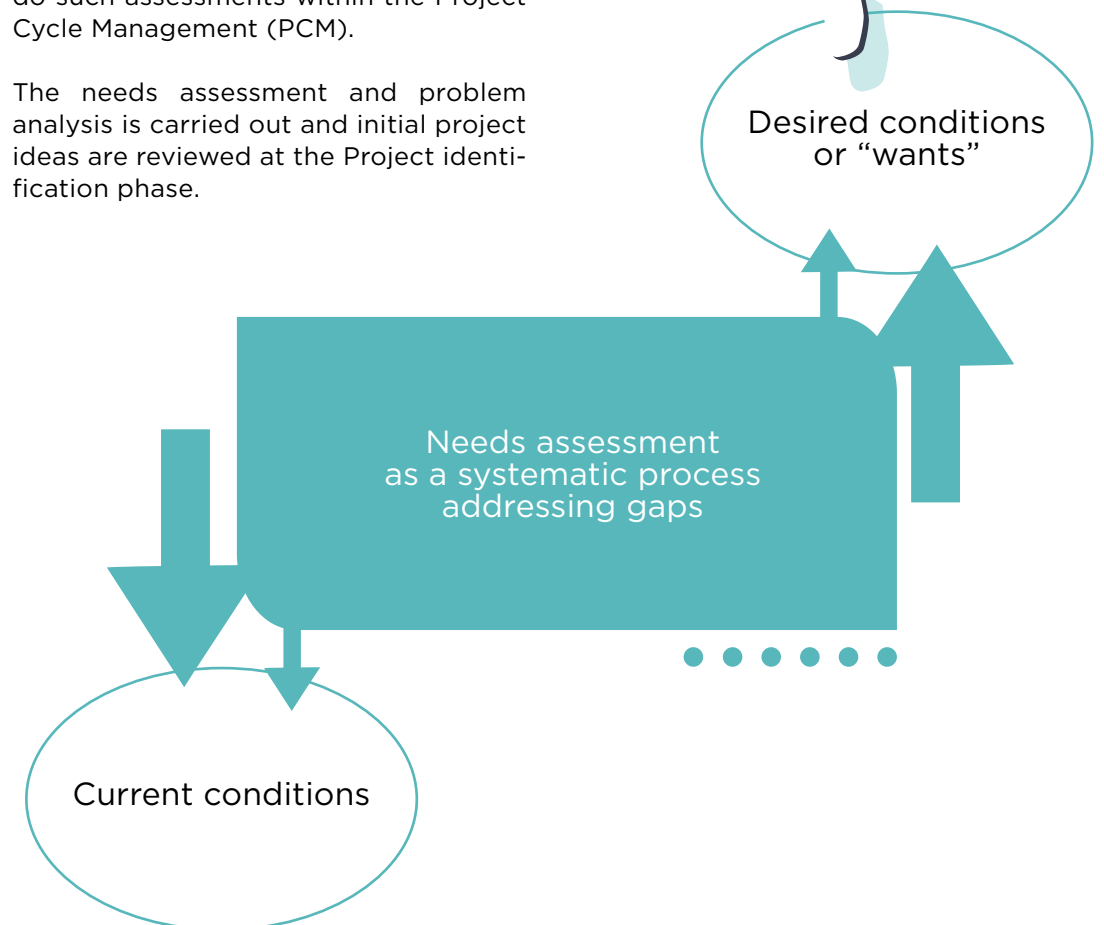
Unified Budget process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Are there plans for youth-targeted activities in the current or next UBP for your department?</li> <li>o Have you incorporated youth perspectives into the UBP for your department?</li> <li>o Are there references to youth mainstreaming in the UBP for your department or office?</li> </ul>
Project Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Are youth considered as stakeholders or partners in this project, even if they are not the specific target group? If yes, is it individuals, youth groups, youth-led organizations, youth-focused organizations or institutions?</li> <li>o Have the needs or perspectives of youth been taken into account during this phase? If so, which youth? Did you consider gender implications?</li> <li>o Have you analysed the positive or negative implications the project could have on youth? What about on marginalized youth?</li> </ul>
Project development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Does the achievement of the project objective or any of its expected results contribute to youth participation to any degree and/or address a specific topic of concern for youth?</li> <li>o Are young people of different ages, genders, and backgrounds, including young people with disabilities, from different ethnic groups, or diverse geographical locations, given opportunities to participate?</li> <li>o Can any budget items be described as facilitating youth participation? Have any extra costs associated with involving marginalized and/or a diverse range of youth in the project been incorporated into the budget (e.g. young parent with a baby, personal assistance, accessible facilities, sign language interpreter)?</li> </ul>
Project implementation, monitoring and controlling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Will you document the level of youth involvement in the project activities and/or analyse the quality and nature of that involvement?</li> <li>o Will you segregate data by gender and age, if applicable?</li> <li>o Can youth-owned or youth-friendly venues be requested from procurement?</li> <li>o Are the logistical aspects of the activities of equal quality to those in which youth are not the target group? For example, have we assumed that youth are fine with sharing accommodation, staying in cheaper hotels, eating cheaper food, or traveling longer distances in less comfortable modes of transport?</li> </ul>
Project self-evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Has the fulfilment of the objective had an equal impact on all age groups, or any one age group in particular?</li> <li>o Has the fulfilment of this objective brought about any improvement or benefit for youth, however small? Which youth, in particular?</li> <li>o Were youth involved in any of the monitoring or evaluating efforts of the project?</li> </ul>

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Tool: Hero #2

The Synthesis Report *Evaluation of the OSCE's Work With and For Youth 2016 - 2018 (2020)*, produced by the OSCE Office of Internal Oversight, found that across the OSCE in 2018, excluding the youth-targeted projects, less than one fifth of all available project proposals integrated youth perspectives in a thorough way. Among other, it particularly recommends strengthening the systematic needs assessment in regard to young women and girls, men and boys, towards enhancing the relevance of the OSCE's work for young people. These Guidelines aims at giving more space to do such assessments within the Project Cycle Management (PCM).

The needs assessment and problem analysis is carried out and initial project ideas are reviewed at the Project identification phase.



### What is a need? Fictional example 1

In 2015, the Fictional International Organization (FIO) established a 5-year strategy to mainstream youth across its programmes. In 2020, FIO's evaluation reports are showing that only 35% of projects contain any youth component. Having in mind that the inclusion of a youth perspective is not applicable perhaps to 20% of projects, the gap of 45% of projects is a need that can be addressed through various activities, also in terms of quality.

### What is a need? Fictional example 2

In the Democratic Republic of X, the importance and benefits of volunteering have long been acknowledged as contributing to the strengthening of some fundamental values, such as solidarity and connecting with communities. It helps individuals to play a significant role in creating a more democratic, caring and responsible society, while also contributing to 2% of X's GDP. Nevertheless, the Law on Volunteering in DRX seems to discourage the organizers of volunteering, leading more than 100 of them to sign an appeal claiming they experience a number of challenges and lower Needs assessment as a systematic process addressing gaps. Current conditions Desired conditions or "wants" volunteering rates. The gap between cherished value operationalized through potentially dysfunctional legislation, and feedback of field practitioners and beneficiaries is a need to be assessed and measured against expected indicators.

**Project Management in the OSCE - A Manual for Programme and Project Managers recommends that the Needs assessment answers the following questions:**

- ✓ What needs to be achieved?
- ✓ What actions would most effectively achieve that?
- ✓ What other options are available?
- ✓ In which context will the project take place?
- ✓ Who has a stake in the project and who will need to be involved?
- ✓ Approximately how and when can the project be carried out?

The current OSCE Project Template (2020) also recognizes youth in a few of the guiding questions focusing on needs assessment, namely:

- If relevant; what are the unique barriers for diverse groups of women and girls, men and boys as well as marginalized communities in the realization of their rights (in the context of the main problems identified). [Situation and problem analysis]
- Briefly describe the main stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries, host authorities, civil society, other international organizations, etc.) and their roles/interests in connection to the core problem, as well as the context, as identified above. Underline, to the extent that is applicable, the different roles and interests of women and men in this project, as well as youth and/or vulnerable groups. [Key Stakeholders]

For youth-targeted projects all elements of a standard Needs assessment framework should apply, apart from these two questions.

*See also Tool in Hero mode #3: Project Youth Check, in particular Background and Justification section.*

### How to actually do it?

Some of the straightforward tools to identify needs used globally are:

#### Can't You Just Send Out a Survey Asking People What They Want? No.

A survey is not a needs assessment. It is only a tool that may be used in a needs assessment, if the circumstances are right to use a survey. Although the individual perspective on what people want to have done is quite valuable in making informed decisions, by itself it is of little value when making decisions. Asking people what they want also sets up the expectation — likely false — that they will get exactly what they want. Thus, we strongly recommend that you don't go down that path. By going far beyond simply asking people what they want, you can create a needs assessment that collects valuable information from multiple perspectives and that guides justifiable decisions. Use multiple tools and techniques, and stay away from questions that may build unrealistic expectations.

*Excerpt from A Guide to Assessing Needs, The World Bank (2012)*

#### Focus group

- ✓ **Not a discussion.** It is a structured group interview used to obtain detailed information about a particular topic, usually involving 4 to 12 participants.
- ✓ **It is fairly flexible to do.** It can be homogeneous or heterogeneous<sup>53</sup>, conducted on-set or online. It usually lasts about 90min to two hours.
- ✓ **Stand-alone tool or addition to other methods.** Depending on the scope of assessment and resources available, focus groups can be used in both ways. One of the useful usages is to analyse, validate, and deepen inputs from quantitative surveys through open-ended questions and synergy of group conversation.
- ✓ **Resources about it are numerous and available for free.** As it is a widely used qualitative method of research, across sectors and sciences a number of good sources can be found to assist you with. Scan the QR code for a sample of a useful Guideline by University of Mississippi. Nevertheless, it is always better to have a trained professional conducting a focus group, if possible.



<sup>53</sup> On homogeneity see further: Kim P. Corfman (1995), "The Importance of Member Homogeneity to Focus Group Quality", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 22, eds. Frank R. Kardes and Mita Sujjan, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 354-359.

### Sample usage:

The OSCE Mission to Serbia conducted a focus group in order to inform design of its activity on the usage of YouTube as a channel for educational yet engaging content on safety topics targeting the youngest cohort of youth and children. The group was held online for two hours with seven participants, 15 to 17 years old. For better dynamics and interaction, additional digital tools were used, i.e. Answer Garden and FunRetro.

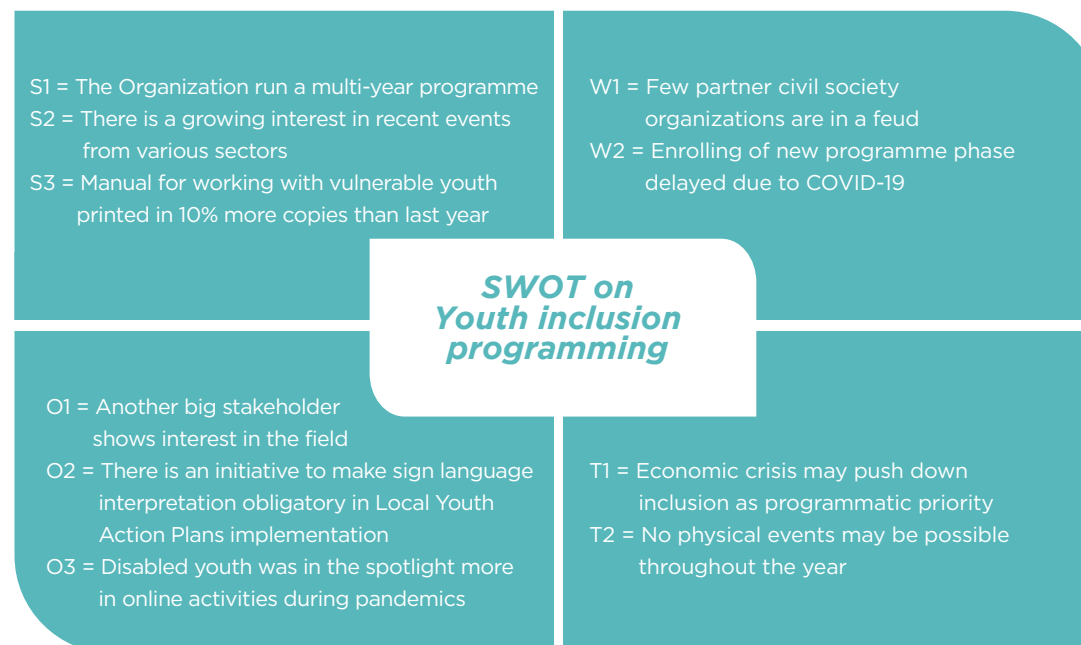
Through four main questions, a few sub questions and an informative icebreaker, the focus group served well to collect valuable inputs in creation of activity, by relying heavily on target group interests, opinions, skills etc. At the same time, it triggered more curiosity in young YouTubers to produce content related to safety and constructive approaches.



### SWOT+

- ✓ A common SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a practical tool to identify, organize, and prioritize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to specific topic.
- ✓ The “plus” addition brings a very valuable layer to the tool by assigning relationship, prioritization and values to SWOT factors, thus informing needs assessment.
- ✓ Detailed guide can be found in *The World Bank (2012), A Guide to Assessing Needs*

### Fictional example



Identified factors could now be connected for intersectionality on continuums of asset-liability and internal-external influence. Once factors are prioritized, you can inform further needs assessment and decisions. The SWOT tool can inform which factors should be fixed immediately, which should be improved over time, which should be sustained, and which should be monitored.

For instance, if S1, W1, O1 and T1 are interconnected, and depending on their placement in continuum, S1 may rely on O1 in order to improve and perhaps bridge W1 with some new partners, while T1 is monitored and countered. Regarding S2, W2, O2, and T2, we may use increased interest of various sectors in order to enrol a new programme which was delayed, but with the focus on opportunity which stems from Local Youth Action Plans. In this way, creating a sound activity may outweigh the perceived threats of online options.

### The World Café

The World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue, making it a great tool for consultations and gathering objective inputs.

✓ It has 5 components, out of which small-group rounds around specific questions are the first association to it. In this way ideas are harvested from (great number of) participants and/or in a highly participatory manner.

✓ Detailed hosting toolkit and other inspirational inputs can be found at: [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)

### Sample usage:

The World Café is relatively often used in OSCE activities. For instance, it was one of the tools used toward mapping needs in a form of Decalogue for mainstreaming the youth agenda into responses to security challenges, as proposed by more than 70 young people between the ages of 18 and 29 from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation at the OSCE 2017 Youth Conference in Spain's Málaga: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/319896>

See also Tool in Enthusiast mode #4: Gathering youth perspectives through meaningful consultation.

Nevertheless, needs assessment can be much more complex, in-depth and it can be revisited throughout the PCM for adjustments.

Some organizations have developed commendably thorough assessment guides specifically in relation to youth programming, particularly in the development sector:

**Sample practice: USAID**

USAID’s Project Design Guidance (2011) proposes to conduct a [Youth Analysis](#), among other analytical work that can inform project development.

A youth analysis in this practice should:

- 1) enable a better understanding of the country’s youth profile and inform program and project focus (by age cohort, for example) and modality selection;
- 2) affirm the commitment to, and create avenues for, meaningful participation by youth in the design process, with potential for longer-term engagement;
- 3) underscore that youth are impacted by, and can have impact on, projects in all sectors, and with more youth-sensitive design can come better overall project outcomes; and
- 4) elevate awareness of, and advocate for, opportunity and attention to youth among host country and development stakeholders at large.



USAID has also developed a comprehensive [Guide to Cross-sectoral Youth Assessments](#) that combines the use of both qualitative and quantitative assessment techniques. This Guide provides instructions on how to conduct hands-on research designed to engage youth and other key stakeholders and understand their knowledge, perceptions, and experiences regarding youth development needs. It also provides guidance for conducting more formal sector-level reviews of youth-related indicators and programs.

Finally, [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#) makes clear that all Missions are expected to incorporate youth participation across their operations. While it is acknowledged that there is no one blueprint for how to involve young people within assessments, the publication states that the involvement of young people can assist the Missions in finding entry-points into the population and developing more intensive roles in participation in terms of youth and integrated programming. Each Mission should consider the roles and methods in which involving youth in the assessment project will be productive, meaningful, and feasible.



**General secondary sources – inspiration list**

SOURCE	WHY
National Youth Strategy and Action Plans and their evaluation reports, legislation	National Youth Strategy is an overarching document usually containing a number of different areas linked to OSCE mandate including security, participation, activism, and environmental and economic issues. The OSCE can contribute meaningfully to the implementation of the NYS.
Local youth strategies and action plans and their evaluation reports	Local policies are a relevant source of information and assessment, particularly when interventions are focused on a geographic area and for local programming,
National Human Rights Institutions Reports	Useful when the programming involves marginalized populations.
Regional agreements, memorandums of understandings related to youth among (neighbouring) states	Documents in support of sub-regional co-operation within the OSCE region, bilateral and multilateral agreements related to youth may be of interest.
Academic papers and research	Useful objectives and credible sources of information on particular topics, as well as ways to contextualize social and historical dynamics.
Universal Periodic Review Reports (UPRs)	The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a process set up by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) which reviews the entire human rights record of UN Member States every four and a half years. It is the only monitoring process where UN member states may ask questions or make recommendations to each other, and for this reason it is a unique and important opportunity for advocacy. The need for contributions and shadow reports focusing on youth is increasing.
Voluntary National Review Reports on SDGs	The voluntary national reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Some countries also youth mainstream their VNRs.
Civil society research, reports and shadow reports, including specialized marginalized groups	Civil society insights often can offer additional angles to the topic or specialized information, especially in relation to vulnerable groups in the population, including young men and women.
Media reports and media monitoring reports	Media reports can offer a “bigger picture” insight. For instance, media monitoring on an electoral campaign in terms of youth can inform on policies intended for them, or about youth political participation.
Gender equality reports	As OSCE is firmly committed to gender equality, gender considerations should always be examined in mapping needs

### Universally relevant OSCE and other international documents

- ✓ OSCE Ministerial Council Declarations related to youth from 2014, 2015 and 2018
- ✓ UN Security Council Resolution on youth, peace and security 2250 from 2015
- ✓ UN Security Council Resolution on youth, peace and security 2419 from 2019
- ✓ UN Security Council Resolution on youth, peace and security 2535 from 2020
- ✓ OHCHR Human Rights Council Resolution 35/14 on youth and human rights from 2017
- ✓ OHCHR Human Rights Council Resolution 41/13 on youth and human rights
- ✓ Youth2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth

## PROJECT YOUTH CHECK ● ● ● ● ● ●

### Tool: Hero #3

Section headings and sub-headings	Checklist
<p><b>Mind your language!</b></p> <p>It is advisable to avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-using patronizing terms such as kiddos, kids, teens, or youngsters-using “students” or “children” interchangeably with youth and/or young women and men</li> <li>-using “children are our future” or similar clichés that recognize the value of young people’s contribution only in terms of their future, rather than their present roles in society.</li> </ul> <p>It is advisable to distinguish, to the extent possible, the target group of youth in the project, reflecting their heterogeneity.</p>	
<p>Summary box</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are any youth organizations/groups listed as beneficiaries? »</li> <li>» Are you required to rate the project according to youth involvement/participation, i.e., a Youth Marker?</li> </ul>
<p>Background and justification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Can you identify relevant youth actors for the project?</li> <li>» Have you consulted any youth/youth organizations during the design phase? In what format were those consultations (focus groups, one-on-one meetings)?</li> <li>» Have you considered youth as stakeholders or partners in this project, even if they are not the specific target group? If so, which youth – individuals, youth groups, youth-led organizations, youth-focused organizations or institutions?</li> <li>» Do young women and men make up any portion of the target group, even if they do not participate directly in activities? Are they given the same opportunities to be involved?</li> <li>» Have you taken the needs or perspectives of youth into account during the design (needs assessment, problem analysis) phase? If so, which youth?</li> <li>» What particular problems faced by youth does the project aim to address?</li> <li>» Have you considered how youth may be affected by the issue the project aims to address?</li> <li>» Have you analysed the potential positive or negative implications of the project on youth? What about marginalized youth?</li> <li>» Have you disaggregated background statistics by age, gender, or another factor?</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» What positive role can youth play in addressing the problem?</li> </ul>

Projective objective		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Does the objective reflect or address the needs of a specific range of youth groups; if so, which group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 15-18 years old</li> <li>o 19-24 years old</li> <li>o 25-30 years old</li> <li>o 31-35 years old</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Will the fulfilment of the objective have an equal impact on all age groups, or any one age group in particular?</li> <li>» Does the fulfilment of the project objective contribute to youth participation to any degree and/or address a specific topic of concern for youth?</li> <li>» Will the fulfilment of this objective bring about any improvement or benefit for youth (however small)? Which youth, in particular?</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Has the objective been negotiated and agreed upon with youth actors?</li> </ul>
Project results	Results with indicators and means of verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Does the project have any youth-targeted or youth-specific results, even if the project as a whole is not youth-targeted?</li> <li>» Are there any youth-specific performance indicators?</li> <li>» Will the achievement of the results have an equal impact on all age groups, or any one age group in particular?</li> <li>» Will youth derive any direct benefits from the achievement of any of the project results?</li> <li>» Does the achievement of any of the project results contribute to youth participation to any degree and/or address a specific topic of concern for youth?</li> <li>» Can result indicators be disaggregated by age group?</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Have the results been negotiated and agreed upon with youth/youth organizations?</li> </ul>
	Activities with indicators, means of verification, and essential inputs	<p>Is there an added value for a youth-targeted activity to be incorporated into the project, if there is not one already?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Have youth/youth organizations or institutions specifically requested any of the project activities</li> <li>» Do planned activities involve people of different age groups? »</li> </ul> <p>Does the project staff have the capacity and skills to facilitate young people's participation in project activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are there any specific efforts required to ensure that youth can participate in the activities not only as beneficiaries, but also as facilitators, experts, and in other capacities?</li> <li>» Can the number of youth participating in an activity be proportionate to their percentage in the population (e.g., 18% in Serbia)</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Have young people been involved in selecting the activities to ensure they are relevant, useful, and interesting for them, in terms of content and type of activity?</li> <li>» Have you contemplated the identified ways to improve youth participation?</li> <li>» See Hart's Ladder of Participation (Page 15). Where does this activity fall on that scale?</li> <li>» Are young people of different ages, genders and backgrounds, including young people with disabilities, from different ethnic groups, or diverse geographical locations, given opportunities to participate?</li> </ul>

Risk management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Have you considered the greater context of age-specific roles and relations within society as a potential risk, such as stereotypes about youth, social hierarchies, or power dynamics that may obstruct or inhibit youth participation?</li> </ul>
Horizontal issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Have you considered obstacles and vulnerabilities faced by youth within the context of the problem your project aims to address?</li> <li>» In which ways does the project rely on youth as potential agents of desirable change?</li> </ul>
Implementation modalities	Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are any of the activities involving young people planned for periods of the year in which participation might be challenging, such as during exam time or university holiday periods?</li> <li>» Have you confirmed that no other large youth-targeted events are occurring at the same time?</li> </ul>
	Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Will the project be monitored and evaluated for different impacts it may have on different age groups?</li> <li>» Will youth be involved in any of the monitoring or evaluating efforts of the project?</li> <li>» Will you document the level of youth involvement in the project and/or analyse the quality and nature of that involvement?</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Is there a specific role envisioned for youth beneficiaries of the project relating to monitoring and evaluation?</li> </ul>
	Partnership Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are youth considered stakeholders or partners in this project, even if they are not the specific target group? If so, which youth – individuals, youth groups, youth-led organizations, youth-focused organizations or institutions?</li> <li>» Are youth project partners treated with the same respect as other project partners?</li> <li>» Does the implementing partner have its own non-discrimination or equal opportunities strategy?</li> <li>» Does the implementing partner have an interest in integrating a youth perspective into the project?</li> <li>» Do you plan for any younger colleagues to participate in the selection of implementing partners?</li> </ul> <p><u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Is the implementing partner an organization for youth or a youth-led organization?</li> <li>» Does the implementing partner value youth participation? »</li> <li>» What is the implementing partner's motivation for promoting or opposing youth participation?</li> </ul>
	Personnel arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Can young experts be hired as consultants for this project, including for non-youth related topics?</li> <li>» Should a youth worker be hired if there are activities involving direct work with young men and women?</li> </ul>

Implementation modalities	Procurement modalities	<p>» Can youth-owned or youth-friendly venues be requested from procurement?  <u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <p>» Are the logistical aspects of the activities of equal quality to those in which youth are not the target group? For example, have we assumed that youth are fine with sharing accommodation, staying in cheaper hotels, eating cheaper food, or traveling longer distances in less comfortable modes of transport?</p>
	Sustainability and exit strategy	<p>» Can you identify youth organizations as possible responsible parties for future aspects of the project?</p> <p>» Are there strategic activities assisting institutions to incorporate youth mainstreaming as a standard? <u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <p>» Can youth partners be empowered to pursue the objective of the project in the future?</p> <p>» Can youth partners be empowered to partially or fully take over aspects of the project next year?</p>
	Visibility	<p>» Will the participation of youth in the project be highlighted in press releases, news items and other promotional material about the project?</p> <p>» Will the project and its objectives, results, or activities be publicized in youth-friendly media outlets or on social media?</p> <p>» Does the project foresee resources for targeted social media efforts?</p> <p>» Which additional visibility efforts will you be taking to ensure access to information to disadvantaged youth?  <u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <p>» Will you publicize calls for participants and other announcements in youth-friendly media outlets or other places where youth may more readily find them (e.g. digital venues, university message boards, though youth networks, youth centres, youth service centres)?</p>
Budget		<p>» Can you describe any budget items as facilitating youth participation?  <u>For youth-targeted projects, additionally consider:</u></p> <p>» Have you incorporated any extra costs associated with involving marginalized and/or a diverse range of youth in the project into the budget?</p>



## ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION FOR OSCE RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES

### Tool: Hero #4

Below are some examples of how youth participation and inclusion could be enhanced in a typical OSCE project result or activity. Try it out for your own project!

Result or Activity	Illustrative examples of youth mainstreaming elements
Creating the National Strategy on Anti-Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include data on the role of youth as perpetrators, victims, and peacebuilders in the background and justification section of the project proposal;</li> <li>• Enable youth CSO participation in working groups.</li> </ul>
Organizing a seminar for lawyers about criminal law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for 1/5 of participants to be young lawyers (or other portion reflecting the percentage of youth in the given geographical context);</li> <li>• In the seminar material, include some examples or analysis of the implications of the law on young people.</li> </ul>
Supporting the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in establishing measures to decrease digital violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire at least one researcher under 30;</li> <li>• Disaggregate data by age (it provides young people with visibility in planning).</li> </ul>
Supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSC Resolution 1325 to advance the role of women, with a focus on the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose at least one youth CSO as an implementing partner;</li> <li>• Have young law enforcement officers trained on communication with students (peer-to-peer);</li> <li>• Support the MOI in establishing a youth task force for the prevention of digital violence;</li> <li>• Hire a youth worker to conduct workshops alongside MOI staff;</li> <li>• Consider youth and gender statistics related to digital violence</li> </ul>
Conducting field visits and presentations for academic audiences and youth to promote OSCE commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce age and gender-based statistics at the local level;</li> <li>• Emphasize the role of youth, and specifically young women, in building peace by providing local/national examples;</li> <li>• Promote youth CSOs led by young women at the local level, and highlight their role and achievements;</li> <li>• Ensure inclusion of young women in decision-making processes related to the national implementation of the NAP;</li> <li>• Engage young women in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NAP.</li> </ul>
Conducting field visits and presentations for academic audiences and youth to promote OSCE commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose innovative presentation formats and use appropriate language;</li> <li>• Choose topics that are more likely to be of interest to young people, or enquire about their areas of interest beforehand;</li> <li>• Organize presentations in youth-friendly venues;</li> <li>• Highlight youth-related commitments in the presentations and other OSCE mechanisms for promoting youth participation;</li> <li>• Ensure a supportive space and discussion environment</li> </ul>



Delivering training on environmental protection legislation with the Environmental Law Clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire young lecturers for some of the topics;</li> <li>• Focus on environmental issues which are of particular concern for young people, such as climate change or plastic pollution;</li> <li>• Discuss the important role of youth in solving environmental issues, highlighting recent inspiring examples such as the #Climatestrike.</li> </ul>
Organizing seminars for media professionals on the impact of digital technologies on media sustainability and the latest media trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite young experts to present on the current role of young people in digital media development;</li> <li>• Invite youth CSOs dealing with media literacy to present or attend;</li> <li>• Ensure participation of young media professionals as participants.</li> </ul>
Developing formal and informal training programs to educate youth, journalists and other members of the public on the rule of law, democracy, and human rights issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with young people and other potential beneficiaries to gather information on knowledge gaps and areas of interest;</li> <li>• Include young lecturers in the program;</li> <li>• Choose innovative and interactive methodologies for the training course sessions;</li> <li>• Disaggregate participants' evaluations by age group;</li> <li>• Highlight the essentialness of youth inclusion for building a democratic society in the curriculum.</li> </ul>
Assisting the Social Welfare Ministry in developing the regulations on the protection of persons with mental health conditions in social care institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite youth CSO working with youth mental health challenges to join the working group;</li> <li>• Gather opinions through a focus group comprising of young people affected by the issue (as beneficiaries or family of beneficiaries);</li> <li>• Enable access to statistics and data related to youth and their mental health, for both young men and women, and obstacles they face;</li> <li>• Mainstream the regulations regarding youth and gender.</li> </ul>
Improving the treatment of prisoners and their social reintegration with the goal of preventing reoffending and reducing crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite youth workers to provide inputs on the role of youth work and youth CSOs in social reintegration of prisoners;</li> <li>• Collect best practice examples related to youth combating crime;</li> <li>• Promote youth as agents of change, rather than as criminal offenders.</li> </ul>

At times, youth mainstreaming an activity is not easy. Consulting other colleagues and the Youth Focal Point can offer multiple perspectives. Consulting young people directly is always a good approach to examine assumptions and collect ideas. Nevertheless, not all activities can have the same depth of youth mainstreaming – and that is fine.

*For collection of youth mainstreamed activities on the ground, see compendium published by the OSCE Mission to Serbia: Youth Mainstreaming in Action - <https://www.osce.org/mission-to-serbia/449881>*

## INDICATORS FOR OSCE PROJECT OBJECTIVES, RESULTS, AND ACTIVITIES

**Tool: Hero #5** ● ● ● ● ● ●

Indicators demonstrate if the project has completed its activities, delivered its intended results, and achieved its objective. It is important to remember that indicators only provide a signal of progress and are not necessarily scientific proof.

The sample indicators below can easily be adjusted to fit the specificities of your project. Importantly, including youth-specific indicators at the project objective, result, or activity level – and thereafter taking the time to report against those indicators – is one way to mainstream youth into your project.

### Sample indicators for project objectives or results

- Supported policy/programme facilitates the active participation of young people in decision-making and encourages them to engage as active citizens.
- Supported policy/programme promotes the inclusion of marginalized young people.
- Supported policy has been developed/changed/revised based on feedback from youth actors.
- Young people participating in the project as beneficiaries report that the objective/result reflected their needs and priorities.
- Young people participating in the project as beneficiaries/stakeholders report that the achievement of the objective/result has positively contributed to youth participation/youth development/another concern of youth.
- The achievement of the objective/result has had a positive impact on young people as determined by post-project assessment surveys/interviews/polls
- Young people participating in the project as direct beneficiaries report that the achievement of the objective/result has brought about an improvement in their lives.
- Focus groups/youth representatives report that the achievement of the objective/result directly benefits youth.
- The level of youth engagement in the project has been analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Number of articles in major newspapers or other outlets explicitly addressing the youth role in the issue in a positive light.
- Number of laws/policies/procedures adopted and implemented with OSCE assistance designed to promote and improve youth participation at the regional, national, and/or local level.
- Proportion of young people employed in the supported institution/ body/organization.
- Proportion of young people with leadership roles in the supported institution /body/ organization.
- Young people participated in all relevant project activities/under this result on a voluntary basis.
- Young people substantively contributed to the monitoring and evaluation of the project results and activities.

### Sample indicators for project activities

- Several age cohorts represented as participants/organizers/facilitators in the activity.
- The number of young participants was proportionate to the number of young people in the country/area of responsibility.
- Young people of different ages, genders, attitudes, and backgrounds, including young people with disabilities, from different ethnic groups, or diverse geographical locations, participate in the activity.
  - Young people were recruited to participate in the activity as facilitators/experts/lecturers.
- The level of youth engagement in the activity has been analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Participants express increased interest in enhancing the participation of youth in their work upon conclusion of the activity.
- Participants report a new or renewed interest in promoting youth participation in their own work as a result of their participation in this activity.
- Young participants report that their participation in the activity was a positive experience.
- Young participants report that they felt empowered to express their views during the activity.
- Young participants report that they felt encouraged to fully participate in the activity and that their contribution was respected and appreciated.
- Young participants report that the activity was relevant, useful, and interesting for them.
- On Hart's Ladder of Participation, the activity reached a level of participation of at least 4 (on a scale of 1-8).



<sup>54</sup> If you have foreseen participation of same respondents during preparation/ideation/design phase of the activity, you may develop two separate statements. The answer might differ from one phase to another (e.g. very high involvement during implementation, not at all during planning).

## EVALUATING YOUTH-TARGETED ACTIVITIES

### Tool: Hero #6

#### Questions for young participants of your activity

*These suggested questions can assist you in collecting information for the evaluation of a youth-targeted activity, including for reporting against indicators.*

**Qs 1-7:** These questions are intended to evaluate the activity as a whole (from planning through implementation) and the experience of the participant as an individual.

1. This activity was relevant and useful for me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. I felt empowered to express my own views throughout this activity<sup>54</sup>, including during the preparation phase (if applicable).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. I felt encouraged to participate in this activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I felt that my contribution was respected and appreciated throughout this activity by the organizers or the other participants<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> You may also choose to split this statement into two, differentiating between organizers and other participants for more accuracy and insight.

<sup>56</sup> For this question it is recommendable to provide a timeframe (e.g. in the short term, in the long term, in two-three years) depending on the nature of your activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. The group of participants was adequately diverse and inclusive, such as in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, origin, attitudes, or other personal characteristics.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. My overall experience of this activity was positive.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. Moving forward, this activity will have a positive impact on young people in my community<sup>56</sup>.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Qs 8-11:** These questions are intended to evaluate the relationship established between the organizers and the participant as part of a group.

8. The OSCE project team and/or other project organizers have clearly explained why we were to participate in this activity, i.e. what the added value of our participation was.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. The OSCE project team and/or other project organizers acted like they knew what was “best for us” and controlled the situations in which we were allowed to be involved.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. The OSCE project team and/or other project organizers allowed us to take part in decision-making, acting like they thought the experience would be “good for us”.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. The OSCE project team and/or other project organizers treated us with respect, took interest in and recognized the value of our insights, and encouraged us to become involved.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### Questions to ask yourself (and be honest!)

A questionnaire, for activity organizers/managers to self-evaluate their performance, including attitudes, best practices, room for improvement and similar.

*These suggested questions are designed to compel you to think about ways in which you have strived for quality youth participation in a youth-targeted activity, and what you might need in order to make improvements in the future.*

*[Note: Please reflect on your approach to working with youth - on this activity and in general.]*

1. What types of roles did you recruit young people to play in this activity?

- Participants
- Facilitators
- Experts
- Logistical support providers
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. What method did you use, if any, to recruit a diverse range of young people to participate in this activity?

- My team and/or I visited locations where a diverse range of young people were present in order to invite them.
- My team and/or I encouraged project partners (informal and formal) to reach out to a diverse range of young people.
- The activity was advertised on social media to reach a diverse range of young people.
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where on Hart’s Ladder of Participation would you place activity?

4. What about Youth Participation Prac-

tice Standards (see Enthusiast mode Tool #3)? Review the list of questions. For how many is the answer “yes”? If your answer was “no” to more than half of the standards, can you think of ways you can improve youth participation in your next activity?

5. I managed to create an atmosphere in which young participants felt they had the right to freely express their views and opinions, while simultaneously considering and respecting the views and opinions of other participants.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. If your answer to the previous question was “Strongly agree” or “Agree”, how did you achieve such an atmosphere? Commented [M6]: Proveriti jel tacan broj toola 9313. Working with young people on this activity helped me overcome my prejudices and/or question my assumptions about youth.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. If your answer to the previous question was “Strongly agree” or “Agree”, what type of prejudices and/or assumptions have you identified? And how did you overcome and/or question them?

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## OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO YOUTH MAINSTREAMING: TIPS FOR HANDLING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

### Tool: Hero #7

The introduction of new processes into any organization inevitably faces resistance within the organization. Below are some sentiments you might encounter (or even think yourself) about why youth mainstreaming should not or cannot be done in the executive structure, along with potential responses.

Youth mainstreaming means additional work. I have too much to do already!

Possible response: Indeed, learning how to mainstream youth will require some additional work, especially in the beginning. However, it is envisaged that once the basics are learned and practiced a few times – including both the fundamentals and the tools – mainstreaming youth will become an automatic process like so many other processes you conduct when you plan or implement a project or activity (e.g. budgeting and communication). Moreover, it might be that youth mainstreaming can bring additional innovation to your work and benefits beyond particular demographic group. Ultimately, your work will be more democratic and of higher quality.

Possible response: Equal treatment in a situation of unequal preconditions can have adverse effects on outcomes. Many young people do not have access to resources and opportunities due to financial instability and/or the lack of connections, certain abilities and privileges, education, or years of experience. Equality is creating the same starting line for everyone, whereas equity provides everyone with a range of opportunities and benefits or – the same finish line. Treating everyone the same way may at first glance appear to be the right thing to do, but it ignores the reality that young people do not always have the same starting point. By focusing on equity, we aim to ensure that everyone can succeed and reach the same finish line, without obstacles.

I don't discriminate against young people – I treat everyone equally!

There are more important problems than those faced by young people, such as discrimination against women and people with disabilities.

Possible response: To be sure, discrimination against women and people with disabilities, or any marginalized, vulnerable, or protected group, for that matter, is present throughout the entire OSCE region. But (not) addressing one form of discrimination does not preclude you from addressing another form of discrimination. In addition, youth, women, and people with disabilities are not separate and distinct categories of people; rather, some youth are women, some youth have disabilities, some women have disabilities, and some women are young and have disabilities. In fact, OSCE recognizes the ways in which young women in particular face discrimination:

The Ministerial Council... consider[s] that adolescence is an important phase in the social development of a person, and recognizing that this phase is often affected by **persistent inequalities**, negative attitudes, behaviours, and **gender stereotypes that can put girls and young women at heightened risk of discrimination and violence** [...] MC.DEC/4/18

The Ministerial Council... underline[s] the need to address the broad range of factors that make **children vulnerable to sexual exploitation**, including economic disparities, lack of access to education, and discrimination, **including gender-related discrimination**, as well as the need to counter demand for child pornography and sex tourism and to prevent the actions of perpetrators [...] MC.DEC/15/06

Possible response: First, it is important to recognize that the institutional policies and programmes which the OSCE supports in any OSCE participating State are not youth neutral; rather, every policy or programme has an impact on young people, either positive or negative, and is therefore relevant to youth. Second, undertaking youth mainstreaming and improving youth participation and inclusion in OSCE-supported programmes or activities of an institution or organization can actually improve the quality of those programmes and activities. Finally, OSCE participating States have formally acknowledged “that youth are an important part of society and the role that they can play in supporting participating States in the implementation of commitments in all three dimensions” and recognized “the role youth can play in contributing to a culture of peace, dialogue, justice and peaceful coexistence, trust and reconciliation.” (MC.DOC/3/18)

My institutional partners are not interested in including young people in any project activities. They say that the topic isn't relevant for young people.

Unlike gender mainstreaming, which all OSCE executive structures are required to undertake, there is no OSCE-wide obligation to conduct youth mainstreaming of our work. So why do we have to do this?

Possible response: It is certainly true that OSCE executive structures are not required to mainstream youth in their programmes and projects... yet! The importance of youth participation and inclusion has been rising in the work of the OSCE for several years now, as evidenced by the appointment of Chairmanship-in-Office's Special Representatives on Youth and Security since 2015; the establishment of the OSCE Youth Focal Points Network; the establishment of the Group of Friends of Youth; and the three most recent Ministerial Declarations, focused exclusively on youth and their ability to contribute to the implementation of OSCE commitments and on their constructive role in peacebuilding (See Fundamentals Part of the Guidelines on OSCE: Working with and for Youth for more details). Moreover, youth-related activities and youth as beneficiaries is nothing new across OSCE structures – using youth mainstreaming principles simply brings more systemic approach, quality and reflection to the existing practice.

OSCE Secretary General presented a **Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security** to the participating States in 2019. It identifies areas where the OSCE has comparative advantages in youth-related efforts, showcases best practices, and offers some recommendations to the executive structures, in particular the Secretariat, on how to work more systematically and more effectively with youth and for youth in all of activities, within existing mandates and in support of the implementation of youth-related commitments



**Reminder:**  
It is important not to be outright dismissive of your colleagues' concerns. After all, if the introduction of youth mainstreaming into the organization is not communicated adequately, or if staff members are not empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake youth mainstreaming, then those concerns are fully understandable and must be adequately and thoroughly addressed.

# ALL-STAR MODE

While most of the tools contained in the previous sections of the Guidelines – *Enthusiast and Hero mode* – can be utilized by an individual OSCE staff member or an OSCE project team, this section, however, contains suggestions and ideas for measures that can be undertaken at the executive structure level. They are more strategic in nature and require senior management leadership, as well as structure-wide readiness and involvement to nurture a strong participatory approach and ownership over the developments.

In this mode you can:

- o Examine infrastructure – the internal game set-up which enables long-term youth mainstreaming owned throughout the executive structure;
- o Team up with young players beyond particular activities or programmes;
- o Recognize which skills and development aim are strengthening the All-star mode game.

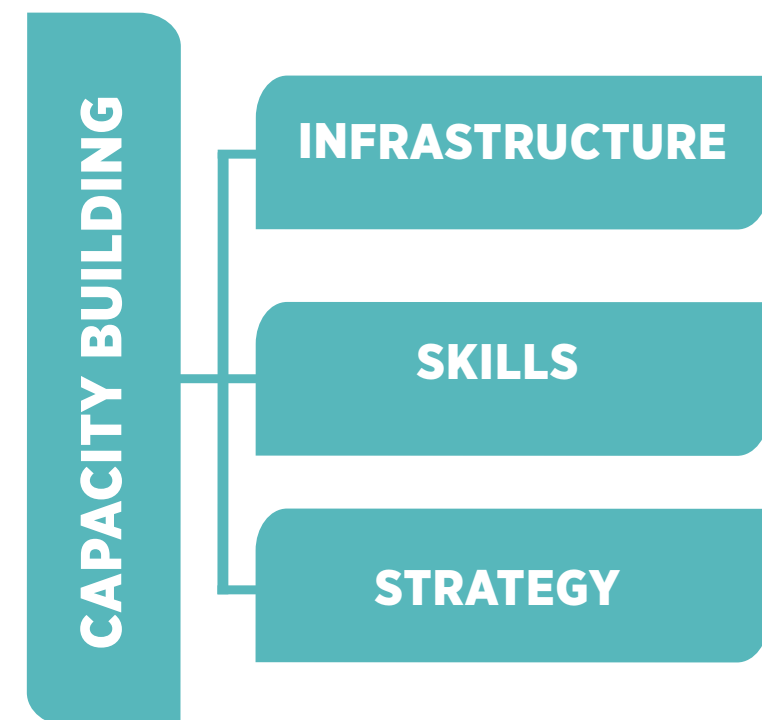
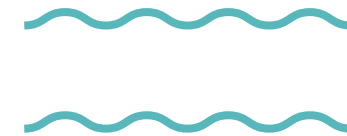


**Bottom Up or Top Down?** Mainstreaming initiatives – be it youth or gender – often originate from the programmatic staff working on these issues or with these target groups on a daily basis. In other words, you can advocate with the leadership of your executive structure to start introducing a variety of youth mainstreaming mechanisms. When approaching leadership about this, remember to:

- demonstrate how youth mainstreaming contributes to better achieving the executive structure mandate and Unified Budget objective;
- present concrete suggestions on how to introduce youth mainstreaming (take this tool to the meeting!);
- anticipate possible concerns and objections, and consider how to address them in advance;
- find initial support from other staff members in key positions who are likely to support the initiative, e.g., Youth Focal Point, department or section heads;

- consult colleagues in other OSCE structures where youth mainstreaming practices are in use.

Once your executive structure becomes interested in kickstarting youth mainstreaming across programmes, activities, or processes, please consider the following important elements:



## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR YOUTH MAINSTREAMING ●●●●●

### Tool: All-star # 1

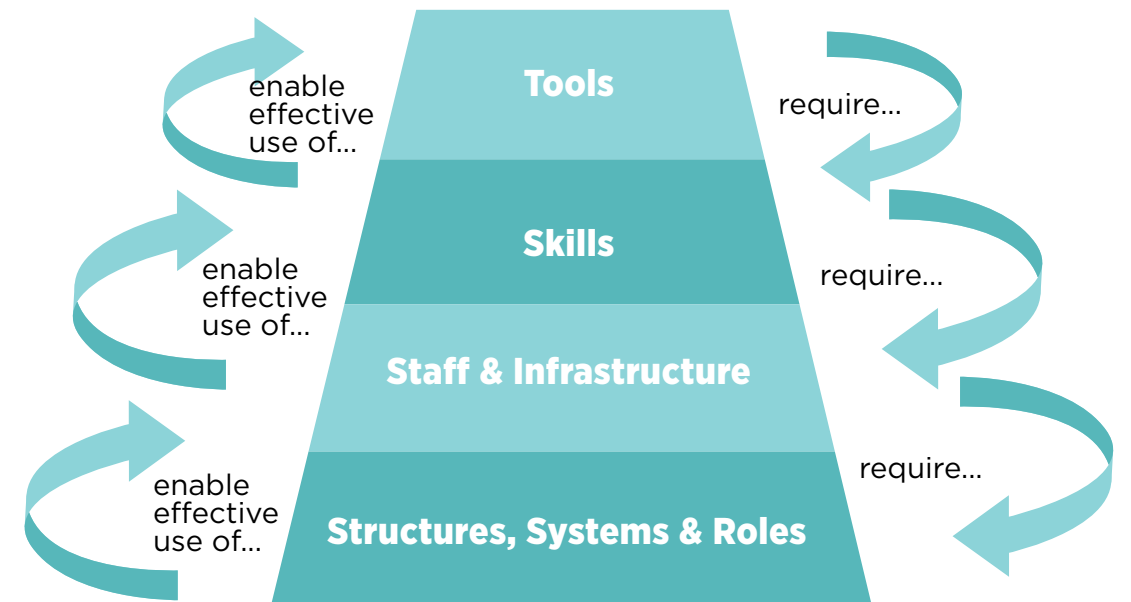
As Potter and Brough<sup>57</sup> note, it is as diagnostically useful to say ‘there is a need for capacity building’ as it is to say ‘this patient is unwell’. Meaning, the term itself is understood in different ways to the extent that it may impact the overall approach and success. Authors elaborate, that in everyday use, the term is employed most frequently to imply that there is a *lack of skills* that needs to be resolved by training, while at other times it is used to signal a *lack of time, money or authority* to do all the things expected or it can imply *institutional capacity*.

More broadly, Harsh<sup>58</sup> writes that capacity building can be seen as a **change process targeted at “aligning beliefs and new or refined practices with desired growth targets”** within an organization.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>59</sup> offers a useful approach that differentiates between three levels of capacity building:

<p><b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL</b></p> <p>Capacity building refers to the process of changing attitudes and behaviours: imparting knowledge and developing skills while maximizing the benefits of participation, knowledge exchange and ownership.</p>	<p>Training programmes, business development activities, workshops for in-depth discussion of specific topics; conferences.</p>
<p><b>INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL</b></p> <p>Focuses on the overall organizational performance and functioning capabilities, as well as the ability of an organization to adapt to change.</p>	<p>Development of internal policies, organizational and procedural restructuring.</p>
<p><b>SYSTEMIC LEVEL</b></p> <p>Emphasizes the overall policy framework in which individuals and organizations operate and interact with the external environment.</p>	<p>Advocacy initiatives, consultations, open dialogue, reforms</p>

In order to address the capacity building approach, Potter and Brough proposed practical Capacity Pyramid:



Capacity Pyramid by Christopher Potter and Richard Brough

Vast literature and practice offers a range of approaches to types, levels and stages of capacity building. Broad internal elements that may be identified almost always gravitate towards: *individual skills, group/organizational strategy or policy, resources and enabling system/infrastructure*.

Therefore, identifying internal capacity building needs should encompass more than the training needs of some staff. While staff training is an important element, it is not sufficient if you are aiming for a systemic comprehensive approach.

It is also important to monitor and evalu-

ate the quality of ideated solutions over time to identify internal capacity needs. Some solutions may need to be changed or adjusted in order to effectively contribute to the overall objective – meaningful and practical youth mainstreaming across executive structure’s mandate.

In the following sections of the tools, you can begin assessing your internal youth mainstreaming capacity building needs. This exercise provides insight into the potential puzzle blocks, while acknowledging that there might be other aspects that are not indicated but are relevant to the specific context of an executive structure.

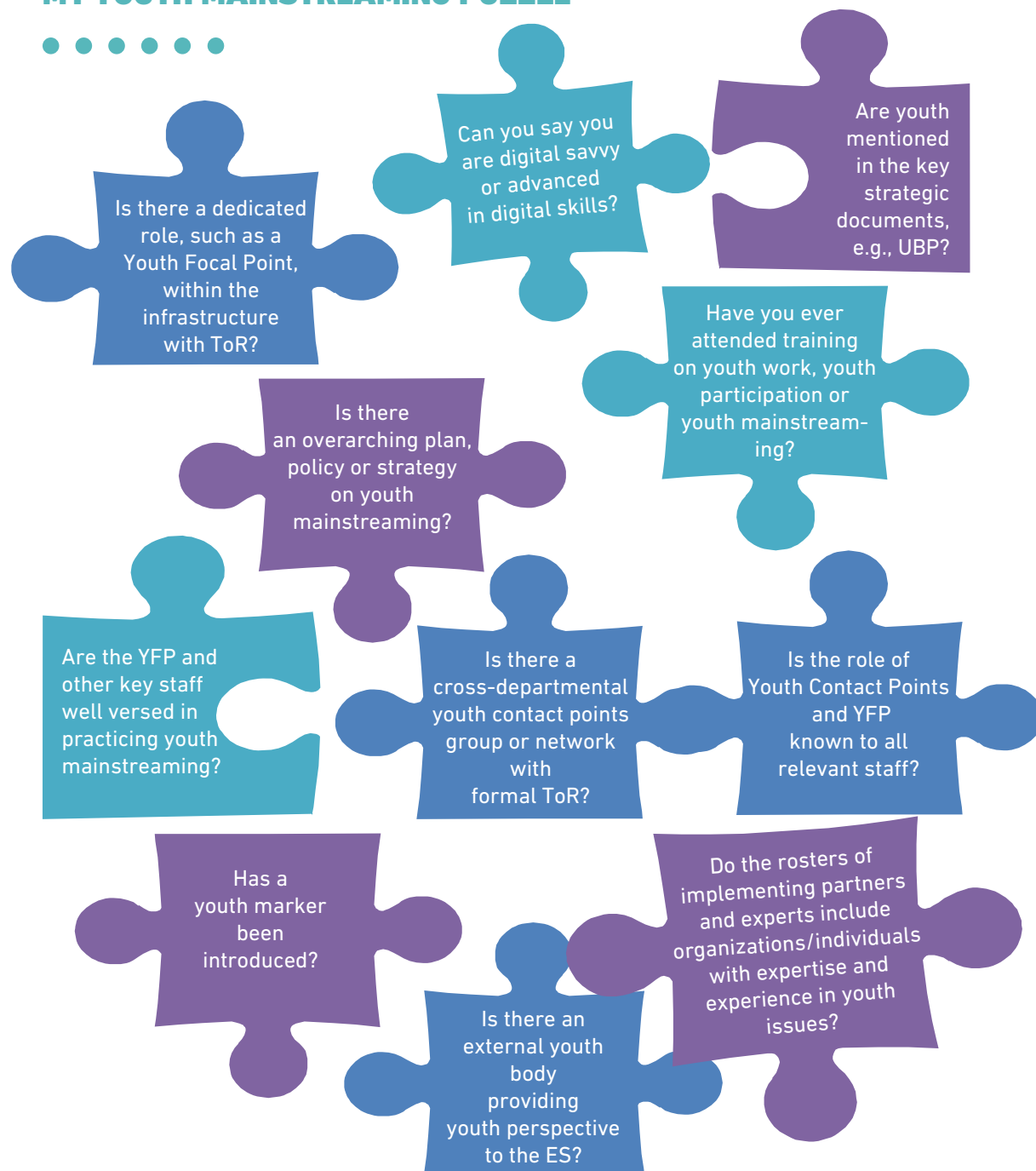
<sup>57</sup> In *Systemic capacity building: a hierarchy of needs* (2004). Oxford University Press, *Health Policy and Planning* 19(5), 336–345.

<sup>58</sup> Harsh S. (2010). Chapter 1: Gaining perspective on a complex task: A multidimensional approach to capacity building. In S. Harsh, K. Bradley, K. Good, & J. Ross (Eds.). (2010). *Capacity building technical assistance: Change agent analyses* (pp.1-19). Charlestown, WV: Edvantia, Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Centre, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> See: <https://www.learlab.com/insights/capacity-building-is-it-only-a-matter-of-training/>



## MY YOUTH MAINSTREAMING PUZZLE



Least turquoise pieces - go to All-star Tool 1

Least blue pieces - go to All-star Tool 2

Least purple pieces - go to All-star Tool 3

You have a majority in all categories or all the pieces?  
Congratulations! You conquered the All-star mode!

## BOOSTING SKILL SET

### Tool: All-star # 2

When examining a skill set consider:

- Is there a number of critical staff members that is adequately familiar with youth mainstreaming concepts? Are there online or offline training opportunities?
- Are you and/or your colleagues, who implement activities, projects and programmes directly with young women and men, familiar with the essentials of youth work and its guiding principles? Or rather, do you rely on hiring youth workers as consultants?
- How often does your outreach, programming and communication take place in the digital world? How proficient you are in digital skills and how familiar are you with digital habits of different cohorts of youth?
- Is there an internal shared resource folder on this topics?
- Is the topic of youth or youth mainstreaming incorporated into the induction programme for new staff members?

### First training on youth mainstreaming in the OSCE

In 2019, the OSCE Mission to Serbia began the development of a training on youth mainstreaming. The two-day course brings the toolbox from these *Guidelines* to life, allowing for practical work by engaging learning methods. While it is primarily intended for programmatic staff, others can also greatly benefit from acquiring new skills in introducing or furthering youth mainstreaming across project cycle management. Today, the OSCE is considering the example of the Mission to Serbia to develop similar tools on youth mainstreaming for the entire Organization. Contact for inquires: [OMiSyouth@osce.org](mailto:OMiSyouth@osce.org)

### Do I need training on youth mainstreaming, youth participation or youth policy?

Mark statements that correspond to your situation, knowledge or needs.

- I have activities, projects and/or programmes that are either youth-targeted or have youth-related relevance.
- The programme I work on is not youth mainstreamed, but I would like to learn how it can be done. Youth mainstreaming is not intuitive in my area of work.
- I operate in a country with a significant youth population.
- I operate in a context of decreasing youth political participation or activism. I cherish inclusion as a value and concept, but I still might have prejudices against young men and/or women.
- Where I work, youth involvement is increasingly included in the agenda.

- Where I work, there is an internal policy or strategy on how to work with and for young people. I want to be part of its operationalization.
- I sometimes have significant challenges in reaching youth or designing initiatives that can motivate youth to partake in the activities I organize.
- I never attended any educational modality in relation to young people and their role in society.
- I am an experienced member of the project management team. We usually have youth participating in our projects as participants.
- I have never co-operated with a youth organization as an implementing partner.
- I am not entirely sure what a youth policy encompasses on either a national or European level.
- Naming more than five youth stakeholders would be challenging for me.
- I am not sure in which ways young women and young men should be approached differently.
- I am not familiar with the legal framework regarding young people on a national level or otherwise.
- I work with other stakeholders whose mandate may be linked to youth interests.
- I tend not to hire young people as consultants or in similar roles.
- I am unsure what youth mainstreaming exactly encompasses in everyday work.
- I am committed to improving programming in relation to gender and youth mainstreaming, but as due to its difficulty, I believe it is a task for experts in the field.
- Sometimes when I listen to young leaders or read the news, I become inspired by the energy and creativity of younger generations.
  - If you marked 10 statements or more, this is a strong indicator that you would benefit from a training course on youth mainstreaming.
  - If you marked between 4 and 10 statements, you would benefit from refreshing your knowledge on this topic as you probably have an interest in working with and for youth.
  - If you marked 3 statements or less, perhaps there is no need for youth mainstreaming capacity building for you.

*In the following pages you may explore some of the open online courses available in English on topics related to capacity building in fields of youth policy and participation, digital skills and other specific areas of relevance for youth, in the context of different OSCE-relevant topics. Descriptions of all online resources are presented as offered by its provider.*

#### **Online educational sources:**

##### **Essentials of youth policy**

The course, organised and offered by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, is open and free for anyone interested. The feedback showed that 80% of the learners felt that the course has enabled them to meaningfully contribute to youth policy development processes in their own contexts. The course objectives aim at helping learners to:

- Understand the “basics” of youth policy (concepts and definitions, scope, objectives, actors, European and national levels).
- Become aware of the relevance of the key elements principles and approaches for youth policy (cross-sectoral, knowledge-based, participative, inclusive youth work).
- Understand how to build a framework for youth policy (identifying key issues, priority areas and themes).
- Understand the major steps for youth policy development, implementation and delivery, and evaluation.
- Reflect on the future of youth policy and your own future engagement in youth policy.
- Gain motivation and information about different ways of getting involved in youth policy.



##### **YouthMetre**

The YouthMetre training is set of resources, free to access and use, that explores a new and creative way to empower and engage young people across Europe in influencing youth policy, in particular through the use of the innovative e-tool YouthMetre and the advocacy toolkit.

The YouthMetre training is intended to all those who work with young people and want to create concrete occasions for them to express their needs, increase their participation in the political dialogue and influence the design of policies that affect them, at European, national, regional and local level.

It is developed by the consortium of organizations within the European Commission-funded Forward Looking project.

Find it at: <http://youthmetre.eu/>

##### **Youth Engagement Matters: Self-guided online course**

This online course is made by the Extension Center for Youth Development of the University of Minnesota, and is based on the Rings of Engagement, which shows the range of youth engagement and youth-adult partnerships. It teaches four ways to engage youth: participation in programs; fostering individual passion through experiences and activities; creating space and place for youth voice in programs; and collective action to make

change with youth and adults as partners. Particularly interesting is Module 4 on Youth engagement in organizations and systems.

Find it at: <https://extension.umn.edu/working-youth/youth-work-courses>

Youth organizations consulted in the making of these *Guidelines* also recognize that some **youth work** capacity building is recommended for any entity working with and for youth, especially when the work is direct. Youth work is nevertheless a profession on its own, and while there is no globally unified approach to it, it usually assumes long-term engagement and practical work towards certification or accreditation. Vocational and further education and training courses in youth work and related fields are provided in many countries by line ministries, universities and professional networks.

See Glossary of terms for definition on Youth work and its features.

#### **Useful courses targeting specific topics in working with youth:**

##### **Course on Youth Participation in Electoral Processes**

This online course offers a dynamic and interactive approach to the question of youth participation in electoral processes. It aims to provide a key understanding of the barriers that youth are facing to participate and engage actively in the political life of their countries. The course also explores innovative solutions to protect youth from being exploited by unscrupulous politicians and potentially involved in electoral violence. Finally, the eLearning sheds light on how these objectives can be linked to the indicators of SDGs, in particular Goal 16. It is developed within European Commission-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance.

Find it at: <https://elearning.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/>

##### **Educating young people against gender-based violence**

The course is intended for the ones who: may not feel comfortable to discuss issues of gender, sexuality and violence; may not feel competent enough to do it; or may not know educational approaches or activities on how to explore the topic of gender with young people. It is designed by Cazalla Intercultural in the framework of New GenDeration project, co-financed by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme.

Find it at: <https://youth-mooc.eu/courses/gender-course/>

##### **jbjMOOCeu – Online course on digital youth participation**

The course offers an introduction to the topic of digital youth participation. The course is open to everybody and free of charge. It focuses on testing concrete tools and ways in which digital youth participation can be implemented. The topics range from the core concepts of digital youth participation, creation of votes, to the design of complex participatory processes. The course gives information on tools such as: Etherpad, Padlet, Tricider and Camper. Developed by German Children and Youth Foundation (DKJS), Deutscher Bundesjugendring (DBJR) and IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany e.V.

Find it at: <https://www.oncampus.de/jbjMOOCeu>

## EXAMINING INFRASTRUCTURE

### **Tool: All-star # 3**

When examining infrastructure consider:

- a. Is there a dedicated role, such as a Youth Focal Point, within the infrastructure? Does the Youth Focal Point have formal terms of reference? Is the role of the youth focal point familiar to all relevant staff?
- b. Is there a cross-departmental youth contact points group or network? Does the group have formal terms of reference? Is the role of the group known to all relevant staff?
- c. Is there any sort of external board or group to advise the executive structure on youth mainstreaming and youth issues more generally?

### YOUTH FOCAL POINT

A number of international organizations, with agencies within the UN system championing it, have established positions, functions or jobs around the term 'Youth Focal Point' or its variations, thus recognizing the relevance and importance of youth perspectives and programming across various fields.

#### **Sample practice:**

**UN DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations Secretariat) Focal Point on Youth** has been set to:

- enhance awareness of the global situation of youth and increase recognition of the rights and aspirations of youth;
- promote national youth policies, national youth coordinating mechanisms and national youth programmes of action as integral parts of social and economic development, in cooperation with both governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- and strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels in order to increase their impact on national development and international cooperation<sup>60</sup>.

Since 2016, under the leadership of the German Chairmanship-in-Office and its Special Representative on Youth and Security, the OSCE has begun to further structure its work with and for youth. Within these developments, the informal OSCE-wide Network of Youth Focal Points conveyed its first meeting in the Kyrgyz Republic. The OSCE Youth Focal Point is a role typically taken by OSCE staff working on youth-related projects, as identified by senior management of respective executive structure.

Having Youth Focal Points Terms of Reference can contribute to:

- » Clarity of the OSCE staff responsibilities on youth-related matters within the executive structure as a whole and beyond the primary set of tasks of the employee;
- » Efficient co-ordination within the executive structure, within the OSCE and with the Youth Focal Points Network, as well as with external youth-relevant stakeholders;
- » Maintaining continuity and consistency in the approach to working with and for youth by the executive structure;
- » Delivering annual objectives in the area of youth engagement and effective monitoring;
- » Systemic capacity building, advancement of practices in use and more impact for the target group.

<sup>60</sup> See: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/09/desa-youth-programming/>

## INDICATIVE CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH FOCAL POINT TERMS OF REFERENCE

When drafting the Youth Focal Point Terms of Reference, following elements and questions may be useful to consider, depending on the complexity of the expected workload, size of the executive structure and overall context.

ToR Element	✓/✗	Hint
<b>BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION</b>		
Does the ToR comply with overall OSCE norms and standards?		Consult Human Resources colleagues if in doubt.
To which OSCE commitments does such an assignment contribute?		Look up the number of Ministerial Declarations and Decisions mentioning youth and the Helsinki Final Act
How does the assignment link to the executive structure's mandate, overall programming and strategy?		Review the Programme Outline (PO), the Unified Budget Proposal (UBP) and the Programme Budget Performance Report (PBPR) of the ES.
Are there any existing complementary examples in other OSCE executive structures?		The first YFP ToR in the OSCE was created by ODIHR. Examples are also available from the OSCE Mission to Serbia and the Project Office in Bishkek.
Is there any overall trend or international strategies, commitments and examples of recommendable practice justifying the purpose of such initiative?		Review resources/information of other international/national stakeholders of relevance to your context, such as UN Security Council Resolutions.
<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>		
What is the main goal of the proposed assignment? How is the YFP making a difference?		For example: to support, in specific ways, the ongoing or planned strategic efforts of the ES in the area of youth.
Who is accountable for the objective(s)?		Objectives may be formulated as solely the YFP's role or it can reflect a higher purpose that the YFP is pursuing alongside other colleagues/internal structures.

ToR Element	✓/✗	Hint
<b>PROFILE REQUIREMENTS</b>		
Are there specific requirements for appointing an OSCE staff member to this role? Should it be a young(er) person? Is their background in youth policy important? Should it be local or seconded?		There is no universal practice in this regard in the OSCE, although in most cases a YFP is primarily linked to the Youth portfolio/UB and most often a local staff member. While expertise in youth policy is evidently a strong asset to have, the lack of it shouldn't discourage an ES from having a 111YFP.
Does a single OSCE staff member perform the YFP role?		Usually there is a single YFP in the ES. Nevertheless, ES may opt for an alternate or a role performed on both political and programmatic level. The choice should be reflected in relation to context, mandate, and size of the ES.
<b>TASKS</b>		
What is the breakdown of the scope of responsibilities of the YFP? Are there clusters of connected tasks that can be grouped together?		For example, there may be tasks related to communication and co-ordination, capacity building, representation and similar. The logic can be also different, focusing on an internal-external set of responsibilities or it can follow the flow of ES' youth policy, if applicable.
What is the breakdown of the scope of responsibilities of the YFP? Are there clusters of connected tasks that can be grouped together?		For example, there may be tasks related to communication and co-ordination, capacity building, representation and similar. The logic can be also different, focusing on an internal-external set of responsibilities or it can follow the flow of ES' youth policy, if applicable.
Are there recurring events or tasks worth mentioning?		For resources planning, it may be useful to foresee recurring events (for example, Ministerial Council youth side events have been organized every year since 2014) or reporting tasks.

ToR Element	✓/X	Hint
Is the YFP implementing tasks on their own?		Acknowledging co-operation with different sections/other roles/colleagues with specific expertise may be useful for a team approach to youth mainstreaming.
<b>DELIVERABLES</b>		
Are there specific deliverables in the work plan of the YFP?		Taking into account the needs and resources, these can be annual deliverables, external or internal, monthly updates. Otherwise, youth-related deliverables can also be linked to ES' overall youth strategy/action plan, rather than solely the YFP's ToR.
<b>REPORTING</b>		
Is the reporting system for the YFP's work in place?		Concrete plan on reporting procedures, frequency, supervisory roles etc.
How is the YFP role recognized in the overall work of the staff member performing it?		Unless the YFP is already a vacancy on its own, the Performance Management Process can be one of the options to accommodate recognition, monitoring and evaluation of YFP's performance, through dedicating one objective to it. Human Resources colleagues should be consulted on such an approach, especially as there may be multiple supervisory authorities for a staff member in a YFP role.

## CROSSCUTTING OWNERSHIP

The Youth Focal Point should not be the only staff member responsible for implementing youth-related activities or the executive structure's strategy in the area of youth. Their role is to help guide the process. Nevertheless, for long lasting, meaningful youth mainstreaming, collective ownership over the processes and introjection of youth inclusion value is crucial.

One of the options to ensure this is to establish an **inter-departmental/inter-sectional group** of staff members gathered around the topic of youth, with the aim to achieve more objective, quality and efficient work with and for youth of the given executive structure. Such practice can be observed in various international organizations committed to enhancing its youth engagement efforts.

### Sample practice (among structures of same Organization):

**Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)** is a network consisting of UN entities, represented primarily at the headquarters level, whose work is relevant to youth. The aim of the Network is to increase the effectiveness of UN work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates<sup>61</sup>.

### Sample practice (within a single structure):

In 2019, the OSCE Mission to Serbia formally established the **Youth Contact Points Group (YCPG)**, made up of the Mission's Youth Focal Point and one Youth Contact Point (and an alternate) from each of the four programmatic departments in the Mission, as well as the Office of the Head of Mission and the Fund Administration Unit. The aim of the Group is to support the Youth Focal Point, the Mission and its departments/offices in implementing youth mainstreaming efforts.



Mission's cross departmental Youth Contact Points Group developing Youth Action Plan

<sup>61</sup> See: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/what-we-do/un-inter-agency-network-on-youth-development.html>

**INDICATIVE CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH CONTACT POINTS GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<i>ToR Element</i>	✓/✗	<i>Hint</i>
<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>		
What is the main goal of the proposed assignment? How is YCPG making a difference?		For example, it acts as a forum to exchange knowledge and experiences in the field of youth mainstreaming and promote it across their departments/sections. The YCPG is securing structure/wide ownership and accountability for the overall youth mainstreaming efforts.
What purpose does it serve?		For example, the YCPG's work may contribute to the overall design and implementation of a functional internal infrastructure for enabling youth mainstreaming and increasing awareness and knowledge about youth policy developments.
<b>GROUP'S STRUCTURE</b>		
Are there specific requirements for appointing an OSCE staff member to this role? Should it be a younger person? Should it be local or seconded?		Some aspects that may be taken into account:- A heterogeneous, gender-balanced Group may bring more perspectives to the table (local and international, senior and junior, with and without direct connection to the topic, programmatic and other staff). YCPG members should be active and motivated, rather than simply filling the spot passively;- Periodical option for rotation of delegated members may be useful;- Foreseeing YCPG members' involvement in further modifications of the Group's ToR
How is YCPG managed and supported?		Consider if specific roles and responsibilities are required within the Group (such as chairing, minute taking, monitoring or other). Identify if any resources should be allocated to it and how they can be provided. Reflect on the possibility of senior management involvement.

<i>ToR Element</i>	✓/✗	<i>Hint</i>
<b>TASKS</b>		
What is the breakdown of scope of responsibilities of the YCPG?		In defining tasks, it would be useful to be as concrete as possible in order to be able to later on follow and measure progress. The group can have tasks on a joint level, as well as expectations related to individual members.
<b>METHODOLOGY OF WORK</b>		
How frequently will the YCPG meet?		Take into account needs in relation to deliverables and scope of tasks, but be careful not to overestimate, especially if members are coming from multiple locations (e.g. field offices, in addition to staff from HQ). For instance, OSCE Mission to Serbia YCPG meets quarterly. Consider if it is possible to organize a working retreat once per year for more in-depth work and/or team building.
Can others join in on the YCPG meetings?		In line with your needs, you may opt to have other colleagues or external partners join the YCPG meetings. Note that particular tasks may require other staff/subgroups to meet or co-operate, in addition to YCPG meetups.
How is YCPG communicating in between the meetings?		Online channels of communication can often be a great time saver and useful for keeping members updated with various developments. Having a joint mailing list, calendar of events, resources folder or occasional online meetings may be useful.
Is some kind of Rules of procedures or Standards of operations needed for the YCPG?		Taking into account the needs and resources, these can be annual deliverables, external or internal, monthly updates. These deliverables may be redefined each year and/or be universal and repeated every year

ToR Element	✓/X	Hint
<b>REPORTING</b>		
Is the reporting system for the YCPG work in place?		This encompasses a concrete plan on reporting procedures, frequency, and supervisory roles.
How is the role of YCPG members recognized in the overall work of the staff member performing it?		Performance Management Process can be one of the options to accommodate recognition, monitoring and evaluation of YCPG members performance, through dedicating one objective to it. Human Resources colleagues should be consulted on such an approach.

## EXTERNAL YOUTH BODIES

Establishing external youth bodies or permanent platforms to amplify youth voices is a useful democratic practice within a number of international organizations and national institutions.

### **Sample Practice:**

#### **Council of Europe's Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)...**

...is the non-governmental partner in the co-management structure which establishes the standards and work priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector and makes recommendations for future priorities, programmes and budgets. It is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks in Europe, and its main task is to advise the Committee of Ministers on all questions relating to youth. Specifically, the Advisory Council helps to ensure youth policies are mainstreamed into the Council of Europe's programme of activities by providing opinions and proposals to all of the Organization's bodies. It also ensures that young people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe and promotes the policies beyond the Organization. Number of CCJ members participate in the Programming Committee on Youth (CPJ), the co-management body in charge of establishing the programme of activities of the youth sector.<sup>62</sup>

### **Sample Practice:**

#### **Canadian Prime Minister's Youth Council**

Created in 2016, the Prime Minister's Youth Council as an advisory board provides non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister on issues of importance to young Canadians and to Canada as a whole. Government of Canada officials frequently consult the Council as one mechanism to incorporate youth perspectives in government policy. Council members are from regions all across Canada, and reflect a range of educational, employment and life experiences. At in-person meetings, Council members provide advice to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and government officials. Discussions are captured in a meeting summary, which is then used by government officials to follow up with relevant Ministers and departments for further action. Council members also provide written or video input on particular topics, based on their school, work and life experience, input from other youth in their community, and their research and volunteer experience. This often results in the Prime Minister tasking Ministers and federal departments and agencies to undertake further analysis of the issue in order to address the Council's input.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/advisory-council-on-youth>

<sup>63</sup> See: <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/prime-ministers-youth-council.html>

<sup>64</sup> See: <http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/en/youth-discrimination-busters-investing-in-the-future/>

<sup>65</sup> Annual Report 2018 [Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 2019] Page 57.

**Sample Practice:**

**Youth Panel of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality of Republic of Serbia**

Youth Panel Discrimination Busters gathers a group of children and young people who take part in workshops and activities of the Commissioner. Panel membership provides the opportunity for participants to be a part of specially created educative programs and workshops, followed by digital networking of panellists and their active participation in the Commissioner activities in areas related to children and youth. Panel members act as advisors of Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and an express their own opinions about discrimination and tolerance issues, especially within family, school and their community.<sup>64</sup> Some samples of it can be found also in the OSCE: Sample Practice: External Youth Advisory Groups and other Bodies in OSCE Field Operations in South East Europe In 2018, the Presence in Albania established a Youth Advisory Group, a youth mainstreaming instrument designed to incorporate youth perspectives into the Presence's policies, plans and activities.<sup>65</sup> The Youth Advisory Group in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides meaningful participation opportunities for young people in the Mission's work and for the inclusion of their diverse and age-unique perspectives in the planning and implementation of the Mission's programmes.<sup>66</sup> The Group was initially established per initiative of the OSCE Youth Ambassador from BiH<sup>67</sup>, and has evolved since then.

**Sample Practice:**

**Network by Consensus in Tajikistan**

The Network by Consensus is an initiative uniting over 400 alumni of the Programme Office in Dushanbe's youth events from all over Tajikistan. It creates a platform for young people to share, inspire and motivate their peers. In 2018, the Office assisted young people through the Network to play an active and constructive role in civic life. An enhanced regional lens was applied to youth activities, with a special focus on engaging active young people from Afghanistan, thus promoting confidence building and collaboration between the youth of Tajikistan and Central Asian states. Workshops on public speaking, debating, negotiating and networking skills were designed to empower them to reach their aspirations in public life, business and civil society.<sup>68</sup>

**INDICATIVE CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH CONTACT POINTS GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<b>MANDATE AND PURPOSE</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Define what concrete contribution the executive structure is pursuing by establishing an external youth body.	
Link the purpose of the external body, to the extent possible, to all programmes of the executive structure, not solely the youth portfolio.	
Consider how an external youth body can meaningfully contribute to internal youth plan/policy/strategy, having in mind security and privacy considerations.	
Can an external youth body be engaged beyond outreach, such as in an advisory role? To whom and how?	
Reflect on the length of the body's mandate and ideas on expected measurable results within the mandate	
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Membership in the external body can have various modalities: individual or representational, predominantly on expertise or diversity, open to only young people or also to youth workers. In all cases, it should be designed to assist effectively mandated areas of ES' work.	
The number of members should reflect the heterogeneity of youth, gender and geographical diversity. Nevertheless, available resources to maintain it may influence this choice and the overall expectations of members.	
Is the engagement of the youth body members pro bono or does it assume remuneration?  Consider what kind of incentives members can receive during their engagement. For instance, opportunities for networking, occasional capacity building, and/or experiences they would not acquire otherwise.	
It is useful to foresee the situation of member resignation for various reasons. Can the person be replaced and under which conditions?	

<sup>66</sup> Annual Report 2018 [Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 2019] Page 59.

<sup>67</sup> OSCE Youth Ambassadors was a Swiss Chairmanship programme from 2014, gathering young people from 57 participating States around negotiating OSCE Youth Action Plan, for whose formal adoption Switzerland and Serbia aimed in their joint workplan of consecutive Chairmanships. See: <https://www.osce.org/cio/121094>

<sup>68</sup> Annual Report 2018 [Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 2019] Page 85.



MEMBERSHIP	Notes
Members should be selected based on certain values and code of conduct, reflecting the Organization's culture and practices. How to ensure commitment to those values and what happens in cases of non-compliance?	
MANAGEMENT	Notes
Who is managing the external youth body's meetings and its overall work? Consider distributing responsibilities to different staff of YCPG members, such as human resources representatives for logistics, and YFP for content.	
The group could have its own Chair, or all members could have equal positions within the external youth body. While having a Chair (or a similar leadership position) eases communication, it also assumes additional workload for a member, who then may be eligible for remuneration.	
Financial management of the body's work is another aspect to look into. It can be basic to the extent of enabling members to meet, or more ambitious toward having activities or initiatives implemented by the group.	
Will an internal working policy or Rules of procedure be introduced? In this regard, consider if members should develop the documents themselves or whether they should be provided in advance.	
EVALUATION	Notes
It is important to periodically assess if the external youth body is still relevant for the executive structure, as well if its overall concept should be modified/improved. Having quantitative and qualitative indicators can be of assistance.	

## ALL STAR PROGRAMMING

### When examining programming and project management consider:

- Have you established the baseline figures of youth involvement and participation in projects and activities?
- Have you mainstreamed, or simply recognized, youth in the key strategic documents, such as the UBP? Is there a policy, plan or strategy on youth mainstreaming?
- Have you introduced a youth marker, in addition to the gender marker into the UB project template?
- Have you included organizations/individuals with expertise and experience in youth issues into the rosters of implementing partners and experts? Are any of the individuals youth themselves? Are any of the organizations youth-led?

### Project Youth Marker

Similar to the gender marker, which has been introduced into the OSCE Unified Budget project template, a youth marker can be a useful tool for taking a bird's eye view to your project and asking yourself:

How does this project contribute to youth participation and/or address a specific topic of concern to youth?

0 - None: No mention of youth at all in any project component.

1 - Limited: The project contributes in a nominal or limited way to youth participation and/or only a few components have been youth mainstreamed.

2 - Youth mainstreamed: All/the majority of the components of the project have been youth mainstreamed beyond young people as participants in some of the activities.

3 - Youth targeted: The objective of the project relates to youth participation or another concern of youth.

*This approach is currently used in the OSCE Mission to Serbia UB template.*

### Sample practice:

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo requires project managers to rank their projects using both a gender marker and a youth marker. For the latter, the scoring system is as follows:  
 2b = Youth-targeted action  
 2a = Youth mainstreaming  
 1 = The project contributes in **some limited way** to youth mainstreaming/participation.  
 0 = Youth dimensions are **not reflected** in any of the project components.

The youth marker can be seen as both an assessment and a quality control tool, which, if used properly can ensure that the project logic takes into consideration youth concerns, needs and voices, and involves young women and men in a number of meaningful ways. The youth marker can also be utilised as an indicator to assess to which extent a project is inclusive of youth and youth initiatives. The youth marker usage is nevertheless just

one of the strategic steps that can advance programming in relation to youth. Its usage may also be foreseen in the executive structure's overall policy, plan or strategy dealing with working with and for youth. As the *Evaluation of the OSCE's work with and for youth, Synthesis report (2020)* states:

In the absence of an OSCE-wide official policy on youth, adopted by participating States, the development of the Secretary General's Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security has been welcomed by many. It offers recommendations to executive structures supporting the implementation of youth-related commitments.

Specific guiding documents for the work with and for youth also exist at the level of some executive structures. Specific action plans or strategies could reflect in a customized manner the mandate of a particular executive structure, while relying on a Framework which is expected "to lay the foundation for a more unified and coherent OSCE approach to working with youth and for youth".

**Sample practice:**

**OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek Youth Mainstreaming Strategy**

The Youth Mainstreaming Strategy (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") focuses on enhancing the contribution of current and emerging projects and activities to improving the host country's outcomes for young people aged 14-28 years. The Strategy is evidence informed and outcomes focused; it is based on understanding of youth as a distinctive period of development between childhood and adulthood, and takes account of the social and economic factors that influence young people during this period and the important role that parents, families, friends, other adults and communities play in young people's lives. It is based on the best international and national policy developments as well as results of consultations with young people, those who work with them, and other stakeholders.

The Strategy recognises the importance of strong engagement by, and collaboration between, statutory bodies/agencies and non-governmental organizations in the pursuit of better outcomes for young people. It acknowledges the interconnection between all of these areas of work, and that young people benefit most when the work of all stakeholders is mutually reinforcing. This framework sets out the Office's agenda and priorities in relation to projects with participation of children and young people under the age of 28 years and provides for the development and implementation of policies and services in relation to the interconnected and mutually reinforcing outcome areas.

**Sample practice:**

**OSCE Mission to Serbia biannual Youth Action Plan**

The Mission's first-ever Youth Action Plan aims to implement a systemic approach to mainstreaming youth across programmes in order to enhance inclusive youth policies, youth education, and youth participation in decision-making processes in Serbia as cornerstones of progress and stability. The Action Plan is in line with the mandate of the Mission, and is clearly linked with the Mission's Unified Budget Programme and overall strategy. It covers the two-year period from the beginning of 2020 to the end of 2021. Leadership and commitment from the Head of Mission has been the essential foundation upon which this Action Plan is built. All elements of the Action Plan have been developed by consensus by the Mission's Youth Focal Point (YFP) and the Youth Contact Points Group (YCPG).

Recommendations from the Secretary General's *Working with Youth and for Youth: Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* have been incorporated into this Action Plan wherever possible. The Action Plan is divided into three parts:

1. The Strategic Framework, which describes the context within which the Action Plan is being implemented, as well as the basis and impetus for its drafting;
2. The Work Plan, which presents in a clear and concise manner what steps must be undertaken, by whom, in which time period, and with which resources in order to realize the objective of the Action Plan;
3. Annexes, including relevant OSCE declarations and other documents and links to legal documents.

**When creating a policy, plan or strategy towards quality youth mainstreaming consider:**

- » Linking it to OSCE commitments, international framework on youth, as well as to national youth policy and standards;
- » Examining the existing practice and overall mandate of the executive structure thoroughly, ensuring that goals are suitable and reachable;
- » Establishing qualitative and quantitative indicators and monitoring procedures;
- » Involving diverse group of colleagues covering different programmatic areas, including funding and administration, thus ensuring ownership over the policy beyond a single source;
- » Foreseeing resources for implementation and clear responsibilities;
- » Consulting suitable target groups of youth and/or youth organizations, as well as former implementing partners in this category;
- » Hiring an external professional to facilitate the process, therefore enabling a more objective process with a fresh perspective. evaluation report on the imple

## REFLECTION TIME ● ● ● ● ● ●

At the beginning of this Toolbox you were asked to reflect on the context and characteristics of your work – from the macro picture of your entire Organization, to the micro level of your activities.

You were also asked to prioritize three aspects that you would like to improve, with the hope that these Guidelines would be a good tool to assist you in the process.

### How was your journey?

I am doing better with:

*What new insights do you have? What practices have you managed to advance?*

I recognize there are still some obstacles:

*In which ways you did not achieve your chosen priorities?  
Would another type of tool or support help you?*

My new priorities:

*You may choose to keep focusing on first three choices or challenge yourself further by setting new ones*

We care about your feedback and suggestions, other good sample practices and useful tools. Please don't hesitate to get in touch!

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## GLOSSARY

Concept	Description
Youth	There is no universally recognized definition of youth. Falling between childhood and adulthood, youth is a period of semi-dependency during which a person is aiming to achieve personal autonomy while still remaining dependent on parents or the state. <sup>69</sup> There is no consensual definition of youth in the OSCE, but a recently issued publication from the Office of the Secretary General suggests operating according to the definition proposed by UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015): 18 to 29 years old. However, legal definitions of host countries should also be taken into account. <sup>70</sup>
Youth mainstreaming	The most cited definition is that from the UN Economic and Social Council: "The process of assessing the implications (for youth) of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making (youth) concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and social spheres so that (youth) benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated." <sup>71</sup> Within the OSCE, the Secretary General's Framework defines it as "a strategic approach to systemically and meaningfully integrating youth perspectives into all three dimensions of security. It follows a comprehensive youth responsive approach by: -Engaging young women and men in policy discussions and programmatic processes; -Responding to the needs of youth and taking them into consideration in any area and stage of a policy or project; and -Assessing the impact on young people of any planned action."
Youth participation	Defining youth participation can be problematic and social scientists have put forward various definitions of it; nevertheless, there is a degree of consensus on the key principles: In broad terms, youth participation refers to the process of involving young people in the decisions and institutions that affect their environment and their lives within it. This involvement takes place in the social, economic and political domains. Scholars have identified three important levels at which youth participation can take place: - The public sphere, where there are opportunities for youth within existing structures, such as political parties, youth councils or youth parliaments; - The social participation sphere, the space outside formal political structures, such as grassroots campaigns, social movements, faith or identity groups, cultural groups, and others;- The individual sphere, where individuals make personal choices and decisions, relating to education, healthcare, faith, consumer choices. <sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Sen, A. and Kakar, R. *Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016* [London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016] Page 6-7.

<sup>70</sup> *Working with Youth and for Youth: Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* [Vienna: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 2019]

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) *Agreed Conclusions 1997/2*

<sup>72</sup> Sen, A. and Kakar, R. *Global Youth Development Index and Report 2016* [London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016] Page 68.

Concept	Description
Youth inclusion	An on-going process which ensures that youth have the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life, and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have greater participation in decision-making, which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights. <sup>73</sup>  <i>You might see youth participation and youth inclusion used hand-in-hand, e.g., youth participation and inclusion</i>
Youth rights or human rights of youth	The human rights of youth refer to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by young people. Promoting these rights means addressing the specific challenges and barriers faced. Discrimination and some of the challenges for young people are documented in accessing civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. <sup>74</sup>
Youth empowerment	Creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. This involves social, political, cultural and economic empowerment. <sup>75</sup>
Youth development	Enhancing the status of young people and empowering them to build on their competencies and capabilities for life. It enables them to contribute to and benefit from a politically stable, economically viable, and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens in their countries. <sup>76</sup>  <i>You might hear youth development and youth empowerment being used interchangeably. Indeed, the essentiality of both concepts is quite similar, and their usage may depend on the preferences of the particular organization, institution or context.</i>
Youth consultation	A way of collecting the views and opinions of young people or obtaining feedback relating to actions or proposals affecting them. Meaningful consultation is a two-way process, and takes place when it is still possible to influence the final outcome or what is going to happen. <sup>77</sup>
Youth policy actors	All government bodies and institutions and non-governmental associations, organizations, and other actors directed at the improvement and promotion of the position and status of young people.

<sup>73</sup> Schroeder, K. *Inclusion A to Z: A Compass to International Inclusion Projects* [Brussels: SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre, 2014] Page 22.

<sup>74</sup> UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR): [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Youth/Pages/HR01Youth.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Youth/Pages/HR01Youth.aspx)

<sup>75</sup> *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment: 2007-2015* [No city: Commonwealth Youth Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat, No year] Pages 15 and 24.

<sup>76</sup> "Fast Facts: The Youth Development Index" [London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016] <sup>77</sup> *Have your Say: Manual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* [Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2015] Page 71.

Concept	Description
Youth representative	A representative is a person who has been chosen to act or make decisions on behalf of another person or a group of people. A youth representative is no different and should refer to a person who is, based on a transparent democratic selection process, elected to represent a certain cohort of young people. Unfortunately, more often than not, the term is used to refer to any member of a demographic group of youth, especially in contexts where young people are rarely present or with a national minority background. Within the OSCE, since 2015, the practice is for the Chairmanship-in-Office to appoint a Special Representative on Youth (and Security). This role assumes representation on youth, and of the entity which mandated it.
Youth research	Youth research is a multidisciplinary area of scientific inquiry into the condition of young people that uses social, psychological, economic, political and cultural perspectives. Youth researchers challenge the idea that young people are “adults in the making”. Instead, most researchers study young people as they are, and not as who they will be, in terms of their social identities, cultures and relations with society’s main structures: family, school, labour market, politics, media, market, religions and so forth. Youth research became a distinct field in Europe in the early 1990s, as an intercultural and international coalition committed to supporting an organized (or structured) interaction among those active in research, policy and practice in the field of youth. <sup>78</sup>
Youth-friendly	Youth-friendly goods, services, or approaches are specifically tailored to young people in a way that makes such goods, services, or approaches fully accessible, obtainable, and understandable for young people. Youth-friendly approaches make youth feel valued and engaged in the particular process or activity.
Youth lens	A way to explore how texts, proposals, policies, actions, and similar, reinforce and/or challenge standard portrayals of young people. <sup>79</sup>
Youth-sensitive (or responsive) budgeting	A process to integrate a clear youth perspective within the overall budget development process through the use of special processes and analytical tools, with a view to promoting youth-responsive policies. <sup>80</sup>
Youth work	Youth work is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of ‘out-of-school’ education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. It is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation. <sup>81</sup>

Concept	Description
Youth work	A Europe-wide study <sup>82</sup> on the socio-economic scope of youth work recognizes that youth work is a summary expression shaped by different traditions and by different legal and administrative frameworks, and it is used to cover a wide range of activities. In some countries it is regulated by legislation (such as Austria, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Romania), while in others it is not.  In Serbia, youth work is mostly understood as work with young people whose purpose is to provide support to young people in a specific developmental period of gaining independence and transitioning to adulthood. It is achieved by youth workers facilitating (supporting) the youth’s personal and social development, therefore contributing to the fulfillment of personal potentials, in order for young people to have their voices heard and taken into consideration in society. However, not all work with young people is youth work; the uniqueness of youth work in relation to any other work with young people lies precisely in its above-stated characteristic that it is planned, i.e., intentionally educational in character. <sup>83</sup>
Young people with fewer opportunities	Young people who face different and/or more difficult obstacles in their lives than other young people. <sup>161</sup> Such difficulties may arise as a result of [mostly] immutable characteristics, such as gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, disability, social status, or other circumstances, such as poverty and [lack of] education.  <i>You might also hear this category of youth referred to as “marginalized young people”, or “vulnerable young people”, or is as more recently and frequently seen in OSCE documents, “marginalized or vulnerable young people”.</i>
Youth-led	Developmental processes that are fully and completely led by young people. Adults can be involved in a supportive role, but the majority of decision bodies are run by youth.
Youth-led organization	A youth-led organization implies that the governing of the organization is entirely or in majority led by young women and men, which is defined by the Statutes of the entity. This type of organization is typically referred to as a youth organization. On the other hand, there are organizations for youth, which may focus on youth-related topics and programming but are not in majority or at all led by young people

Comprehensive glossary on youth by EU-Council of Europe youth partnership <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary>

<sup>78</sup> Petkovic, Ignatovich, Galstuan (2019). Youth research: the essentials. Council of Europe and European Commission

<sup>79</sup> Petrone, R., Sarigianides, S.T., Lewis, M.A. “The Youth Lens: Analysing Adolescence/its in Literary Texts” Journal of Literacy Research Vol. 46 (4) 506–533 [No city: Sage Publishers, 2015] Page 511.

<sup>80</sup> Youth Stocktaking Report [Paris, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018] Page 33.

<sup>81</sup> See: [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/study\\_Final.pdf/642c51c1-34d7-4f03-b593-317bf1812009](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/study_Final.pdf/642c51c1-34d7-4f03-b593-317bf1812009)

<sup>82</sup> Center for Youth Work, Practical manual for youth work in community

<sup>83</sup> Schroeder, K. Inclusion A to Z: A Compass to International Inclusion Projects [Brussels: SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre, 2014] Page 19.









# Nothing about youth without youth

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