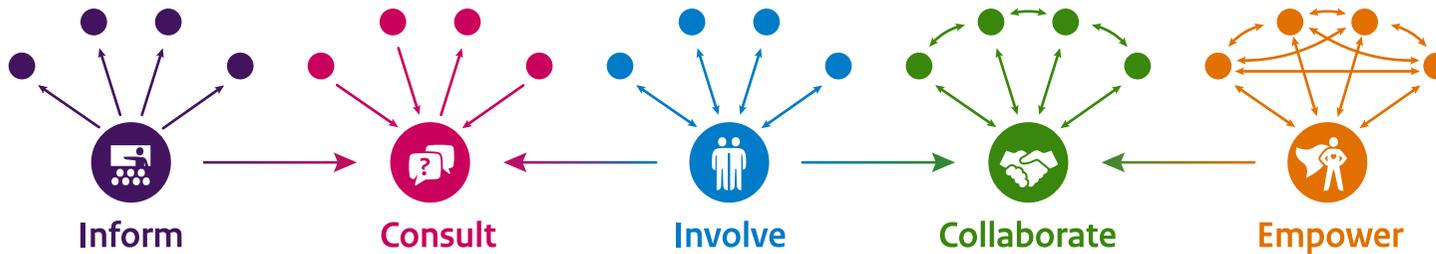




# MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

what it is | why it is important | how it can be achieved



YOUTH  
AT  
HEART

# PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

1. To increase understanding of meaningful youth participation (MYP) in development policy and practice.
2. To provide inspiration and practical guidance to assist policy makers at Ministry & Embassy level as well as development agencies to work more effectively with and for young people.



“The goal will be achieved if you start to meaningfully engage with young people in your work”\*

\* This toolkit is tailored to the work of colleagues working at the Dutch MFA, but is shared for public use.

# INTENDED USERS

This toolkit serves to support all MFA staff:

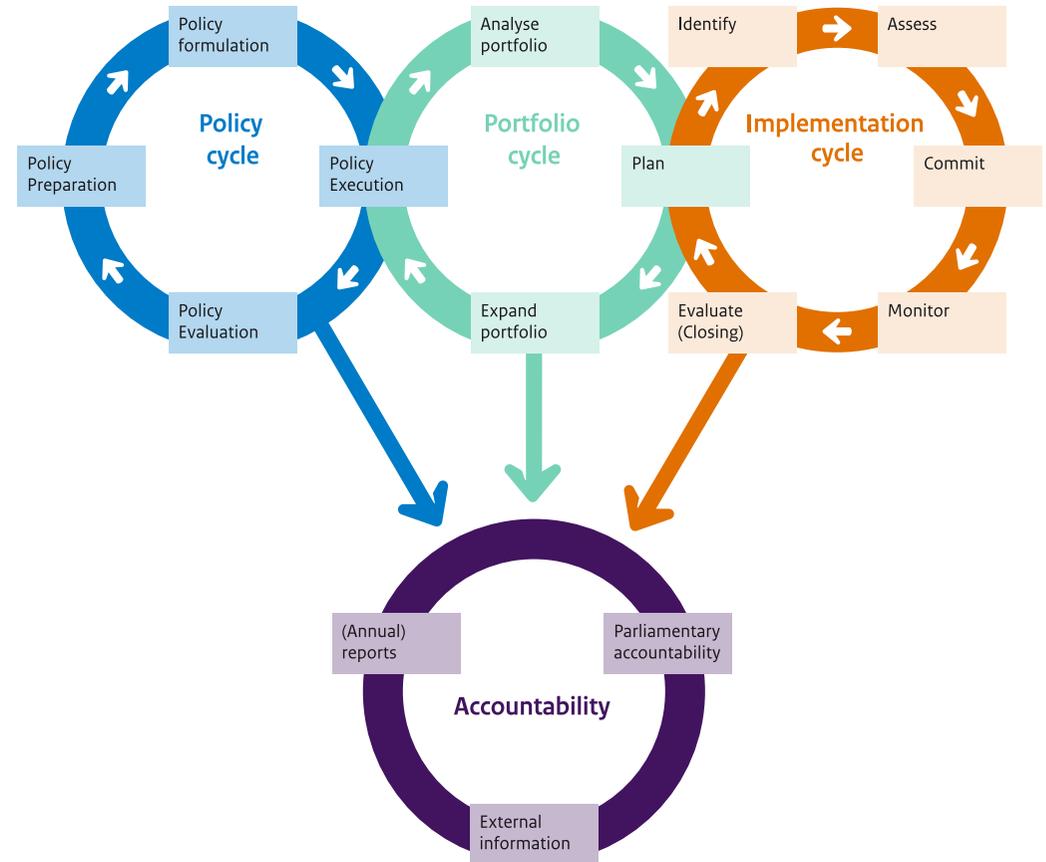
- DGs
- Directors
- Ambassadors
- Policy Officers (at HQ & EKN)

Regardless of your position, whether you are a director, ambassador, programme coordinator or policy officer or advisor, this toolkit is also intended for you.

It is specifically developed and tested to serve you in your position in the wider policy, portfolio and implementation cycle of the Ministry. We hope your results will inspire others to practice and apply MYP.

On 24/7 plaza we have created a map where you can find background information, additional tools and examples from various users who have applied Meaningful Youth Participation in their field of work.

Please also visit our website that contains inspiring stories from people on the ground. Want to add your story here? Feel free to share it with us.



[www.YouthAtHeart.nl](http://www.YouthAtHeart.nl)

# READERS GUIDE

The MYP toolkit is put together with great care by the team for Youth, Education and Work in collaboration with colleagues and youth. The background information as well as suggestions for tools and methods will guide you in ensuring that youth voices are heard.

The MYP toolkit consists of four parts and takes about **1 hour** to read. It is not a blueprint, rather an inspiration and guidebook.



## GOOD TO KNOW

1. The toolkit builds further on the Essentials of Meaningful Youth Participation two-pager ([see Annex 9](#)) and is an outcome of the Youth At Heart Strategy
2. We are available for support in using the MYP toolkit. You can contact us via: [team-JOW@minbuza.nl](mailto:team-JOW@minbuza.nl)
3. Tailored MYP training for Ministry & Embassy staff can be provided upon request
4. To make your life easier, use the “navigation tool” to go directly to the relevant chapter by pressing the letter in the lower left corner or the three lines to go back to the table of contents.

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## Glossary

**MYPT** Meaningful Youth Participation Toolkit

**DDE** Department of Sustainable Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

**DSO** Department of Social Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

**IGG** Inclusive Green Growth Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

**DSH** Department for Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

**CDP** Chef de Poste

**EKN** Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

**DGIS** Directorate-General for International Cooperation

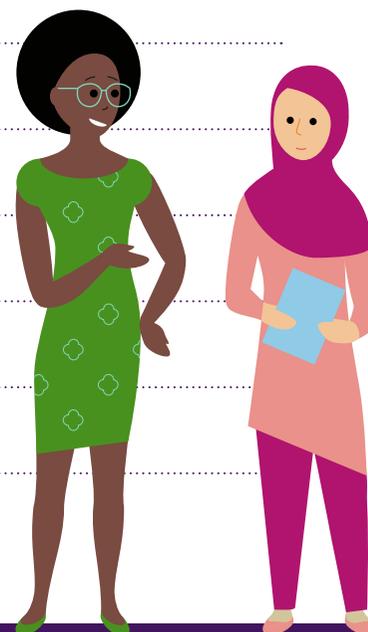
**MFA** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

**CSO** Civil Society Organisation

**YLO** Youth-Led Organisation

**YAC** Youth Advisory Committee

**YAB** Youth Advisory Board



# A

# INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION

# INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION

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**Part A** serves to develop a basic understanding of meaningful youth participation. **Why** it is a central ambition of the Ministry? **How** will it benefit your work and the youth in your policy, programmes, work and context, and **What** results will it deliver?



# 1 DEFINITIONS



## JUST FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING

### The definition of: Youth

Standard definitions of youth vary for different organisations. See table. The African Union defines youth in its charter as any individual between 15-35 years of age. This definition, which takes the age 15-35 cohort as a reference, serves our purposes for this toolkit when it comes to including young people in our action and providing guidelines for meaningful youth participation. It allows us to take the perspective of different phases of life from childhood to adulthood into account.

### DEFINITIONS OF YOUTH

Entity/instrument/organisation	Age	Reference
UN/UNESCO/ILO	Youth: 15-24	UN Instruments statistics
UN Habitat (Youth Fund)	Youth: 15-32	Agenda 21
UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA	Adolescent: 10-19, Young People: 10-24, Youth: 15-24	UNFPA
UNICEF/The convention on the rights of the child	Child until 18	UNICEF
The African Youth Charter	Youth: 15-35	African Union, 2006

### The definition of: Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP)

In the context of this toolkit, MYP means young people being able to have a say (consult, involve, collaborate) in explicated stages of decision-making (design, implementation and/or evaluation) on policies, strategies and/or programmes that affect them, in such a way that it benefits the Ministry, Embassies and development agencies, but predominately the young people themselves and the societies they are part of.

MYP implies young people have a voice, and decision makers listen and act. The level of and methods for youth engagement should be chosen based on the actual situation and project in which MYP is applicable.

### The definition of: Youth-Led Organisations

These are non-governmental organisations that are fully led, managed and coordinated by young people. In the case of an organisation, it means that staff and members are all below a certain age, and work on a variety of issues from a youth perspective.

# 2 WHAT IS MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) is about ensuring that young people have the opportunity to be involved in processes of decision-making on policies, strategies and programmes that affect them. This implies working with them as leaders, partners and beneficiaries, and listening to what matters most to them, with the aim of taking their views, concerns and suggestions into account in our policies, strategies and programmes.

Youth participation is not just about working with young people on matters that are high on our agenda. Young people should have the opportunity to speak out about their own agendas as well. A vital part of the participation process is to ensure young people are properly informed about the issues at hand and the processes they are engaged in.

“We need to get into the habit of structurally listening to young people’s voices”

Minister for Foreign Trade & Development  
Cooperation of the Netherlands



### YOUTH PARTICIPATION IS:

- Acknowledging that young people are leaders, partners and (not only) beneficiaries
- An opportunity to arrive at more impactful and relevant policies, strategies and programmes
- An opportunity for everybody involved to develop new knowledge, skills and ideas
- An opportunity for young people to speak out, decide and be heard, but different for each context and in each step of the process



### YOUTH PARTICIPATION IS NOT:

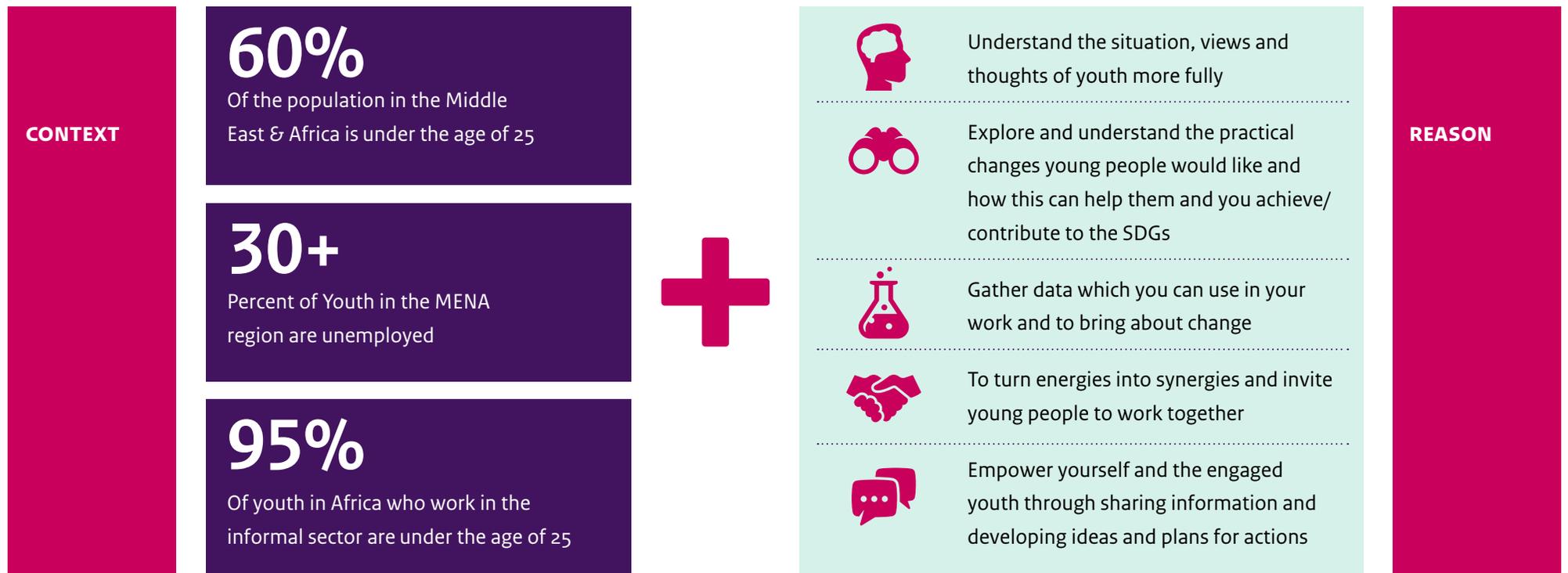
- A ‘token-gesture’ towards involving youth, to ‘tick the box’
- A one size fits all approach: methods and levels of youth engagement can differ per context
- Always formal, serious or large scale
- Always ‘Do It Yourself’: it can also be something to pursue in multilateral or bilateral partnerships and programmes
- The same as ‘consultation’ (which is just a method)

Source: Among others, UN, EPD, Save the Children

# 3 WHY IS YOUTH PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

Countries in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, have very young populations. Much can be achieved if we gear policies and interventions towards the specific challenges and opportunities of the youth. For that to happen,

we need to make sure youth voices are heard and integrated. After all, young people can tell best what works for them. This is why enabling young people to strengthen their voice is one of the central ambitions in the Youth at Heart Strategy.



## 4 WHY IS MYP SO IMPORTANT TO THE MINISTRY?

- The principle of MYP recognises the potential of youth to enrich decision-making processes, to share perspectives, and to participate as **leaders, partners** and **beneficiaries** in our policies and programmes.
- Participation of youth from the **early stages of programming** helps to ensure that planning and design are relevant to the needs and the rights of young women and men in the respective context. Their participation leads to more effective and accountable programmes and reduces the generation gap.
- **Best practices** confirm that young people need access to opportunities that allow them to become socially, civically and economically empowered. When they are empowered in all three ways, they are better safeguarded against human rights violations and they can become successful and thriving adults with viable, decent livelihoods.
- **Social and civic empowerment** enables youth to take on roles as active citizens who contribute to the development of their societies.



**Source:** Among others, UN, EPD, Save the Children

# 5 LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

In literature, the level of participation is displayed in different ways. A well-known way is the so-called ‘Ladder of Participation’, which is further elaborated in part C (page 51).

In this toolkit, we distinguish **five levels of participation**, from Informing as the lowest level of engagement, to Empowering as the highest level of youth engagement.

In different contexts and roles, different levels of participation may be required and applied. Sometimes it may be appropriate to only consult youth, but in other cases it is important to actively collaborate. The **goal** and the promise are different at each level (see further elaboration in Annex 7).

Please note that there is no blueprint that determines right of wrong MYP. Rather, there are recommendations that help you evaluate your position and context.



## 6 WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- You get **first hand information** about the challenges and opportunities young people face.
- You get to **enrich your understanding** of the issues that need to be addressed by the policy, strategy or programme.
- You enhance your understanding of **strengths** of proposed policy, strategy or programme, but also its **potential traps and threats**. You thereby avoid potential flaws in your policy, strategy or programme and increase legitimacy.
- You benefit from **creative and out-of-the-box ideas** which will make the policy, strategy or programme more effective and relevant.
- You **do justice** to the rights of youth to (co-) decide on matters that affect them.



“If participation of young people is truly meaningful, it benefits the young people, the program, policy or organization and society as a whole.”

CHOICE FOR YOUTH AND SEXUALITY

## 7 | WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

- To be **curious** towards what will come out of the process.
- To show **commitment, empathy** and respect towards the youth that take part in your MYP process.
- To **communicate pro-actively** during the process how their voice will be translated.
- To accept that it may take additional **time and effort** to make MYP a part of the process.
- To create a **safe environment** where every young participant is and feels safe to express her/his opinion.
- To **reach out** to youth beyond your usual circles and assist those for whom your policy, project, visit or diplomatic intervention is most relevant.



Meaningful Youth Participation is to be intrinsically motivated to listen to the voice of youth and to act on it – staying far away from tokenism, decoration or manipulation!

# B ORGANISING AND MOBILISING YOUTH

# ORGANISING AND MOBILISING YOUTH

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Part B serves to deepen your understanding of **the do's & don'ts** of organising and mobilising youth, the way your own perceptions affect your actions, and how to create a safe space for meaningful youth participation



# 1 YOUTH AS BENEFICIARIES, PARTNERS AND LEADERS

Understanding the difference between youth as beneficiaries, partners and leaders is important. Our perception, our assumptions and the fact that youth are not a homogenous group affect the way we work – intentionally or unintentionally. Whether we automatically think of engaging youth, or whether this does not cross our minds at all. It also influences the way in which we enter into a dialogue with youth. Being aware of the lens through which we are looking and being able to deliberately choose a specific point of view are some of the capacities this toolkit aims to enhance.

## THE THREE-LENS APPROACH TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION



### Working for youth as beneficiaries

Defined as the bare minimum of a good intervention for young people:

- Youth as beneficiaries implies they are a **target group** and are adequately **informed**;
- Explicitly focuses on youth issues through documentation;
- Can **prepare the ground** for working with youth as partners.

### Engaging with youth as partners

Defined as:

- **Collaborative** interventions, where young people are fully **consulted** and informed;
- Implies mutual co-operation and responsibility;
- Recognises that young people generally need experience working at this level before progressing to becoming leaders and initiators of development (if appropriate) – a progression which not all will want or be able to make.

### Supporting youth as leaders

Defined as:

- Enabling **youth-initiated and directed** interventions;
- Opening up a space for youth-led decision-making (delegation) within existing structures, systems and processes.

Now that we better understand the differences between youth as **beneficiaries**, **partners** and **leaders**, it is also important to understand that our position in the MFA organisation determines how you should or could approach them. Important to mention is that none of the approaches can be considered right or wrong.

## Some examples of how different programmes have approached the targeted youth

- **Youth as beneficiaries:** in the **Nexus Skills & Jobs** local youth have so far been the target group. They have not co-designed the programme but were informed about the purpose of it and the opportunities it offers to them in their context.
- **Youth as collaborators:** in the setup of the **Challenge Fund for Youth Employment programme**, local youth have been the target group but have also been collaborators in some countries. They have co-designed the programme but were also informed about the purpose of it and the opportunities it offers to them in their context.
- **Youth as collaborators:** in the **Orange Corners programme** the Embassy with the support of OCHQ design the programme. The involved stakeholders (including the youth) have a shared responsibility in the execution and continuous improvement of the programme.
- **Youth as leaders:** youth have the lead in the process of formulating the **Youth at Heart Principles** that were central during the international Youth at Heart virtual forum.

Visit [Youth at Heart](#) for more information.





## Now what?

There are different ways of using MYP in your work. The lens you determine yourself.

We will provide you with some background information, tools, examples and best practices to get inspired and broaden your knowledge.

Check [page 51](#) for more guidance regarding the choices you can make.

## What do you seek?



Do you want to gather information and understand the views of young people on a specific topic or issue?



Do you want them to co-design the programme you are able to offer in the country/region?



Do you want to empower the voice of a Youth-Led Organisation because you believe they are having an impact?



Consider consulting young people! Explain the topic or issue and request their thoughts and suggestions.



Consider involving youth groups that are already in your networks and work with them as partners. Pay attention that the context, the target group and geographical location of the programme play a crucial role in meaningful youth participation. Ask yourself the question: Do they and you fully understand the context? If not determine together the purpose, issue and potential actions. Then discuss together with plan of approach.



Approach them and show your support to them. Consider hosting their meeting at your premises. Advocate online and offline about them.

## 2 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Youth are not a homogenous group. The socio-economic, geographical, cultural, religious, sexual and historical experiences differ greatly from person to person. How do you ensure diversity and inclusion during your MYP activity?

When working with and planning for youth, it is important to start by asking yourself some questions:

- Which youth should I be working with?
- How can I be as inclusive as possible in my approach?
- How do I get the diversity of voices that makes the participation truly meaningful and broadly supported?



The Ministry has developed an Inclusion Toolkit to create awareness on bias and to strengthen capacities for inclusion. This Toolkit is helpful to approach youth participation in an inclusive way.



**Tip 1:** in applying MYP, it is recommended to work with young people of different ages. This is helpful in capturing many of those who face education/livelihood/employment challenges and the wider effects of structural poverty.

**Why we recommend this:** a diverse group allows you to benefit from insights of young people who come from different locations, religious backgrounds and positions, as well as the practical life phases of life.

**Tip 2:** it is helpful to distinguish the following life phases of youth:

- Young people who are still part of the education system
- Young people who are making the transition from education to work
- Young people who are in (the early phase) of work or self-employment

Each phase brings its own type of responsibilities for the youth and each phase comes with its own challenges, opportunities and perspectives that serve as input to take into consideration in policies, strategies and programmes.

# 3 ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY

Meaningful youth participation is conducive to the empowerment of female youth. A thorough understanding of the participation context (when are you involving them for what reason) is essential to fully materialize this potential. In some settings, additional measures may be needed for female persons to participate and contribute actively in a safe and conducive environment.

While young women will benefit greatly from social and civic empowerment in all spheres of their lives, participation and retention of young women in youth groups, especially young married women, requires special attention in many patriarchal cultures. For this reason, it is important to follow-up on gender issues throughout the participation project period and not only at the beginning.

## Positive side-effects of MYP

- Female empowerment and stronger citizen engagement (both core ambitions of the MFA gender policy and civil society strengthening policy framework)
- Better employment opportunities for women (ambition of the MFA sustainable economic development department)



### WHEN A NEW YOUTH GROUP IS ESTABLISHED CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

1. Have an equal number of male and female participants
2. Involve influential people if possible, such as local leaders, headmasters, religious leaders whom people trust. This will also pave the way for young women.
3. Inform the parents and/or caregivers about the purpose, process and timeline of the participation process.
4. If you facilitate a session, pay close attention to creating space for women to talk. In many cultures, women do not speak out if they are not encouraged to do so.
5. Have female facilitators and young women act as role models.

### #DidYOUknow:

If done right, MYP contributes to gender equality as it benefits the development of young women by:

- Enhancing their self-confidence and assertiveness
- Acquisition of life and professional skills (negotiation, public speaking, policy making, critical thinking, cooperation)
- Increased employment opportunities as a result

# 3 ENHANCING

Meaningful youth participation is complex. A thorough understanding of the participants (for what reason) is essential to fully mobilise them. Additional measures may be needed for participants to actively in a safe and conducive environment.

While young women will benefit greatly in all spheres of their lives, participation and leadership, especially young married women, require support in patriarchal cultures. For this reason it is important to consider the participation project period and nature.

### Positive side effects to MYP

- Female empowerment & stronger gender equality (Both core ambitions of the MFA gender equality strengthening policy framework)
- Better employment opportunities for women (ambition of the MFA sustainable development goals)

## MALE RESPONSIBILITIES & PARTICIPATION



It's not just the responsibility of women to spearhead change! Changes in everyone's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are necessary to achieve gender equality. Everyone should work to counter the constraints of male domination.

### PLISHED CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

Participants  
local leaders, headmasters, religious leaders, etc. to encourage the way for young women.  
the purpose, process and timeline of the project  
on to create space for women to talk. If they are not encourage to do so.  
act as role models

ality as it benefits the development  
ness  
, critical thinking, cooperation)  
result

# 4 REACHING OUT TO YOUTH

Participation processes take place with different youth, in formal and informal settings, and at different levels. This part provides guidance on where and how to connect with young people.

At the level of the Ministry, there are several options for reaching youth:

- The **Youth Advisory Committee** is operational as of mid-2021. This Youth Advisory Committee has an international composition and will serve as a platform for ongoing dialogue between policy makers and young people from the focus regions. The committee can be approached for participation processes at Ministry level.
  - The **Youth Representatives & Ambassadors** working with or within the Ministry on specific topics.
  - The **West Wing** youth Think Tank.
  - The **interns** currently working in your department as well as the **employees** that meet the age criteria and have relevant experience on the ground or with the topic of the consultation.
  - A starting point can be to engage youth through existing connections with **youth-led organisations** and **programmes** supported by the Ministry, such as One Young World Ambassadors.
- At the level of your **Embassy**, you can consider the following options:
- A starting point can be to engage youth through existing connections with **youth networks and youth-led organisations and programmes** supported by the Embassy.
  - Work with national and international partners (multilateral organisations, development agencies, education institutions) with good connections with youth. A list of the most common types of youth organisations is included in [Annex 2](#).
  - Through the **interns** working at the Embassy.
  - **Employees** that meet the age criteria and have relevant experience on the ground or with the topic of the consultation.
  - Through **Youth Advisory Board** that you might have established. For more info see [Annex 3](#).
  - **Social media**, but also traditional channels such as **radio** can also be used to inform the youth about upcoming youth consultations and to invite them to participate.

# 5 SUPPORTING AND FACILITATING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

As a Ministry, we can support MYP in various settings and ways.

This includes but is not limited to:

1. **Schools & (higher) education institutions;**
2. **Youth organisations & Youth councils;**
3. **Conferences, forums & seminars;**
4. **Policy influencing & diplomacy.**

All of the above are context-dependent and also depend on your position in the organisation.

## 1. Schools & (higher) education institutions

Even though there is a clear hierarchical system in most formal educational systems, there are still possibilities for youth participation. The most well-known being engagement in the student councils, school unions, pupils' councils or boards (different vocabulary or terminology depending on the country). These are usually self-governed and self-organised bodies with young people being elected to represent the pupils towards the school management.

Similarly to youth participation in schools, there are different possibilities to participate in universities or institutes of higher education, such as joining the student union, student parliament, student council or various student organisations. These bodies or organisations (which are either a part of the university/higher education institution or independent structures) usually aim at strengthening the

voice of students towards the management and teaching staff, as well as to organise the time and life of students in the way they want to.

It is often possible to find a variety of self-organised clubs, projects or groups focussing on different topics at universities, where students can plan and implement their own projects. Some international examples with global chapters are:

- [Global Shapers Communities](#) of the World Economic Forum
- [AIESEC](#) a youth leadership movement with chapters across the world
- [Model United Nations](#) chapters



**EXAMPLE:** by organising and facilitating a training for student (led) groups, you empower these teams in understanding and applying participation and advocacy principles in their institutions. The Netherlands Consulate in Nigeria participated in the Model United Nations organised fully by the students of the University of Lagos, which helped them to develop their negotiation and presentation skills. For more inspiration check [here](#).

Adapted from: [Yeni.org](#)

## 2. Youth Organisations & Councils

Most countries have a variety of youth organisations and national youth councils through which youth are organising and managing different activities and initiatives, taking responsibility for themselves and other people, managing budgets and deciding on the strategy of the organisation. It is important to identify such organisations and ensure spaces for cooperation. Transparent evaluation of capacities and impact is important, but we can take informed decisions and calculated risks that have impact.

Youth councils are long-term platforms for participation that are present in the majority of countries. Young people are elected by other young people and have a mandate to participate in the decision-making processes at different levels (from local communities to regional or national politics). The structures differ from place to place, but what they have in common is that young people are chosen for a longer period of time and therefore participate bindingly and in the long term, which also helps them in gaining political experience and self-confidence.

Young people in the council or parliament need to discuss with one another, and the process of decision-making in such formats resembles the regular decision-making processes in politics. The aim of these structures is to make the views and opinions of a large group of young people heard by decision makers. Sometimes youth parliaments can decide what motions they want to bring to the city council, which is then obliged to discuss these motions. In some countries, there are also parts of the budgets that can be decided by youth councils or parliaments. However, we often see that they possess limited capacity and resources to do all of the above and practise meaningful youth participation.

It is important to be aware that in some contexts, youth councils are used in an instrumental manner by governments. Members are hand-picked by high ranked officials. By offering capacity building and training on democratic procedures that value transparency and meaningful participation, we can increase the voice of youth in policy making.

See [Annex 2](#) for more information about different types of youth organisations.



Adapted from: Yeni.org

### 3. Conferences, forums & seminars

Open participation events aim to facilitate exchange between different actors on concrete subjects such as entrepreneurship, sustainability, technology, agriculture, education, climate, etc.

It is important to pro-actively seek for ways to involve young people as partners and leaders in such forums and conferences in order to gain the perspective of young people on a particular issue. Conferences provide an excellent opportunity for Embassies and the Ministry to engage with young people and to make sure they have the floor, can speak out, and are actually listened to as well.

It might be possible for young people to have a direct say on motions, Conclusions and Commitments. In any case, the opinions, ideas and recommendations of young people should be taken on board.



**BEWARE:** if you decide to do this, you need to make sure their contributions are well documented, communicated and secured in order to increase transparency and agreement about what will happen with the results of such events (see also the risk of Tokenism on [page 34](#)). On the other hand, quite often such conferences and seminars are organised in a very attractive and interactive way. If events build upon one another, it can lead to the development of a long-term dialogue with policy makers.



**EXAMPLE:** the Embassy in Sudan decided to participate in the Global Entrepreneurship Week in 2018 and funded a series of interactive policy dialogues called #StartSUDANup. These dialogues were on education and entrepreneurship, government and entrepreneurship. They invited several Ministers to participate in these dialogues. In this way, the Embassy actively supported this youth conference and helped the organisation committee to invite high profile guests. By using their authority, they created a constructive dialogue between the politicians and the youth present.



**@KARIN\_BOVEN**

THANK YOU ALL FOR JOINING OUR INTERACTIVE EVENT #STARTSUDANUP AT NL RESIDENCE. EXITED ABOUT THE OPEN EXCHANGE ON HOW TO ENHANCE YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WHAT THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE. WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEP?



## 4. Policy influencing & diplomacy work in general

Our diplomacy and policy influencing activities provide a great opportunity for meaningful youth participation. Youth groups or representatives can be capacitated to be part of these dialogues, or they can be actively consulted beforehand, so that we can bring the interests of young people to the attention of political actors and decision makers in the countries where we work.



Another form of policy influencing work is to support or provide visibility to activities and campaigns of youth-led organisations which concentrate on one specific issue that is relevant to young people.

**BEWARE:** in some countries it is not recommended to offer such support openly.

Adapted from: [Yeni.org](http://Yeni.org)

**EXAMPLE:** the Dutch ambassador in Sudan decided to participate in the silent protest that was taking place in April 2019 in Khartoum. By going to the streets where thousands of young people gathered, she drew (international) attention to their issues. Other ambassadors soon joined and they all helped the Sudanese youth demand a change in decisions and laws of their country. Soon after the government changed. Read more about how she engaged with youth [here](#).



**@KARIN\_BOVEN**

MY SINCERE GRATITUDE GOES OUT TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE SIT-IN, WHO FACILITATED MY FIRST VISIT TO THE AREA TODAY. I SPOKE WITH WOMEN, MEN, YOUTH. IMPRESSED BY THEIR PROFESSIONALISM, COURAGE, PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE!  
**#SUDAN**



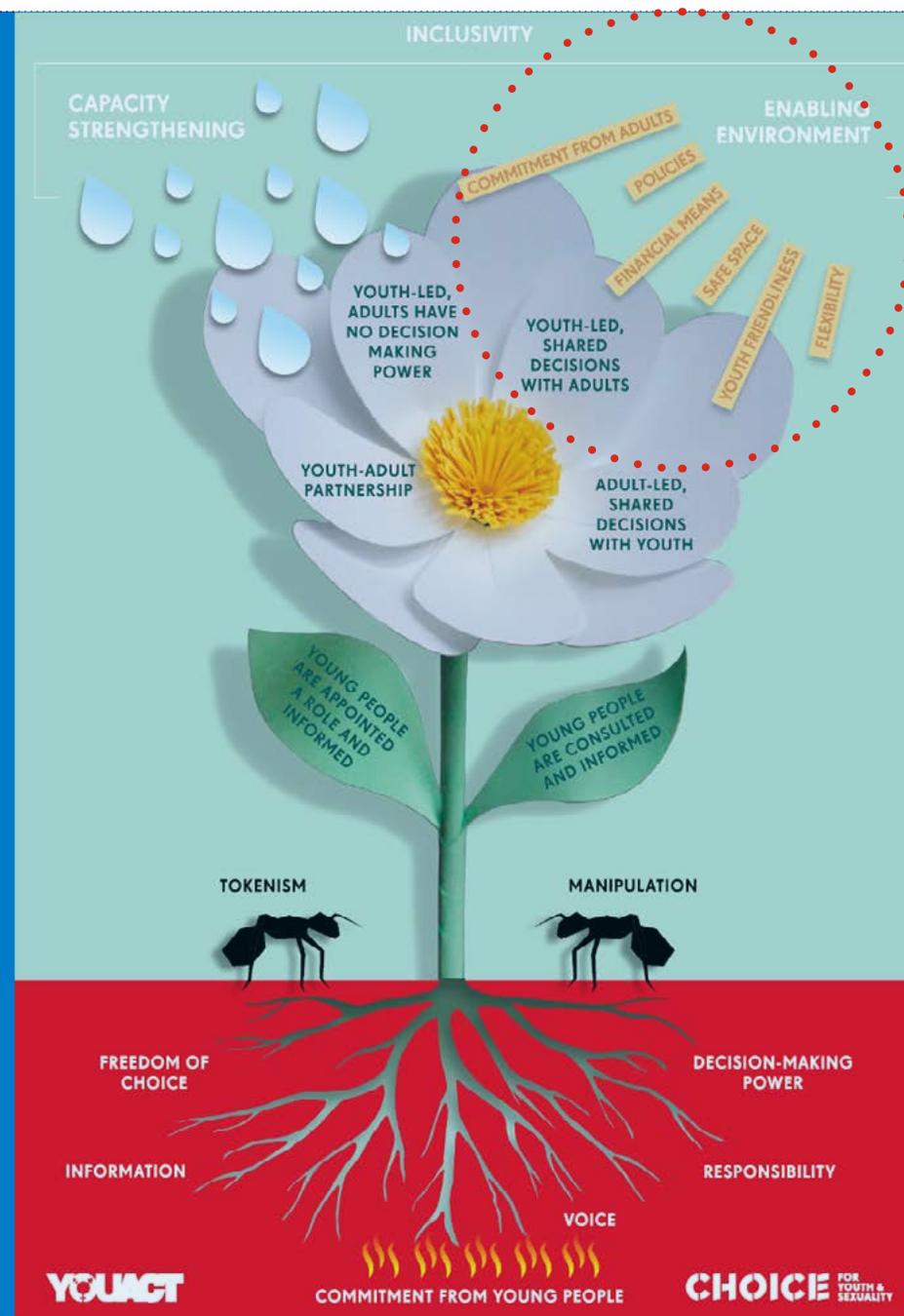
# 6 CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Youth-lead organisations, such as [CHOICE](#), point to the importance of creating a safe and enabling environment for youth participation.

“Make sure to create and sustain an enabling environment for MYP. An enabling environment for MYP consists of multiple elements: commitment from adults, policies on MYP, financial means, a safe space, youth-friendliness, and flexibility (with regards to time). All of these elements are important for MYP to flourish and can be found in the [Flower of Participation](#). For example, meetings should be held at a time that suits young people – this can, for example, mean after school or work hours, in the evenings or in the weekends. In addition, make sure to allocate the necessary (financial) resources that are necessary to enable young people to participate. For example, research done in Kenya showed that young people were sometimes unable to participate in the Community Health Committee, because they did not have the financial means for the transport to attend the meetings.”

## - CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality

It is essential to create this safe and enabling environment by showing commitment to the abovementioned principles and preconditions.



# 7 CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

As much as it is important to contribute to the overall enabling environment, it is also crucial to create a safe environment during the participation process itself. Do not forget your position and how this is perceived by the local youth. Working for a Ministry or an Embassy comes with certain expectations and perceptions we must be aware of. Take time to explain who you are, what your work entails and what your expectations are from this engagement and how important you find their views.

## Creating a safe space is about:

- Creating an environment where young people feel valued, respected, encouraged and supported to speak out. Regardless of their ethnic, religious, educational or societal background. There is room for everyone.
- Ensuring that youth are well informed about the issue at hand, the purpose of the MYP sessions and the stage in the process in which the participation takes place.
- Being transparent about what is possible and what is not in terms of the level of engagement (inform – consult – involve – collaborate – empower), incorporation of input and feedback provided, and about complexities related to policies, strategies or programmes.
- Creating room for questions and input, allowing everybody around the table to speak out, fostering an atmosphere where critical comments are valued and appreciated.
- Being flexible and open for creative, out-of-the box and sometimes unexpected ideas, comments and insights about the issue at hand, affecting the very core of the envisioned policy, strategy or programme.



# 8 OBSTACLES & HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

There are obstacles to youth participation which we should be aware of as you might encounter them during your work. These obstacles are:

## Poor education and training

Education systems often fail to prepare young people adequately to participate in decision-making. They do not develop the necessary analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving through participatory, active learning. In some cases young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making without ensuring that they receive adequate training or access to the appropriate information that would enable them to make informed decisions. It is important to mention is that language barriers can also form an obstacle.

## Weak infrastructure

In many countries, young people lack direct access to institutional systems and structures within governments, the media and private and civil society sectors. This severely impedes their ability to advocate for their rights. In the rare cases where young people have been able to influence or make decisions, barriers within complicated infrastructure have tended to limit implementation. This weakens young people's confidence and trust in such mechanisms.

## Inequality and exclusion

Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of particular groups of young people is a big challenge within the youth sector, even for youth organisations. Creative mechanisms, such as the use of radio to reach out (to rural illiterate youth in particular), but also promoted messages on social media, must always be strived for and reviewed. Restrictive systems can make it more difficult to organise youth participation. In such cases it is advised to take additional measures to ensure a safe environment. Should personal safety of young people be at stake, it is advised to evaluate carefully whether it is responsible to proceed.

## Cost

Youth participation may require some resources. For example, the cost in relation to organising and hosting a dialogue session. However, the positive financial repercussions of allowing young people to determine something that may have an impact on their own lives and others, and may be more readily accepted or practical, should not be underestimated.

Source: youthpolicy.org

As a starting point, we and the organisations we support should always consider using international and national frameworks which enshrine the rights of young people to participate in development as a mechanism for overcoming the above obstacles. In doing so, it is also crucial to speak out for the rationale for engaging young people, who represent a growing proportion of national populations and are increasingly affected by development issues.

Many of the above obstacles can be overcome by challenging our own **perceptions** and **values** of ourselves and our colleagues, the key stakeholders, and gatekeepers for youth through dialogue. Transforming and negotiating values for working with and for youth is crucial to fostering an enabling environment for youth participation in development. Youth participation is action orientated – a process rather than an end in itself - and therefore it is embedded in managing relationships effectively.

When working with young people, it is vital to consider and acknowledge the decision-making (or power) dynamics of any given situation, because young people are often in situations where decisions are being made for them, and exerted over them by older adults and institutions. Think about it.

There are instead more positive forms of decision-making relations to consider. As is also explained in slide 18 about the youth lens. These are:

**Working with young people:** through collaboration and collective action, implying mutual trust, joint learning and collaboration (youth as partners).

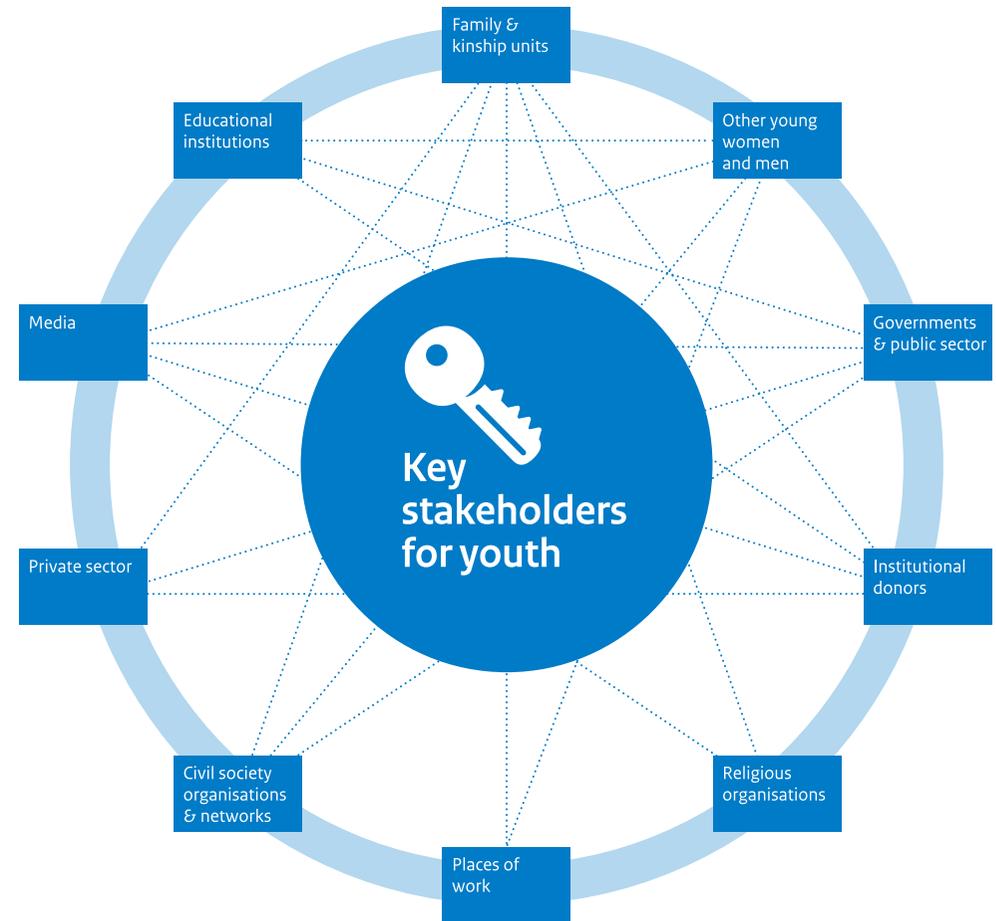
**Empowering young people:** through supporting the development of their personal capabilities and feelings of self-worth and confidence (creating youth as leaders and initiators of development).

Source: youthpolicy.org

Realising young people’s right to participation is the responsibility of a wide range of actors. Each actor represents a potential arena for participation – be it an institution or social group: networks which bring together these different stakeholders can help to identify and address obstacles to participation.



### Key stakeholders for youth



Adapted from: YouthPolicy.org 2010

# 9 MITIGATE RISKS

There are a number of potential risks to youth participation that need to be considered, and properly mitigated.



**The risk of manipulation / tokenism**

Mitigated by clearly defining the goal, promise and process/feedback loop

**The risk of limited diversity**

Mitigated by recognizing the importance of diversity and heterogeneity of youth and aiming a minimum level of diversity; as well as by creating a safe and enabling environment

**The risk of reinforcing inequalities**

Mitigated by creating a safe space and a focus on diversity enabling all participants to raise their voices through well-facilitated dialogue

**The risk of promising too much**

Mitigated by clearly defining the level of participation and managing expectations well by being transparent about possibilities, limitations and complexities



# PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE

# PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE

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Part C of the toolkit, we want to provide you with concrete help to tackle the subject of youth participation.



## JUST FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING

The words that are underlined in this section contain a link to a relevant source or interesting article.



**WE PRESENT YOU WITH EXAMPLES ON HOW TO:**

- A** Take certain actions on MYP
- B** Establish a youth advisory board
- C** Conduct a workshop
- D** Introduce the subject of participation
- E** Engage participants in the reflection about the concept

Furthermore, we present several methods and tools that can be used during the workshops or with a youth group. At the end of the toolkit you will find other sources that can help you deepen your knowledge on youth participation.

There are a lot of organisations and institutions with great expertise in this subject. We are happy to include a suggestion of further sources: websites and publications that can help you implement workshops or just read more on youth participation. See the annexes and enjoy!



# 1 | INSPIRING EXAMPLES OF MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

So far, we have looked at quite a lot of theory. The only way to experience the value of Meaningful Youth Participation is to simply start doing it.

**Inspiration and best practices definitely help.** In this section we therefore combine background information with inspiring examples.

In order to better understand what participation can look like, this toolkit presents various forms of youth participation that have already taken place on various occasions and in various positions. These examples have been provided by colleagues during the focus group consultations as part of the development of this toolkit.

The examples are meant for your inspiration and can be applied by you. Depending on your position, the setting, whether it is at an Embassy or the Ministry, there are different ways to approach and apply MYP in decision-making processes and to make your work more impactful.

Some of these forms require long-term engagement, some respond to concrete causes or issues. We hope this overview helps you to understand the diversity of participation forms, proves to you that it does not need to be difficult and motivates you to choose the way that fits your issue the best. By reading this toolkit, you will become aware of the challenges and important do's and don'ts that you need to bear in mind.

In order to align to the strategic priority of working not only for, but with youth, programmes and development engagements should, when appropriate and feasible, include support to youth participation and mobilisation.

This involves providing support to and opportunities for young people to be actively engaged; i.e. creating an enabling environment for their participation, building their voice, providing them with leadership skills and enhancing their representation in governance structures.

As our Embassies and our colleagues at our Embassies are on the ground, their distance to the local youth is significantly smaller. For this reason we provide you with a bigger list of **examples, activities, tools** and **methods** to engage with local youth.

Please note once again that your country context, as well as the scope of the specific programme or development engagement, determines the extent to which an explicit youth focus is appropriate and feasible. The Youth Situational Analysis explained in [Annex 5](#) provides guidance to determining the relevance of applying a youth focus in a specific programme or development engagement.



**DURING THE FORMULATION OF THIS STRATEGY VARIOUS CONSULTATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH ALL THE RELEVANT YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS**



**THE CDP IN BEIRUT DISCUSSED WITH YOUTH ABOUT COVID-19**



**YOUTH, AMBASSADOR AND MINISTER DISCUSSING EMPLOYMENT IN BAGHDAD**



**EKN BURUNDI INVITED YOUTH TO DISCUSS EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES**



HENNY DE VRIES, #NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR IN #MOZAMBIQUE, ORGANISED TWO #YOUTHCIRCLES TO DISCUSS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE YOUTH AND THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON THE COUNTRY. THEY WERE THE FIRST TWO IN A SERIES OF #YOUTHCIRCLES OVER THE COMING PERIOD.



#BAMAKOTALKS YEAR PLAN CONSULTATIONS WORKSHOP



#YOUTH4CHANGE INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION ON VOICE OF YOUTH IN THE HAGUE



ONE YEAR AFTER THE PANDEMIC STARTED, AMBASSADOR TIJMEN ROOSEBOOM SPOKE TO ORANGE CORNERS YOUTH FROM 15 COUNTRIES AND DISCUSSED THE IMPACT ON THEIR WORK AND LIFE.

# 2 MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT MINISTRY LEVEL

List of possible ways to enhance MYP at Ministry level, as a thematic or regional department

## INTEGRATE A 'YOUTH-LENS' IN YOUR POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES.

### Inspiration alert!

You can use the [Youth at Heart strategy](#) and [Principles](#) as a guiding document and lead by example by encouraging youth to collaborate, advise and engage with the department. Or better yet, you can recruit [your own Youth Ambassador](#).

## ORGANISE AND/OR PARTICIPATE IN DIALOGUE WITH YOUTH IN RELATION TO INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.

### Inspiration alert!

Prior to the [Climate Adaptation Summit](#), a dialogue was organised with young experts from Africa to take on board their knowledge and expertise in the preparation of the Summit.

## EVALUATE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF MYP IN PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIPS AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT.

### Inspiration alert!

The current ToCs of thematic departments may not pay specific attention to the role and position of youth: look for ways to include MYP in a logical manner.

## ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MYP DURING BILATERAL MEETINGS.

### Inspiration alert!

During a bilateral meeting with the Burkinabé Minister, the Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work Tijmen Rooseboom emphasised the importance of MYP in policy formulation.

## ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MYP AS PART OF MULTILATERAL COOPERATION.

### Inspiration alert!

The EU Commissioner for International Partnerships committed to establishing a Youth Sounding Board for EU external policies.

## HAVE INFORMAL DIALOGUES OR BRAINSTORM ON SPECIFIC TOPICS WITH YOUTH FROM YOUR PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES OR WITH THE GROUPS MENTIONED IN [SLIDE 24](#).

### Inspiration alert!

During a session called Youth4Change, policy officers and youth were grouped together based on their expertise. An interactive discussion about this theme and guiding questions resulted in valuable and concrete recommendations to the policy officers and thereby MYP was ensured.

## SUPPORT YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES AND ORGANISATIONS FOCUSING ON EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH.

### Inspiration alert!

An example is the programme of One Young World [Enterprise for Peace Scholarship](#), where the Ministry supports 50 young people from the focus regions to participate in the biggest youth conference in the world and engage with Dutch policy officers.

## COOPERATE WITH MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (SEE [SLIDE 24](#)).

List of possible ways to do MYP as a director

**ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MYP DURING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MEETINGS. THIS CAN ALSO BE DONE ONLINE VIA YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
During your various meetings, ask your counterparts about their ways of engagement and if not present, advocate about the importance of it.

**EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE BY NOT ONLY TAKING ALONG YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT GIVING THEM YOUR TIME AND SPACE DURING IMPORTANT FORA.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
During the Generation Equality Forum, the Dutch government representative chose to shift her screen and cede her speaking time to a Dutch Youth Ambassador.

**SIMPLY PUT YOUTH ON THE AGENDA OF YOUR WORKING VISIT AND RESERVE TIME TO HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL YOUTH.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
During a visit make sure to include youth consultation about various topics on their agenda.

**MOTIVATE CHAMPIONS INSIDE YOUR DEPARTMENT WHO APPLY MYP IN AN EFFECTIVE WAY. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AND MOTIVATE OTHERS TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
Express explicit commitment to your staff to enhance MYP in the various dossiers related to the different policy areas of your department.

List of possible ways to do MYP as a policy officer

**PRO-ACTIVELY ENGAGE YOUTH IN RELATION TO THE POLICY AREAS AND PROGRAMMES FOR WHICH YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
Cooperation with members of the youth advisory board (see slide 23) or The West Wing youth think tank.

**ADDRESS MYP IN THE (MULTI-) ANNUAL PLAN CONSULTATIONS.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
The Embassy in Lebanon has started working with youth volunteer circles and has linked these circles to programmes. This way, they are part of a community.

**ORGANISE BROADER YOUTH CONSULTATIONS IN YOUR DEPARTMENT IN ORDER TO INSPIRE AND INFORM OTHER COLLEAGUES ABOUT THE ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS YOUTH FACE.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
If you are renewing or evaluating a youth programme, make sure to include youth organisations in your network. Think about youth initiatives, youth networks in the programme and involve them within your department.

**ORGANISE YOUTH CONSULTATIONS OR PARTICIPATE IN CONSULTATIONS THAT YOUR TEAM OR EMBASSIES INITIATE.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
Policy officers organised a session on the Future of Work, where the management of the department participated to learn first-hand about the trends and developments.

# 3 MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT EMBASSY LEVEL

## What are the proposed actions if you are at an Embassy?

The following list of selected youth-focused activities may serve as an inspiration for how to incorporate a youth focus, either directly by your Embassy or through an implementing CSO or private consultancy company that you work with.

1. **Conduct a youth review of youth-related activities within the overall country portfolio.** This will provide information on the scope of the Embassy’s youth engagement, expected results and available resources, and form the basis for a mainstreamed commitment to youth development.
2. Establish a **youth advisory board** (see [Annex 3](#)) with a group of youth representatives with whom the Embassy can discuss and validate context and programme-related youth issues. A youth advisory board will help strengthen young people’s voice and perspective in relation to policy and programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and it will provide a platform for direct and possibly continuous youth consultation. The selection of members for the youth advisory board should carefully consider a diverse and relevant representation of youth.
3. **Include youth representatives in context analysis, reviews and evaluations** (see [Annex 4](#)). This will serve to maintain focus on the overall youth agenda, provide a critical “youth lens” and youth input to the overall exercise, ensure that

achievements are assessed from a youth perspective and finally contribute to building young people’s agency while also ensuring the validity of collected data. In [Annex 10](#) you will find a reference to a practical guide of how our partner Oxfam did this in the Dutch-funded programme LEAD.

4. Work with **young interns**. Embassies could consider national and/or Dutch interns, i.e. university students or recent graduates, who can help promote a youth focus in development programmes and ensure a young perspective and – in the case of the national interns – a local youth voice in relation to implementation and monitoring of programmes.
5. Engage with **Civil Society Organisations** (CSO) that are actively engaged with youth and youth-led organisations (YLOs). The Embassy could tap into the knowledge and network of these CSOs, for example the ones we support.
6. Engage in **youth-focused policy dialogue** (see [Annex 6](#)) with the aim of influencing change or enforcement of legislation, promotion of youth rights or changes of practices in terms of human resources and youth participation. This may involve international, national or local-level dialogue partners, e.g. government institutions, line ministries, the national youth council, civil society platforms or organisations, local government institutions, and private sector actors.

**Adapted from:** Youth Engagement by Embassies (um.dk)

7. Establish specific **“youth windows”** in (existing) funding mechanisms to ensure that youth, including youth organised in smaller, less formalised youth organisations or social movements, can access funding. Youth involvement in selection processes can ensure a young perspective and enhanced transparency. However, when engaging with informal organisations and networks, it is important to consider the issue of accountability, and it might be necessary to link the funding mechanism to an existing youth organisation or council that can monitor and build the capacity of the young grantees.
8. Promote the idea of national **youth delegates to the UN and Young Ambassadors programmes**. The Netherlands is a pioneer country in appointing youth delegates to the UN and other multilateral forums on specific topics. Dutch Embassies can

therefore, with significant weight, promote the idea and pave the way for more youth delegates who are able to influence regional and international agendas with a youth perspective. Embassies can also link up with the Dutch youth delegates and ambassadors, who can convey youth-related issues to multilateral forums.

9. Promote **networking and coalition building** among and with YLOs and the wider development or academic world, including funding of selected key events designed and organised with or by youth, as appropriate in the context, and convening linkages to international and national CSOs that are willing to act as mentors for new and small YLOs, helping them build their capacity in areas such as advocacy, management and fundraising. These activities can be incorporated in (existing) CSO support programmes.



UN YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE OF NL



COCREATE MY CITY SOUTH AFRICA



EKN IN RABAT CO-FUNDS THE EMPOWERHER SESSIONS



EKN IN MALI HAD A YEAR PLAN CONSULTATION WORKSHOP WITH LOCAL YOUTH

As an Embassy

**FORMULATE AN AMBITION REGARDING THE LEVEL OF MYP IN EMBASSY ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES.**

***Inspiration alert!***

Organise a youth consultation group composed of representatives from your projects to discuss and elaborate on your year plan. How? Check [Annex 3](#).

**CO-ORGANISE AND/OR PARTICIPATE IN AN EVENT RELATED TO YOUTH AND PREFERABLY ORGANISED BY YOUTH OR A YOUTH-LED ORGANISATION.**

**HAVE FORMAL AND INFORMAL DIALOGUES OR BRAINSTORMS ON SPECIFIC TOPICS WITH YOUTH FROM YOUR PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES OR WITH THE GROUPS MENTIONED IN [SLIDE 24](#).**

***Inspiration alert!***

The EKN in Maputo has organised youth circles to engage with relevant youth on different topics. For more info please contact our Embassy in Maputo.

**ALLOCATE RESOURCES FROM YOUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BUDGET TO FINANCE SMALL-SCALE MYP ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCATE IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**

**EVALUATE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF MYP IN PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIPS AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT. [ANNEX 4](#) WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THIS PROCESS.**

**PROMOTE AND ADVOCATE THE IMPORTANCE AND EFFECTS OF MYP DURING BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH COUNTERPARTS AND OTHERS.**

**DURING OFFICIAL VISITS/ FIELD VISITS, WHETHER TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR ENTITIES, THE PRIVATE SECTOR OR OTHERS, REQUEST THE PRESENCE OF YOUTH AND ENGAGE WITH THEM ON MATTERS THAT AFFECT THEM.**

**COOPERATE WITH MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (SEE [SLIDE 24](#)).**

**DURING INCOMING MISSIONS/VISITS FROM THE NETHERLANDS, MAKE TIME TO MEET AND DISCUSS WITH YOUTH LEADERS OR YOUTH WHO ARE THE TARGET GROUP OF DUTCH INTERVENTIONS.**

**USE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS TO CONNECT WITH YOUTH AND GIVE VISIBILITY TO CAUSES THAT MATTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE.**

As an Ambassador

**INITIATE A YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, SHARE (PARTS OF) YOUR CALENDAR WITH THE YAB AND REQUEST INPUT ON/FOR CERTAIN MEETINGS AND POLICY TOPICS.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
The NL CDP in Lebanon held regular meetings with youth to discuss current developments and their views on specific topics.

**ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MYP DURING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MEETINGS. ALSO DO THIS ONLINE VIA YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
During meetings, ask your counterparts about their methods of engagement and address the importance of it. Think about inviting a youth representative to a meeting.

**PARTICIPATE IN YOUTH CONSULTATIONS THAT YOUR TEAM INITIATES OR THROUGH THE INVITATIONS YOU GET.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
The EKN in Morocco and Sudan participated in the programme called EmpowerHER and discussed the opposition and challenges female entrepreneurs face.

**MAKE SUFFICIENT TIME DURING WORK VISITS TO ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL YOUTH. IF POSSIBLE ALSO INVITE OTHER KEY FIGURES (OFFICIALS, PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS, INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE) TO JOIN YOU IN THIS VISIT. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CONNECT AND FACILITATE THE DISCUSSION.**

**APPOINT A YOUTH FOCAL POINT: MOTIVATE CHAMPIONS INSIDE YOUR EMBASSY TEAM WHO APPLY MYP IN AN EFFECTIVE WAY. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT AND MOTIVATE OTHERS TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE.**

As a policy officer

**CONDUCT A YOUTH SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (SEE ANNEX 5) IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS THAT MIGHT EXIST, THEIR NEEDS, PERSPECTIVES AND VIEWS.**

**FORM A YAB AT YOUR EMBASSY SO THAT YOU CAN REQUEST INPUT ON CERTAIN MEETINGS, PROGRAMMES AND POLICY FORMULATIONS SUCH AS THE ANNUAL PLAN.**

**Example:**  
see how to in [Annex 3](#)

**ADVOCATE MYP DURING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MEETINGS AND ONLINE VIA YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS.**

**🔊 Inspiration alert!**  
During meetings, ask your counterparts about their methods of engagement and address the importance of it.

**DRAFT A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY TO MAXIMIZE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITHIN YOUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.**

**MAKE TIME DURING YOUR COUNTRY VISITS TO MEET, DISCUSS, HEAR AND LEARN FROM THE LOCAL YOUTH ABOUT THEIR VIEWS.**

## 4 MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION AT A DEVELOPMENT AGENCY LEVEL

What are the proposed actions if you are an development agency related to or funded by the Netherlands?

The following list of selected youth-focused activities may serve as an inspiration for how to incorporate a youth focus, either directly by your Embassy or through an implementing CSO or private consultancy company that you work with. This list is not exclusive and various ways, methods and approaches can be applied. In addition the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands does not obligate any organisation to follow any of the recommendations below. All of the actions listed below should be seen as inspirations and suggestions.

**1. Conduct a youth review of youth-related activities within the overall country portfolio.** This will provide information on the scope of the organisation's youth engagement, expected results and available resources, and form the basis for a mainstreamed commitment to youth development.

**2. Establish a youth advisory board (see Annex 3)** with a group of youth representatives with whom your organisation can discuss and validate context and programme-related youth issues. A youth advisory board will help strengthen young people's voice and perspective in relation to policy and programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and it will provide a platform for direct and possibly continuous youth consultation. The selection of members for the youth advisory board should carefully consider a diverse and relevant representation of youth.

**3. Include youth representatives in context analysis, reviews and evaluations (see Annex 4).** This will serve to maintain focus on the overall youth agenda, provide a critical "youth lens" and youth input to the overall exercise, ensure that achievements are assessed from a youth perspective and finally contribute to building young people's agency while also ensuring the validity of collected data. In Annex 10 you will find a reference to a practical guide of how our partner Oxfam did this in the Dutch-funded programme LEAD.

4. Establish specific “**youth windows**” in (existing) funding mechanisms to ensure that youth, including youth organised in smaller, less formalised youth organisations or social movements, can access funding and/or opportunities. Youth involvement in selection processes can ensure a young perspective and enhanced transparency.

However, when engaging with informal organisations and networks, it is important to consider the issue of accountability, and it might be necessary to link the funding mechanism to an existing youth organisation or council that can monitor and build the capacity of the young grantees.

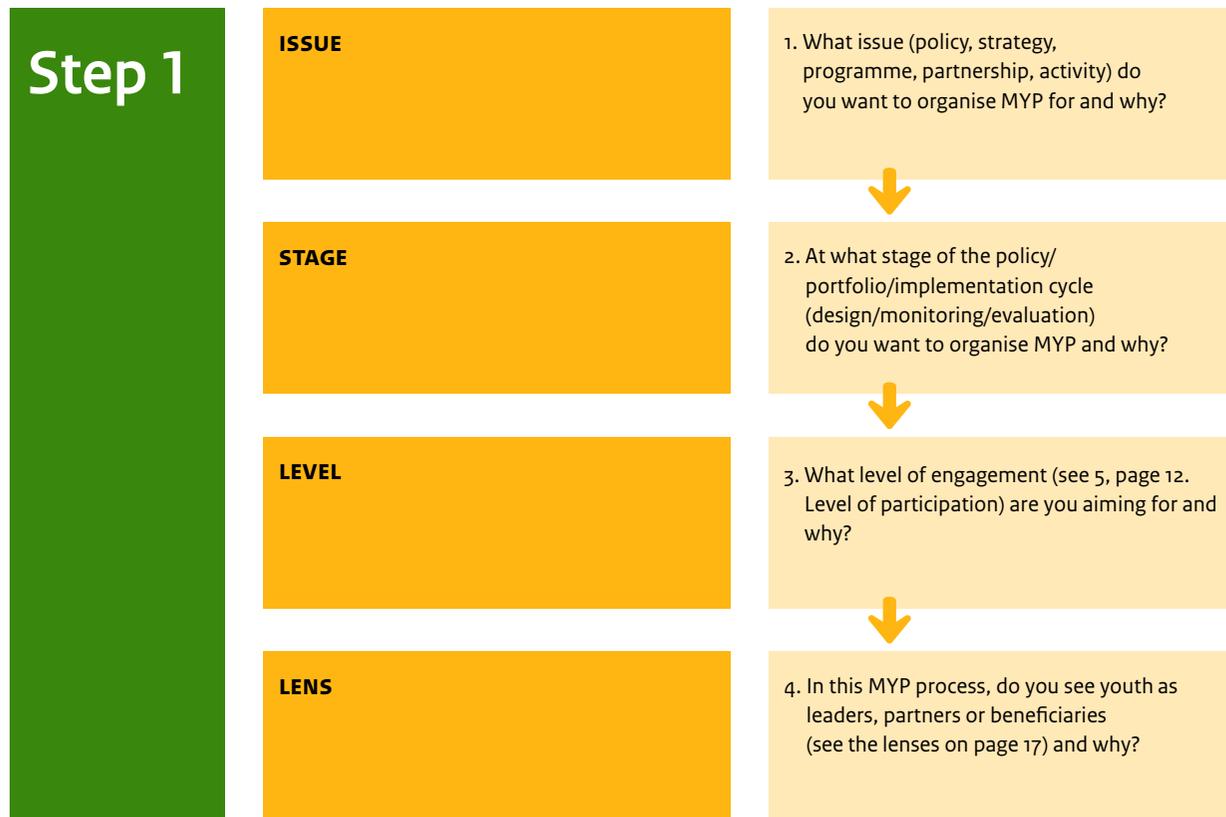
5. If your programme has (digital) access to a larger group of youth, consider organising **online surveys** to get input from a larger number of youth on specific issues as a consultation-level form of MYP.

6. Use **(social) media** to connect with youth (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram pages of departments, Embassies and/or individual staff) and **give visibility** to causes that matter to young people; as a way to inform, consult and build relationships for all levels of participation.



# 5 NOW IT IS UP TO YOU!

The only way to experience the value of Meaningful Youth Participation is to simply start doing it. Start by clearly identifying and describing the context in which you want to apply MYP with help of these four questions:



Adapted from: [Ladder of Participation model by Arnstein & Hart's](#)



## JUST FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING

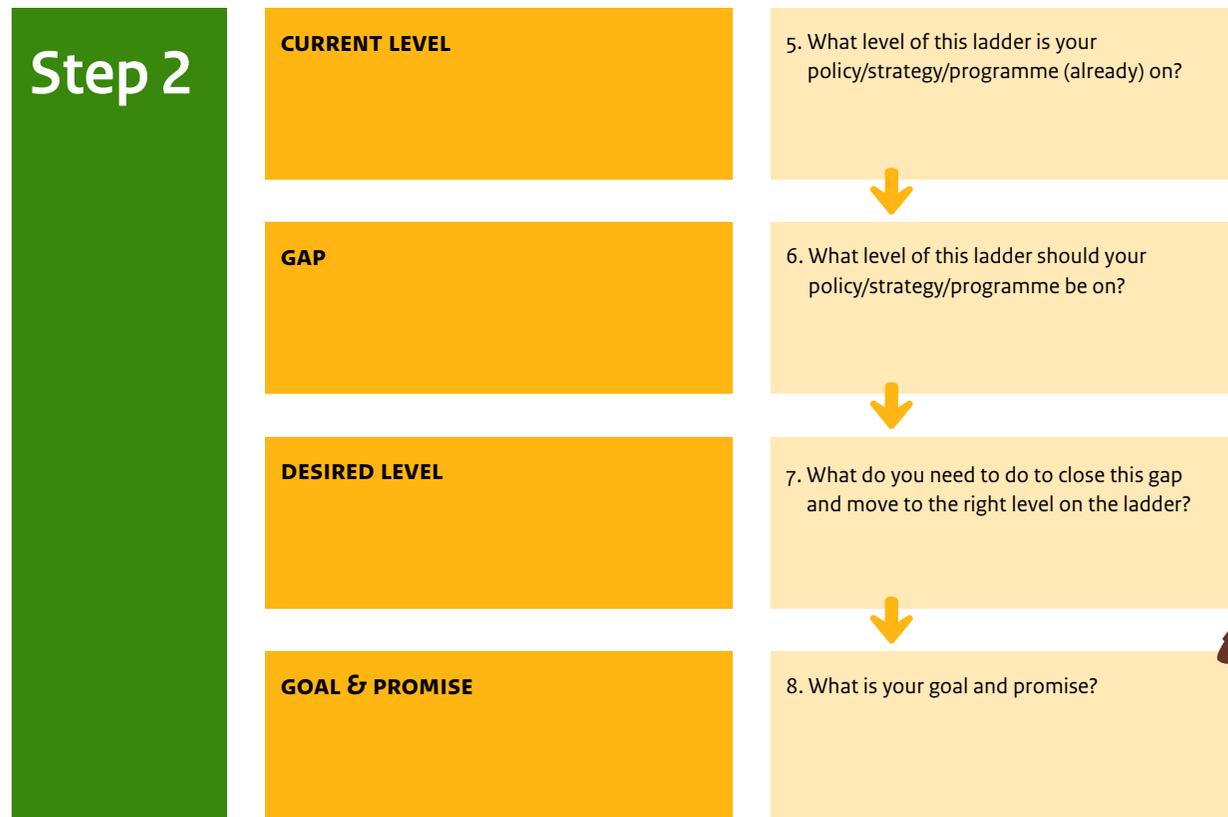
You will need to decide on the level of participation, the goal and the promise for your specific situation.

As MYP comes in many different shapes and sizes, step 2 is to map the degree to which you may already have applied MYP, or to understand the gap between the current situation and the desired situation. The Ladder of Participation is a helpful tool to assess this further (see next page). The four questions below will guide you through step 2.



**JUST FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

You will need to decide on the level of participation, the goal and the promise for your specific situation.



 <b>Step 2</b>	<b>ASSESSING YOUR SITUATION: THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>	 <b>EXAMPLES FROM EMBASSIES</b>
    	<p><b>8. YOUNG PEOPLE &amp; ADULTS SHARE DECISION-MAKING</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>7. YOUNG PEOPLE LEAD &amp; INITIATE ACTION</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>6. ADULT-INITIATED, SHARE DECISIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>5. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONSULTED &amp; INFORMED</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>4. YOUNG PEOPLE ASSIGNED BUT INFORMED</b></p>	<p>→ Young people have the ideas, set up the project and invite adults to join them in making decisions throughout the project. They are equal partners.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Young people have the initial idea, and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Adults have the initial idea, and young people are involved in making decisions, planning and implementing the project.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Adults design and facilitate the project and young people's opinions are given weight in decision making. Young people receive feedback about their opinions.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Adults decide on the project and young people volunteer for it. Young people understand the project and adults respect their views.</p>	<p>→ Young people decide they need a one-stop shop in their community. They partner with the Embassy partners in different youth employment programmes and together lobby the government for resources and policy reforms.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A group of students get permission from their principal to run a career day. The students make the decision, and the school and Embassy provides support.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A policy officer asks young people/ groups for project ideas for Youth Week. The 'youth' suggest having a skills development event. The officer and youth work together to make decisions and develop the project and apply for funding.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A local council runs several consultations to get young people's input about a TVET. Young people tell the council about features in the programme they want added/changed. The council provides feedback to the young people about how their views affected decision-making.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A youth-related conference creates positions for two young people on a panel of speakers. Young people decide how to select their representatives and work with the policy officer/development agency to understand their role.</p>
 <p><b>NON-PARTICIPATION</b> It is important to remember that tokenism, decoration and manipulation are not examples of youth participation.</p>	<p><b>3. TOKENISM</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>2. DECORATION</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>1. MANIPULATION</b></p>	<p>→ Young people are given a limited voice and little choice about what they can say and how they can communicate.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Young people take part in an event in a very limited capacity and have no role in decision-making.</p> <hr/> <p>→ Adults have complete and unchallenged authority and abuse their power. They use young people's ideas and voice for their own gain.</p>	<p>→ A young person is asked by the Embassy/development agency to be on a panel and represent the 'youth'. The young person is not given the opportunity to consult with peers or understand the role.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A group of young people are given a script by an Embassy/development agency about 'youth challenges' to present to policy makers attending a youth conference.</p> <hr/> <p>→ A publication uses young people's cartoons or photos; however the publication is written by adult consultants or policy makers.</p>

Ladder of Participation model by Arnstein & Hart's

Having executed step 1 and 2, you can start organising MYP in your own context.



**JUST FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

You will need to decide on the level of participation, the goal and the promise for your specific situation.



# D

# MEASURING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

# MEASURING IN PRACTICE

1	HOW TO MEASURE YOUTH PARTICIPATION?	55
2	YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDICATORS	56

**Part D** serves to provide you with practical tools and methods to measure the outcome and level of youth participation and to deepen your understanding of how it has benefited everybody involved



# 1 HOW TO MEASURE YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

## The purpose

The main purpose of this chapter is to help you to identify indicators that can be used to effectively measure youth participation in your context of policy, diplomacy or programme development or implementation. The youth participation indicators presented below are inspired by the USAID YouthPower platform and can be used during programme design, planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL).

## Why is it important?

It is important to consider how to measure the level and value of youth participation. This measurement not only helps track the results of such engagement on youth, but also helps to ensure the opportunities provided for participation are constructive and substantial.

Measuring youth participation is useful in many ways. First, indicators can be used to assess levels of youth participation over time throughout policy and programme development and implementation processes. Youth participation indicators can also be linked to sectoral outcomes of interest, or to key commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The indicators listed below are not the only indicators available, however they can provide a foundation and inspiration for how to measure youth participation consistently with the information of this MYPT. It will be up to you to select and (re)formulate indicators that fit within the context of your work. In other words, this section will help you to formulate indicators that are aligned with the relevant ambitions in your annual plan, MASP, policy or programme framework.

# 2 YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDICATORS

Building on the toolkit of USAID, which provides measurement statements and guidance for monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes, their online tool provides illustrative indicators that may be useful for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The measurement statements in this MYPT are classified at three levels: **youth**, **programme** or **organisation**, and **enabling environment**. For each category listed, we provide the definition followed by a table that maps out the measurement statement to an illustrative indicator example and the measurement source. The right column provides examples of illustrative indicators that can assess the measurement statements shared in the brief. By clicking on the link at the end of each level you will be redirected to a site where you can find practical guidance and a measurement tool.

## Youth Level

Youth-level indicators “set a standard or aspiration for youth participation from the perspective of youth, and focus on topics such as type of participation, level of participation, and satisfaction with this participation”. These indicators measure youth participation from youth’s perspective only, and as such most of the data collection for these indicators would be with youth. See table below for some examples.

Measurement statement	Indicator example
Youth are actively engaged in policy or programme (a) design (b) implementation (c) monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number/proportion (%) of youth participating in: _____ (e.g., policy or programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.)</li> </ul>
Youth are engaged in governing or decision-making bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number/proportion (%) of youth participating in: _____ (e.g., policy or programme design/ implementation/ monitoring/evaluation or international diplomacy at MFA department/Embassy/development agency/ implementing partner level)</li> </ul>
Youth voices are shared and valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of youth who state that their voices are shared and valued (Level 5)</li> <li>Percentage of participating youth who report that their concerns were heard by officials or other leaders</li> </ul>

For more information and inspiration, visit [www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-youth-level](http://www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-youth-level)

## Programme or Organisational Level

Programme or organisational indicators “look at how programmes or organisations are engaging youth, what resources they are dedicating to youth participation, and what outcomes are resulting from these efforts”. These indicators are at the programme level and would be collected from programme staff or records.

Measurement statement	Indicator example
The department/Embassy/organisation has youth participation policies in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth participation policy developed</li> <li>Youth participation policy implemented</li> <li>A non-discrimination policy developed</li> <li>Youth policy was developed in collaboration with youth</li> </ul>
The department/Embassy/organisation spends a certain percent of its budget on youth participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___% of budget the programme/organisation spends on youth participation</li> <li>Number of youth experts/youth advisors</li> <li>Number of positions held by youth within the organisation</li> </ul>
The department/Embassy/organisation makes changes to its activities or services based on youth input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme/organisation adjusted activities or services based on youth input</li> </ul>
A diverse group of youth, representing all affected populations, including the most vulnerable and marginalized youth populations, is engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Advisory Board established</li> <li>Level of diversity (nationality, geography, educational level, gender) represented in youth platforms</li> </ul>
The department/Embassy/organisation provides services that are tailored to meet the needs of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased youth-responsive characteristics of a programme/organisation</li> </ul>

For more information and inspiration, visit [www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-program-organizational-level](http://www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-program-organizational-level)

USAID also describes the ‘Enabling Environment’ level as well, yet these definitions may be less useful in your position as MFA policy officer or Embassy staff member. More information here: [www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-enabling-environment](http://www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-enabling-environment)

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

1. There are many ways to convert the measurement statements into an indicator, all depending on how the context is defined, and how the target population is defined for that indicator. It is important for those that use these measurement statements to discuss with the team what operational definition of that statement is most important to the research question or M&E plans, and then define the indicator accordingly. It is also important that indicators are disaggregated by age and sex.
2. For any further inquiries you might have, please contact your MEL advisors at the thematic departments at the Ministry in The Hague.
3. Last but not least, although these indicators might be viewed as rather quantitative, the use of the participation ladder (see previous chapter) allows for a more qualitative interpretation of indicators.

All of the information above is adapted from USAID's [www.YouthPower.org](http://www.YouthPower.org)

# SOURCES & ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1 | Sources & background information

### EXAMPLE OF OTHER TOOLKITS

[SAVE THE CHILDREN](#)

[UK GOVERNMENT](#)

[UNICEF](#)

[USAID – YOUTH POWER](#)

[YOUTH OF EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES](#)

[UNESCO](#)

[EUROPEAN UNION – URBACT](#)

[UNFPA](#)

[DANCE4LIFE](#)

[OXFAM](#)

[YOUTH DO IT](#)

### LITERATURE

[www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide-selecting-right-level-public-participation](#)

[DUF\\_2019\\_Meaningful\\_Youth\\_Participation\\_Towards\\_2030\\_and\\_Beyond.pdf](#)

[youtheconomicopportunities.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resource/6962\\_Youth\\_Participation\\_in\\_Development.pdf](#)

[www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-participation.pdf](#)

[rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-pro/1680759e6a](#)

[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740918304614](#)

## ANNEX 2 | Typology of Youth Organisations

- A young person's legitimacy is reinforced when tapping into structures where youth are organised and represent a broader and consolidated voice of youth. When promoting youth inclusion and participation, it is important to support and engage with the youths' own organisations.
- Youth organisations are broadly defined as “those social organisations (associations, clubs or movements) that are set up to serve young people and where young people are in charge of the organisational structure and which are democratic, non-governmental and not for profit”. The specific characteristics of youth organisations will vary from country to country and are influenced by the social, political and economic context, as well as the ethnic composition and historical legacy of the country.
- The most common types of youth organisations are listed below. A mapping of youth organisations, undertaken as part of the Youth Situational Analysis, may help identify the most relevant actors and potential partner organisations, as well as the impartiality and legitimacy in terms of a genuine constituency of these organisations.

## ANNEX 2 | Typology of Youth Organisations

<p><b>Local youth group organisation</b></p>	<p>Often informal groups where the members are young people from the local area, brought together by a common social, cultural, political or economic interest.</p> <p>Examples are expressive purposes (sport, music, theatre, art, hobby clubs); youth per se (youth groups, clubs); the common good as the unifying principle (environmental, peace groups); deliberative (political party, citizen assemblies); and religious and/or ethnic organisations.</p>
<p><b>Youth movements</b></p>	<p>Social movements are loosely organised groups with a common cause and value-based goals, often mobilised as a reaction against or in favour of something as a campaign. Social movements are often short-lived and may dissolve once the goal is reached or abandoned.</p> <p>Examples of social movements are often found around issues related to human rights, women’s rights, LGBTI rights, environmental/climate and land issues, students, consumers or other interest groups.</p>
<p><b>Youth-Led Youth Organisation (YLO)</b></p>	<p>Youth-led organisations are established, controlled and led by young people, often on a voluntary basis. The YLOs normally have an age limit for membership, ensuring that they truly represent young people.</p> <p>Examples are student organisations, party political youth organisations, Red Cross Youth, issue-based youth foundations etc. that are all characterised by a self-defined agenda, purpose and rules.</p>
<p><b>Youth-oriented organisations and youth-focused networks, associations and coalitions</b></p>	<p>CSOs, networks, associations and coalitions which operate with a particular focus on youth and youth-related issues.</p> <p>Examples are national and international organisations and networks working with for example SRHR, early marriage and pregnancy, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship etc.</p>
<p><b>National youth councils rights of the child</b></p>	<p>National youth councils exist in most countries, but their characteristics and legitimacy vary substantially. In some countries, the national youth council functions as an important intermediary that provides assistance to youth and ensures meaningful youth participation in political decision-making processes. In other countries, the youth councils have strong links to the ruling party and act as a mobilisation vehicle for political parties. Thus, the presence of functioning internal democratic structures, broad inclusion and representativeness of youth and political autonomy are key characteristics of legitimate youth councils.</p>

ANNEX 3

## Youth Advisory Board – Programme Management Tool

### PURPOSE

One approach to youth engagement is to establish a youth advisory board (YAB), which is a consultative group with the purpose of providing ongoing input on selected policy, strategic and implementation issues. The composition and mandate of a YAB may vary from case to case. Inspiration for setting up a YAB is provided in the following section.

A YAB provides benefits in a number of areas, such as:

- access to a group of youth representatives with whom the Embassy can interact on a continuous or ad-hoc basis
- discuss and get a youth perspective on policy context and programme-related issues
- an opportunity to better understand the target group and the particular challenges and needs of youth
- a platform for direct and possibly continuous youth consultation.

### THE YAB WILL FURTHERMORE:

- provide their views on the design of programmes and ultimately create better programmes
- safeguard and strengthen young people’s voice and perspective in relation to policy and programme formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

YABs can be established at different stages and at different levels within a country programme, either as an overall mechanism or linked to a specific thematic programme or development engagement. The composition and scope of the YAB mandate will vary depending on the stage or programme level.

A YAB established in the formulation phase can be set up with an open, explorative mandate, where the objective is to tap into the existing knowledge and experience of youth. A YAB established as part of the implementation phase may have a monitoring role and mainly address programme implementation issues, and it can also provide valuable input in the evaluation and closure of a programme or development engagement (DE). Likewise, a YAB established with a national perspective may address overall national policy context issues, whereas a YAB established to follow a specific DE may have a more limited scope.

Please note that it requires special efforts to select and gather the right people to be on the YAB, and it is important to be very clear about the purpose and terms in order not to create unrealistic expectations amongst the YAB members.

## ANNEX 3 Youth Advisory Board – Programme Management Tool

### HOW TO WORK WITH A YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

During the design and planning, i.e. the formulation of a country policy, programme or development engagement, the YAB may provide youth-related information on the context; i.e. first-hand information on young people’s daily lives, their challenges and aspirations, and the gaps between young people’s needs and the available resources. The YAB can be established on an ad-hoc basis and the possibility of a later formalisation kept open.

During implementation and monitoring, the YAB will have a true sounding-board role and may be involved in discussing activity plans, commenting on reports and mid-term reviews (MTR), and some youth members may be represented in monitoring visits and MTR.

At the end of a programme or development engagement, the YAB can provide youth perspective input and feedback on ToR and evaluation questions, as well as findings and recommendations for follow-ups.

The graphic below shows how listening to youth at different stages of the programme implementation cycle can provide valuable input to the work of Embassies.

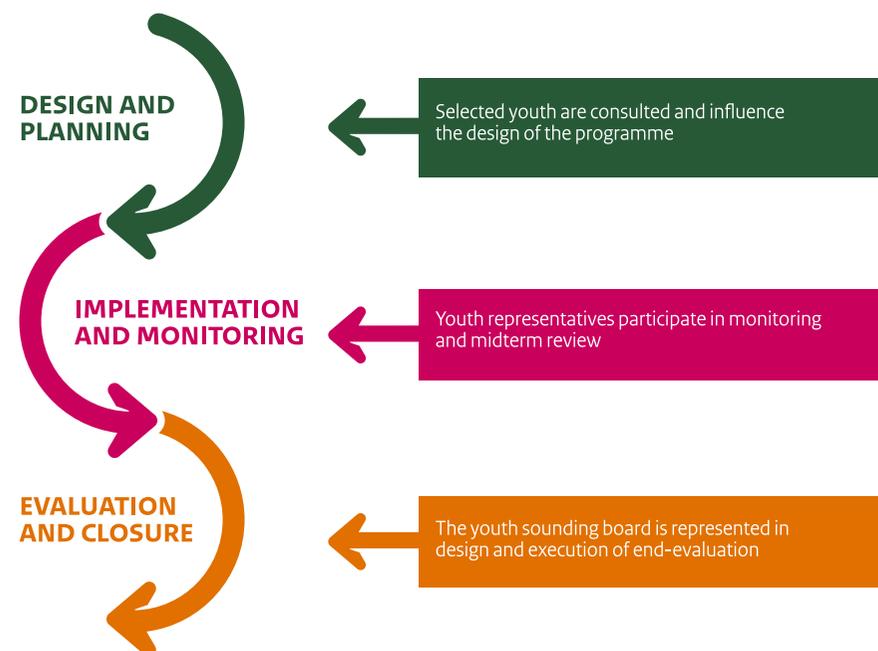
### ESTABLISHING A YAB

If an Embassy decides to operate with an YAB, the objectives and scope of the YAB, the specific tasks, selection of members and composition, as well as the frequency of meetings, possible cost coverage and remuneration etc. must be clearly defined.

Please refer to the [Generic Terms of References](#)

Further Reading on Youth Advisory Boards:

[www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca](http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca)



## ANNEX 4 Youth Involvement in Analysis, Reviews and Evaluations

### PURPOSE

In line with the youth involvement in sounding boards for policy development and ongoing programme monitoring, youth may also be involved in regular programme analysis, reviews and real-time and end-evaluations. This will further support the overall youth agenda and specific priorities, policies and achievements related to youth-specific indicators, as well as provide a critical youth perspective on the overall exercise. Youth-inclusive analyses, reviews and evaluations will benefit from having youth represented on the team(s) carrying out the analytical work.

### INVOLVING YOUTH

The **objectives** of involving youth in the analysis, review and evaluation teams are multiple:

- To promote that young people's rights and perspectives are embedded throughout the analysis, review and evaluation processes and outputs.
- To strengthen perception data (i.e. stakeholders' perception of a given situation) available for programming, assessing the success of programme implementation, and/or informing recommendations for future programming, including best or promising practices related to young people's active involvement.
- To strengthen inter-generational dialogue and learning and to build a bridge between different generations' assessment of priorities.

The **advantages and results** of including youth in a team of experts may include:

- Enhanced community perspective
- Better communication with young people
- Broadening the canvas of assumptions held in the team
- Enhanced capacity of young evaluator(s)
- Visibility of young people as a resource.

More info? See here: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

<https://amg.um.dk/en/Tools/youth-in-development/youth-engagement-by-embassies/youth-analysis-reviews-and-evaluations/>

## ANNEX 4 Youth Involvement in Analysis, Reviews and Evaluations

### PROFILE OF YOUNG TEAM MEMBERS

When recruiting young team members, it is important to consider their legitimacy as representatives of a larger group of young people by tapping into organised structures representing a broader and consolidated voice of youth. Moreover, the young team members should be:

- Within the national (or regional) age range for youth
- Experienced in working with youth in the specific development sector
- Knowledgeable of non-capital and non-urban areas (depending on the context of engagements)
- Balanced with regard to gender (see also [slide 22](#); 'Enhancing gender equality')

### RECRUITMENT

If the young team members are recruited among members of a **youth advisory board** (see [Annex 3](#)) or similar consultation group for the Dutch programmes, the participation may also contribute to:

- Building the long-term capacities of members of the youth advisory board
- Model a new approach to youth-inclusive analysis, reviews and evaluations

Young team members may also be recruited through subject-matter relevant civil society organisations, private sector institutions/organisations, universities, consultancy agencies or independently.

### EXAMPLE FROM DENMARK:

#### *Youth-inclusive evaluation of an end early marriage programme in Ethiopia*

The inclusion of young evaluators and young ambassadors as official members of the final evaluation team was an innovation. The inclusion of young people's voices is an established good practice in all aspects of programmes that aim to benefit the lives and opportunities of young people, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child supports children's right to participate in any decision-making which affects them. Despite this, inclusion of young people as bona fide evaluators is not well evidenced. Young people are now often consulted or work as peer researchers, but they are not often included in analysis and decision-making relating to other young people's rights and needs.

Inspired by: Youth In Development of Danina

[Youth Involvement in Analysis Reviews and Evaluations \(um.dk\)](#)

**ANNEX 5**

## Youth Situational Analysis – Programme Management Tool

### **PURPOSE**

Young people constitute a significant proportion of the population in developing countries, but their lived experiences and living conditions differ significantly from those of the rest of the population. In the process of developing country plans, policy papers and/or thematic programmes, it is therefore important to employ a proper youth situational analysis to ensure a youth perspective and to gather sufficient information on youth-related issues. For an example of a youth analysis, please refer to USAID’s [Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment Situational Analysis](#) for Ethiopia.

### **YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

A recommended approach to ensuring a youth perspective in the youth situational analysis is to consult and actively involve young people in conducting the analysis. Consultations with a representative group of youth will often be in the form of focus group interviews, but youth involvement can be ensured by engaging existing youth organisations/movements as the lead for the analysis, or by including graduate students or members of youth advisory/sounding boards (Youth Sounding Boards) in the expert team conducting the analysis (Youth Involvement in Analysis, Reviews and Evaluations). Youth consultation and involvement will, among other things, facilitate:

- Inter-generational dialogue and learning, bridging gaps between different generations’ assessment of priorities.
- Youth perspectives being included in the analysis and validation of findings.
- Empowerment/capacity building of youth who will acquire new skills and an improved understanding of their own context.

### **PERSPECTIVES SUPPORTING A YOUTH SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

The following format provides a non-exhaustive list of questions that can help to establish a contextual understanding of the national policy framework for youth, and the main needs, priorities and perspectives of youth. Please note that the questions are for inspiration only – they will need to be contextualised and possibly rephrased to enable young people to take an active part or lead in the analysis. Prior to conducting a youth situational analysis, it is appropriate to explore the opportunity of a joint donor analysis, as other donor agencies (e.g., EU, USAID and World Bank) may be conducting similar analyses.

The questions below should be combined with questions for a more detailed thematic youth situational analysis within the thematic areas: growth, employment, governance, social sectors and peace and security.

ANNEX 5

## Youth Situational Analysis – Programme Management Tool

### 1. NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Information based on desk studies and key informants. Key informants can, for example, be found in ministries or other authorities working with youth issues, youth councils and larger youth-led organisations.

- a. What is the national age range for youth?
- b. What are the most relevant government institutions for youth? National Youth Council, Ministry of Youth, etc.?
- c. How are youth generally viewed in society (e.g., as an opportunity, a challenge or a threat)?
- d. Has a national youth assessment been conducted recently? If yes, what are the main findings relevant to the Embassy's engagements?
- e. Is there a [National Youth Policy](#)? If yes, how was it developed and how effective is it?
- f. Are there any other laws, policies or action plans of particular relevance to youth, and what structures exist to implement/enforce these laws, policies and/or plans?
- g. What are the main national youth platforms? Are they regarded as representative of youth and as legitimate entities; i.e. do they have a democratic structure, are they open to diversity and do they have regional/local representation?
- h. Are any larger youth programmes currently being implemented by government or donor agencies? If yes, what are the main areas/targets of relevance to the Embassy's engagements?

### 2. NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Information based on focus group interviews with youth:

- a. Who are regarded as youth in your specific country/geographical area; i.e. what unifies/diversifies youth?
- b. What are your dreams and aspirations?
- c. What key challenges do you face in daily life?
- d. What do you think are the root causes of dissatisfaction amongst some youth?
- e. Do you generally have a positive sense of identity and a positive attitude towards your future prospects?

ANNEX 5

## Youth Situational Analysis – Programme Management Tool

### EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOODS

- a. What opportunities are there for you to get an education/develop skills/earn money?
- b. What challenges, if any, do you face to get an education/develop skills/earn money?
- c. What influences (positively or negatively) your ability to realise your aspirations within education and the labour market (ask participants to consider micro-level influencers (peers, family members etc.), community-level influences and the broader macro-level structures and systems).

### HEALTH:

- a. What influences your ability to be healthy (e.g., risky personal decision-making, peer pressure, availability/lack of family support, availability/lack of health facilities, medications, youth-friendly services etc.)?

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

- a. What are the main youth-led organisations in your area?
- b. What opportunities exist at a community level for you to engage in civic activities (e.g., youth forums or advisory councils)?
- c. What opportunities exist at a national level (e.g., national youth policies, youth parliamentarians)?
- d. What influences (positively or negatively) your ability to engage in youth organisations/civic activities?
- e. How do young people access information (e.g., via radio, newspaper, TV, internet or other sources)?

ANNEX 6

## Youth-Focused Policy Dialogue

### PURPOSE

Dutch Embassies continuously engage in various forms of policy dialogue with multiple stakeholders related to overall political issues as well as more programme-specific policy dialogue. Policy dialogue is an important instrument in promoting youth policies, influencing the national political context and enhancing an enabling environment for youth in terms of adherence to international conventions, national legislation and practice.

### YOUTH-FOCUSED POLICY DIALOGUE

When it comes to **youth-focused policy dialogue**, the goal may be to influence legislation, law enforcement, promotion of youth rights or changes of practices in terms of human resources, youth involvement etc. – depending on the level of policy dialogue (international, national, local or programmatic). Clarification of which potential dialogue partners are the most relevant to obtain the goal is important. Depending on the sector-specific focus of the programmes, government institutions, including line ministries, national youth councils, civil society platforms or organisations, local government institutions and private-sector actors are among the most frequent dialogue partners. Policy dialogue – and youth-focused policy dialogue – may be addressed by and through Embassy partners: CSOs, CBOs, think-tanks and YLOs. Influencing these partner organisations to have a specific youth focus may be a way for Embassies to indirectly support a youth-focused policy dialogue. There are multiple tools available for a youth-focused policy dialogue, including youth situational analyses (potentially joint with other donors) (see [Annex 6](#)) advocacy and lobbying, consultations and participation, support to media and research to provide evidence, support to law enforcement or formulation/revision

of national legislation, international conventions and SDGs, implementation and dissemination of information on national policies.

For further reading, inspiration and support for policy dialogue, see [Support to Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogue \(netpublikationer.dk\)](#)

ANNEX 7

## Levels of participation

		Goal and promise
<b>Inform</b>	This level is about providing youth affected by policies or programmes with information about proposed plans, the decision-making process and/or the rationale behind them. In some cases this may be the appropriate thing to do, but it is important to acknowledge that this is a minimum level of participation that does not allow youth to have a voice (act as a leader and partner). Honest and complete provision of information is crucial.	Both the <b>goal</b> and <b>promise</b> at the 'Inform' level is to keep the public informed.
<b>Consult</b>	This level enables the basic minimum opportunity for public input into a decision. At this level, you only ask youth to share their insights, comments and opinions. Youth are not invited to sit down together and work on things in a cooperative way. Inputs serve the decision-making process or the content of a policy, strategy or programme. It is a one-time endeavour.	The goal at this level is to obtain and consider public input. The promise is to consider the public input received and to provide feedback as to how that input influenced the decision/policy/strategy/programme.
<b>Involve</b>	Involving goes beyond consulting, because at this level youth are included in the decision-making process. At the 'Involve' level, youth are invited into the process, usually from the beginning, and are provided with multiple if not ongoing opportunities for input as decision-making continues. However, the Ministry, Embassy or development agency is still the sole decision-maker and there is no expectation of building consensus or providing youth with any sort of high-level influence over the decision.	The <b>goal</b> is to work directly with the public and consider their input throughout the decision-making process. The <b>promise</b> is that the public will have access to the decision process and decision makers and will be given the opportunity to provide input throughout the process and receive direct feedback on how their input helped to influence the decision.
<b>Collaborate</b>	The 'Collaborate' level includes all the elements of 'Involve'. At this level, the public is directly engaged in decision-making and it often includes an explicit attempt to find consensus solutions. However, as with 'Involve', the Ministry/Embassy/development agency is still the ultimate decision-maker. The degree to which consensus will be sought and how much we are able to share with the youth must be made explicit. In the end, we will take all of the input received and make the decision. Collaborative forms of youth participation can be time-consuming and resource intensive. If stakeholders do reach a consensus and we are not able to give it serious consideration, it can have serious negative consequences on the policy/strategy/programme and on future relationships with the youth.	The <b>goal</b> is to design a process that allows for effective partnering with youth on all aspects of the decision. The promise is that youth will be engaged in all key activities and decisions, and their input will be incorporated to the maximum extent possible. The degree to which consensus will be sought should be an explicit part of the promise.
<b>Empower</b>	At the 'Empower' level, we provide youth with the opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to improve their quality of life, not on a personal level but by creating greater community change. This can be achieved through participation in youth empowerment programmes, empowering youth-led organisations, youth councils, youth-led media, and finally meaningful youth involvement in decision-making.	The <b>goal</b> at the 'Empower' level is to create a process that allows the public to make an informed decision. The <b>promise</b> is that the Ministry/Embassy/development agency will implement what the public decides.

## ANNEX 8 How to conduct a workshop

When	What	How	Details	Material/setting
09.00	<b>Hello and welcome</b>	Welcome the participants of the workshop and introduce yourself.	A short introduction about why I am holding the workshop (how I got in contact with their organisation/institution, where the idea of the workshop came from). I explain which minority group I belong to, where I live. It is also possible to do an <a href="#">ice breaker</a> here.	
09.10	<b>Programme</b>	Present the plan of the workshop.		Have a flipchart prepared with a plan and a timetable.
09.15	<b>Get-to-know each other. Connection before content</b>	Participants choose two words: 1. that describe their current state of mind (and mood), 2. that stand for what they look forward to in the workshop.	All participants take one moderation card. On one side, they write a word that describes their current state of mind (and mood), on the other side, what they are looking forward to. Participants sit in a circle and after saying their name, they read out loud how they feel and what they are looking forward to. If they want, they can give a brief explanation.	Moderation cards and pens for all participants
09.30	<b>Divide people into two groups</b>	Divide participants standing in line by asking them to say "one" or "two" after each other - all those who say "one" belong to group 1, all who say "two" to group 2.	Ask participants to form a line (without speaking), starting with those born in January and ending with those born in December. Then ask the participants to say "one" or "two" in turns to form two groups.	
09.35	<b>Concepts of "Youth" and "Participation"</b>	Participants explore the concepts of "Youth" and "Participation" in small groups, by creating a performance.	Prepare two flipcharts (Youth, Participation). One group gets "Youth", the other group "Participation". Each group must present their own understanding of the concept through a short play or a performance. Each group has 10 minutes to prepare and 2 minutes to present.	Flipcharts, pens – maybe some props for the play if you have any.
10.05	<b>Discussion</b>	After the workshop, open a discussion on the concepts of "Youth" and "Participation" and write the findings on the flipcharts.	Support the definitions presented by the groups with the definitions provided in this Toolkit or other models (participation ladder) and/or with types of participation.	
10.30	<b>Break</b>			

ANNEX 8

## How to conduct a workshop

10.45	<b>Yes/No Debate</b>	Participants position themselves in the room according to their response to the question asked. Participants share why they have chosen their respective position and what their experiences are.	<p>Prepare 2 posters – one saying, “Yes” and the other saying “No” – and stick them on the walls at opposite ends of the room, so that people can form a straight line between them. Read “Have you ever” questions and ask the participants to position themselves according to their personal answer. Encourage participants to share their opinion by asking additional questions (why yes?, why no?).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have you ever been involved in a Youth Group?</li> <li>- Have you ever volunteered in any way?</li> <li>- Have you ever been involved in making a video, writing a song, or making a poster about something that is important to you?</li> <li>- Have you ever got involved in organising or helping with activities in your school?</li> <li>- Do you think you had a chance to change/influence something by participating – in school - with your organisation etc.?</li> <li>- Return to the circle to identify and discuss opportunities and obstacles.</li> </ul>	
11.05	<b>How to participate?</b>	Participants think for themselves (without talking) about what they want to change or influence, then they present a drawing of it to the group. The participants work on the most common topics in small groups, thinking about how it could be achieved and present it to the group.	<p>Give each participant a “post-it” note. Participants now have five minutes to think about following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What would you like to change around you?</li> <li>- How would you like to achieve it? What can you organise/undertake to achieve it?</li> </ul> <p>After this reflection, the participants have 5 minutes to draw their answers and ideas on an A4 sheet of paper. After that, they sit in a circle and present their drawings and ideas. Then you split the group into four small groups and assign each group an activity idea (choose activities that were mentioned the most). Each group gets a flipchart. They should write down why the idea is good and how they could make it happen (preparation time: 15 min). The groups then present their findings (presentation time for each group: 2 min). After the presentations, don’t forget to draw some conclusions and close the discussion (you can ask people if they also have some additional comments).</p>	A4 paper, pencils or pens
11.40	<b>Conclusions</b>	Summary	If you want to, please share your experiences of participation and why it is important. Try to encourage the participants to act. Also thank all the participants for their work, sharing and for their attention.	
11.45	<b>Feedback Round</b>		<p>In order to get some feedback, you can ask participants to form a circle. You stand in the middle and after you ask the question, those who agree come closer to you, those who disagree go further away. You can ask the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did you find the workshop interesting?</li> <li>2. Did you gain new knowledge?</li> <li>3. Are you motivated to get more active/more involved?</li> </ol>	

ANNEX 9

Essentials of Meaningful Youth Participation



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Essentials of Meaningful Youth Participation

WHY



Countries in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and North Africa have very young populations. Much can be achieved if we gear policies and interventions towards the specific challenges and opportunities of the youth.

For that to happen, we need to make sure youth voices are heard and integrated. Young people can tell best what works for them after all. This is why strengthening voices of youth is one of the central ambitions in the Youth at Heart strategy.

WHAT



Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) is about ensuring that young people have the opportunity to be involved in processes of decision making on policies, strategies and programmes that affect them.

This implies working with youth as leaders, partners and beneficiaries and listening to what matters most. Our aim is to take their views, concerns and suggestions into account in developing or implementing our policies, strategies and programmes.

HOW



If you are working for the MFA - either in The Hague or at an Embassy or representation office you have the opportunity to engage youth in the dialogue about policy or programmes that are of direct relevance to them.

MYP has no blueprint. Meetings, interactive discussions and consultations and the use of technology, such as Radio, SMS, Social Media platforms or online surveys, can enable you to incorporate larger cohorts of youth voices in your policy or programmes. This requires a well-thought outreach strategy to target the right young people. In some cases, one-time consultative Focus Group Discussion-meetings (Consult-level) may suffice. Youth Advisory Committees, as the one established at HQ level, enable collaboration with youth over a longer period of time (Collaborate level). Several Embassies have already started to develop specific programmes geared towards youth empowerment (Empower-level). The Civic Space Fund provides opportunity to finance such activities.



The MYP toolkit will support you in determining how you can best approach MYP in your own context and theme.

Did you know that?

- ✓ Incorporating youth voices in your policy or programme...
  - ✓ ...leads to more effective & accountable policies & programmes
  - ✓ ...reduces the generational gap & enhances intergenerational justice
  - ✓ ...empowers involved youth socially, civically & economically

What's in it for you?

You get to enrich your understanding of the dynamics that need to be addressed by the policy, strategy or programmes based on first-hand information about the challenges and opportunities young people face. You will enhance your understanding of strengths of proposed policy, strategy or program, as well as potential flaws in them.



You benefit from creative and out-of-the-box ideas which will make your work more effective & relevant with regards to youth.

Reader's Guide

The MYP toolkit was put together with great care by the team for Youth, Education and Work. The background information as well as suggestions for tools and methods will guide you in making sure youth voices are heard in relation to matters that are relevant to them.



The MYP toolkit consists of five parts and takes about 40 minutes to read. It is not a blue print rather an inspiration and guidebook.



Part A serves to develop a basic understanding of why it is a central ambition of the ministry, how it will benefit your work & what MYP is.



Part B serves to deepen your understanding of the Do's and Don'ts of organizing, mobilizing & including youth.



Part C serves to provide you with practical examples, tools, methods & exercise to apply meaningful youth participation in your work.



Part D serves to provide you with practical tools & methods to measure the outcome and level of youth participation and to deepen your understanding of how it benefits all.



Part E provides sources & background information

Ministry Staff

In your position, MYP will most likely be applied within the Policy Cycle, during Policy preparation, formulation, execution or evaluation. Your role can also be to monitor incorporation of youth voices at policy implementation level across your portfolio.

Embassy Staff

In your position, MYP will most likely be applied within the Policy and/or Portfolio Cycle, during portfolio analysis, (multi-annual) planning, or execution. It may be worthwhile identifying opportunities to support youth empowerment programmes. In any position, it's important to distinguish

between different roles & mandates:

- ✓ Incorporating youth voices in own programming, e.g. annual plan cycle, events, policy dialogues;
- ✓ Stimulating others/implementing partners to incorporate youth voices (e.g. in tendering). Different roles can be applied in different sorts of programmes;
- ✓ Directly facilitate/finance/support youth-led programmes or specific youth engagement programmes (e.g. from Civic Space Fund);
- ✓ Addressing youth issues in diplomacy, e.g. address cultural barriers in wider society



Support

The MYP toolkit is developed by the MFA team for youth, education & work, in collaboration with colleagues & youth.

We are available for support in using the MYP toolkit. You can contact us via: team-JOW@minbuza.nl

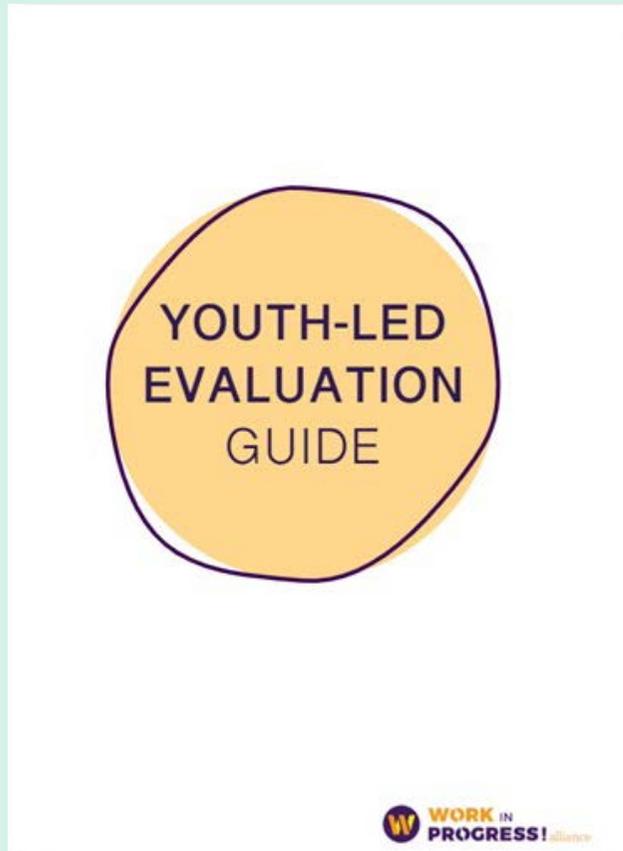
Tailored MYP training for ministry & embassy staff can be provided upon request



www.youthatheart.nl

YOUTH AT HEART

ANNEX 10 Example of Youth-Led Evaluation by Oxfam Novib



### ABOUT YOUTH-LED EVALUATION

There can be different stages of youth engagement in the evaluation process and it is important to understand (and agree from the very beginning with all involved) what kind of youth-led evaluation will be implemented.

**YOUTH-LED EVALUATION**

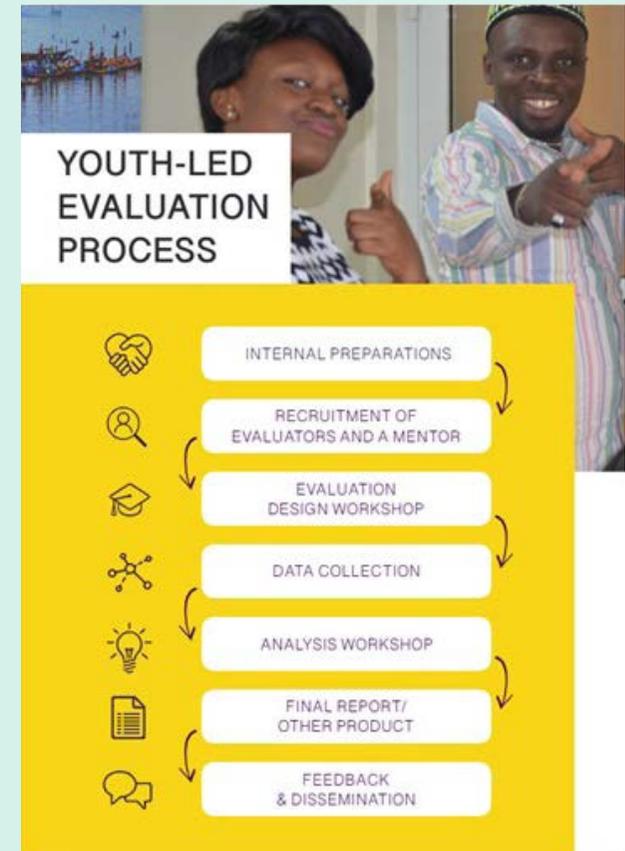
- Youth have the opportunity to design evaluation questions, tools and methods, they collect information from respondents, analyse the data and produce a final report or a product of their choice.
- Youth give feedback on the data collection methodology and then collect data themselves.

**NOT A YOUTH-LED EVALUATION**

- Youth interview their peers based on a pre-designed methodology.
- Youth participate as respondents during interviews.

**ADVANTAGES**

- Youth take decisions about what they want to evaluate, they are not burdened by the project logic and outcomes, they bring fresh insights and recommendations.
- Most probably, they are your project target group, or they are very close to them, so they can relate to respondents and have honest discussions with them.
- In case of a project targeting youth, the evaluation is done by the main beneficiary group, youth. Nobody is more expert in the issues of youth than themselves. The same applies for a project targeting women, children, etc.



Find out more about this document [here](#)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[www.YouthAtHeart.nl](http://www.YouthAtHeart.nl)



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