

ENGAGED AND HEARD!

Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement



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INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been developed to enhance systematic programming and advocacy to realize adolescents' right to be heard in matters affecting them. The guidelines provide information on the 'why', 'what' and 'how-to' of participation and civic engagement, with a specific focus on adolescents.

Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, engaged and having an influence in decisions and matters that affect one's life – in private and public spheres, in the home, in alternative care settings, at

THE GUIDELINES PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE 'WHY', 'WHAT' AND 'HOW-TO' OF PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON ADOLESCENTS

school, in the workplace, in the community, in social media and in broader governance processes. Article 12¹ of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. The State, as the ultimate duty-bearer, has obligations to create an enabling environment that allows the views of children and adolescents to be heard on practices and policies that directly or indirectly concern them.² Parents, caregivers, teachers and a range of other actors also have responsibilities to listen to children and adolescents and to take their views seriously.

➔ Box 1: Why adolescent participation is important

- ✓ **A HUMAN RIGHT:** Adolescents have the right to be heard in all matters affecting them, in addition to rights and freedoms to appropriate information, thought, expression, association and peaceful assembly. Participation is a core principle of all UNICEF programming.
- ✓ **MORE RELEVANT PROGRAMMES AND IMPROVED SERVICES AND POLICIES ACROSS DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS:** Adolescents' knowledge about their own lives, their creativity, skills and aspirations can be harnessed to inform the development and monitoring of more effective, relevant and sustainable services, policies and practices.³
- ✓ **ENHANCED PROTECTION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Having both the right and the space to be heard is a powerful means through which adolescents can challenge discrimination, violence, exploitation or injustice.⁴
- ✓ **GREATER CAPACITIES FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Adolescence is a critical period of rapid growth, learning, adaptation and neurobiological development.⁵ Participatory opportunities enhance adolescents' communication, problem-solving and negotiation skills and allow them to build better relationships and connectedness with their peers, families and communities.⁶
- ✓ **MORE EFFECTIVE OUTREACH TO ADOLESCENTS:** Adolescents are often best placed to build rapport and trusting relationships with their peers and can be effective peer educators, peer mediators or peer counsellors.⁷
- ✓ **GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY:** Participation increases opportunities for adolescents to promote accountability and good governance. When adolescents have access to policymakers they can assert, claim and exercise their rights, and strengthen government accountability.



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These guidelines are primarily intended for personnel at UNICEF and their partners, including governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) (including youth- and adolescent-led organizations) and Independent Human Rights Institutions. Professionals working with and for adolescents can draw on these guidelines to inform their work in development and humanitarian contexts. Adolescents may also use the guidelines to inform their strategies as they exercise and claim their rights.

The main sections of the guidelines include guidance on:

- **Conceptual understanding of adolescent participation**, focussing on rights-based approaches to equitable and meaningful adolescent participation, linkages between adolescent participation and civic engagement, and a Theory of Change (see Section 2).
- **Main strategies and key interventions for adolescent participation and civic engagement**, with a focus on sustainable system strengthening (Section 3).
- **Organizational commitment and processes** to enhance adolescent

participation included at each stage of programming (Section 4).

- **Monitoring and evaluation of adolescent participation** (Section 5).

The appendices provide sector-specific guidelines for adolescent participation in:

- Health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition and HIV (Appendix 1);
- Education (Appendix 2);
- Child protection, care and justice (Appendix 3);
- Disaster risk reduction, climate change and environmental protection (Appendix 4); and
- Peacebuilding and humanitarian response (Appendix 5).

The **appendices** also include **guidance on concepts and practical approaches** that support meaningful, gender-equitable, disability-inclusive, conflict-sensitive and safe adolescent participation (Appendices 6–12), sample output indicators and inputs for adolescent participation (Appendices 13 and 14) and **links to practical tools and resources** (Appendix 15).

ADOLESCENTS ALSO MAY USE THE GUIDELINES TO INFORM THEIR STRATEGIES AS THEY CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS





CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

2.1 Defining adolescent participation

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION: “adolescents (individually and/or collectively) form and express their views and influence matters that concern them directly and indirectly.”⁸

The term ‘*adolescent*’ refers to girls, boys and those with other gender identities aged 10–19 years. These guidelines are rooted within broader strategic frameworks, such as the UNICEF Programme Guidance for the Second Decade; the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on Adolescence; the Sustainable Development Goals; Youth 2030: UN Youth Strategy; and Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth and peace and security.

The guidelines consider adolescence as part of an overall **life course**, within which circumstances in one phase of life influence the later phases.⁹ Opportunities to be heard should start in early childhood to lay the foundations for expression and active participation in decision-making and to support children’s growth and development into healthy, resilient and active citizens (see *Appendix 8*). Although the right to participation applies to every child capable of forming a view, its nature and scope inevitably changes as individuals reach the second decade of life. Adolescence is characterized by the emergence of a sense of identity, acquisition of new responsibilities and exposure to emerging opportunities and risks, and in many cases engagement in more risk-taking behaviours. The CRC concept of ‘evolving capacities’ means that as adolescents acquire greater maturity, so their

ADOLESCENCE IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE EMERGENCE OF A SENSE OF IDENTITY, ACQUISITION OF NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPOSURE TO EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS, AND IN MANY CASES ENGAGEMENT IN MORE RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOURS



level of agency to take greater responsibility and to exercise their rights increases.¹⁰ Giving adolescents more influence in decision-making does not remove their entitlement to continued protection under the CRC, nor the obligation to promote their best interests. Some risk-taking has inherent value in both achieving change and helping explore and understand the assessment and control of risk. Engaging adolescents in identification of potential risks and the measures needed to mitigate them, through their exercise of participation, will lead to more effective protection.

2.2 Adolescent participation and civic engagement in UNICEF’s strategic framework for the second decade

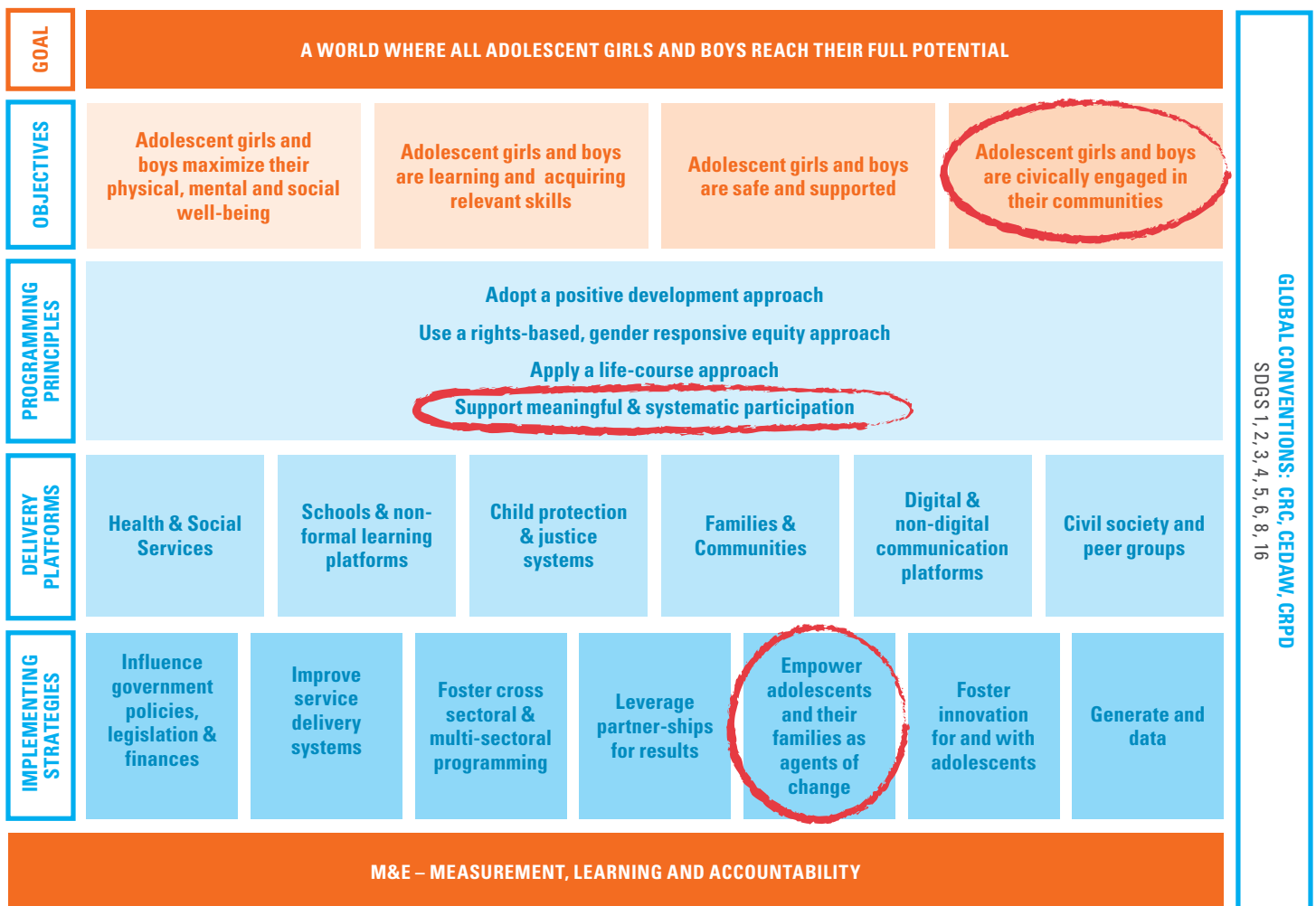
Adolescent participation and civic engagement are embedded in the strategic framework for the second decade (see *Figure 1*). They represent one of the four key objectives supported by the organization to enable adolescents to reach their full potential and contribute positively to their society. It is a programming **principle that underpins the work of UNICEF with children and adolescents** and it is a **means** for achieving results by empowering adolescents themselves to be change agents.

2.3 Applying a rights-based approach

The UN CRC is the most comprehensive treaty on the rights of children. It affirms that:

- An adolescent’s rights to participation are universal and should be respected in diverse contexts, including complex emergency and humanitarian settings.

Figure 1: UNICEF’s Strategic framework for the second decade



- A child’s right to be heard (Article 12, CRC) is both a fundamental right and a key principle that should be taken into account when considering how to implement other rights.
- Article 12 is linked to other general principles of the Convention, such as Article 2 (the right to non-discrimination), Article 6 (the right to life, survival and development) and, in particular, Article 3 (primary consideration of the best interests of the child).
- Article 12 is also closely linked with other civil rights and freedoms including the rights to freedom of expression (Article 13), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14), freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15), privacy (Article 16) and information (Article 17).
- An adolescent’s right to participate actively in society is strengthened by Article 29 of the CRC concerning ‘education for responsible life’.

- The right for children with disabilities to actively participate in the community is also emphasized in Article 23.
- Participation of adolescents with disabilities is reinforced by Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006).

Furthermore, the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 20 (2016) focuses on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence. This highlights the importance of a human rights-based approach that recognizes and respects the dignity and agency of adolescents, including their empowerment, citizenship and active participation in their own lives. Other international and regional human rights conventions and instruments such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children’s Rights (1996) recognize children’s rights to express their views.



SYSTEMATIC EFFORTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TRANSFORM EXISTING PATTERNS OF EXCLUSION, DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUITY



2.4 Ensuring equity and inclusion

Systematic efforts are required to ensure that strategies and interventions for adolescent participation and civic engagement transform, rather than reinforce, existing patterns of exclusion, discrimination and inequity. It is crucial to acknowledge that **adolescents are a very heterogeneous group**, and some forms of **inequity and privilege are entrenched**, systemic and even intentional. Vulnerability and exclusion can occur through **one or multiple intersecting and overlapping dimensions of inequity**,¹² including, but not limited to, age, gender (including gender identity/sexual orientation), ethnicity, disability, care status, migration status, language and economic or social status. It can also be made worse by context (rural, emergency, conflict, poverty, exclusion, lack of digital connectivity, etc.). Peer pressure or discrimination can contribute to adolescents' confidence or lack of confidence to express their views. Broader social norms and cultural and organizational practices also help or hinder adolescents' participation and civic engagement. Within youth structures, younger adolescents are often marginalized in favour of older youth. Information and participation methods are not always sufficiently adapted to adolescents of different ages and abilities. When initiating consultations or forums for adolescents, many agencies find it easier to reach and involve school-going adolescents (especially those who are doing well in school). This, unintentionally, excludes more marginalized adolescents who may not regularly attend formal schools.

Key actions to promote equity and inclusion in adolescent participation and civic engagement:

1. Adopt a twin-track approach for equitable participation:

(a) Identify, analyse and address barriers to inclusion, including stigma and discrimination.

Encourage duty-bearers, stakeholders, staff and

adolescents to reflect upon and discuss power relations within and between groups, analyse patterns of inclusion and exclusion and implement strategies for overcoming discrimination, including transforming harmful social norms and supporting marginalized adolescents' participation (see Section 3.2).

(b) Actively support the participation and capacities of adolescents who are excluded.

Target and build solidarity among adolescents who are: out of school and working; living with disabilities; girls; ethnic minorities; affected by HIV/AIDS; married; caregivers or parents; stateless, refugees, internally displaced (IDPs) and/or on the move; living in alternative care; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or intersex (LGBTQI). Consult adolescents about how they would like to be engaged, what barriers limit their participation and how to overcome them.

2. Ensure risk assessments, child safeguarding and do no harm.

Systematically implement UNICEF's Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children, including risk assessments and mitigation (see Appendix 10: Risk Assessment Tool). Prioritize **conflict sensitivity** and do no harm, especially in contexts of conflict or political insecurity (see Appendix 7). Support a safe environment for participation by increasing the awareness of communities (particularly 'gatekeepers' such as parents, elders, teachers, etc.) of the benefits of adolescent participation, especially for girls, adolescents with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

3. Support inclusive spaces and separate spaces for specific groups of adolescents.

Inclusive spaces enable adolescents from different backgrounds (e.g., gender, age, disability, work, ethnicity, sexuality, care status, etc.) to collaborate on activities and to overcome stigma and discrimination. However, it may also be useful for adolescents with similar backgrounds to meet together, build solidarity and a positive identity, and act to improve their particular situation. For example, adolescent girls are more able to discuss sensitive issues in female-only spaces.¹³



➔ Box 2: Applying a rights-based approach to programming with adolescents¹¹

- ✓ Place adolescents at the centre, recognize and empower them as rights-holders and social actors, and strengthen their capacities to claim their rights.
- ✓ Recognize governments as primary duty-bearers who are accountable to their citizens and help them develop their capacities to respect, protect and fulfil rights.
- ✓ Recognize parents and families as primary caregivers, protectors and guides and support them in these roles.
- ✓ Use human rights and child rights principles to guide the organization's work in all sectors and at each stage of the process. These principles include universality, non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to survival and development, the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, accountability and respect for adolescents' views.
- ✓ Promote equity and respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation, origins, wealth, birth status or ability.
- ✓ Aim for sustainable results for adolescents by focussing on both the immediate and root causes of problems.
- ✓ Advocate for the participation of adolescents in humanitarian contexts and complex protracted political emergencies as a means of supporting resilience and social cohesion.

4. Ensure accessible, diversity-friendly information for adolescents of different ages and abilities. Provide offline versions of online resources, as some adolescents cannot access the internet. Budget for interpreters (e.g., sign language, braille or local languages).

5. Disaggregate data. Promote greater disaggregation of data (e.g., by gender, wealth, urban/rural, ethnic/linguistic, migrant, disability, care status, etc.) to ensure critical contextual inequalities are addressed by policymakers and implementers.

6. Strengthen partnerships with the most marginalized adolescents and their allies (e.g., working children's associations and movements, associations of adolescents or youth affected by HIV, organizations for people with disabilities, LGBTQI groups, etc.) Support the training and mentoring of adults, youth and adolescents on gender equity, disability inclusion and conflict sensitivity.

7. Advocate for equitable facilities, services, communications and policies. Address attitudinal barriers among service providers and institutionalize accountability mechanisms to track whether marginalized adolescents are being reached. Recognize and mitigate policy tensions that may arise when marginalized adolescents begin participating in governance (e.g., opposing interests of adolescents and political or corporate actors).

Additional guidance and checklists to support the participation of adolescents of different genders, (dis)abilities, ages and contexts are included in *Appendix 7*.

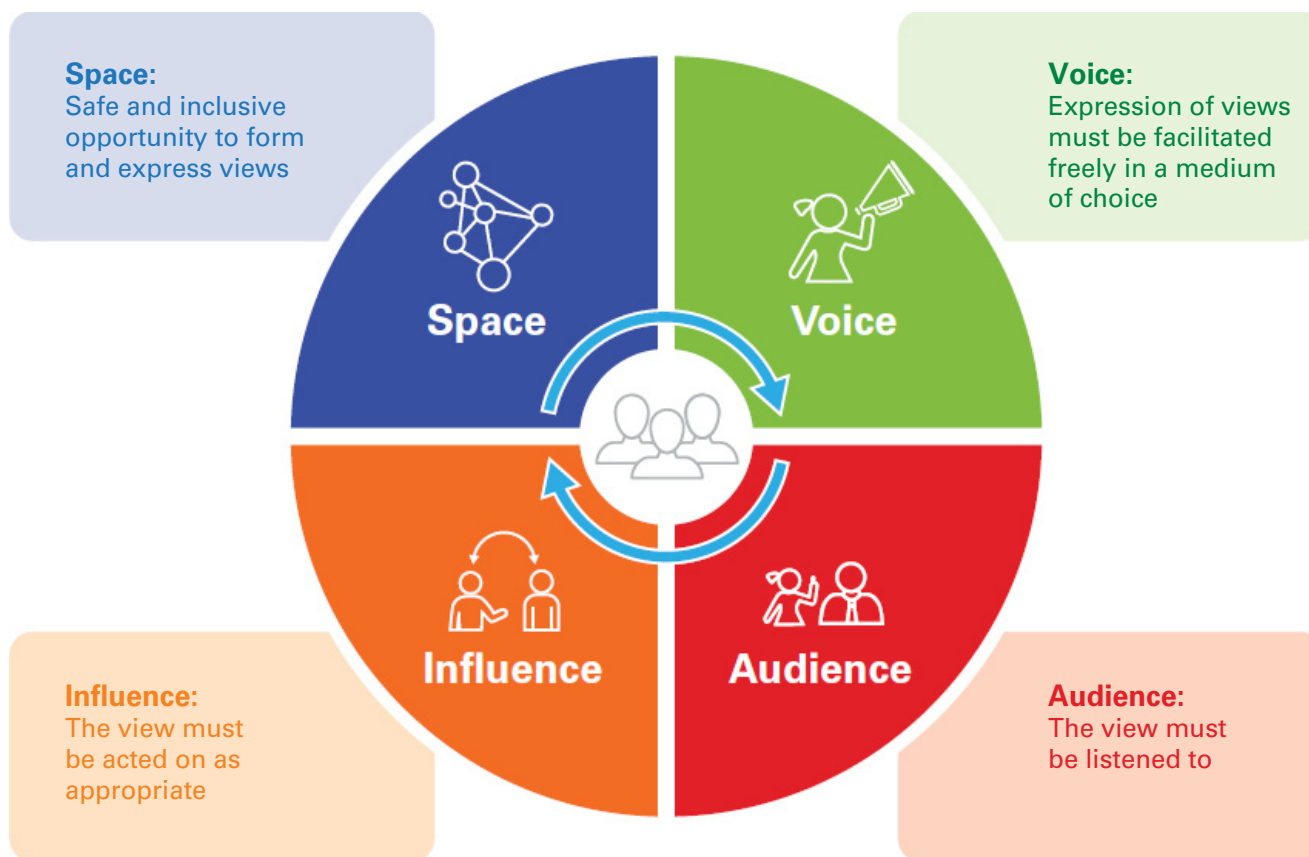
2.5 Essential features of meaningful participation: space, voice, audience, influence and the nine basic requirements

'Meaningful' opportunities for adolescent participation require strategic and practical efforts that ensure space, voice, audience and influence (*see Figure 2*).¹⁴

- **Space:** Adolescents need safe and inclusive opportunities that provide them with space and time to form and freely express their views and opinions.
- **Voice:** Adolescents should be provided appropriate information to inform their views, and they should be able to use the media of their choice to communicate their views and to negotiate decisions (e.g., verbal expression, creative theatre, art, digital media, etc.).
- **Audience:** Adolescents' views must be respectfully and seriously heard by those with the power and authority to act on them (e.g., government officials, parents, social workers, doctors, etc.).
- **Influence:** Adolescents' views should receive proper consideration, and adolescents should receive timely feedback about the outcome(s) and the extent of their influence.¹⁵

Quality processes must adhere to the **nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation** that are outlined by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 12 on the child's right to be heard (*see The Planning Tool Checklist in Appendix 9*), otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.

Figure 2: Features of meaningful participation



(Lundy, 2007, diagram UNICEF, 2019)

 **Box 3: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents¹⁶**

- 1. TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
- 2. VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
- 3. RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
- 4. RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
- 5. CHILD-/ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
- 6. INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
- 7. SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
- 8. SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
- 9. ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.

2.6 Modes of adolescent participation: Consultative, collaborative, adolescent-led

There are three broad modes of participation that differ according to adolescents' level of engagement and influence in decision-making: **a) consultative, b) collaborative** and **c) adolescent-led** (see Figure 3).

Each of these modes of participation is legitimate and appropriate in a different context, as long as it complies with the **nine basic requirements**. For meaningful consultative and collaborative participation, it is particularly important to respect the features of **space, voice, audience and influence** so that adolescents influence adult decision makers on issues that affect them. These features may also be relevant for some adolescent-led initiatives, but not necessarily all. For example, adolescent-led social gatherings and action initiatives may not require an external audience to be meaningful.

Some programmes and projects may include a mixture of different modes of participation. Adolescents can lead certain aspects and be consulted, or work collaboratively on other aspects. Furthermore, a process that starts off as consultative may evolve into something more collaborative or may contribute to adolescent-led initiatives. The appropriate mode of participation will be informed

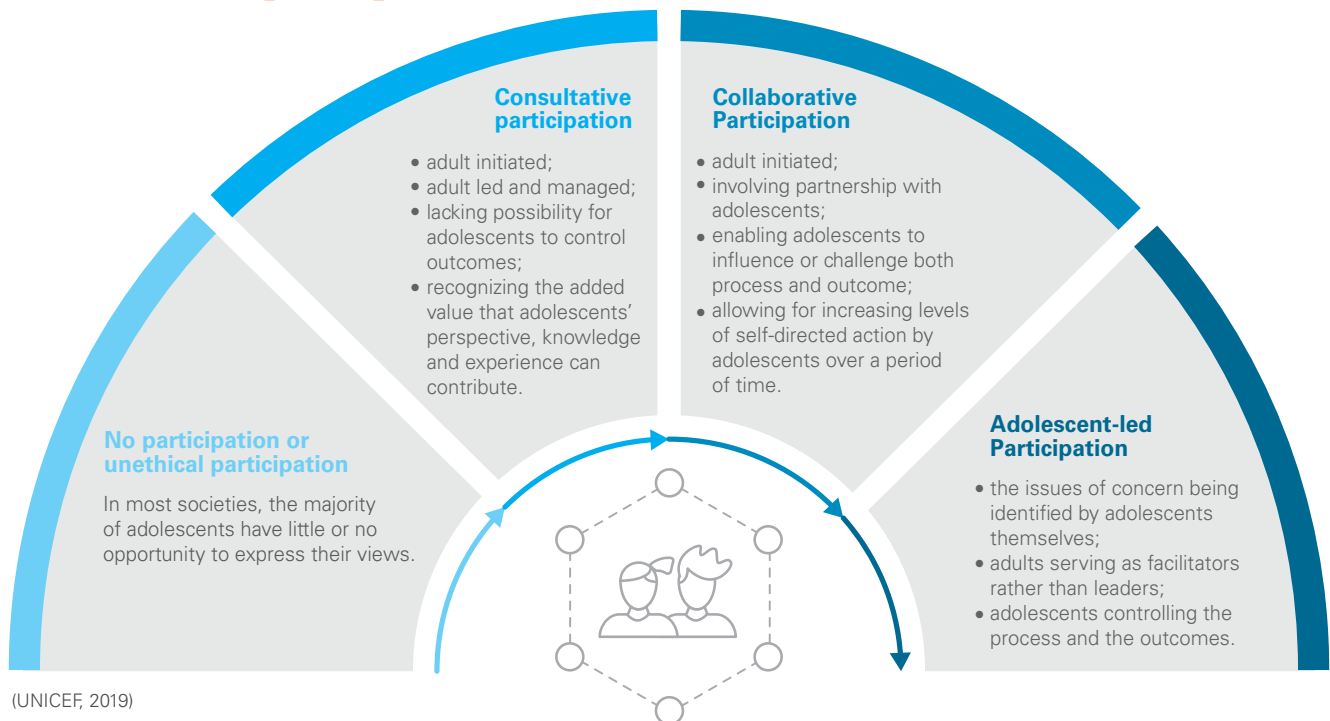
by the context. Adolescents are likely to gain more skills, knowledge and confidence through longer-term interactive processes. On the other hand, adolescents may feel the 'burden of participation' if they must participate in lengthy processes to receive benefits or services.

2.7 Adolescent participation, engagement and civic engagement

The Socio-ecological Model positions adolescents in nested spheres in which various decisions affecting them are made and, therefore, in which they have the right to participate (see Figure 4). Adolescents should have individual and collective opportunities to express their views in their families, communities and societies and to influence decisions that affect their education, free time, clothing, friendships, work, marriage, environment, society, care and protection.

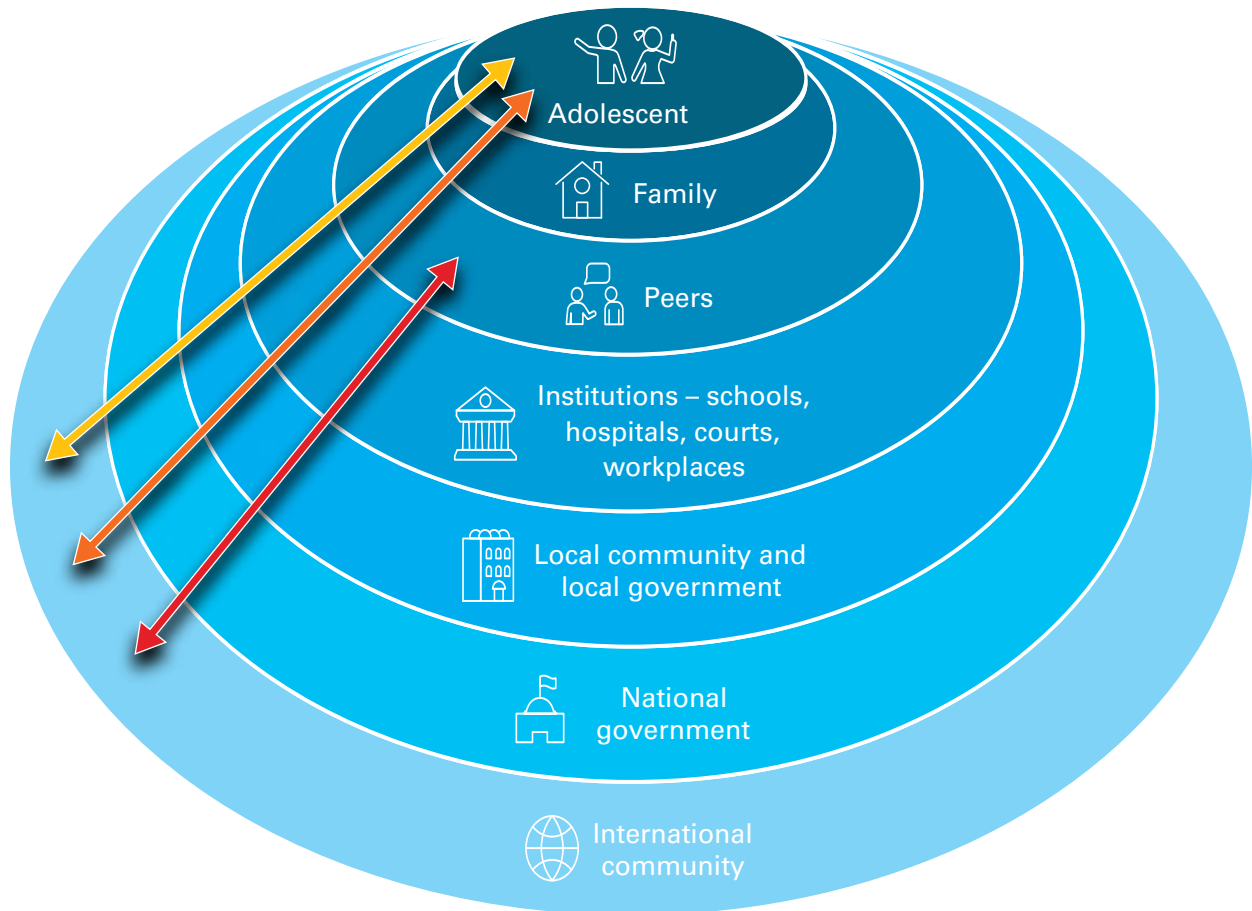
UNICEF's definition of adolescent participation particularly focuses on **influencing decisions and matters that affect them**. The terms participation, engagement and civic engagement are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing.¹⁷ Engagement covers broad ways that adolescents can engage in matters that affect their lives and communities (see Figure 4).¹⁸ **Civic engagement is a subset of engagement, which focuses on participation in public spheres to improve the well-being of communities or society.**¹⁹

Figure 3: Modes of participation



(UNICEF, 2019)

Figure 4: The Socio-ecological Model



Participation:
Adolescents form and express their views and influence matters that concern them directly and indirectly.



Engagement in dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes.



Civic engagement:
Individual or collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general.

UNICEF supports adolescents to actively engage in their families, peer groups, communities, local and national institutions and policy arenas (offline and online) to influence decisions that affect them, while ensuring that their participation is inclusive, safe and beneficial. Civic engagement enables adolescents to take on responsibilities and develop skills as educators, volunteers, activists and advocates.²⁰

UNICEF also recognizes how **participation connects to empowerment**. Meaningful participation builds adolescents' self-confidence and self-efficacy as their views are heard and taken seriously. This empowers adolescents to claim other rights. Through their participation, adolescents

can improve the delivery of adolescent-friendly services, influence laws and policies, hold duty-bearers accountable and increase their collective ability to defend their rights.

2.8 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (see Figure 6) identifies the outcomes and outputs to meet the goal of realizing adolescents' rights to participation. It draws on the conceptual framework for measurement of adolescent participation.²¹ The goal is supported by four outcome domains:

- Adolescents have a **sense of self-worth, self-esteem and self-efficacy** that gives them confidence to express their views and challenge rights violations;

ADOLESCENTS ARE PARTNERS AND CHANGE AGENTS WHO CAN POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE MATTERS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY



- Adolescents are **taken seriously** and feel respected by those involved in decision-making processes;
- Adolescents make **decisions** and have influence in decision-making on matters that affect their lives; and
- Adolescents have opportunities for **public and civic engagement** that influences actions and decisions in public settings, (e.g., schools, communities and local government).²²

These outcomes require **strategic efforts** that:

1. **Advocate for laws, policies, practices and budgets** that institutionalize adolescent participation in different settings, and support adolescent civic engagement.

2. **Enhance positive social norms and attitudes** concerning the rights and capacity of adolescents of all genders, ages and abilities to participate in decisions and matters that affect them.
3. **Build the awareness, skills and capacities of adults** to promote and support adolescent participation and civic engagement, to share information and power with adolescents, and to take adolescents' views seriously.
4. **Build the awareness, skills and capacities of adolescents**, especially the most marginalized, to express their views on decisions and matters that affect them individually and collectively.
5. **Create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement** that give adolescents space, voice, audience and influence and that support adult–adolescent partnerships.

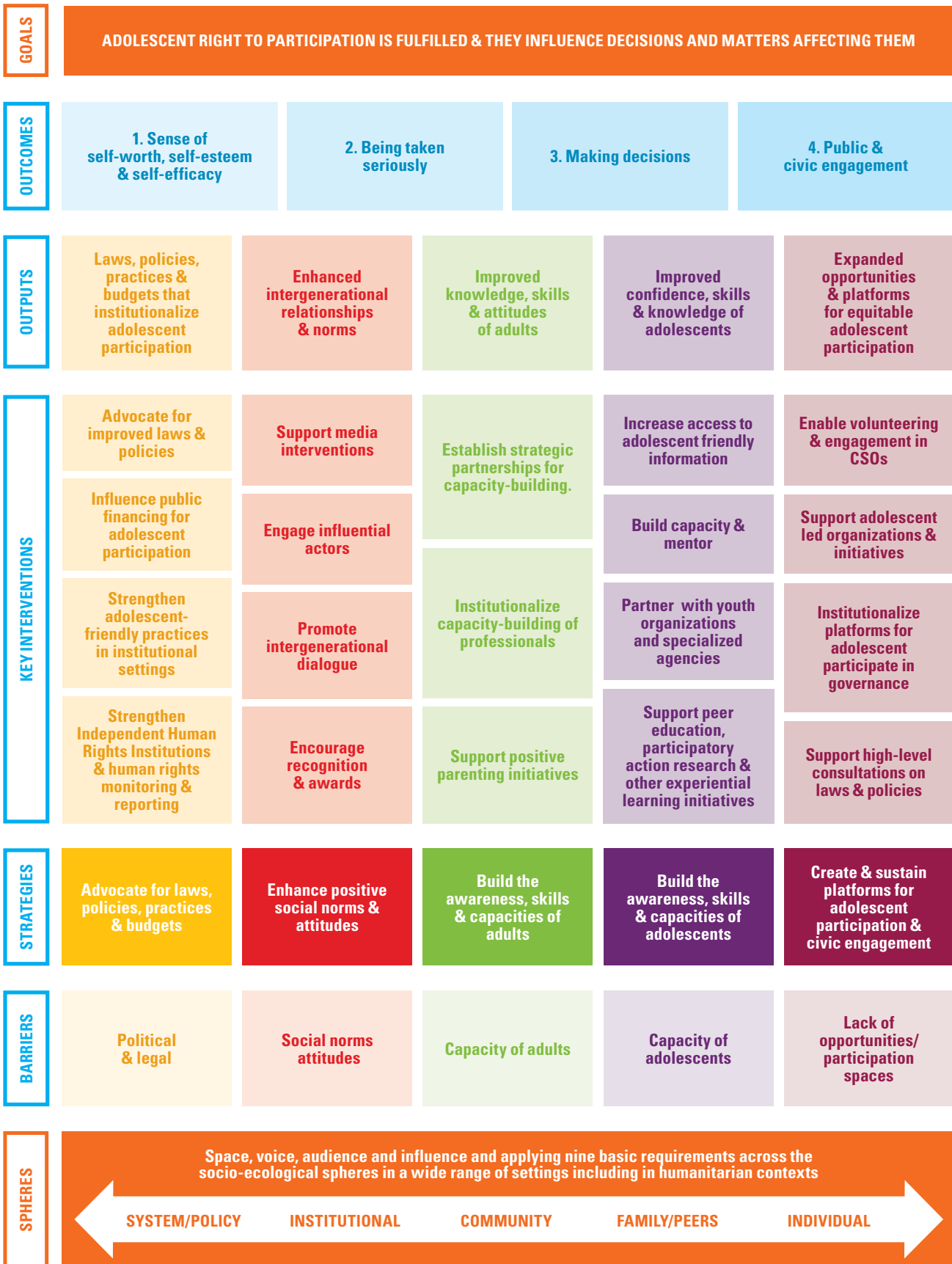
Box 4: Types of adolescent civic engagement

- VOLUNTEERING AND SERVICE (offline or online)
- MOBILIZING PEERS AND/OR COMMUNITY MEMBERS to engage in awareness and actions
- PARTICIPATION IN ACTION RESEARCH
- MEDIA INITIATIVES
- PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ARTS, MUSIC OR THEATRE INITIATIVES
- PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACY OR ACTIVISM TO INFLUENCE PRACTICES AND POLICIES
- SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND PRACTICE
- PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE OR LOCAL GOVERNANCE
- PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL VOTING

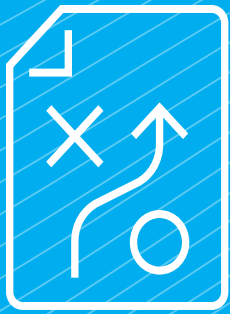
The Theory of Change seeks to reframe the role of adolescents. Adolescents are not passive recipients. Rather, **adolescents are partners and change agents** who can positively influence the matters that affect their lives, both individually and collectively. Partnering with adolescents requires that adults shift their **mindset** and value and approach adolescents as *equals*, as a constituency who can offer valuable perspectives and insights, take forward their own initiatives, and work together with parents, caregivers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

In each socio-political context, UNICEF must determine which outcomes and outputs it can support through strategic interventions and partnerships. UNICEF should identify and build on its comparative advantage(s), best practices for leveraging existing resources and the complementary work of other agencies. To construct appropriate response strategies, UNICEF must also assess the internal and external assumptions that have to hold true for the outputs, outcomes and impacts to be attained and the internal and external risks to achieving those results.

Figure 5: Theory of change for adolescent participation



CONTEXT: Rights-based participation from the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) Art. 2 (All adolescents without discrimination on any grounds)/Art. 12 (Right to express views and have them given due weight)/ Art. 13 (Freedom of expression)/Art. 14 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion)/Art. 15 (Freedom of association)/Art. 17 (Right to information)



STRATEGIES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This section introduces the five main strategies and key interventions for promoting adolescent participation and civic engagement (see Figure 7). It is preceded by brief guidance for undertaking a situation analysis to inform decisions about the most strategic interventions in each specific context and to better support sustainable processes and platforms for adolescent participation. Links to practical tools and resources for each strategy are included in Appendix 15.

These strategies are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

A participatory situation analysis can help to identify the appropriate mix of strategies to support adolescent participation and civic engagement in a specific context. Key elements of the analysis include:

- A **causal analysis** (e.g., a problem tree analysis) to identify the root causes of the non-realization of adolescents' participatory rights to expression, information, association, etc.
- **Disaggregated analyses of gender** and other **diversity factors** to identify:
 - The adolescents who are most excluded from decision-making processes that affect them (see Appendix 15, Section 3.1 for tools for situation analysis on adolescent participation).
 - Contextual inequalities (e.g., gender, wealth, urban/rural, ethnic/linguistic, migrant, disability, etc.)²³ that

influence particular adolescents' capacity to claim their rights.

- A capacity gap analysis to assess the existing systems and capacities related to adolescents' meaningful participation and civic engagement, including:
 - Key duty-bearers who are responsible for supporting adolescents' participation rights across different spheres.
 - Barriers that prevent duty-bearers from fulfilling these rights (e.g., lack of motivation, power, knowledge and/or resources).
 - Obstacles to, and key entry points for, strengthening systems that support equitable adolescent participation and civic engagement in the particular sociocultural political context²⁴ (including **organizational; political, legal and/or administrative; sociocultural; ethical; and pragmatic**²⁵).
- Assessment of existing **social norms** to:
 - Understand how they support or hinder different adolescents' participation.
 - Identify influential stakeholders who can promote positive social norms on equitable adolescent participation.
- Mapping of existing practices supporting adolescent participation and civic engagement and identification of potential **entry points** and **strategies for scaling up sustainable, high-quality participatory processes and platforms** that engage adolescents in equitable ways.²⁶

Figure 6: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement





3.1 ADVOCATE FOR LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS THAT INSTITUTIONALIZE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The right of adolescents to participate in all spheres of life must be underpinned by legislative and policy frameworks that strengthen and guarantee participation rights. Recognizing participation rights, incorporating them into laws, policies and practices, and providing the necessary budgetary support will ensure institutionalized participation rather than short-term, one-off participation activities.²⁷

The institutionalization of meaningful adolescent participation should be supported across different socio-political contexts (including humanitarian settings), institutions and mechanisms (including human rights monitoring and reporting mechanisms). The call to action by the [Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action](#) encourages all governments and partners to strengthen their efforts to engage and address the needs of young people.²⁸

To support this goal, relevant authorities should be consulted and included in all phases, including programme design. Practitioners and advocates can use the evidence from research, monitoring and evaluation to work with governments, donors and other key duty-bearers to implement four types of interventions:



3.1.1 ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVED LAWS AND POLICIES

UNICEF and partners should:

- Institutionalize platforms and processes that ensure adolescent participation and civic engagement (e.g., in families, care/justice/protection systems, educational and health care facilities, workplaces, local and national governance, trans-national processes such as asylum seeking and immigration, reconstruction and peace processes, online, etc.).
- Allocate sufficient resources for equitable adolescent participation and representation in governance (including participatory budgeting and/or e-governance).
- Develop and disseminate relevant child- and adolescent-friendly information on a range of policies, processes and issues via offline and online platforms.
- Implement safe and accessible child- and adolescent-friendly complaint procedures, including opportunities for adolescents to participate in human rights monitoring and reporting.
- Encourage adolescents to volunteer and practice civic engagement.
- Allow the registration and independent functioning of adolescent-led associations (e.g., working children’s associations, student unions, child clubs, etc.).
- Implement law reform processes that include platforms for adolescent participation and incorporate adolescents’ views, suggestions and best interests (*see Strategy 3.5*).

3.1.2 INFLUENCE PUBLIC FINANCING FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Budget allocations are essential if governments are to implement laws, policies and procedures for adolescent participation and civic engagement. For instance, adolescents’ safe, meaningful and inclusive participation in governance requires funds for travel, facilitation, interpretation and child safeguarding (e.g., adult chaperones).²⁹ Including adolescents in budget analysis and monitoring at micro (e.g., community, district) and macro levels also provides valuable insights into the situation of adolescents and supports evidence-based advocacy for improved public financing of adolescent participation.



Adolescent participation in participatory budget processes, Argentina³⁰

In Argentina, UNICEF provides technical assistance to the government to facilitate the involvement of adolescents in participatory budget processes, including budget monitoring and analysis. Collaboration with the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers and the Argentinian Network of Participatory Budgets has enhanced adolescents' visibility in participatory budgeting processes. A training manual and methodologies have been developed for central government and municipal officials. As a result, over 30,000 adolescents from more than 38 municipalities have been involved in participatory budgeting through fora, dialogue and innovative communication tools.

Ongoing monitoring of subnational budgets confirms that the shares of overall public investments in children have increased.

can monitor and report on human rights, especially through their groups and networks. Adolescents can:

- Contribute to child rights monitoring and reporting by preparing and submitting their own supplementary reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child or by ensuring that their experiences and suggestions are integrated into periodic government reports.³³
- Adolescent delegates can directly present their views to the Committee in Geneva, and adolescents can use the concluding comments to inform ongoing advocacy and to fulfil their rights.
- Contribute to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) intergovernmental human rights review through which State governments, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other stakeholders (including CSOs) submit reports to the Human Rights Council every four years.
- Register complaints on violations of children's rights to national courts or to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child through the Optional Protocol on a Communication Procedure (OP3 CRC), if this protocol has been ratified by their country.³⁴

3.1.3 STRENGTHEN ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY PRACTICES IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS³¹

Strengthening adolescent participation in decision-making and governance processes across development and humanitarian contexts (including educational settings, courts, alternative care institutions, health care facilities, workplaces and communities) may require specific practical measures such as protocols, checklists, minimum standards, adolescent-friendly information, training materials, legal advice, etc. (See Appendices 1–5 for examples of sectoral interventions.)

3.1.4 STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (IHRIS) AND HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

IHRIs, including National Human Rights Institutions and dedicated ombudspersons for children's rights, can be strengthened to promote, monitor and report on legal and policy measures that safeguard and encourage the participation rights of adolescents. IHRIs must work directly with adolescents to learn about their concerns and priorities.³² IHRIs, governments, the UN and CSOs can also strengthen processes and mechanisms so that adolescents

3.2 ENHANCE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES THAT SUPPORT ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Social norms and prevailing cultural values often impede adolescents' participation rights in both private and public settings.³⁵ Many adolescents, particularly girls, are discouraged from questioning adults or exercising free thought. Norms that reinforce patriarchy and discrimination based on gender, disability, health status, care status, ethnicity, refugee status/statelessness, sexual orientation or family income can further marginalize adolescents and exclude them from relevant decisions.³⁶ Adolescents are often motivated to challenge discriminatory social norms, including in humanitarian settings, but they must be allowed to do this safely and without the risk of retribution.³⁷

Analytical tools from Communication for Development can help identify social norms that underly harmful practices and also inform strategies that can address them. The guide [Everybody wants to belong](#) can be used to inform strategic interventions for positive social norms.



Working in partnership with adolescents, programmers and advocates can use a variety of communication methods and approaches to promote positive social norms change in four ways:



MEDIA CAMPAIGNS CAN REDRESS NEGATIVE SOCIAL NORMS, PROMOTE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND SHOWCASE POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN DIFFERENT SPHERES

3.2.1 SUPPORT MEDIA INTERVENTIONS

Media campaigns can redress negative social norms, promote positive social norms and showcase positive examples of adolescent participation in decision-making in different spheres. These messages can be distributed by television, radio and/or social media. Adolescents should be encouraged to participate in both content development and production to give them the opportunity to improve how they are portrayed. This is especially true for adolescents who are particularly marginalized (e.g., those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, girls, refugees, migrants, etc.). (See Strategy 3.5.)

3.2.2 ENGAGE INFLUENTIAL ACTORS

Influential actors and groups can be mobilized to dialogue and take action in support of positive gender and social norms for adolescent participation. Community meetings and/or small group meetings can support community members to reflect upon, engage in dialogue and mobilize in support of equitable adolescent participation. Traditional and religious leaders, teachers and other influential actors can publicly support positive norms around adolescents' participation and explain why it is harmful to ignore the views of adolescents. Adolescent influencers, including those on social media, can increase support for positive

norms related to adolescent participation, gender equity and disability inclusion. Formal partnerships with existing youth organizations, networks and platforms, especially those including the most marginalized adolescents, can also support positive social norm change. Positive norm change should be supported at the institutional level: engaging government officials and professional actors across sectors can support positive shifts in gender norms.

3.2.3 PROMOTE INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Facilitating intergenerational dialogue within families, communities and wider public settings strengthens the relationships and norms that enable adolescents of different ages, genders and backgrounds to express their views and feelings on matters that affect them. Positive parenting initiatives also support improved intergenerational dialogue in families (see Strategy 3.3.3).

3.2.4 PROMOTE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Recognizing and awarding champions and their positive practices can increase support for positive social norms around adolescent participation. Advocacy can be undertaken with governments to recognize and acknowledge the beneficial role adolescents play as active citizens and positive agents of change in their communities and wider society. Award schemes (e.g., an award for most child-friendly district/city) can be initiated to celebrate the efforts of local government officials, professionals and community members who involve adolescents in decision-making processes. Additional efforts can also be made to connect the role models of positive practices to existing youth networks, civil society groups, coalitions, etc., to help spread these good practices.



Turning Nigeria Purple! Innovative approaches to creating and measuring social norms change, Voices for Change in Nigeria³⁸

DFID Nigeria’s flagship gender equality programme, Voices for Change, uses a norms approach to inspire attitudinal and behaviour change in young people towards women’s roles in household decision-making, women’s leadership and prevention of violence against women and girls. It was designed and implemented over five years (2012–2017) across four states – Enugu, Lagos, Kaduna and Kano. It specifically targeted a population of 3 million young men and women aged 16–25 with a range of interventions. Young people were invited to join intensive ‘safe space’ dialogues in person, in their colleges or online. Transformative gender awareness training was provided for influencers in young people’s lives, such as media personalities and religious and traditional leaders, to enable them to promote positive gender behaviours. To promote societal change and to make gender equality the new cool, a branded mass media campaign, ‘Purple’, was

broadcast over radio, TV and social media. Finally, to strengthen institutional commitments to gender equality, the programme supported Nigerian gender advocates to push for legislation to enshrine equal opportunities in law, to prohibit the use of violence, to give greater focus to budgeting resources for promoting gender equality and to assist women to get more involved in politics.

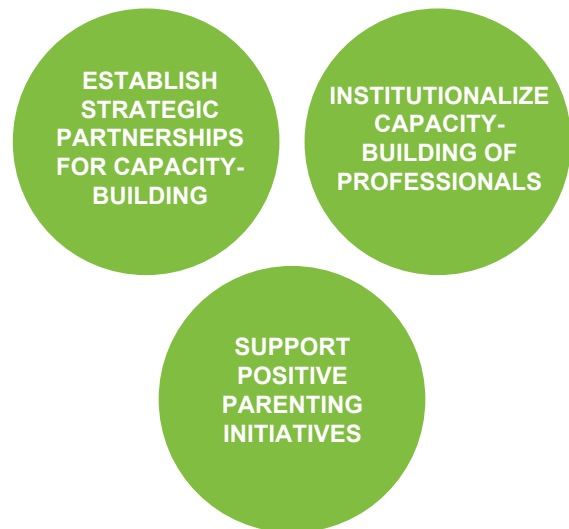
As a result of the programme, there was a large-scale change in young people’s gender attitudes in the four states. Almost 48% of young people in the four states (1.14 million people) recognized Purple, and over 70% of them correctly identified the brand as being associated with gender equality. These ‘Purple people’ experienced greater levels of change in their gender attitudes and practices than young people who did not recognize Purple.

3.3 BUILD THE AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Adults must be equipped with knowledge and skills to interact with adolescents in a respectful, participatory and inclusive way and to partner with adolescents as change agents. Technical support and mentoring on participatory processes should be provided to decision-makers in families and alternative care settings (parents and caregivers), schools (teachers and head teachers), other institutions (health clinics, courts, etc.), communities (leaders, religious elders) and the larger society (service providers, legislators, etc.). Capacity-building should include training in sensitization and skills such as facilitating experiential participatory processes. A **wide range of adults** who are in a position to influence adolescents’ participation require:

- **Knowledge of children’s rights**, adolescent development, participation and safeguarding.
- **Core skills** such as **communication, active listening, self-reflection and negotiation.**
- **Respectful non-discriminatory attitudes** towards adolescents.

To build the awareness, skills and capacity of adults to promote and support adolescent participation, programmers and advocates should do the following:



3.3.1 ESTABLISH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING

Capacity-building for professionals, government officials and other relevant actors should build upon identified entry points for wider-scale system strengthening. This may involve partnering with professional bodies, universities and other



academic and training institutions, child-/adolescent-focussed agencies and/or government ministries to develop standard training courses, modules and manuals (including online resources) on children’s rights and adolescent participation that can be scaled up. A pool of trainers on children’s rights and adolescent participation – including adults, youth and adolescent facilitators – could be established. Reflective experiential learning and value-deliberation around the right of adolescents to participate is strongly encouraged to reflect and to learn from our experiences.

3.3.2 INSTITUTIONALIZE CAPACITY-BUILDING OF PROFESSIONALS

Technical assistance and advocacy with governments and associated training institutions should be provided to plan, budget for and implement pre- and in-service training on children’s rights, including participation rights, for all professionals working with adolescents. Training should be provided to teachers, lawyers, judges, police, social workers, community workers, medical professionals, civil servants, public officials and traditional leaders.³⁹ Universities and other academic and training institutions should be encouraged to incorporate child rights education into their curricula and to build the capacity of their staff to integrate child rights training.⁴⁰ Experiential in-service training and mentoring on adolescent participation and adult–adolescent partnerships can give adults opportunities to recognize adolescents’ capacities as change agents.⁴¹ Online training on adolescent participation can increase the reach of the training.

3.3.3 SUPPORT POSITIVE PARENTING INITIATIVES

Positive parenting can be designed to build the capacities and confidence of parents and caregivers to communicate effectively with adolescents, strengthen healthy parent–adolescent relationships and allow adolescents to influence decisions that affect them. Programme staff should encourage and partner with the government and other CSOs on positive parenting initiatives that focus on parenting throughout the life course.

3.4 BUILD THE AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS (ESPECIALLY THE MOST MARGINALIZED) TO PARTICIPATE AND CIVICALLY ENGAGE

Adolescents need information, knowledge, skills and confidence to claim and exercise their participation rights, especially in contexts where girls and/or boys are not encouraged to express views and make decisions. Experiential learning and participatory methodologies can effectively

A national curriculum on parenting of adolescents, Moldova

In 2017, UNICEF Moldova participated in a [regional study on parenting adolescents and parenting support programmes](#). The study in Moldova revealed common challenges and needs identified by both parents and adolescents, including the need for non-violent communication, opportunities for adolescents to participate in family decision-making, guidance on career opportunities and increased access to information and services on reproductive health. Building upon these findings, UNICEF Moldova, in collaboration with the National Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse, developed and piloted a national curriculum on parenting adolescents that focussed on stimulating adolescents’ participation in decision-making processes, career orientation, non-violent communication and healthy lifestyles.

To enhance scale-up and sustainability, advocacy is also under way to influence a National Action Plan for Parenting, and communication materials on parenting have been developed.

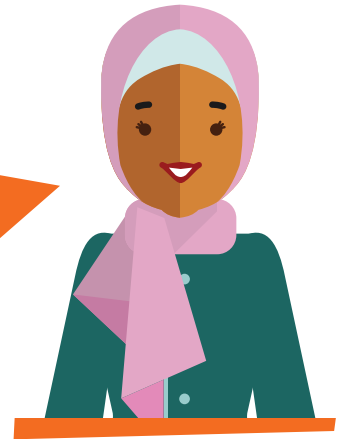
build adolescents’ abilities to identify and address issues that affect their lives. Creative, fun and innovative skill-building methodologies can help motivate and sustain adolescents’ participation and civic engagement. In both formal and informal settings, it is important to adopt a positive development approach, acknowledge adolescents as rights-holders, recognize and build upon their existing strengths and ideas, and engage with them as change agents and partners.⁴²

General areas of capacity-building for adolescents include:

- **Transferable skills:** UNICEF takes a holistic approach and promotes transferable cognitive, social and emotional skills (see Appendix 12).
- **Child rights:** Adolescents should be aware of their rights and equipped to defend them.
- **Gender equality and non-discrimination:** All adolescents should be able to exercise their participation rights.
- **Participatory action research, critical analysis and project planning** (including financial literacy): Adolescents should be able to analyse, plan and implement initiatives on issues that affect them.
- **Advocacy, media and digital literacy:** Adolescents should exert their influence in many forms of media.



ADOLESCENTS MUST HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON MATTERS THAT AFFECT THEM, AS THEY CAN BETTER PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM HARM AND EXPLOITATION WITH ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE AND RELIABLE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT



- **Organizational development skills:** Adolescents should be equipped to participate in groups or networks.

Specific capacity-building needs may vary according to the sociocultural political context and the unique priorities of different adolescents. For instance, training adolescents in peacebuilding may be especially relevant in contexts affected by insecurity and conflict.

To build the awareness, skills and capacity of adolescents, programmers and practitioners should do the following:



3.4.1 INCREASE ACCESS TO ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY INFORMATION

Adolescents must have access to information on matters that affect them (e.g., their rights, inequalities, sexual and reproductive health, climate change, peacebuilding, etc.), as they can better protect themselves from harm and exploitation with access to appropriate and reliable information and support.⁴³ Information should be adapted for adolescents of different ages and abilities.

Adolescents can help to develop and disseminate adolescent-friendly information through social media, drama, film, radio, newsletters, U-Report, etc. Advocating with governments and businesses can increase adolescents' access to high-quality internet and support safeguarding measures and digital literacy to keep adolescents informed, engaged and safe online.⁴⁴ Information about volunteer and civic engagement opportunities can also be shared through online and offline information hubs (e.g., schools, websites, youth centres) and public meetings.

3.4.2 BUILD CAPACITY AND MENTOR ADOLESCENTS

Adolescents' capacity around child rights, transferable skills, civic education, digital literacy and other issues (such as sexual and reproductive health) should be supported in formal and informal settings. This may include advocacy and technical assistance for schools to integrate child rights education, transferable skills and/or civic education (and their practical applications) into the school curricula. Integrating the 'child rights approach' into school systems through whole-school approaches will institutionalize opportunities for students to access information, discuss their rights and responsibilities, express their views and actively engage in school and wider civic life. Increased knowledge and practice of democratic politics in supportive environments can foster civic and political engagement.⁴⁵

Capacity-building and mentoring can also be supported in informal settings, such as communities, youth centres, adolescent-friendly spaces, refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, etc. Inclusive arts, theatre or sports for development initiatives can support inclusive participation and can help adolescents to strengthen their social, educational and leadership skills; develop their physical abilities; improve their health; and have fun.⁴⁶



Adolescent engagement in disaster risk reduction, Indonesia⁴⁷

Indonesia ranks first among 76 countries for tsunami risk and first and sixth among 162 countries for landslide and flood risk, respectively. More than half of Indonesians aged 10–24 (approximately 30 million) live in high-risk areas, yet young people are rarely engaged in making decisions or preparing for these risks. A programme was launched to build the capacity of adolescent girls and boys to be better prepared before, during and after an emergency. Using the [Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation](#) adolescents mapped potential risks, developed stories on the pressing issues that affect them and presented them at community events,

village council meetings and school events. They also spearheaded innovative solutions for these issues and engaged with policymakers and community members to mobilize the resources needed for those solutions.

Building on this experience, the Ministry of Education and Culture is strengthening adolescent participation in conducting assessments in safe schools. Additionally, capacity-building support is being provided to the Ministry's Emergency Response Personnel to better equip responders to implement adolescent-specific activities in affected areas.

3.4.3 PARTNER WITH YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Youth organizations and other specialized agencies (e.g., digital skills specialists) can be powerful partners in mobilizing and engaging adolescents. Capacity-building to support adolescent multimedia engagement can be particularly effective, as many adolescents are already interested and engaged in using and expanding their online technical skills. Through mentoring, training and/or peer-to-peer initiatives, adolescents' skills can be strengthened in areas such as blogging, music, photography, filmmaking, social media, radio programming and digital cartoon production.⁴⁸

3.4.4 SUPPORT PEER EDUCATION, PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND ACTION INITIATIVES

Adolescents often learn from, are motivated by and organize initiatives with their peers. Thus, it is crucial to consult adolescent peer educators and activists to better understand what type of capacity-building support or other support needs they have. Programmes that engage adolescents and support human-centred design can empower adolescents.⁴⁹ Participatory action research (PAR) or other experiential learning initiatives can also be practical and effective entry points to enhance adolescents' skills and confidence to identify, analyse, plan and implement action initiatives on issues affecting them. Guidelines for [Ethical Research Involving Children](#) must be observed in PAR; and UNICEF staff should apply [UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis](#).

3.5 CREATE AND SUSTAIN PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Adolescents have rights to the freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15). Opportunities to meet regularly and to implement action plans through their own associations and other collaborative platforms are crucial to adolescents' systematic participation. Platforms for such participation in both formal governance structures *and* informal spaces (in person and online) should be supported and strengthened, as some adolescents, especially the most marginalized, may initially be less willing and able to engage in formal spaces.⁵⁰

It should be noted that adolescents who do engage in civic action may do so for non-political as well as political ends, not all of which may be tolerant or inclusive.⁵¹ Adolescents' positions may not align with official government positions and can put them in conflict with the authorities. Risk assessments involving adolescents must be conducted to mitigate risk and consider their best interests in all decisions (*see Appendix 10*).

Platforms for adolescent participation in local governance should be inclusive, relevant and sustainable and support the establishment of more inclusive platforms at the national level.⁵² In countries where there is decentralization, local governments have increased responsibilities for planning and delivering services for children and adolescents. Participation in national and international fora can offer strategic opportunities for adolescents to influence broader policies and planning processes that affect them. Policy forums and



networks can foster intergenerational dialogue and adult–adolescent partnerships around positive social change. Furthermore, digital platforms are creating new avenues for adolescents to engage and partner with diverse audiences beyond their local communities.⁵³

To create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement, programmers and advocates can do the following:



3.5.1 ENABLE VOLUNTEERING AND ENGAGEMENT IN CSOS

Volunteering and engaging in CSOs (social or environmental organizations, community-based organizations, etc.) allow adolescents to gain skills and confidence and to positively contribute to their communities and wider society on matters that concern them. Policies, practices and platforms that support and build the skills of adolescent volunteers should be actively promoted.

3.5.2 SUPPORT ADOLESCENT-LED ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES (INCLUDING ACTIVISM AND MEDIA)

Adolescents should be supported to establish and strengthen adolescent-led organizations, fora, school councils, municipal children’s councils, advisory boards, media initiatives and issue-based advocacy groups (e.g., working children’s associations). In their own groups, adolescents can identify, analyse and action plan the issues that affect them. They can use their collective power to defend their rights, including access to basic services.⁵⁴ Growing evidence from conflict-affected settings shows the



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benefits of adolescents’ participation in peace clubs, youth associations, community-based social cohesion initiatives and broader reconstruction and peace processes.⁵⁵

Adolescent-led organizations and initiatives, including social entrepreneurship, may benefit from micro-grants programmes that provide flexible funding and support capacity-building.⁵⁶ Grants can help adolescents overcome legal and administrative barriers to securing and managing their own funds. Training adolescents on organizational development, project management and financial literacy can enhance the sustainability of adolescent groups and provide individuals with important transferable skills.

Local, regional or national networks of adolescent groups can become platforms for civic engagement, mutual learning, collective advocacy and democratic governance/policy development. Adolescent-led media initiatives also serve as platforms where adolescents can share their views and ideas.

3.5.3 INSTITUTIONALIZE PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

Adolescent participation should be institutionalized across a wide range of systems/processes. Such institutionalization requires laws, policies and budgets that mandate adolescent



ADOLESCENTS MUST RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM ADULT STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEIR VIEWS INFLUENCED THE OUTCOMES OF HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS



participation and representation in relevant governance mechanisms (see Strategy 3.1); capacity-building for adults (see Strategy 3.3); and capacity-building for adolescents (see Strategy 3.4).

- Institutionalizing adolescent participation in school governance, such as school councils or unions, can be supported and strengthened by whole-school approaches to child rights education (see Strategy 3.3).
- Institutionalizing adolescent participation in local governance can be facilitated by, for example, supporting Municipal Children’s Councils and other forms of Child Friendly Local Governance.⁵⁷
- Adolescents should be able to participate in community-based child protection systems, subnational and national child protection systems and adolescent health advisory boards/working groups.
- Adolescent-friendly accountability mechanisms should be in place across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. For example, adolescents may use simple scorecards to monitor local government services.

3.5.4 SUPPORT HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS ON LAWS AND POLICIES

High-level consultations engaging adolescent representatives can be organized using offline and online platforms and fora at national, regional and/or global levels. Follow-up processes are crucial for ensuring adolescents’ meaningful and accountable participation, particularly in national and international fora.⁵⁹

Adolescents must receive feedback from adult stakeholders about the extent to which their views influenced the outcomes of high-level consultations and have opportunities to take forward some of their own action ideas. Innovation and technology can increase engagement of and with adolescents. Digital platforms provide growing opportunities for adolescent activism.⁶⁰ Adolescent-focussed websites and social media groups can be effective platforms for information-sharing, expression and mobilization among adolescents on laws, policies and practices, particularly when such platforms are managed by adolescents and/or youth.⁶¹

Child-friendly Local Governance supports platforms for adolescent participation, Nepal⁵⁸

Strategic advocacy and collaboration by CSOs with the Government of Nepal has resulted in positive trends in support of community- and school-based child clubs and adolescent involvement in various local governance structures and processes, including health and school management committees and citizens’ forums at the district, municipal and village development committee levels. The Child-friendly Local Governance strategy in Nepal has institutionalized adolescent participation in planning committees and processes through consultations known as ‘bal bhela’. The bal bhela uses a systematic creative methodology (such as risk-mapping

and visioning) to consult with adolescents (generally 12–18 years old) about their needs and demands for their community and to ensure that their priority concerns are reflected in local municipal planning and budgeting processes.

For instance, based on adolescents’ demands, Sunwal municipality integrated plans and budgets for various child-focussed activities including training on child rights, enhanced girl-friendly toilets in schools, and awareness campaigns on child marriage and labour exploitation.



ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND PROCESSES FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

4.1 Practices to support adolescent participation

Organizational commitment is essential to prioritize strategic focus, resources and programming for equitable adolescent participation and to encourage intersectoral collaborations and strategic partnerships with adolescents, youth, government and other actors.

Managers can:

- ✓ Demonstrate **leadership and commit to investing in processes that support meaningful, equitable adolescent participation.**
- ✓ **Conduct initial risk assessments to help identify likely challenges to adolescent participation.**
- ✓ Support **an enabling environment** for meaningful participation (*see Appendices 9 and 10*). (Country offices may consider undertaking an **organizational assessment** to inform strategic organizational development and to institutionalize support for adolescent participation [*see Appendix 15, section 3 for organizational assessment resources and Appendix 11 for assertive responses to commonly identified objections to adolescent participation that can be used to equip staff and partners*].)
- ✓ **Integrate plans and budgets for adolescent participation into situational analysis, country programme documents (CPD), results assessment modules (RAM) and/or sectoral programmes** across development and humanitarian settings (*see Appendices 1–5*).
- ✓ **Encourage intersectoral collaborations for adolescent participation and civic engagement** (e.g., a multisectoral working group on adolescent development) that enhance learning and the collaborative development/implementation of relevant strategies/interventions.

- ✓ **Encourage reflective practice on power relations** and privileges and support efforts to challenge harmful social norms and hierarchies that undermine equitable participation.
- ✓ Ensure adolescents have knowledge of and access to **adolescent-friendly complaints mechanisms.**

Human resources staff can:

- ✓ **Embed adolescent participation in job descriptions, induction and training** of staff and partners, and **management review processes.**
- ✓ Implement **flexi-time policies** so programme staff can work with adolescents on weekends (non-school days) or other times that suit them.
- ✓ Ensure that country plans and budgets support **training of staff and partners** on adolescent participation.
- ✓ Explore opportunities to have **young interns and volunteers** embedded within teams.

Everyone can:

- ✓ **Be flexible and responsive to adolescent-led agendas and approaches**, including support for **adolescent-/youth-led organizations and action initiatives.**
- ✓ **Ensure compliance with child safeguarding procedures** (*see Appendices 9 and 10*).
- ✓ Implement **clear accountability mechanisms** (results, staff performance reviews, matrix management) for adolescent participation processes that provide adolescents with feedback about their participation and influence.
- ✓ **Produce and share adolescent-friendly information** about strategies, programme plans, ways of working and opportunities for participation and engagement.



ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME CYCLE IS MORE MEANINGFUL WHEN ADOLESCENTS ARE INVOLVED FROM THE EARLIEST STAGES: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS, ANNUAL PLANNING, AND PROGRAMME DESIGN

4.2 Adolescent participation in the programme cycle

Participation in the programme cycle is often consultative or collaborative. When supporting adolescent participation in programming, it is crucial to (a) identify how adolescents already improve their own lives, communities and broader society and (b) be flexible and responsive. Flexibility is especially important in humanitarian settings: emergency contexts are dynamic, and the young people themselves are in transition.⁶² Ensuring adolescent participation across the humanitarian programme cycle requires engaging adolescents in preparedness, coordination and information management (see *Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises*).

Adolescent participation in the programme cycle is more meaningful when adolescents **are involved from the earliest stages:** situational analysis, strategic planning, annual

planning, inception planning and programme design (see *Figure 8*).⁶³ Adolescent participation in situation analysis can increase understanding of their aspirations, their rights violations and their different experiences as a result of gender, age and background. Adolescents must be given space and opportunities to inform and influence project/programme design; identify relevant stakeholders; and suggest indicators, activities and budgets. For UNICEF, adolescent participation in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is not mandatory, although it is encouraged.⁶⁴ *UNICEF guidance* (2018: 15) explains that “what is realistic, feasible and most suitable depends on the expected added value of adolescent participation in M&E processes and contextual factors including: ethical considerations, time and resources available, existing and previous practice, staff competencies, the interests and capabilities of adolescents, the security environment and the potential risks to both adolescents and UNICEF and its partners.”



Participatory analysis of Mozambican adolescents' priorities and concerns

In Mozambique, adolescents are about a quarter of the population, and they face multiple challenges affecting the fulfilment of their rights. Adolescents actively participated in a situation analysis to investigate Mozambican adolescents' priorities and concerns and to promote social change. A participatory and visual action research method (inspired by Photovoice) was used, whereby adolescents were asked to produce pictures and drawings to answer the following questions: What makes you feel good? What makes you feel bad? What is your dream? Research took place in three different Mozambican contexts (city, village and rural area). It involved 31 girls and 32 boys (10–19 years) of

different religions, schooling, disabilities, marital/family status, orphanhood/ family situation, work, residence, etc.

Adolescents identified the following main factors that can support their rights: self-esteem; self-efficacy; clarity of objectives and strategy to reach them; peer and family support; economic conditions; access to education and health; participation in local organizations; contact with a natural, clean and healthy environment; and scholarships. The main barriers to their rights included bullying and violence, alcohol and drugs, corruption, witchcraft, weak public services, weak implementation of legislation, pollution, social norms on gender and generation.



Figure 7: Key actions to promote adolescent participation at each stage of the programme cycle

STAGE	EXAMPLES OF KEY ACTIONS TO PROMOTE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:
Situation analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity of staff and partners to support meaningful participation of adolescents in situation analysis, with attention to child safeguarding. • Support adolescent participation in research, data collection and analysis (including U-Report), and sector-wide assessments (including MultiSector Initial Rapid Assessment and Post-Disaster Needs Assessments in emergencies). • Use a human-centred approach to analyse barriers and opportunities for adolescent participation. • Partner with existing adolescent-led groups and networks that involve marginalized adolescents to undertake research and analysis.
Planning and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support human-centred design processes involving adolescents to design solutions to address problems affecting them. • Include adolescents (especially the most marginalized) in strategic planning, programme planning exercises and adolescent advisory boards (if possible). • Use preparatory processes to build adolescents' skills and confidence. • Encourage adolescents to share project ideas, proposals and priority issues and incorporate their perspectives into country strategic plans and proposals. • Include activities, budgets and indicators that support adolescent participation in sector-specific response plans and result frameworks. • Strengthen partnerships with adolescent and youth organizations to jointly design strategies and action plans to achieve programme goals.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support adolescent-led initiatives, groups and networks, through grants, capacity-building, and access to information and key decision-makers. • Apply community engagement standards. • Establish adolescent-friendly feedback and accountability measures. • Use creative adolescent-friendly approaches, including support for adolescent media initiatives and participation in U-Report. • Support adolescents' use of human rights monitoring and reporting/complaints mechanisms to express their views and advocate with key duty-bearers. • Support peer education and networking among adolescent- and youth-led groups that defend human rights, gender equality, environmental rights, etc. • Support adolescents to meet with key duty-bearers and engage in governance processes (e.g., school and local governance, etc.).
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish feedback and accountability mechanisms to regularly gather and respond to adolescents' feedback on programmes. • Support adolescent-led reviews and evaluations, including building adolescents' capacity in participatory M&E methods. • Encourage adolescents to regularly review, assess and share feedback about approaches that help/hinder adolescents' participation and civic engagement. • Include indicators on adolescent participation and outcomes in programmes.

Participatory Action Research with adolescents in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon: UNICEF⁶⁵

Participatory Action Research (PAR) supported vulnerable adolescents, including refugees, displaced persons and host community young people, to research the problems affecting them and their community. It also built the capacity of UN and NGO partners to support, guide and mentor young researchers. Young people and coordinators learned how to conduct interviews, focus group discussions and use other data collection tools; drafted and implemented a research plan; and collected data from their peers. They transferred the data to UNICEF via tablets. UNICEF

supported the young researchers in data cleaning and analysis. After data collection, the young researchers received basic communication and advocacy training and started implementing advocacy plans at local, national and regional levels. In workshops, they directly interacted with key stakeholders and shared their findings/recommendations.

The PAR findings resulted in programming that was based on reliable and accurate data collected by young people themselves.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

Although these guidelines present a clear rationale for why participation matters and build on years of best practice within the child rights sector, limited systematic evidence exists on the effectiveness and impact of adolescent participation.⁶⁶ Difficulties in defining, conceptualizing and measuring outcomes of adolescent participation and civic engagement are acknowledged.⁶⁷ Several initiatives are under way to close these knowledge gaps,⁶⁸ and UNICEF has developed a conceptual framework for measuring outcomes of adolescent participation⁶⁹ which informed the Theory of Change outlined in these guidelines.

This final section provides brief guidance on monitoring and evaluation and links to sample programmatic-level indicators that correspond to the Theory of Change. Programming that is responsive to adolescents and their local contexts requires space and flexibility for additional and/or adapted indicators and measurement tools. Thus, participatory M&E processes involving adolescents are necessary (see [Guidance note: Adolescent participation in UNICEF monitoring and evaluation](#)).⁷⁰ Collecting and analysing data and information with adolescents on 'what works' and 'why it works' contributes to the evidence base on adolescent participation and civic engagement.

5.1 Outcome indicators

The conceptual framework defines **four potential outcomes of adolescent participation**. The decision-making process can affect one outcome or many. For participation to be meaningful, the adolescent must have influence or power over the decision. These four outcomes were selected because each one can indicate a wider range of positive changes or implications for adolescents:

1. Self-worth, self-esteem and self-efficacy: a combination of high self-esteem and high self-efficacy with high levels of self-worth indicates confidence,

aspiration to goals, ability to challenge rights violations, safety in speaking out and a sense of personal well-being.

2. Being taken seriously: this is interpreted as the perception of respect and encouragement to participate, as well as a sense of connectedness with the adolescent's reality, that prompts adolescents to participate in meaningful ways.

3. Making decisions: this domain plays a central role in the process of meaningful participation and reflects the influence and power adolescents have over decisions and matters that affect their lives.

4. Public and civic engagement: public and civic engagement include adolescents' influence over and participation in public decision-making, their sense of social justice and their civic knowledge.

5.2 Output indicators

Output indicators measure the quantity and/or the quality of performance or achievement that occurred because of the activity or services provided. (See [Appendix 13 for sample indicators for the main outputs in the Theory of Change](#).) For example, output indicators include:

- The number of adolescent girls and boys participating or leading civic engagement initiatives.
- Existence of a strengthened system for adolescent participation, which includes policies/laws in place to support systematic adolescent participation, institutionalized mechanisms/platforms for participation (e.g., student councils, local governance committees) at national level and at subnational level, budget allocated for adolescent participation, capacities built for service providers/partners and adolescents for participation.
- Existence of modules on children's rights, civic engagement and/or transferable skills embedded in the school curricula.



WHEREVER RELEVANT, DISAGGREGATE OUTPUT DATA BY GENDER, AGE, ETHNICITY, URBAN-RURAL, DISABILITY, CARE STATUS, INCOME AND OTHER KEY DIVERSITY FACTORS



- The percentage of adolescents trained in children’s rights and transferable skills (in formal or non-formal educational settings).
- The number of local governments that regularly meet (e.g., at least three times a year) and engage in dialogue with adolescent representatives/groups.

Wherever relevant, disaggregate output data by gender, age, ethnicity, urban-rural, disability, care status, income and other key diversity factors. Adolescents and other stakeholders can also use the nine basic requirements to monitor and evaluate the quality of the participation process (see Appendix 15, Section 5).

5.3 Input indicators

Input indicators refer to the resources needed to implement an activity or intervention (e.g., human, financial or material

resources, policies, etc.). (See Appendix 14 for sample inputs for the key strategies on adolescent participation.) These examples must be adapted based on the context, the sectoral or intersectoral programme design and the views and suggestions of adolescents:

- Budget allocations for adolescent participation in advocacy processes (with budget to support preparations for and follow-up to any advocacy events).
- Plans to support piloting of awards schemes (e.g., award for Child-friendly Local Governance mechanism supporting inclusive participation platforms).
- Training curricula to support capacity-building initiatives with adult duty-bearers and adult facilitators on adolescent participation.
- Budget/small grants for adolescent-led action/advocacy initiatives.





APPENDIX 1:

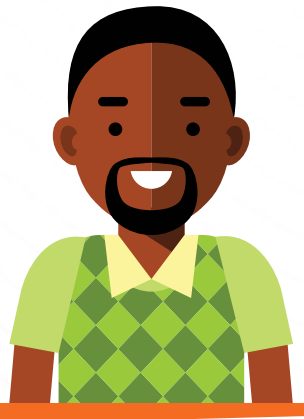
ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH, WASH, NUTRITION AND HIV

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, involved and able to influence decisions and matters that affect one's private and public life – at home, in alternative care settings, at school, at work, in the community, on social media and in broader governance processes. Staff are encouraged to recognize and promote adolescent participation as:

- A **goal** in its own right (*adolescent right to participation is fulfilled and adolescents influence decisions and matters affecting them*);
- A **means** to achieving results; and
- A **principle** of rights-based programming.

Particular efforts are needed to reach and empower the most disadvantaged adolescent girls, boys and those with other gender identities.

PARTICULAR EFFORTS ARE NEEDED TO REACH AND EMPOWER THE MOST DISADVANTAGED ADOLESCENT GIRLS, BOYS AND THOSE WITH OTHER GENDER IDENTITIES



Engaging adolescents and youth in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes requires that adults shift their **mindset** and value and approach adolescents as *equals*, as a constituency who can offer valuable perspectives and insights, take forward their own initiatives, and work alongside parents, caregivers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Reframing **adolescents as partners** and ensuring equitable access to information and participation will help harness their unique body of knowledge, experiences and views for more effective, relevant and sustainable services, policies and practices.

To improve outcomes for adolescents in health, WASH, nutrition and HIV, UNICEF should consider the following (sample) practices for adolescent participation and civic engagement:

LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS

- **Advocate for laws, policies and practices** – with commensurate budgets – that

Figure A1.1: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement



ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ENSURE ADOLESCENTS' RIGHT TO EXPRESSION, INFORMED CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL COUNSELLING FOR THEIR OWN MEDICAL TREATMENT



institutionalize equitable adolescent participation in community, school, health, regional and national governance structures so that adolescents can influence health and nutrition issues affecting them and give suggestions to deliver adolescent-friendly health services.

- **Advocate for policies and procedures that ensure adolescents' right to expression, informed consent and confidential medical counselling** for their own medical treatment, including HIV testing. As adolescents mature, they should be allowed to make decisions about their medical treatment while continuing to get support from their caregivers and health professionals.⁷¹
- **Support adolescent participation in the formulation of health- and nutrition-related policies/strategies** that are relevant to them.

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **Engage religious and traditional elders** to publicly support positive norms about equitable adolescents' participation in the domains of health, nutrition, HIV and WASH.
- **Promote intergenerational dialogue** on health, sanitation, nutrition and HIV in families, communities and wider public settings to increase mutual understanding and respect for all actors' perspectives and contributions across age, gender and background groups.
- **Partner with adolescent girls and boys** to develop and implement social and behaviour change strategies on key health and well-being issues that impact them. This includes working with adolescents to develop and implement behaviour and social change strategies and improve how adolescents, especially marginalized groups (e.g., those with disabilities, ethnic minority girls, refugees and migrants), are portrayed.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- **Provide government officials and professionals with capacity-building, technical support and mentoring** on key principles and approaches for adolescent participation (e.g., peer education to promote health nutrition/hygiene/HIV awareness, adolescent health advisory platforms, etc.).
- **Build the capacity of health and social providers to create an adolescent-friendly environment** that encourages adolescents' healthy behaviours and use of available health services. Health workers should be trained in effective, non-discriminatory communication with adolescents, which fosters trust building and sincere efforts to receive and act on adolescent feedback.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

- **Work with adolescents to develop and increase access to adolescent-friendly, gender-sensitive and disability-appropriate knowledge** on hygiene, health, nutrition, reproductive and sexual health topics.
- **Build adolescents' capacities** in decision-making, reflective thinking, self-efficacy and gender equality **to equip them to defend and negotiate their rights, relationships and choices for healthy well-being.**
- **Provide capacity-building and mentoring to strengthen adolescents' ability to serve as health promoters and peer educators** on issues related to mental, physical and sexual reproductive health; sanitation; and well-being.
- **Support adolescent-led participatory research and action initiatives** that inform service delivery, practice and policy developments on health, well-being, nutrition, sanitation or HIV issues that affect them.

PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Support adolescents' participation in offline and online clubs, networks and forums** (e.g., HIV clubs, school health clubs, adolescent girls' groups, water management committees, etc.) where they can discuss, analyse and action plan on health-related issues that affect them.
- **Support the establishment of adolescent client feedback mechanisms**, such as adolescent health advisory boards with clear TORs and roles/responsibilities in health settings. Institutionalized platforms provide a regular space for adolescent representatives to dialogue with policymakers and practitioners and to influence adolescent-friendly services, laws and policies.
- **Establish accessible, adolescent-sensitive feedback and complaints mechanisms** in health settings so

adolescents can share concerns and receive feedback on related decisions.

- **Support adolescent participation in programming processes** including analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Partner with adolescent- and youth-led organizations and networks working on HIV, sexual reproductive health** or other health issues to advocate for the health rights of disadvantaged groups. Provide adolescents and youth with capacity-building on organizational development, management skills, resource mobilization and advocacy skills.

Participatory programming with adolescents must follow the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation outlined by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 12](#). Otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.

Box A1.1: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents⁷²

1. **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
2. **VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
3. **RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
4. **RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
5. **CHILD-/ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
6. **INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
7. **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
8. **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
9. **ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.

Practical tools for mainstreaming adolescent participation in WASH, nutrition, health and HIV

CATINO, J., BATTISTINI, E., AND BABCHEK, A. (2019). *Young people advancing sexual and reproductive health: Toward a new normal*. This publication includes research findings, lessons learned guidance and promising case examples of young people's participation in sexual and reproductive health initiatives.

CHILDREN FOR HEALTH (CfH) resources. CfH provides a digital hub of free health education resources co-created with practitioners, children and experts around the world. For example, *The 100 Health Messages for Children to Learn and Share* is available as a downloadable booklet in 18 languages. CfH also works in partnership with health education and life skills programmes in a number of countries, strengthening approaches to child and adolescent participation.

FHI (2008). *Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning, and Implementation*. This guide includes assessment and planning tools and training materials for youth–adult partnerships. The training curriculum is designed to build the skills of individuals and organizations to engage and involve youth and adults more fully in youth reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programme design, development, implementation and evaluation.

FHI & YOUTHNET (2011). *Engaging Communities in Youth Reproductive Health and HIV Projects: A Guide to Participatory Assessments*. Youth Community Involvement Resources. This guide includes participatory tools for assessment involving young people and adults. Some of the tools can also be adapted to additional stages of the project cycle (implementation, monitoring, evaluation).

INTERNATIONAL HIV/AIDS ALLIANCE (2004). *A Parrot on Your Shoulder: A guide for people starting to work with orphans and vulnerable children*. This guide is aimed at facilitators working with children affected by HIV/AIDS. It contains 30 activities for engaging children

in group work: ice-breakers and energizers, observation, active listening and analytical skills, drama and role-play, painting and drawing.

KHAMAL S., ET AL., (2005). *The Joy of Learning: Participatory lesson plans on hygiene, sanitation, water, health and the environment*. Provides practical guidance to engage adolescents in WASH.

SAVE THE CHILDREN (2015). *How to Integrate Children's Participation in Health and Nutrition Programming*. It includes practical guidance and tools to involve adolescents in health and nutrition programmes, including information on practical ways to involve children and young people at each stage of the programme cycle.

WHO (2017). *Global accelerated action for the health of adolescents (AA-HA!): Guidance to Support Country Implementation*. This guidance focuses on the health of adolescents and includes helpful information on the neurobiological development of adolescents.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MAINSTREAMING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN WASH, NUTRITION, HEALTH AND HIV

- **GIBBS, S., MANN, G. & MATHERS, N.** (2002). *Child-to-Child: A practical guide*. Empowering Children as Active Citizens, Health Action Zone, Groundwork Southwark, London.
- **UNICEF & IRC** (2005). *Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education for Schools* Roundtable Meeting, Roundtable Proceedings and Framework for Action.
- **UNICEF ET AL.** (2019) *Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the global programme to end child marriage phase II: A summary for practitioners*
- **WATER AID** (undated). *A summary of child rights and WASH programme*.



APPENDIX 2:

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PATHWAYS

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, involved and able to influence decisions and matters that affect one's private and public life – at home, in alternative care settings, at school, at work, in the community, on social media and in broader governance processes. Staff are encouraged to recognize and promote adolescent participation as:

- A **goal** in its own right (*adolescent right to participation is fulfilled and adolescents influence decisions and matters affecting them*);
- A **means** to achieving results; and
- A **principle** of rights-based programming.

Particular efforts are needed to reach and empower the most disadvantaged adolescent girls, boys and those with other gender identities.

ADOLESCENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD IN INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS CONCERNING THEIR EDUCATION, SKILL TRAINING AND WORK



Children's right to influence decisions concerning their education is integral to quality education. Adolescents have the right to be heard in individual decisions concerning their education, skill training and work and in collective decisions related to school governance and educational policies and laws.⁷³ Supporting disability inclusion, gender equity and non-violence in schools and other non-formal learning and skill training spaces is critical to creating equitable participation. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 4, advocacy should support strengthened education and skill training systems that enable life-long learning for all learners.

Engaging adolescents and youth in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes requires that adults shift their **mindset** and value and approach adolescents as *equals*, as a constituency who can offer valuable perspectives and insights, take forward their own initiatives, and work

Figure A2.1: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement



ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT SUPPORT TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WITHIN FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION SUCH AS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, NEGOTIATION AND DECISION MAKING



alongside parents, caregivers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Reframing **adolescents as partners** and ensuring equitable access to information and participation will help harness their unique body of knowledge, experiences and views for more effective, relevant and sustainable services, policies and practices.

To improve outcomes for adolescents in education and alternative learning, UNICEF should consider the following (sample) practices for adolescent participation and civic engagement:

LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS

- **Advocate for laws, policies and practices** – with commensurate budgets – that support inclusive democratic structures, child-/adolescent-centred learning and integrated child rights and civic education within schools and training establishments.
- **Advocate for policies that support transferable skills** within education and alternative learning pathways (formal or non-formal) that enhance adolescents' skills in effective communication, negotiation and decision-making.
- **Implement school-wide child rights educational approaches** that place the right to participation at the heart of educational establishments' ethos and curricula, including active learning methodologies and democratic practices.
- **Support Global Citizenship Education (GCE)** to be provided as a compulsory subject within the education system for all young people including those in vocational education and at least up until the end of compulsory education⁷⁴

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **Collaborate with 'champions'** (teachers, school administrators, business leaders, student representatives

and adolescent entrepreneurs) to pilot and showcase the benefits of gender-equitable and disability-inclusive adolescent participation in decision-making in formal and informal educational and skill training settings.

- **Promote intergenerational dialogue** through adolescent–parent–teacher meetings and school-based associations to support increased mutual understanding and respect for the perspectives and contributions of all actors across age, gender and background groups.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- **Partner with and build the capacity of teacher training institutions and teachers' unions** to train, mentor and support teachers' implementation of participatory child-/adolescent-centred learning approaches, civic education, transferable life skills and positive discipline.
- **Build capacity, provide technical support and offer mentoring** to government officials, teachers and trainers to improve the awareness and skills of teachers and trainers working in formal and informal education and skill training institutions.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

- **Increase access to gender-sensitive, disability-appropriate and adolescent-friendly information** on child rights, gender equality, transferable skills and other relevant topics through formal, non-formal and informal educational and skill training establishments.
- **Partner with adolescents to promote awareness** on children's rights and other issues that affect them.
- **Mentor and build adolescents' capacity on child rights, transferable skills, civic education, digital literacy, peer education, peacebuilding or other capacities** to address issues affecting them through formal and informal settings.

Box A2.1: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents⁷⁶

1. **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
 2. **VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
 3. **RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
 4. **RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
 5. **CHILD-/ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
 6. **INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
 7. **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
 8. **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
 9. **ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.
- **Integrate activities that develop transferable skills for participation and civic engagement** into formal and non-formal curricula (e.g., cultural activities, arts, music, sports, in-school and after-school clubs, etc.).
 - **Partner with youth organizations to mentor and train adolescents on skills for participation and civic engagement** (transferable skills, advocacy, digital technology and arts).
 - **Support peer education, participatory research and action initiatives** within formal and non-formal educational and training institutions (e.g., peer mediation, anti-bullying campaigns or other action initiatives).
 - **Support adolescent-led initiatives** (including social entrepreneurship) including mentoring, especially among disadvantaged adolescents.
 - **Support school councils** to institutionalize platforms for adolescents (including the most marginalized) to equitably participate in school governance; help develop an inclusive, safe, quality education; express their concerns, and address bad practices.⁷⁵
 - **Establish accessible child-/adolescent-sensitive feedback and complaints mechanisms** within educational and skill training settings (formal and non-formal) so that adolescents can share their concerns and receive feedback on decisions that affect them.
 - **Support forums (offline and online)** that enable adolescents to influence policies and laws concerning their education, skill training and employment opportunities.
 - **Support adolescent participation in programming processes** including analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Support adolescent-led, school-based organizations and initiatives** to promote children's rights and to contribute to improvements in their schools and wider communities (e.g., child rights clubs, school sports teams, theatre and art classes, school photography clubs, bloggers' clubs, etc.).

Participatory programming with adolescents must follow the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation outlined by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 12](#). Otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.



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Practical tools for mainstreaming adolescent participation in education and alternative learning pathways

UNICEF (2009). *Stand Up for Children's Rights: A Teacher's Guide for Exploration and Action with 11 to 16 year olds*. This resource includes guidance and a range of tools to use with and by adolescents to enable them to learn about and stand up for their rights and the rights of others. Activities include creating a poster on the CRC, conducting a simple CRC survey, creating a community map, lobbying for change and more.

UNICEF (2014). *Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools*. This toolkit provides a wealth of guidance to assist practitioners and decision-makers in implementation of whole-school approaches, and includes a range of practical approaches and tools to enhance child rights education and adolescent participation in schools.

UNICEF (2017). *Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative Middle East and North Africa. Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa. A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills: Conceptual and Programmatic Framework*.

INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL GROUP ON YOUTH (2018). *Adolescent and youth engagement*. MENA UN: NGO

Adolescent and Youth Group toolkit. Includes guidance on economic participation and engagement as well as civic engagement.

WOMEN'S REFUGEE COUNCIL, UNICEF & CPC (2014). *Empowered and Safe: Economic Strengthening for Girls in Emergencies*. Shares evidence from development, emergency and non-emergency settings on economic strengthening as an effective strategy for reducing adolescent girls' risk of gender-based violence.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MAINSTREAMING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PATHWAYS

- **UN** (2016). *Youth Civic Engagement*.
- **UNESCO & UN WOMEN** (2016). *Global guidance: School-related gender-based violence*.
- **UNICEF** (2017). *Toolkit for adolescent and youth engagement*. UNICEF MENA.
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Technical note on young peoples' transition from school to work*.
- **UNICEF & SAVE THE CHILDREN** (2012). *Children's Rights and Business Principles*.



APPENDIX 3:

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN CHILD PROTECTION, CARE AND JUSTICE

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, involved and able to influence decisions and matters that affect one’s private and public life – at home, in alternative care settings, at school, at work, in the community, on social media and in broader governance processes. Staff are encouraged to recognize and promote adolescent participation as:

- A **goal** in its own right (*adolescent right to participation is fulfilled and adolescents influence decisions and matters affecting them*);
- A **means** to achieving results; and
- A **principle** of rights-based programming.

Particular efforts are needed to reach and empower the most disadvantaged adolescent girls, boys and those with other gender identities.

WHEN ADOLESCENTS’ VIEWS ARE MARGINALIZED AND IGNORED, ADULTS CAN MORE EASILY ABUSE AND EXPLOIT ADOLESCENTS WITH IMPUNITY



Engaging adolescents and youth in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes requires that adults shift their **mindset** and value and approach adolescents as *equals*, as a constituency who can offer valuable perspectives and insights, take forward their own initiatives, and work alongside parents, caregivers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Reframing **adolescents as partners** and ensuring equitable access to information and participation will help harness their unique body of knowledge, experiences and views for more effective, relevant and sustainable services, policies and practices.

When adolescents’ views are marginalized and ignored, adults can more easily abuse and exploit adolescents with impunity. By speaking up, adolescents are able to break the silence that supports rights violations, and through their participation they can improve justice systems. When adolescents are involved in legal

Figure A3.1: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement



proceedings they have the right to be heard directly or through an independent advocate. All adolescents who witness, survive or commit a crime must be properly informed about the proceedings, given opportunities to prepare and to express their views (directly or indirectly), and given feedback about the outcomes of the case.⁷⁷ Many justice systems do not have child- or adolescent-sensitive procedures because of a lack of resources and/or political will.

All adolescents, particularly the most marginalized (e.g., adolescents who have disabilities; are affected by conflict, displacement or migration; live in alternative care settings; identify as LGBTQI), must be empowered with confidence, knowledge, skills and platforms to share their perspectives and to assert their rights. A key outcome in the Theory of Change to end violence against children is that all adolescents are more empowered to exercise rights and agency; live free of violence; seek help; and build gender-equitable, non-violent relationships.⁷⁸

To improve outcomes for adolescents in protection, care and justice, UNICEF should consider the following (sample) practices for adolescent participation and civic engagement:

LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS

- **Advocate for improved laws, policies and procedures – with commensurate budgets – that institutionalize adolescent participation** in care, protection and justice proceedings that affect them, either through direct representation or through independent advocates.
- **Influence public financing for adolescent participation** (e.g., adolescent participation platforms, independent advocates, training of professionals on children’s rights, etc.) in care, protection and justice settings.
- **Advocate for legal aid** for adolescents (and families) to enhance their access to justice, care and protection; and ensure adolescents are heard in legal proceedings that affect them.
- **Strengthen the child-/adolescent-friendliness of court and justice procedures, police personnel and facilities, and diversion and restorative justice procedures** to make it easier for adolescent survivors, witnesses, refugee or asylum seekers, and/or offenders

to express their views and feelings and to influence decisions that affect them.

- **Strengthen Independent Human Rights Institutions** (IHRIs) to promote adolescent participation and to support safe opportunities for adolescent participation in human rights monitoring and reporting (e.g., CRC or Universal Periodic Review [UPR] reporting mechanisms).

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **Collaborate with ‘champions’** (adolescent-friendly police, social workers, traditional elders etc.) to promote the benefits of gender-equitable and disability-inclusive adolescent participation.
- **Partner with adolescent girls and boys in developing and implementing social and behaviour change strategies** on key issues that impact them. This includes working with adolescents to develop and implement behaviour and social change strategies related to care, protection and justice to improve how adolescents, especially marginalized groups (e.g., those with disabilities, ethnic minority girls, refugees and migrants), are portrayed.
- **Promote intergenerational dialogue** on protection, care or justice issues affecting adolescents from different genders and backgrounds, to increase understanding and value of all stakeholders’ perspectives and insights.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- **Provide technical assistance and advocacy to governments and associated training institutes** to plan, budget for and implement graduate and post-graduate courses and/or pre- and in-service training on adolescent participation in justice, care, protection for social workers, youth workers, probation officers, lawyers, judges and police.
- **Sensitize and train traditional and/or religious elders** to ensure adolescents’ views are heard in traditional or customary justice and protection mechanisms that affect them.
- **Support positive parenting initiatives** for fathers, mothers, grandparents and other caregivers to increase communication and problem-solving in families that is non-violent, intergenerational, and respectful of adolescents’ views, regardless of age, gender or sexual orientation.

SUPPORT POSITIVE PARENTING INITIATIVES FOR FATHERS, MOTHERS, GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING IN FAMILIES



AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

- **Increase adolescents' access to information** (offline and online) on laws, policies, programmes and matters that affect them in formats that are adolescent-friendly and accessible to those of different (dis)abilities, ages, genders and literacy levels.
- **Mentor and build the capacity of adolescents** on child rights, skills for civic engagement, gender equality, self-protection, peer education, participatory action research and advocacy to equip them to better defend their rights, address different forms of discrimination and injustice, enhance gender equality and prevent violence.
- **Support peer education, participatory research and action initiatives** on violence prevention, care, justice, prevention of child marriage, gender equality, inclusion, peacebuilding, etc.
- **Consult adolescents about the type of support they need most**, such as capacity-building, mentoring, information sharing, leveraging resources or accessing decision-makers.
- **Strengthen partnerships** with youth groups, outreach youth workers or independent advocates to collaborate with the most marginalized adolescents on outreach work, information sharing and mentoring.

PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Support volunteering and mobilization** of girls, boys including those with gender fluidity to help prevent gender-based violence and other forms of injustice.
- **Support adolescent-led organizations and initiatives** such as:
 - Community-based, camp-based or school-based **child clubs, youth groups, councils**, etc.

- **Children's associations**, including working children's associations and wider forums where adolescents can influence policy and practice that affects them.
- **Adolescent activists** who are mobilizing others to prevent and respond to child marriage, gender-based violence and other forms of violence and injustice.
- **Adolescent and youth initiatives and partnerships to co-design, implement and monitor inclusive, gender-sensitive, adolescent-friendly spaces** in humanitarian contexts.
- **Networking between adolescents and youth** who are involved in violence prevention, peacebuilding, promotion of child rights and justice.
- **Forums (online and offline)** for adolescent participation in laws, policies and practices concerning their protection, care and justice.
- **Strengthen institutional platforms for adolescent participation in justice, care and protection systems** – including linkages between existing adolescent groups/ clubs, community- or camp-based child protection mechanisms, and district-/national-level child protection systems – to ensure adolescents can access information and express their views directly and/or through an independent advocate.
- **Establish child-/adolescent-friendly and safe complaint mechanisms and referral pathways** in communities, schools, alternative care settings and work places in accordance with existing [guidance](#).

Participatory programming with adolescents must follow the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation outlined by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 12](#). Otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.



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Box A3.1: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents⁷⁹

1. **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
2. **VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
3. **RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
4. **RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
5. **CHILD-/ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
6. **INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
7. **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
8. **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
9. **ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.

Practical tools for mainstreaming adolescent participation in child protection, care and justice

ACTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (2009).

ARC resource pack: A capacity-building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. Foundation [Module 4: Participation and Inclusion](#). *Guidance and tools are provided to support the development of effective and ethical participation of children of different ages and backgrounds in project, programme and policy responses and service delivery during different phases of an emergency, from preparedness, early, intermediate and post-emergency responses to longer-term development.*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, edX training on [Protecting Children in Humanitarian Settings](#). *This 12-week online course includes a strong focus on children's agency and ways to support adolescent participation to enhance their protection and well-being in humanitarian settings.*

LAWS, S. & MANN, G. (2004). [So You Want to Involve Children in Research?](#) London: International Save the Children Alliance. *This toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children promotes research that sees children as active agents in their own lives, rather than passive victims or research 'subjects'. The booklet presents research techniques and pointers for involving children in secondary and primary research.*

PLAN INTERNATIONAL (2010). [Bamboo Shoots](#):

A training manual on child-centred community development/child-led community actions for facilitators working with children and youth groups. *The emphasis of the training is on practical actions that children will develop after identifying child rights violations, thereby creating a platform for them to recognize and address issues that affect them directly.*

PLAN INTERNATIONAL (2013). [Sticks and Stones](#): A training manual for facilitators on how to increase the involvement of children in their own protection. *This manual is the sequel to Bamboo Shoots. It includes guidance and 23 activities that can be used with children/adolescents to increase their participation in their own protection. Activities can be adapted depending on the participants' ages and abilities and the cultural setting.*

UNHCR ET AL. (2018). [Sport for Protection Toolkit](#).

Programming with young people in forced displacement settlements. *This toolkit shares practical guidance and tools for using sport to strengthen the protection of young people.*

UNICEF (2018). NHRI Series: [UNICEF \(2018\). NHRI Series: Tools to support child-friendly practices. Child-friendly complaint mechanisms](#). *Provides practical guidance on establishing child-friendly complaint mechanisms.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MAINSTREAMING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN IN CHILD PROTECTION, CARE AND JUSTICE

- **AFRICAN MOVEMENT OF WORKING CHILDREN AND YOUTH** (2014). [Child protection manual](#) by the Associations of Working Children and Youth.
- **FEINSTEIN, C. & O'KANE, C.** (2009). [Children and adolescent's participation and protection from sexual abuse and exploitation](#). UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, IWP 2009-09.
- **O'KANE, C., MESLAOUI, N. AND BARROS, O.** (2016). [Research Toolkit: Facilitators Guide for organising consultations with children in support of the International Campaign "It's Time to Talk – Children's Views on Children's Work"](#). Kindernothilfe, terre des hommes, Help for Children in Need.
- **PROMUNDO, INSTITUTO PAPAI, SALUD Y GÉNERO AND ECOS** (2013). [Program H|M|D: A Toolkit for Action. Engaging Youth to Achieve Gender Equity](#)
- **SAVE THE CHILDREN** (2008). [Promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence](#).
- **UNICEF EAPRO** (2017). [DIVERSION NOT DETENTION: A study of diversion and other alternative measures for children in conflict with the law in East Asia and the Pacific](#).
- **UNICEF** (2017). [Preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents. Theory of Change](#).
- **UNICEF** (2018). [DISCUSSION PAPER: Operational-level grievance mechanisms fit for children](#).
- **UNICEF** (2018). [Life skills programmes to end child marriage: are they fit for purpose? A regional synopsis from East and Southern Africa](#).
- **UNICEF** (2018). [Ensuring life skills programmes to end child marriage are fit for purpose. Standards and Guidance](#).
- **UNICEF ET AL.** (2019). [Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the global programme to end child marriage phase II: A summary for practitioners](#).



APPENDIX 4:

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, involved and able to influence decisions and matters that affect one's private and public life – at home, in alternative care settings, at school, at work, in the community, on social media and in broader governance processes. Staff are encouraged to recognize and promote adolescent participation as:

- A **goal** in its own right (*adolescent right to participation is fulfilled and adolescents influence decisions and matters affecting them*);
- A **means** to achieving results; and
- A **principle** of rights-based programming.

Particular efforts are needed to reach and

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empower the most disadvantaged adolescent girls, boys and those with other gender identities.

Engaging adolescents and youth in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes requires that adults shift their **mindset** and value and approach adolescents as *equals*, as a constituency who can offer valuable perspectives and insights, take forward their own initiatives, and work alongside parents, caregivers, practitioners, researchers and policymakers. Reframing **adolescents as partners** and ensuring equitable access to information and participation will help harness their unique body of knowledge, experiences and views for more effective, relevant and sustainable services, policies and practices.

Supporting adolescents' participation includes responding to and supporting adolescent-led

Figure A4.1: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement



MENTOR AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF ADOLESCENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, CLIMATE ACTION, DRR AND SKILLS FOR LIVING IN A CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND LOW-CARBON WORLD



activism for climate and environmental justice, as well as human rights. The world is witnessing more extreme climate change, droughts, flooding, pollution, dumping of toxic waste, etc., than ever before. Children and adolescents in developing countries have contributed least to the causes of climate change but are the worst affected by it.⁸⁰ Evidence-based⁸¹ activism by adolescents emphasizes the urgency and scale of the action required by local and global governments, private organizations and individual citizens. Engaging with adolescents as active agents builds their resilience and supports more relevant policy and practice responses.⁸²

To increase adolescents' participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate and environmental protection, UNICEF should consider the following (sample) practices for adolescent participation and civic engagement:

LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS

- **Advocate for improved laws, policies and procedures** – with commensurate budgets – that recognize and support adolescents' participation in local, national and global environmental protection, DRR and climate change action (e.g., building their own and their communities' resilience to climate shocks and stresses, promoting and adopting more sustainable low-carbon lifestyles, etc.).
- **Advocate with relevant government officials to embed plans and budgets** for adolescent participation within broader strategies and plans for DRR, climate change adaptations/actions and emergency preparedness, ensuring all efforts seek to strengthen gender equality, disability inclusion and the resilience of the most marginalized while reducing vulnerability.

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **Collaborate with 'champions'** who promote and support adolescent participation in climate and environmental protection.
- **Use social media campaigns** to show the **value of adolescents' contributions, priorities and perspectives related to environmental and climate activism.**
- **Promote intergenerational dialogue** on DRR, the climate crisis and environmental protection in families, communities and wider public settings to increase mutual understanding and respect for all actors' perspectives and contributions across age, gender and background groups.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- **Advocate and provide technical assistance** for training educators (formal and non-formal), government officials and humanitarian actors to implement child-/adolescent-centred DRR, environmental protection and climate change adaptation initiatives.
- **Strengthen partnerships with teacher training institutions** to integrate training on child-/adolescent-centred DRR into schools (formal and informal).

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

- **Work with adolescents and related information hubs to develop and disseminate disability-appropriate, adolescent-friendly information** on environmental issues, climate change and DRR.
- **Mentor and build the capacity of adolescents** on environmental protection, climate action, DRR and skills for living in a climate-resilient and low-carbon world (e.g.,

through experiential learning, action planning initiatives, community risk and resource mapping, emergency preparedness plans, etc.).

- **Partner with youth organizations** or other environmental protection agencies that have existing skills and expertise to support and mentor adolescent participation in environmental protection initiatives.
- **Support peer education, participatory research and action initiatives** on environmental protection, climate change and DRR.

PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Support adolescent volunteering** and engagement in CSOs that focus on environmental issues.
- **Support the participation and representation of adolescents** (including the interests, perspectives and needs of those most at risk) **in disaster reduction and climate and environmental governance** bodies and policies at local and national levels (e.g., national climate

change policy, DRR policy, national climate change adaptation plans, nationally determined contributions, etc.).

- **Strengthen networks** among adolescents and other actors who are engaged in environmental protection and climate change activism.
- **Support adolescents' participation and representation in national, regional and global fora on climate change** through offline and online platforms that collect, synthesize and share the views and suggestions of adolescents from different countries concerning the environment and climate.⁸³
- **Support adolescent participation in programming processes** including analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory programming with adolescents must follow the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation outlined by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 12](#). Otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.

Box A4.1: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents⁸⁴

1. **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
2. **VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
3. **RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
4. **RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
5. **CHILD-/ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
6. **INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
7. **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
8. **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
9. **ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.

Practical tools for mainstreaming adolescent participation in DRR, climate change and environmental protection

ACLU (2015). *Stand up/Speak up: a guide for youth activists*. USA. Provides guidance for young people who want to create change in their schools and communities. It includes advice on recruiting members; researching issues; planning campaigns; identifying allies, opponents and decision-makers; creating a coalition; leveraging the media; and dealing with the results.

SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN (2007). *Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction: A practical guide*. This guide – intended for trainers, teachers, facilitators and children – illustrates the steps to take to replicate a successful Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction (CLDRR) programme.

UNICEF (2016). *Child-centred disaster risk reduction: Contributing to resilient development*. This provides key conceptual and technical approaches to support child-centred DRR.

UNDRR (2019). *Words into Action: On the frontline of disaster risk reduction and resilience: Children and youth engagement guide*. This guide provides a wealth of knowledge and practical implementation ideas to support the inclusive and meaningful participation of adolescents and children in disaster risk reduction.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MAINSTREAMING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN DRR, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- **ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH** (2013). *Youth activist's toolkit*.
- **CHILDREN IN A CHANGING CLIMATE** (2009). *A right to participate: Securing children's role in climate change adaptation*.
- **GADRRRES**, Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector.
- **HART, R.** (1997). *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care*.
- **MADGE, N. & WILLMOT, N.** (2004). *Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making on the Environment*, Sustainable Development, and the Countryside. National Children's Bureau, UK.
- **OHCHR** 2018, *Framework Principles on Human Rights And The Environment*
- **UN CC:** Learn [website](#)
- **UNICEF INNOCENTI** (2014). *The challenges of climate change: Children in the front line*
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Risk-informed Education Programming for Resilience Guidance note*
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Youth Advocacy Guide, Youth Advocacy Guide Workbook*
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Adolescent Kit for expression and innovation*.
- **UNITAR** (2013). *Integrating Climate Change in Education at Primary and Secondary Level*



APPENDIX 5:

ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) enshrines participation as a fundamental human right. Participation is much more than having a voice. It is about being informed, involved and able to influence decisions and matters that affect one’s private and public life – at home, in alternative care settings, at school, at work, in the community, on social media and in broader governance processes. Staff are encouraged to recognize and promote adolescent participation as:

- A **goal** in its own right (*adolescent right to participation is fulfilled and they influence decisions and matters affecting them*);
- A **means** to achieving results; and
- A **principle** of rights-based programming.

Particular efforts are needed to reach and empower the most disadvantaged adolescent girls, boys and those with other gender identities. Adolescents require us

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to think differently about peacebuilding and humanitarian response. Every child, including adolescents, enjoys the right to participation, and these rights must also be upheld in fragile, conflict-affected and emergency settings. And as is being increasingly recognized, it is precisely in these settings that investing in and tapping into the power of adolescent participation – and acknowledging their role as rights-holders – can make a difference for fostering peace and social cohesion and improving the quality and impact of emergency response.

Of the world’s 1.8 billion young people, 1 in 4 live in settings affected by armed conflict and organized violence – with conflicts now driving over 80 per cent of humanitarian needs.⁸⁵ By 2030, it is projected that two-thirds of the world’s poor will live in fragile countries, where the proportion of young people is approximately twice that of non-fragile countries.⁸⁶ In many of these



Figure A5.1: Five main strategies for adolescent participation and civic engagement



How adolescents can make a difference in peacebuilding and humanitarian action

PEACEBUILDING: Mali has seen a sharp rise in political tensions, young people's recruitment into armed groups and repeated episodes of collective violence. UNICEF is training adolescents as 'peace ambassadors', with approximately 2,500 adolescents conducting online and offline advocacy, inter-communal dialogues, radio listening clubs, and sports and cultural activities on peace. Their participation through virtual events on U-Report will contribute to a memorandum to the government outlining the vision of young people on national reconciliation.

HUMANITARIAN ACTION: Following the 2015 twin earthquakes in Nepal, UNICEF supported direct outreach to communities through a variety of social and behaviour change communication strategies. To reach affected populations in remote areas, UNICEF partnered with a youth-led organization that already had strong district-based networks. Hundreds of young volunteers went door-to-door in villages and camps to exchange information, distribute leaflets and demonstrate the use of essential supplies.

settings, peace and security approaches still consider adolescents and youth as potential threats and neglect their needs or trivialize their contributions.⁸⁷ Similarly, meaningful engagement has also been a challenge in humanitarian action, in which adolescent participation has not been systematically mainstreamed in preparedness, response and recovery responses across sectors.

The important role of adolescents and youth in sustaining peace and supporting humanitarian action has received growing international recognition and global evidence. UNSCR 2250 and 2419 resolutions (2015 and 2018, respectively) recognize the important role of young people in peace and security and call on all actors to promote their inclusion and participation in peacebuilding. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit emphasized the urgent need to safeguard the rights of young people and engage them in humanitarian response efforts, as articulated in the [Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action](#).

A conflict analysis is a critical first step in the design of any peacebuilding programme. It is a way of creating a picture of the dynamics underlying conflicts and identifying priority areas for response. Therefore, engaging adolescents in conflict analyses can, in itself, be an important entry-point for participation and ensure that peacebuilding programmes address the root causes of conflict by prioritizing their perspectives, needs and participation.

To improve outcomes for adolescents in contexts affected by conflict, insecurity and disaster, following a conflict analysis UNICEF should consider the following (sample) practices for adolescent participation and civic engagement in peacebuilding and/or humanitarian action:

LAWS, POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUDGETS

- **Advocate for improved laws, policies and procedures on peacebuilding and humanitarian action** that recognize and support meaningful adolescent participation, especially for the most marginalized, in decision-making, peace and reconciliation agreements, and emergency response plans across sectors such as education, protection, WASH, livelihoods, etc.
- **Influence public financing for adolescent participation and representation** in peacebuilding and humanitarian action, at all levels and processes. Invest in quality and accessible services for adolescents in conflict-affected, fragile and emergency settings, including education and life skills for the most marginalized. Advocate for accessible funding for adolescent- and youth-led peacebuilding and humanitarian initiatives.
- **Transform institutional cultures to value the opinions and views of adolescents to strengthen social cohesion and resilience** and encourage their role in decision-making. Promote accountability and transparency mechanisms for government at all levels that address adolescent exclusion and are responsive to their needs.
- **Strengthen adolescent participation in Independent Human Rights Institutions (IHRIs), and human rights monitoring and reporting** including through CRC reporting, or Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reporting mechanisms. These offer entry-points to strengthen protection mechanisms and address structural and collective dimensions of young people's victimization, vulnerabilities and grievances.

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **Support media interventions** and programmes using multiple media platforms such as adolescent-led radio

PROMOTE QUALITY CONFLICT-SENSITIVE EDUCATION AS THE FOUNDATION FOR ADOLESCENTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACE



and journalism programmes, art events and social media campaigns to promote broad-based awareness among adolescents around peacebuilding, social cohesion and coexistence issues. Use interactive social media platforms and campaigns, such as U-Report, to connect adolescents to local- and national-level dialogues on peacebuilding and emergency response.

- **Engage influential actors and champions** to raise awareness on the importance of participation, especially of girls, in peacebuilding and humanitarian action, including tackling stereotypes and highlighting stories of their contributions.
- **Promote regular intergenerational dialogue** between adolescents, youth and adults from different backgrounds in the community to contribute to social cohesion by bridging divides.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- **Support capacity development of national and local government officials and humanitarian actors** to strengthen participation in all sectors and in all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle.
- **Institutionalize capacity-building of professionals** (teachers, social workers, health workers) working with adolescents through regular training on adolescent participation in peacebuilding and humanitarian action. Embed training in the policies, budgets and workplans of relevant institutions and organizations as part of broader strategies on adolescent and youth engagement, ensuring that adolescents and youth are involved in design and implementation of such strategies.

AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

- **Increase access to adolescent-friendly information on peacebuilding and humanitarian issues** at local, national and international levels. Identify adolescent-friendly online and offline venues where information can be safely disseminated and discussed. Involve

adolescents in developing and disseminating accessible information to engage their peers (in all their diversity).

- **Promote quality conflict-sensitive education as the foundation for adolescents to contribute to social cohesion and peace.** Invest in training on peacebuilding and humanitarian action for adolescents in formal and non-formal spaces (in schools, adolescent-friendly spaces, youth clubs, peace clubs etc.).
- **Partner with youth organizations or other specialized agencies on peacebuilding and humanitarian action** to support high quality and context-relevant knowledge and skills for adolescents. Support youth organizations for peer-to-peer learning and be ‘connectors’ between adolescents and policy and decision-making processes.

PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Support adolescent volunteering and participation in youth-led organizations and initiatives** through flexible funding, material or technical support for new or existing adolescent initiatives on peacebuilding and humanitarian action.
- **Institutionalize platforms for adolescent participation in governance**, such as in decision-making on peace, security and humanitarian action at all levels, including peace, reconciliation and reconstruction processes. Ensure that policies are shaped by the views of adolescents from the most marginalized, at-risk and traditionally excluded communities.
- **Strengthen networking among adolescents and youth peacebuilders and human rights defenders** on offline and online platforms that help adolescents jointly form, articulate and synthesize their views, allowing both contribution to high-level policy processes and to decisions provision of social services, and connection to peers in relevant youth organizations and networks.
- **Support high-level consultations through equitable and representative participation of adolescents in**

peace processes and agreements and humanitarian plans in fragile, conflict-affected and crisis settings. Ensure that consultations capture the views and perspectives of 'hard to reach'/marginalized adolescents.

- **Support adolescent participation in peacebuilding and humanitarian action** programmes: analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Participatory programming with adolescents must follow the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation outlined by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 12](#). Otherwise, participation runs the risk of being tokenistic, manipulative or unsafe.

Box A5.1: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of adolescents⁸⁸

1. **TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE:** Adolescents must receive full, accessible, diversity sensitive and age appropriate information about their right to express their views and the purpose and scope of participation opportunities.
2. **VOLUNTARY:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes, and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
3. **RESPECTFUL:** Adults should acknowledge, respect and support adolescents' ideas, actions and existing contributions to their families, schools, cultures and work environments.
4. **RELEVANT:** Adolescents should have opportunities to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities and to express their views on issues that have real relevance to their lives.
5. **CHILD /ADOLESCENT FRIENDLY:** Environments and working methods should consider and reflect adolescents' evolving capacities and interests.
6. **INCLUSIVE:** Participation opportunities should include marginalized adolescents of different ages, genders, (dis)abilities and backgrounds.
7. **SUPPORTED BY TRAINING:** Adults and adolescents should be trained and mentored in facilitating adolescent participation so they can serve as trainers and facilitators.
8. **SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adolescents should participate in risk assessment and mitigation and know where to go for help if needed.
9. **ACCOUNTABLE:** Adolescents should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes and should be supported to share that feedback with their peers.



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Practical tools for mainstreaming adolescent participation in peacebuilding and humanitarian action:

IASC (2020). *Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian Emergencies and Protracted Crises*. – Provides principles, tips and examples to plan, design, implement and monitor interventions along the humanitarian programme cycle with and for young people.

UNICEF (2016). *Toolkit on adolescents as peacebuilders – a practical framework for developing adolescents’ skills and competencies for peacebuilding and social cohesion*.

UNICEF (2016). *Conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding programming guidance* and *Guide to conflict analysis*. Provides the main organizational resources on peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity with specific sections on adolescents and youth.

UNICEF (2017). *Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation*. A package of guidance, tools and supplies to support country programmes to reach and engage adolescents affected by conflict and other humanitarian crises.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING: PRACTICE NOTE (2016). *This is a user-friendly guide on how to conduct a conflict analysis with an emphasis and examples on promoting youth and adolescent participation*.

UNOY (2018). *Youth4Peace Training Toolkit*. UNOY Peacebuilders, The Hague. Provides training tools and adolescent-friendly experiential learning tools to train adolescents and youth in peacebuilding.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MAINSTREAMING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

- **NEW WAY OF WORKING** (2017). *Framework for connecting humanitarian response and longer-term development work. Specific emphasis on the need to work with young people*.
- **UNFPA & PBSO** (2018). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth Peace and Security*. Flagship report on the common challenges and needs of young people in peace and security. Report has recommendations on the way forward to support young people’s role in peacebuilding.
- **UN SECURITY COUNCIL** (2015). *Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security – landmark resolution on calling for greater youth participation in peacebuilding*.
- **UNICEF** (2013). *Guide to engaging adolescents in conflict analysis*.
- **SAVE THE CHILDREN** (2015). *Conflict management and peace building in everyday life: A resource kit for children and youth*.
- **THE COMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION**. *A structure for coordinating and driving youth policy and programming in the field*.
- **WOMEN’S REFUGEE COMMISSION** (2015) *Including Adolescent Girls with Disabilities in Humanitarian Programs: Principles and Guidelines*.

APPENDIX 6:

GLOSSARY

This glossary largely builds upon the glossary from UNICEF (2019). *Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation*.

Accountability: A system whereby effective measures are in place so that governments or other duty-bearers are answerable for the protection of adolescents' rights and can be held accountable if those rights are not met.

Adolescence: Adolescence is a transitional period encompassing rapid physical growth and sexual maturation combined with emotional, social and cognitive development. *While UNICEF recognizes that individual diversity makes it difficult to define a universal age for the start or end of this critical period, defining a specific age span is essential for monitoring progress across contexts and across time. Therefore, UNICEF follows the WHO definition of 'adolescents', which is persons from 10 through 19 years of age.*

Agency: The personal capacity, or self-belief by an adolescent, in their capacity to act and to make free choices or to have control over their actions.

Autonomy: The freedom or the right for adolescents to make their own decisions about what to do, rather than being influenced by someone else, told what to do or have decisions made on their behalf by others.

Assent: Assent is the willingness to participate in research, evaluations or data collection by persons who are by legal definition too young to give informed consent according to prevailing local law, but who are old enough to understand the proposed research in general, its expected risks and possible benefits, and the activities expected of them as subjects. In most countries, if assent is given, informed consent must still be obtained from the subject's parent or guardian or a responsible adult. *(UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evidence, data collection and analysis).*

Civic engagement: Individual and collective actions in which people participate to improve the well-being of communities or society in general.

Efficacy: The power of an adolescent to influence or achieve a desired result.

Empowerment: The process of adolescents becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights. It also refers to the measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy.

Enabling environment: Those factors within adolescents' environments that serve to support, strengthen and sustain meaningful participation.

Engagement: Engagement in dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes.

Evolving capacities: The process of maturation and learning through which adolescents (and younger children) progressively acquire competencies.

Informed consent: The voluntary agreement of an individual, or his or her authorised representative, who has the legal capacity to give consent, and who exercises free power of choice, without undue inducement or any other form of constraint or coercion to participate.

Outcomes: Lasting or significant change, positive or negative, in an adolescent's life brought about by an action or series of actions.

Participation: Adolescents (individually and/or collectively) forming and expressing their views and influencing matters that concern them directly and indirectly.

Social norms: Pattern of behaviour in a particular group, community or culture, recognized as appropriate and acceptable, to which an adolescent is expected to conform and breach of which has social consequences. The strength of these norms can vary from loose expectations to unwritten rules.

Social ecology: A model that recognizes that adolescents behaviours are influenced by multiple factors ranging from their immediate family and peer group to the local, national and international levels.

APPENDIX 7:

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT GENDER-EQUITABLE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION, DISABILITY INCLUSION AND CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PARTICIPATION

1. GENDER CONSIDERATIONS: Given their specific social position, vulnerabilities and gendered experiences, adolescent girls may face different barriers, and they may react to and benefit from participation opportunities differently from adolescent boys.⁸⁹ For example, in some cultural contexts the views of girls are seen as less valuable than the views of boys, thus girls have less confidence to express their views. Adolescent girls also face increased restrictions on freedom of movement, and their parents/caregivers may not allow them to participate in spaces where they can freely interact with adolescent boys. Both girls and boys often face time constraints for participation; however, such constraints can be exacerbated by patterns of paid and unpaid work responsibilities, which are influenced by gender. Depending on the cultural context, girls might be hesitant to discuss some issues relating to violence, sexuality or health if they are in a group that includes boys; and boys may hesitate to discuss some issues in the presence of girls.⁹⁰

ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER-EQUITABLE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

- ✓ **Avoid stereotypical assumptions** about the roles and aspirations of girls, boys, young women, young men and those with other gender identities.⁹¹
- ✓ Encourage adolescents to **reflect on power relations, privileges and gender division** of roles and responsibilities to identify and address patterns of exclusion or inequality.
- ✓ Ensure that adolescent **girls have access to safe spaces** in which they can share their experiences and ideas, receive training and gain access to mentors and adult allies.⁹²
- ✓ Reach out to **inform and seek support from gatekeepers** (parents, caregivers, traditional elders, husbands) to enhance the participation of adolescent girls.

- ✓ Where separate gender activities are organized, it is important to **be sensitive and responsive to the feelings, views and suggestions of transgender individuals.**
- ✓ Promote non-discrimination and equitable participation opportunities for **adolescents who are LGBTQI**, including those who have fluid gender identities.

2. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT DISABILITY INCLUSION: Adolescents with disabilities often face additional barriers to participate in decisions affecting them. Some of these barriers are stigma and discrimination, lack of access to education, varying levels of encouragement from their parents/caregivers, inaccessibility of some venues, lack of access to information in suitable formats (e.g., sign language), lack of training for facilitators as well as few opportunities for children with disabilities to develop the skills and confidence to participate.

ACTIONS TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

- ✓ **Analyse, plan and budget** for the necessary support to ensure equitable participation of adolescents with disabilities. Engaging adolescents with disabilities requires **adequate preparation, commitment, resources, flexibility and skilled, trained facilitators.**⁹³
- ✓ **Increase capacity-building of staff and partners on inclusive communication** – applying the [inclusive communication module](#) to better understand disability terminology and disability etiquette, and providing tips to make communication accessible.
- ✓ Adolescents with disabilities might have physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. **Communicate/consult** with them to identify and build on their abilities and preferred forms of communication.

- ✓ Ensure the **premises** used during participatory processes are **accessible**, and that information/materials are shared in **accessible formats**.
- ✓ Give adolescents with disabilities the **choice to be accompanied** (or not) by parents, caregivers or friends who may enable their communication and participation.⁹⁴
- ✓ **Apply guidance UNICEF (2013) Take us seriously! Engaging Children With Disabilities In Decisions Affecting Their Lives**, which provides additional practical advice. For example, the creation of an **inclusive** environment in which adolescents with disabilities feel more accepted, included and confident can be enabled through:
 - A welcoming introduction: check to ensure all adolescents can participate.
 - Ensuring equal opportunities to participate: every adolescent can make a contribution if properly supported.
 - Building on adolescent's strengths: reinforce adolescent's abilities and strengths rather than focussing on what they cannot do.
 - Accommodating differences: give adolescents the time to understand and formulate their response; and to participate as they can.

3. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING WITH DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS:

Adolescents may face different kinds of barriers and opportunities based on their age, gender and other factors. Younger adolescents may be more susceptible to influence by their older peers, and may face increased restrictions on freedom of mobility and expression, compared to older adolescents. However, gender discrimination may enhance barriers faced by older adolescent girls in some sociocultural contexts. Younger adolescents may have less access to the internet and mobile phones, and thus have fewer opportunities to engage in digital technologies than older adolescents. However, motivation to access the internet and to increase skills and confidence in using digital technologies may be similar across age groups.

ACTIONS TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS:

- ✓ Provide some **separate spaces for younger adolescents** (for example 10–14 year olds), and older adolescents (15–19 year olds) to meet, prior to joint collaborative opportunities. This will help to ensure that

issues and priorities of younger adolescents are not overshadowed by those of older participants, as their agendas may differ.⁹⁵

- ✓ Encourage different age groups to **reflect and dialogue on power relations and privileges** experienced by different age groups; and ways to enhance equitable participation.
- ✓ Adolescent-friendly approaches require consideration of the **specific interests and abilities of different age groups**, as well as attention to **child safeguarding policies** and gender-sensitive approaches.
- ✓ Consult adolescents of different age groups to better understand their **preferred forms of communication and participation**. For instance, in some contexts, younger adolescents may articulate their interest to use games, sports, dance, drama, poetry, visual participatory tools (e.g., community mapping) or other forms of creative cultural expression or digital platforms to express themselves.
- ✓ **Strengthen partnerships with youth** (18–24 years) who can support efforts to deliver results for adolescents, because youth are considered key 'influencers' for adolescents.

4. CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND DO NO HARM is very important when promoting adolescent participation, especially in contexts where there has been recent or historical conflict or political insecurity based on ethnicity, religion, income or other factors. Adolescent participation and engagement is particularly important in contexts that are characterized by instability, insecurity and conflict, as such contexts can increase the vulnerability of adolescents to different rights violations and hardships, including deteriorated education, health, protection, water sanitation and hygiene facilities, increased risk of family separation, sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. In such contexts, fostering the capacities of adolescents to speak out against violations, and setting up mechanisms for redress through non-violent means, becomes even more important. In the UNICEF (2017: 4) Adolescent and youth engagement strategic framework, risks of adolescent participation were identified: *“Even when issues of building capacity and platforms are inclusive of marginalised adolescents, the process of engagement may not necessarily be linear and can run a number of risks. Young people themselves may choose to use skills and platforms in ways unforeseen or unintended, such as for overtly political actions. They may also be co-opted by those with power*

for unconstructive ‘engagement’ such as through underage recruitment by armed forces, gangs, political parties and factions. Any engagement plan should fully consider such risks at design phase and closely monitor them throughout implementation”.

ACTIONS TO ENSURE CONFLICT SENSITIVITY AND DO NO HARM WHEN PROMOTING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

- ✓ **Analyse sociocultural, political and economic factors** that influence adolescent participation and **use the findings** to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of participation strategies and interventions that **do no harm**.⁹⁶
- ✓ **Apply the Sphere principles**, to consider whether proposed interventions discriminate against any group or might be perceived as doing so, whether they

protect the rights of people who have historically been marginalized or discriminated against, and, if so, whether they consider the possible impacts on intra- and inter-communal relationships.⁹⁷

- ✓ **Apply Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding.**
- ✓ Engage with the **Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action.**
- ✓ Apply the [IASC Guidelines \(2020\) on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises](#).
- ✓ **Promote awareness and application of Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015)**, which recognizes the participation of young people as key to building sustainable peace after conflict, in key aspects such as repatriation, resettlement and reconstruction.



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APPENDIX 8:

STAGES OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION⁹⁸

Figure 8: Stages of adolescent development, and opportunities for participation

	PRE-ADOLESCENCE	EARLY ADOLESCENCE	LATE ADOLESCENCE	YOUNG ADULT
<p>Brain development and associated changes in behaviour</p> <p>Adolescent neurodevelopment is affected by social and nutritional environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to socio-centric thought • More concrete logical thinking • Craving for new information • Little development of prefrontal lobe and executive functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging development of prefrontal lobe and executive functions • More abstract thinking and less concrete thinking • Developed switching capacity (ability to switch between two concepts) • Increased sensitivity to rewards (more influenced by exciting, arousing and stressful situations compared to adults) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major opening to abstract thinking and full meta cognitive functions • Rapid increase in problem-solving abilities, learning and planning ahead • Sensation-seeking begins to decrease and rewards of peer affirmation declines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher stages of cognitive and moral development are achieved, but cognitive growth continues into mid-20s
<p>Social and emotional development</p> <p>Adolescent social and emotional development is impacted by neurodevelopment as well as gender and social norms (including parenting and peer and community interactions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in self-confidence • Fluctuations of self-image and increased feelings of embarrassment • Emerging need for privacy and increasing emotional autonomy from parents • Capacity to identify complexities and shades of feeling • Gradual shift in morality previously determined by rewards and punishments towards society rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in self-confidence • Fluctuations of self-image and increased feelings of embarrassment • Emerging need for privacy and increasing emotional autonomy from parents • Capacity to identify complexities and shades of feeling • Gradual shift in morality previously determined by rewards and punishments towards society rules • Social demands and expectations increase and may become increasingly gender differentiated (gender-based restrictions for girls frequently emerge at this age) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased self-reliance, emotional self-regulation and more differentiated self-conceptions • Gradual intimacy with parents increases once again (if positive relationships existed previously) • Intimate relationships become more important • Gradual shift in morality towards where society's rules are seen to support and serve human ends • Decline in conformity to peers, but social supports built on trust are increasingly important • Decision-making abilities approach those of adults, particularly when not in emotionally charged environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of legal privileges and responsibilities attained • Resistance to peer pressure by age 18 is comparable to adults of any age (stronger for girls than boys) • Improved impulse control, emotional regulation, less influenced by fatigue and stress • Concerns with having economic independence are prominent • Emotional autonomy continues to increase • Increased stabilization in relations with parents • Interest and concerns with future plans intensify
<p>Opportunities for participation in consideration of evolving capacities</p> <p>(illustrative only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing own style of dress and self-expression • Choosing own friends • Participating in family decisions • Participating in decisions made at school • Taking an interest in community matters • Accessing information on issues that impact or interest them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing what to do in own free time • Choosing who to date • Participating in family decisions • Seeking medical advice on their own • Running for student council • Volunteering in the community • Forming and expressing opinions on policies and programmes that impact them, and the larger society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing how to spend one's time, including education • Seeking medical advice and services on their own, including sexual and reproductive health services • Designing and leading own projects • Organizing with other adolescents to articulate common views and demands on policies that impact them, and the larger society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises full citizenship roles in society, including voting and running for office (ages vary) • Exercises full autonomy in all spheres of life

APPENDIX 9:

USING THE NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS AS A PLANNING TOOL FOR QUALITY PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

Figure 9: Using the nine basic requirements as a planning tool for quality participation processes

PLANNING TOOL: KEY QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT PLANNING TO APPLY THE NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1. PARTICIPATION IS TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE

- For consultative or collaborative participation, do adolescents have enough information about the process (purpose, scope, potential risks and benefits) to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate?
- For adolescent-led participation, are adolescents able to share information about their initiatives with their peers and with other potential allies?
- Is information shared in accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate formats and languages that they and their peers understand?
- Has relevant information about the process been shared with adolescents' parents/caregivers to ensure informed consent and encouragement for adolescent participation regardless of gender?

2. PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

- Is adolescent participation voluntary?
- Are adolescents fully aware that they can withdraw (stop participating) at any time they wish?
- For adolescents who are already engaged and active in their own initiatives, are they interested to join other relevant participatory processes?

3. PARTICIPATION IS RESPECTFUL

- Are adolescent's own time commitments (to study, work, play, etc.) respected and taken into consideration to inform the project design and timing of activities?
- To support consultative, collaborative and/or adolescent-led participation does the organization have flexible policies that allow staff to work at times that suit adolescents? (e.g., weekends, evenings?)
- Has support from key adults in adolescent's lives (e.g., parents, caregivers, teachers) been gained to ensure respect for adolescent's participation?
- Are strategies and activities planned and facilitated in ways that a) recognize and respect adolescents' existing skills, competences, interests and initiatives? b) build on positive cultural practices and c) enable respect for differences of opinion among participants?

4. PARTICIPATION IS RELEVANT

- Is space provided for adolescents to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important?
- Are the project objectives and issues being addressed of real relevance to adolescent's own lives?
- Do adolescents feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them?
- Is UNICEF and its partners sufficiently responsive to adolescent-led initiatives and suggestions?
- Is networking, exchange and learning supported among adolescents and youth?

5. PARTICIPATION IS CHILD FRIENDLY

- Are adolescent-friendly meeting places used, which are accessible to adolescents with different abilities, ages and genders?
- Do processes allow sufficient time for trust building among adolescents, and with adults?
- Do the ways of working build self-confidence and self-esteem of adolescents of different genders, ages, abilities and backgrounds?
- Are adolescents encouraged to explore issues using their own preferred forms of communication and/or using adolescent-friendly approaches including creative participatory tools?
- Are adolescents encouraged to work together in peer groups to support one another and to take forward their own ideas and initiatives?

APPENDIX 9:

PLANNING TOOL: KEY QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT PLANNING TO APPLY THE NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS

6. PARTICIPATION IS INCLUSIVE

- Do adolescents of different genders, ages, abilities and backgrounds have opportunities to participate and influence decision making?
- Are efforts made to analyse and overcome barriers for inclusive participation (through consultative, collaborative or adolescent-led planning with marginalized adolescents)?
- Are proactive efforts made to reach girls, boys, transgender, adolescents with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, out of school adolescents, stateless, refugee or migrant adolescents, adolescents living in alternative care, adolescents living in remote, rural and urban communities, etc.?
- Have partnerships with disability rights organizations/working children's associations/ethnic minority organizations/feminist groups, etc., been strengthened to support equitable participation opportunities?
- Have the activities – space, pace, roles – been adapted with adolescents so that they cater for a range of abilities and all can engage?
- Are adolescents encouraged to reflect on existing patterns of discrimination and to address discrimination through their participation?

7. PARTICIPATION IS SUPPORTED BY TRAINING

- Are there plans and budget to support capacity-building of adolescents on child rights, participation, transferable life skills, facilitation, gender equality and other topics identified by them?
- Have staff (UNICEF and partners including youth) been provided with training on child rights, participation, child safeguarding, facilitation and adolescent-friendly participatory tools?
- Do staff and volunteers have sufficient knowledge, confidence and skills to facilitate ethical and effective participation of adolescents?
- Have adult duty-bearers received training on children's rights and adolescent participation to increase the likelihood that adolescents' views are taken seriously?

8. PARTICIPATION IS SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK

- Are procedures for [child safeguarding](#)⁹⁹ and procedures applied?
- Have risks associated with adolescent participation been identified and efforts taken to minimize them in consultation/collaboration/or led by adolescents themselves? (*see Appendix 10*)
- Are risk assessments sensitive to current and historical conflicts?
- Are the principles of 'do no harm' and 'best interests of the child' sufficiently considered when designing, implementing and monitoring the project/programme?
- Have all staff, volunteers and partners received training on child safeguarding and the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse?
- Do all staff, volunteers and partners know what actions and behaviours are prohibited, what the sanctions are, and how and to whom they can report any concerns?
- Are staff members, professionals and concerned duty-bearers sufficiently trained to sensitively respond to adolescents in distress and/or to potential disclosures of abuse?
- Has a child safeguarding focal point been allocated for the programme/ project?
- Are roles and responsibilities of chaperones, facilitators, and a child safeguarding focal point clearly defined?
- Are referrals established for psychosocial support and other forms of support if needed by adolescents?
- Are referral pathways clear for emergency cases (e.g., if an adolescent is sick or in an accident?)
- If the participation includes travel, are procedures in place to ensure safe transportation logistics, accommodation arrangements and other requirements? (*see Appendix 10*)
- Have adolescents given their informed assent/consent to participate? (*see Appendix 6 Glossary*)
- Have adolescent's parents or legal guardians given their informed consent?
- Are adolescents informed and aware of the child protection code of conduct, and do they know how and to whom they can report any concerns?

9. PARTICIPATION IS ACCOUNTABLE

- Do adults take adolescent's views and suggestions seriously and act on their suggestions?
- Do agencies have indicators, plans and budget to monitor and evaluate the quality and outcomes of the participation process?
- Are adolescents supported to actively participate in follow-up research, monitoring and evaluation processes?
- Do UNICEF staff and partners consider adolescent views to tailor programme interventions across development and humanitarian contexts?
- Are sufficient time, capacity-building support and resources allocated to support adolescent participation in monitoring and evaluation processes?
- Are adolescents given feedback about the extent to which their views were taken into account?
- Do any elected adolescent representatives ensure timely sharing of information and feedback with wider numbers of adolescents who they represent?
- Is there a plan and budget to develop and disseminate an adolescent-friendly report of any planned evaluations?

APPENDIX 10:

A RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL AND ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE TO ENHANCE SAFEGUARDING

'Child safeguarding' refers to proactive measures taken to limit direct and indirect collateral risks of harm to children, arising from the work of UNICEF, its personnel or associates. The risks may include those associated with physical violence (including corporal punishment); sexual violence, exploitation or abuse; emotional and verbal abuse; economic exploitation; failure to provide for physical or psychological safety; neglect of physical, emotional or psychological needs; harmful cultural practices; and privacy violations.

Meaningful adolescent participation requires systematic attention to child safeguarding, ensuring proper implementation of **UNICEF Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children**, and adherence to **safeguarding procedures**, and for UNICEF staff and associates UNICEF Personnel Standards.¹⁰⁰ If adolescents are involved in research, evaluations or data collection, the UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis should also be applied.

Risk assessment and risk mitigation strategies should be undertaken in collaboration with adolescents and other concerned stakeholders, to ensure that adolescents do not face harm as a result of their participation. Risk assessment requires awareness and consideration of risks and opportunities for adolescents in the specific local and national sociocultural, religious and political context. It also requires consideration to gender and conflict-sensitive issues (see Appendix 8) with attention to how power affects relationships and responses.

Risks may be present whether adolescent participation is digital or face-to-face. It is important and opportune to recognize that adolescents are frequently early adopters of new technologies and they can access rich information, and communicate and connect in innovative ways through digital technologies.¹⁰¹ However, access to the internet

is accompanied by risks including: information overload; overuse of the internet, which may restrict time spent in alternative constructive activities; online bullying and spread of discriminatory messages; exposure to child sexual abuse and exploitation; unsafe sharing of information negatively affecting individual privacy; and risks of punishment for expressing views online. See UNICEF Standards for child safeguarding in online and digital environments.

- ✓ Undertake risk assessments, and regularly monitor, assess and mitigate risks in collaboration with adolescents.
- ✓ Assess risks associated with participation, but also analyse the risks of not consulting and not listening to adolescents (e.g., increased risks of adults abusing adolescents IF there are no channels for adolescents to share their concerns and complaints).
- ✓ Within their own adolescent-led initiatives, adolescents should also be actively involved in risk assessments and strategies to reduce risks and to inform decisions about when and how participation may not be safe or appropriate; and should be supported to adjust their plans if proposed activities are not in line with their best interests.

A MINIMUM PROCESS AND SET OF QUESTIONS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MITIGATION:

- Consider the socio-political, geographic, sociocultural and religious contexts; as well as current reactions and responses by adolescent and families, especially in humanitarian settings.
- Consider each scenario:
 1. No participation or consultation with adolescents
 2. Consultation with adolescents (through informal interviews, focus group discussions or use of participatory tools)
 3. Collaborative participation whereby adolescents collaborate with adults and are able to influence planning, decision-making and/or implementation

4. Adolescent-led participation – activities that are initiated and/or led by adolescents
- Complete the table below regarding potential benefits and risks/threats of supporting different modes of adolescent participation; and actions that have been or could be taken to reduce risks to make a decision

about whether it is in the best interests of adolescents to involve them. *Involve adolescents to help identify the benefits and risks/threats of their participation.*

Note: One example of a perceived benefit, and one example of an identified risk and risk mitigation strategies are shared.

Figure 10: Risk assessment tool for adolescent participation

MODE OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION	KEY IDENTIFIED BENEFITS associated with no participation or different modes of participation	KEY IDENTIFIED RISKS/THREATS associated with no participation or different modes of participation	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK (high, medium, low)	SEVERITY OF RISK (high, medium, low)	RISK MITIGATION what actions have been taken to reduce risks?	FURTHER ACTION NEEDED to ensure best interests and 'do no harm'
1. Adolescents are not involved						
2. Consultation	e.g., State-level consultation on child rights	e.g., 1) Adolescents will be transported from various locations with poor road safety record and conditions, which increases the likelihood of road accidents and potential injuries	Medium	High	1a) Vehicles pass all safety requirements and proper licensing 1b) Drivers required to strictly adhere to traffic laws and taking any additional passenger 1c) Drivers read and sign Code of Conduct	1a) Ensure trip is registered in office trip register along with the list of passengers 1b) Drivers must ensure adolescents always have a seat belt to secure them 1c) Give full trip itinerary to parents/caregivers
		2)			2a)...	2a)...
		3)....			3a)...	3a)...
3. Collaborative participation						
4. Adolescent led participation						

Ensuring risk mitigation and response to potential and identified harm during participation processes:

- ✓ Ensure **organizational recruitment procedures** and practices encompass comprehensive background checks when recruiting staff and volunteers.
- ✓ Ensure all staff have **signed the code of conduct**.
- ✓ Provide staff and volunteers with training on **child safeguarding**.
- ✓ When **designing, implementing and monitoring** the programme/project, listen to adolescents' views and **ensure that the principles of 'do no harm' and 'best interests of the child' are sufficiently considered**.

- ✓ Ensure **child safeguarding focal points** are allocated for programmes supporting adolescent participation and civic engagement, appointing individuals with skills and experience in sensitive responses to disclosures of abuse.
- ✓ Ensure that the **roles and responsibilities** of chaperones, facilitators and a child safeguarding focal point are clearly defined. See UNICEF (2010). [Children as Advocates](#) for examples of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for chaperones and facilitators.
- ✓ Ensure that **safe, confidential and ethical referral pathways for services are clear** for medical assistance, psychosocial support, alternative care, legal support, education support, etc., especially in circumstances where urgent medical assistance and/

or alternative care is required. Immediate emergency (and security) care needs of a child/young person must be prioritized and addressed before any other steps.

For participation opportunities, ensure that adolescents have access to sufficient information and spaces to give their **informed assent or consent** (see Appendix 6 glossary; Santelli et al., 2017¹⁰²); and that for adolescents under the age of 18 years informed consent is also gained from parents and guardians. See UNICEF (2010). *Children as Advocates* for examples of informed consent forms and media consent forms.

- ✓ Ensure that adolescents are informed and aware of the child protection code of conduct, and that they know **how and to whom they can report any concerns**. Serious incidents, particularly those involving UNICEF personnel, should be reported to integrity1@unicef.org.
- ✓ If the adolescent participation opportunities include **events or field travel, apply regulations** to ensure preparations for safe participation, prior to, during and after the event. These regulations include attention to:
 - **Event and trip planning:** ensuring transparent and fair processes to select participants; information sharing with adolescents/parents/guardians; securing written records for informed consent/ assent; risk assessments and risk mitigation planning; preparatory workshops with adolescents.
 - **Roles of chaperones, focal points and facilitators:** clarity about roles and responsibilities; and efforts to ensure the right people are selected for their role.
 - **Safe transportation logistics:** make sure adolescents have a safe way of travelling to and getting from locations where activities will take place. If using private cars or buses then get written consent of parents/guardians. Make any necessary arrangements for travel and
- **medical insurance, travel documents and visas** (where required).
- **Appropriate and safe accommodation arrangements:** following risk assessments and compliance with health and safety legislation; and sufficient rooms for the number of participants.
- Considerations for safe and **ethical media interactions** including informed consent forms for media interaction (if relevant); and preparations and briefings with journalists.
- **Emergency protocols and procedures in place to respond to** medical emergencies, accidents or injuries and preventative efforts including a record of pre-existing medical conditions/allergies/ dietary requirements. Staff to carry a First Aid Kit.
- Communication with parents or guardians including provision of emergency contact details.
- Codes of conduct developed by children/ young people to ensure rules of what is and is not appropriate behaviour; and emergency contact card provided.
- Debrief with adolescents, parents and chaperones.
- ✓ Approach consultations on **sensitive issues** (e.g., sexual harassment) in a **considerate and culturally** appropriate way ensuring that staff or volunteers have sufficient training and expertise to work with adolescents and to respond sensitively to their views and concerns.
- ✓ Carefully consider the ethical implications regarding reimbursements, incentives and rewards concerning adolescent volunteering or participation – see UNICEF Guidance Note: Adolescent participation in UNICEF monitoring and evaluation (pp.36–37).
- ✓ Safeguard adolescents' privacy through secure data storage. Ensure that data are password-protected.
- ✓ Teach digital literacy to keep **adolescents informed, engaged and safe online**.

YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONSENT TO TAKING PART IN RESEARCH INDEPENDENTLY IF THEY ARE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESEARCH, ABLE TO ASSESS THEIR OWN BEST INTERESTS, AND ABLE TO MAKE A VOLUNTARY CHOICE



APPENDIX 11:

DEALING WITH COMMON OBJECTIONS¹⁰³

Objections may be raised by parents, caregivers, adolescents, teachers, community elders, government officials or by staff, especially in humanitarian settings or contexts of political insecurity. The objectors may not know or take account of the benefits of participation, and objections are usually founded on views that children and adolescents are dependent and incapable. Obstacles derive from perceived external barriers, such as time available and the ability of adults to facilitate and respond to adolescents.

“Adolescents lack competence.” In different contexts, including humanitarian scenarios adolescents have demonstrated their competency to act responsibly and effectively to protect themselves, their family members, their peers and communities. Many girls and boys make ongoing important contributions to family life, to the care of siblings or parents, to household, agricultural or income-generating work. Adolescent competence varies individually (just as it does among adults) and varies in accordance with different aspects of the adolescents’ lives. However, adults need to open their eyes and ears to recognize and value the competency that girls and boys are exhibiting.

“Adolescents should learn responsibilities first.” Participation is an effective means for adolescents to take, accept, learn and understand responsibility. Participation is not the opposite of responsibility, rather it is a fundamental part. Listening to adolescents and taking them seriously is an important aspect of giving responsibility and creating an environment of learning to respect and understand others. Adolescents making decisions and taking action together develops accountability to each other. Learning responsibilities as adolescents helps prepare them for adulthood; many adults have not had experiences in childhood that prepared them for adult forms of citizenship.

“Adolescent participation is too complicated and too expensive.” Above all, facilitating and supporting participation of adolescents requires openness on the part of UNICEF and partners across the range of sociocultural economic political contexts, including humanitarian settings. It requires

competence on behalf of the adults and organizations involved – but so, too, do other sectoral responses. It is only because adolescent participation is sometimes considered an ‘optional extra’ that limitations and prohibitions based on complexity and cost arise. The reality is that participation benefits adolescents, families and communities, therefore suggesting that it is an ‘optional extra’ or an additional burden is unhelpful, unrealistic and not properly responsive to adolescents’ circumstances, protection and development, especially in humanitarian settings.

“Children and adolescents will lose their childhood and not respect parents.” Participation is a voluntary process and should not be burdensome. The notion of adolescents ‘losing their childhood’ rests on a perception of children and adolescents being entirely dependent. But adolescents make decisions and take action every day; for example, in their communications and relationships with family, peers, schoolteachers and other adults in their community. Some adolescents who are carers for parents or who are working make life-surviving decisions every day – and not only for themselves. The processes of participation only enhance and improve qualities and capabilities that adolescents already have.

“Participation is not part of ‘traditional’ culture.” Although adolescents may not be recognized as active decision makers in many traditional cultures, many adolescents are active agents in their own lives and contribute to their families and communities. Furthermore, societies, cultures and environments are not static but dynamic; they change over time. Changes in the position of women in many societies have demonstrated the benefits of shifts in values, beliefs and practice, for example, with greater recognition of women’s rights to protection from domestic violence. Children’s rights to protection and participation and their benefits are also increasingly recognized.

“There is no time to develop adolescent participation in emergencies.” The supposed obstacle of ‘no time’ is really an objection and may be linked to the idea of participation not

being part of local ‘tradition’ – that is, adolescent participation is not part of the ‘relief’ tradition. Many adolescents participate during emergencies and in the immediate relief stage, and thus their efforts should be actively support to increase safe and effective participation across the humanitarian programme cycle and in peacebuilding initiatives. As the need for urgency diminishes and more time is available at later stages, there is even more time for adolescent participation to be planned for and taken up. Furthermore, training and support for adolescent participation should be integrated into emergency preparedness.

“Adolescent participation puts them at risk.” In general, adolescent participation serves to enhance their protection by gaining a better understanding of their circumstances, by enabling environments in which they can speak out about problems and because participation promotes resilience. There are occasions, perhaps media events and public conferences, where children’s best interests are not served through them speaking out or being identified because of later repercussions. But systematic risk assessments and

risk mitigation involving adolescents (*see Appendix 10*) can help to prevent and protect children from participation that is determined not to be in their best interests. Systematic use of the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation supports planning, implementation and monitoring of adolescent participation with careful consideration of their best interests.

“Adolescents can be manipulated by adults.” Adults may control the processes of participation and manipulate adolescents through poor quality and unethical processes to achieve outcomes for themselves. It may superficially appear to be participation, but this is because there needs to be greater experience and critical understanding of participation definitions, processes and outcomes. Such manipulation must be prevented, by ensuring common understanding of adolescent participation, different modes of participation, and the nine basic requirements. Attention to basic requirements for quality participation, transparency within and among agencies and processes of accountability work against manipulation.



APPENDIX 12:

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Transferable skills, also known as life skills, soft skills or socio-emotional skills, allow young people to become agile, adaptive learners and citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social and economic challenges. They include problem-solving, negotiation, self-management, empathy and communication. They support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face

of adversity. Transferable skills work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce, and develop other skills and build further knowledge. Many national education and learning systems and skills development programmes have developed frameworks that identify, prioritize and conceptualize a set of transferable skills to be developed through programming.

Figure 11: Example of transferable skills, Egypt country office

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	RELATED LIFE SKILLS
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	
Participation	• Dialogue, active listening, analytical and critical thinking, self-confidence, agency
Empathy	• Understanding others, caring for others, identifying abusive and non-abusive behaviours, altruistic behaviour, conflict management, conflict resolution, understanding and managing emotions
Respect for diversity	• Active tolerance social interaction, self-esteem, self-control, analytical thinking, active listening
LEARNING	
Creativity	• Innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis and synthesis; agency
Critical thinking	• Questioning, interpreting information, synthesizing, listening; self-protection, social responsibility
Problem-solving	• Curiosity, attentiveness, analytical thinking, active engagement
EMPLOYABILITY	
Productivity	• Work hard, produce results
Cooperation	• Teamwork to achieve common goals, collaboration in the workplace, respect for others
Negotiation	• Influencing and leadership, cooperation, customer relationship, career planning, effective communication
Decision-making	• Action planning, goal setting, leadership skills, risk taking, safety skills, ethical reasoning
PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT	
Accountability	• Ensure sharing and feedback
Self-management	• Self-efficacy, goal setting, life planning, autonomy, agency, self-help, motivation
Resilience	• Grit, steadfastness, stress control, adaptability, self-efficacy, self-development, agency, emotional and behavioural regulation, adaptation to adversity, emergency preparedness
Communication	• Relationship management, self-realization, self-presentation, active listening, two-way empathic communication, appropriate assertiveness

Source: UNICEF, 2019, Global Framework for Transferable Skills

APPENDIX 13:

SAMPLE OUTPUT INDICATORS FOR KEY STRATEGIES ON ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

Figure 12: Sample output indicators for key strategies on adolescent participation

KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
OUTPUT A: Laws, policies, practices and budget that institutionalize adolescent participation	
A.1 Legal protection for adolescent right to participate is reflected in the national Constitution and/or in other relevant legislation and policies.	Constitution and analysis of laws and policies.
A.2 Existence of mechanisms to enable adolescents to exercise their right to participate safely in administrative and judicial proceedings.	Operational documents (judiciary, admin).
A.3 Existence of an adolescent participation costed strategic plan by the government or local authorities.	Document analysis.
A.4 Existence of an appropriate budget for the government authorities to implement policies and plans on adolescent participation.	Budget and document analysis.
A.5 Proportion of priorities formally expressed by adolescent reflected in plans, e.g., local government development plans and budgets, school improvement plans and budgets, reconstruction plans, etc.	Document and budget analysis.
A.6 "% of UNICEF country offices routinely engaging adolescents in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of country programmes."	UNICEF country plans and proposals.
OUTPUT B: Enhanced intergenerational relationships and norms that encourage adolescents to express their views and feelings	
B.1 % of adults who believe adolescents should have the chance to participate in addressing issues affecting society (proxy for social norm).	Survey of teachers/governance staff/ public.
B.2 % of adolescents who believe adolescents should have the chance to participate in addressing issues affecting society (proxy for social norm).	Survey of adolescents.
B.3 # of communication programmes, public awareness campaign and other approaches designed to enhance positive social norms on adolescent participation (with disaggregated findings for age, gender, backgrounds).	Mapping report(s).
OUTPUT C: Improved knowledge, skills and attitudes of adults to listen and to take into account adolescents' views	
C.1 Existence of training programmes on children's rights and adolescent participation which are embedded in training programmes for professionals working with and for adolescents (especially teachers, doctors, health workers, social workers, judges, lawyers, police).	Review of professional training curricula.
C.2 Existence of costed plans to train professionals working with and for adolescents on children's rights and adolescent participation.	Budget analysis.
C.3 # (%) of service providers (teachers, lawyers, police, social workers, health service providers, etc.) trained on children's rights and adolescent participation.	Attendance sheets (training institutions).
C.4 # (%) of parents/caregivers with adolescents who participate in positive parenting initiatives.	Parenting initiative monitoring sheets.
C.5 # (%) of professionals working with and for adolescents (especially teachers, doctors, health workers, social workers, judges, lawyers, police) with improved skills for facilitating adolescent participation.	Pre- and post-training assessments.

APPENDIX 13:

KEY PROGRESS INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
OUTPUT D: Improved confidence, skills and knowledge of adolescents to express their views and feelings	
D.1 Existence of adolescent-friendly information on main laws, policies and budgets affecting adolescents.	Review of information available on laws, policies and budgets.
D.2 Existence of adolescent-friendly materials on main laws, policies and budgets that are available in braille or other disability-accessible formats.	
D.3 Existence of modules on children's rights, and civic engagement and/or transferable skills embedded in the school curricula.	Review of formal school curricula.
D.4 Existence of modules on children's rights, and civic engagement and/or transferable skills for non-formal education settings.	Review of non-formal educational training materials.
D.5 Existence of costed plans to train adolescent on children's rights and transferable skills in formal and non-formal education.	Budget and document analysis.
D.6 # (%) of adolescents trained in children's rights and transferable skills (in formal or non-formal educational settings).	Formal and non-formal data.
D.7 % of adolescents who are aware of participation opportunities at school, community, municipal or national level.	Survey data.
D.8 # (%) of humanitarian programmes supported by UNICEF that are informed by adolescents' views and ideas.	UNICEF proposals and plans.
D.9 # (%) of development programmes supported by UNICEF that are informed by adolescents' views and ideas.	UNICEF proposals and plans.
OUTPUT E: Expanded opportunities and platforms for equitable adolescent participation across spheres	
E.1 # (%) of adolescents who have a) participated a public meeting, demonstration or protest; b) contracted a local councillor or member of assembly; or c) signed petition.	Survey data/data from UNICEF and other agencies.
E.2 % schools that have established school councils or student unions holding regular meetings (at least three times a year).	Ministry of Education.
E.3 % schools that have established school councils or student union that include representation from adolescents with disabilities and other identified marginalized groups.	Ministry of Education.
E.4 # and diversity of child/adolescent-led organizations registered at local, subnational, and national level.	Mapping report(s).
E.5 # of local governments that regularly meet (e.g., at least three times a year) and dialogue with adolescent representatives/ groups.	Local government data.
E.6 Proportion of girls and boys, and children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups who participate in local governance platforms.	Meeting reports.
E.7 Existence of adolescent-friendly complaints mechanisms which receive comments from adolescents.	Independent Human Rights Institution reports, reports from humanitarian agencies.
E.8 Proportion of adolescent-friendly complaints mechanisms where adolescents receive feedback about complaints submitted.	Independent Human Rights Institution reports, reports from humanitarian agencies.
E.9 # of adolescents who participate in high-level consultations (offline or online).	Online monitoring data, and offline consultation registration forms.

APPENDIX 14:

SAMPLE INPUTS FOR KEY STRATEGIES ON ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

Figure 13: Sample inputs for key strategies on adolescent participation

NPOT INDICATORS FOR STRATEGY 1) Advocate for laws, policies, practices and budgets that enable institutionalization of adolescent participation

- Plan for a review/analysis of laws, policies, practices and budgets supporting adolescent participation.
- Budget for a review/ analysis of laws, policies, practices and budgets.
- Technical support from lawyers and budget analysts.
- Plan for adolescent participation in advocacy processes.
- Budget allocations for adolescent participation in advocacy processes (with budget to support preparations for, and follow-up to any advocacy events).
- Plan to pilot new practices in institutional settings (e.g., adolescent-friendly court procedures for adolescent views to be heard in court).
- Budget to pilot new practices in institutional settings.
- Partnership/Memorandum of Understanding established with the Independent Human Rights Institution (including a specific focus on strengthening mechanism to promote adolescent participation).

INPUT INDICATORS FOR STRATEGY 2) Enhance positive social norms and attitudes

- Partnership agreement with media agencies, including strategic partnerships supporting adolescent social media initiatives.
- Partnership agreement with community-based influencers such as religious and traditional elders, youth groups, women's groups are fostered through the programme.
- Plan to support intergenerational dialogue in different settings.
- Budget to support intergenerational dialogue in different settings.
- Plan to support piloting of awards scheme (e.g., award for Child-Friendly Local Governance mechanism supporting inclusive participation platforms).
- Budget to support piloting of awards scheme.

INPUT INDICATORS FOR STRATEGY 3) Build the awareness, skills and capacities of adults

- Plans to support capacity-building initiatives with adult duty-bearers and with adult facilitators on adolescent participation (including training of UNICEF and partners staff across development and humanitarian contexts).
- Training curricula to support capacity-building initiatives with adult duty-bearers and with adult facilitators on adolescent participation.
- Budget to support capacity-building initiatives with adult duty-bearers and with adult facilitators on adolescent participation.
- Budget for advocacy with the professional training institutes to integrate capacity-building on children's rights, child and adolescent right to be heard in professional training (e.g., of teachers, doctors, health workers, social workers, lawyers, judges, police, etc.).
- Partnership agreement with local universities or training institutes to institutionalize training for professionals on adolescents' participation.
- Plan to pilot positive parenting interventions with adolescents.
- Budget to pilot positive parenting interventions with adolescents.
- Plan for mentoring, supervision and networking among facilitators to enhance power-sharing, reflection and learning.

APPENDIX 14:

INPUT INDICATORS FOR STRATEGY 4) Build the awareness, skills and capacities of adolescents

- Plan to support capacity-building initiatives with and by adolescents.
- Training curricula to support capacity-building initiatives with and by adolescents.
- Budget to support capacity-building initiatives with and by adolescents.
- Development of accessible information on laws/policies/issues affecting adolescents in gender-sensitive, age-appropriate, disability-inclusive formats.
- Partnership agreement with youth organizations or agencies specialized in capacity-building on digital technologies.
- Partnership agreement with organizations for people with disabilities to support capacity-building on disability inclusion.
- Plan for advocacy with the Ministry of Education to increase government planning and budgets for embedding children's rights, civic education and transferable skills in the school curricula.
- Plans for adolescent participation are integrated into country strategic plans, annual plans, thematic programme plans and/or sector programmes across development and humanitarian settings.
- Budgets for adolescent participation are integrated into country strategic plans, annual plans, thematic programme plans and/or sector programmes across development and humanitarian settings.

INPUT INDICATORS FOR STRATEGY 5) Create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement

- Mapping report of existing adolescent and youth organizations and initiatives, disability rights, gender rights organizations.
- Plan to support diverse types of platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement.
- Budget to support diverse types of platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement.
- Budget/small grants for adolescent-led action/advocacy initiatives.
- Budget for regular planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings among adolescents, and between adolescents and key duty-bearers (e.g., in schools, in communities/camps, local government, national government) through adolescent participation in school governance or local governance (e.g., Child-Friendly Local Governance initiatives).
- Budget for preparing, implementing and follow-up to high-level consultations (offline or online).
- Technical support to support online digital platforms for high-level consultations

CROSS-STRATEGY: *Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation are used as a tool to plan and monitor the quality of adolescent participation*

APPENDIX 15:

PRACTICAL TOOLS AND USEFUL RESOURCES FOR EACH SECTION OF THE GUIDELINES

Sections 1 and 2: Practical tools and resources for ensuring conceptual understanding of adolescent participation

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR ENSURING CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

ACTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN (2009). ARC resource pack: A capacity-building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. [Foundation Module 4 on Participation and Inclusion](#). This includes tools to explore the concept and practice of adolescent participation with adolescents and/or adults (e.g., the “participation balloon” [section 1, exercise 2]); and exercises to explore participation rights (section 2, exercise 2).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENSURING CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

- **BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION AND KIT** (2017). *Empowerment of women and girls: a conceptual understanding*.
- **COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD** (2016). [CRC/C/GC/20](#). General comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence.
- **INNOVATIONS IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION** (2010). *Youth development through civic engagement: Mapping assets in South Asia*.
- **INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL GROUP ON YOUTH** (2018). *Adolescent and youth engagement*. MENA UN: NGO Adolescent and Youth Group toolkit.
- **INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION** (2007). *Children as active citizens: commitments and obligations for children's civil rights and civic engagement in East Asia and the Pacific*.
- **LUNDY, L.** (2007). *Voice is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927–942.



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- **UNESCO** (2012). *Understanding Youth Civic Engagement*.
- **UNICEF** (2010). *What works: Finding their voice – engaging adolescents in meaningful participation strategies*. Adolescent participation in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **UNICEF ET AL.** (2017). *LSCE: Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-dimensional and systems approach to 21st Century Skills*.
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation*
- **UNICEF INNOCENTI RESEARCH CENTRE** (2018). *Cradled by Conflict: child involvement with armed groups in contemporary conflict*.
- **UNICEF & SAVE THE CHILDREN** (2011). *Every Child's Right to be Heard: A Resource Guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12*.

Section 3: Practical tools for situation analysis of adolescent participation rights

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR SITUATION ANALYSIS OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION RIGHTS

SAVE THE CHILDREN, UNICEF ET AL. (2014). *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation: Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children.* Booklet 2 provides matrices and indicators to measure the extent to which governments support a participatory and respectful environment for children. It provides 25 indicators covering three categories: i) protecting the right to participate, ii) promoting awareness of the right to participate and iii) creating spaces for participation.

UNICEF (2017). *Child participation in local governance.* A UNICEF guidance note. This publication includes detailed guidance to inform a situation analysis, with a particular focus on child/adolescent participation in local governance. It emphasizes the need to analyse data on the child policy framework; the decentralization framework; the institutional landscape; and the social, cultural and political context.

3.1 Practical tools and resources to advocate for laws, policies, practices and budgets that enable institutionalization of adolescent participation

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO ADVOCATE FOR LAWS, POLICIES AND BUDGETS THAT ENABLE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT (2013). *Speak up for your rights. OP3 CRC.* A short guide for children, teens and child-led organizations about a new United Nations Treaty that lets you speak up about child rights violations.

NGO GROUP FOR THE CRC (2011). *Together with children – for children.* A guide for non-governmental organizations accompanying children in CRC reporting. Provides practical guidance to support child and adolescent participation in the CRC reporting process, including preparation of and submission of reports, support for delegates of children/adolescents to present their views to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and follow-up work using the concluding observations.

SAVE THE CHILDREN, UNICEF, ZIMBABWE YOUTH COUNCIL AND NANGO (2015). *Child Friendly National Budgeting*

Initiative, Facilitators Manual. Provides training materials to support new ideas and skills in budgeting and analysis of budgets, including opportunities for adolescent participation in budget analysis and governance processes.

SAVE THE CHILDREN (2011). *Child Rights Governance: Universal Periodic Toolkit.* A guide for country programs. Provides practical guidance and tools to support civil society engagement and adolescent participation in UPR reporting.

UNICEF & SAVE THE CHILDREN (2011). *Every Child's Right to be Heard: A Resource Guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12.* This resource guide provides a comprehensive explanation of how to understand the obligation to listen to children and take them seriously. It provides illustrative examples of laws, regulations and policies adopted by some governments to give effect to the right embodied in Article 12; case studies; and research evidence on the benefits of listening to children.

UNICEF (2017). *Children's participation in the work of NHRIs.* This tool provides detailed guidance to National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) on what is meant by child participation, how to engage children in multiple ways in various aspects of the work of the institution and how to ensure that this work is at all times ethical and effective.

UNICEF (2017). *UNICEF's Engagement in Influencing Domestic Public Finance for Children (PF4C):* A global programme framework. This document includes practical guidance to influence financial planning and spending for children. It includes guidance to improve the capacity of adolescents and civil society groups to review and analyse budgets and to engage in budget decision-making at local and central levels.

3.2 Practical tools and resources to enhance positive social norms and attitudes

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO ENHANCE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

UNICEF (2020). *Communication for development programme guidance.* The C4D programme guidance provides an organization-wide framework, terminology and technical guidance, and delivery platforms and implementation strategies for evidence-based and quality C4D programmes and strategies across different programming contexts linked to the SDGs and the 2018–2021 strategic plan.

UNICEF, PETIT V. AND ZALK T.N. (2019). *Everybody wants to belong: practical guide to tackling and leveraging social norms in behavior change programming.*

UNICEF ET AL. (2019) *Technical note on gender-transformative approaches in the global programme to end child marriage phase II: A summary for practitioners.* This technical note provides guidance on how to translate bold commitments to gender equality and gender transformation into practical action. It emphasizes the importance of placing girls at the centre of programming, building their skills and agency to open alternative life choices beyond child marriage; and it provides guidance to support children's agency and participation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO ENHANCE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS AND ATTITUDES

- **CISLAGHI, B. & HEISE, L.** (2018). *Theory and practice of social norms interventions: eight common pitfalls.* *Global Health*, 14 (1), 83.
- **CISLAGHI, B. ET AL.** (2019). *Changing Social Norms: the Importance of Organized Diffusion for Scaling Up Community Health Promotion and Women Empowerment Interventions.* *Prevention Science*, 20 (6), 936–946.
- **IFRC** (2013). *Youth on the move: Youth as agents of behavioural change. Doing more. Doing better. Reaching further.* YABC.
- **UNFPA-UNICEF** (2016). *Manual on social norms and change.*
- **UPENN** MOOC online training on social norms

33 Practical tools and resources to build the awareness, skills and capacities of adults to promote and support adolescent participation

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO BUILD THE AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

UNICEF (2014). *Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools.* This includes guidance to assist practitioners and decision makers in rooting the provisions and principles of the CRC and the child rights approach into schools.

VAN BEERS, H. & TRIMMER, C. (2004). *Adults First!* An organisational training for adults on children's participation. Save the Children Sweden. *The book is aimed at staff and managers of child-focussed organizations and shares concepts and exercises on children's participation for use with adults and young people.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO BUILD THE AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADULTS

- Action for the rights of children (2009). ARC resource pack: A capacity-building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. [Foundation Module 4: Participation and Inclusion.](#)
- EU & UNICEF (2014). [EU-UNICEF Child rights toolkit: integrating child rights in development cooperation.](#)
- UNICEF & Save the Children (2011). [Every Child's Right to be Heard: A Resource Guide on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 12.](#)
- UNICEF (2017). [Toolkit for adolescent and youth engagement.](#) UNICEF MENA.
- WHO & UNICEF (2018). [INSPIRE Handbook: Action for implementing the seven strategies for ending violence against children.](#) This includes parenting strategies.

34 Practical tools and resources to build the awareness, skills and capacities of adolescents

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO BUILD THE AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS

ACLU (2015). *Stand Up/Speak Up: A Guide for Youth Activists.* USA. *Provides guidance for young people who want to create change in their schools and communities. It includes advice on recruiting members; researching issues; planning campaigns; identifying allies, opponents and decision makers; creating a coalition; leveraging the media; and dealing with the results.*

ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH (2013). *Youth activist's toolkit.* Includes tools for mapping power, planning and implementing strategic activism. It includes 198 methods for non-violent activism.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2013). *Passport to your rights* is designed for children and adolescents to enter into the world of their rights in a playful manner, explaining their basic rights, as well as the relationship with the states, or the role of international organizations. *It is available for download in 20 languages.*

CUNY ET AL. *The Article 15 Resource Kit.* This resource kit includes 10 modules and 20 tools to support children's right to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.

EUROCHILD & LEARNING FOR WELL-BEING (2019). *We are here: A child participation toolbox.* Provides guidance to create a safe enabling environment to move from participation to partnerships among adults, adolescents and children. It includes creative and practical tools to improve adolescents' skills and roles as participants, representatives and facilitators.

THE YEP4EUROPE CONSORTIUM (2017). *Using digital media for youth engagement and active citizenship.* This publication includes details of the training methodology 'Find-Tell-Act' from a project that empowered migrant young people. This methodology for a non-formal training course is based on blended learning, implemented mainly as face-to-face activities. It includes four interrelated digital media modules/workshops on: i) digital journalism, ii) digital photography, iii) digital storytelling and iv) online platforms.

UNICEF (2014). *Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting child rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools.* This toolkit provides a wealth of guidance to assist practitioners and decision makers in rooting the provisions and principles of the CRC and the 'child rights approach' into early childhood education, primary and secondary schools. The guidance supports whole school approaches.

UNICEF (2018). *Policy guide on children and digital connectivity.* The policy provides guidance on how to use digital connectivity to increase the skills of adolescents, as well as guidance on how to increase protection from harm through access to the internet and digital technologies.

UNICEF (2019). *Global framework on transferable skills.* Provides strategic and practical guidance on transferable skills.

UNICEF (2019). *Youth Advocacy Guide, Youth Advocacy Guide Workbook.* Provides adolescent-friendly guidance to support youth-led advocacy initiatives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO BUILD AWARENESS, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES OF ADOLESCENTS:

- **CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT** (2010). *Together With Children For Children* - A guide for non-governmental organisations accompanying children in CRC reporting.
- **INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL GROUP ON YOUTH** (2018). *Adolescent and youth engagement. MENA UN: NGO Adolescent and Youth Group toolkit.*
- **ITU** (2018). *Digital skills toolkit.*
- **UNICEF ET AL.** (2017). *LSCE: Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-dimensional and systems approach to 21st Century Skills.*
- **UNICEF** (2019). *Getting into the game: Understanding the evidence for child-focused sport for development.*
- **USAID** (2014). *Youth engagement in development: effective approaches and action-oriented recommendations for the field.*

3.5 Practical tools and resources to create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN PLATFORMS FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

UNICEF (2018). *Child Friendly Cities Initiative: Child and Youth Participation – Options for Action.* This document offers guidance and concrete suggestions on how children and young people can participate in decisions involving their lives through the Child Friendly Cities Initiative and more broadly within their local communities.

UNICEF (2017). *Child participation in local governance.* A UNICEF guidance note. This guidance note explores the key considerations for UNICEF country office staff when supporting child participation in local governance, with the focus on participation in local government structures and processes. The guidance note is based on an extensive literature review and four case studies from Belize, Ethiopia, Nepal and Turkey.

UNICEF (2010). *Children as Advocates: Strengthening Child and Young People's Participation in Advocacy Fora.* The

handbook provides guidelines and resource documents to support meaningful adolescent participation in global advocacy. It provides guidance and standards for organizing global meetings with children and young people, with attention to practical tips and quality standards to consider before the meeting, during the meeting and after the meeting. It includes guidance to ensure informed consent, travel logistics, the roles and responsibilities of chaperones and facilitators, and codes of conduct for children and young people.

UNICEF (2017). [Toolkit for adolescent and youth engagement](#). UNICEF MENA. This toolkit provides those working in the humanitarian and development sectors with a collection of key tools to support young people's participation and engagement. It includes guidance to support adolescent participation in programming, and guidance to strengthen adolescent- and youth-led civic, social and economic engagement.

UNOY (2018). [Youth4Peace: Training toolkit](#). This toolkit has been developed for beginners and intermediate youth trainers and educators in the field of peacebuilding. It explains core concepts and practical non-formal education methods to promote creation of an enabling environment for peace. It includes a wide range of participatory tools on conflict assessment, conflict management and peacebuilding for working with and for young people.

UNICEF [Adolescent Kit for expression and innovation](#). This Kit is a package of guidance, tools and supplies to support country programmes to reach and engage adolescents aged 10–18 affected by conflict and other crises through education, child protection, youth development and/or peacebuilding initiatives.

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL (2017). [Leading the way: Guidance on the participation of children and young people in global engagements](#).

Section 4: Practical tools and resources for organizational commitment and processes for adolescent participation

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

ACTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN (2009). ARC resource pack: A capacity-building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. [Foundation Module 4: Participation](#)

and [Inclusion](#). This module includes some guidance and a range of participatory tools including tools:

- **to identify issues affecting them** (e.g., timelines, risk mapping, body mapping, transect walk, drawings, poetry and/or drama);
- **to prioritize issues** (e.g., diamond ranking, matrix ranking);
- **to analyse issues with them** (e.g., children's participation balloon, problem tree analysis, circle of influence and capacity analysis);
- **to action plan** (visioning and steps to reach the vision, and visual mapping: adult-child partnerships);
- **to monitor and evaluate** (e.g., using 'H' assessment, timeline of a child-led initiative, body map (before and after), and spider tool).

BOYDEN, J. & ENNEW, J. (1997). [Children in focus: A manual for participatory research with children](#). Save the Children Sweden. This manual gives practical and ethical guidance on conducting research with children. It includes chapters on participation, child-centred and conventional research methods and child-focussed research tools.

GRAHAM, A., POWELL, M., TAYLOR, N., ANDERSON, D. & FITZGERALD, R. (2013). [Ethical research involving children](#). Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. Provides essential guidance, a code of conduct, tools and good practices for ethical research involving children and adolescents. It can be used as a tool to generate critical thinking, reflective dialogue and ethical decision-making.

O'KANE, C. (2013). [Children's Participation in the analysis, planning and design of programmes: a guide for Save the Children staff](#). London: Save the Children. This publication includes practical guidance and tools to support staff to build their capacity and ensure that children's views and perceptions are included in analysis, planning and design processes. One example of an adolescent-friendly tool that can be used for strategic planning is:

- **Visioning tree** uses a tree image to explore strategic and practical ways in which adolescents' rights can be better fulfilled. The fruit represents their vision/dream (individual and collective); the roots represent their individual and collective strengths as children/

adolescents, as communities, etc.; and the trunk will represent their recommendations and action planning to move towards their vision(s).

SAVE THE CHILDREN NORWAY (2008). *A kit of tools for participatory research and evaluation with children, young people and adults*. This publication includes more than 35 participatory tools that can be used and adapted with and by adolescents to explore and analyse their experiences, to prioritize and plan action, to strengthen their individual and collective capacities to implement actions and advocacy, and to monitor their initiatives.

THE COMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION. (2019). *This is a structure for coordinating and driving youth policy and programming in the field*.

IASC GUIDELINES (2020) on *Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises*. Includes guidance, tips and resources to support the participation in different stages of programming with young people in humanitarian settings.

UNICEF Human-Centred Design: Accelerating results for every child by design. *Provides introductory guidance on human-centred design*.

UNICEF (2015). *UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis*. Clear procedures to apply to ensure ethical standards in research, evaluation and data collection; and processes to ensure accountability.

UNICEF (2017). *Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action*. A wealth of guidance to include children with disabilities in sectoral and intersectoral work in humanitarian settings.

UNICEF (2018). *UNICEF Guidance Note: Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Programme Monitoring and Evaluation*. This guidance should be used during the planning phase. It provides step-by-step guidance on how to support meaningful participation of adolescents in monitoring and evaluation activities. It is designed to help UNICEF staff and partners understand and explore:

- What adolescent participation in M&E (APM&E) is, and how adolescent participation can add value to monitoring and evaluation processes;

- If, why and how adolescents can be involved in monitoring and/or evaluation activities in different contexts;
- The most important issues to consider when designing, planning and implementing APM&E activities;
- Existing tools and resources that can be used to support the realization of meaningful APM&E.

WOMEN'S REFUGEE COUNCIL. *I'm Here: Adolescent Girls in Emergencies*. *I'm Here* is an operational approach for humanitarian actors to reach the most vulnerable adolescent girls, and to be accountable to their safety, health and well-being from the start of a response to crisis. From the start of an emergency, 'I'm Here' enables humanitarians to engage girls in their own solutions, ensuring effective programmes and protected rights.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

- Boyden, J. & Ennew, J. (1997). *Children in Focus: A manual for participatory research with children*.
- **SAVE THE CHILDREN** (2002). *Child to Child: A practical guide – Empowering Children As Active Citizens*.
- **COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT** (2005). *Booklet 1: Participation in the Second Decade of Life What and Why?; Booklet 2: Adolescent and Youth Participation Adults Get Ready!; Booklet 3: Adolescent Participation and the Project Cycle; and Booklet 4: Tools for Adolescent and Youth Participation*.
- **DYNAMIX LTD & UNICEF** (2006). *Toolbox of Participative Tools*: Adapted from the UNICEF workshop on participatory approaches for working with children and young people in programme planning, implementation and studies and evaluation, 3–8 April 2006, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- **OZER, E.J. & PLATT, A.A.** (2017). *Adolescent participation in research: innovation, rationale and next steps*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Brief, 2017-07.
- **UNICEF** (2006). *Child and Youth Participation Resource Guide*. (Part two: *Children Involved in Research, Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation*)

- **UNICEF** (2016). *What we know about ethical research involving children in humanitarian settings: an overview of principles, the literature and case studies.*
- **UNICEF** (2017). *Toolkit for adolescent and youth engagement.* UNICEF MENA.
- **UNICEF** (2018). *Programme Guidance for the Second Decade: Programming with and for Adolescents.*

Section 5. Practical tools and resources to monitor and evaluate adolescent participation

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

UNICEF (2019). *Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation.*

SAVE THE CHILDREN, UNICEF ET AL. (2014). *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation*

A series of six booklets on monitoring and evaluation of children's participation.

- *Booklet 1: 'Introduction' provides an overview of children's participation, how the toolkit was created and a brief guide to monitoring and evaluation.*
- *Booklet 2: 'Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children' provides a framework and practical tools to measure children's participation in their community and society.*
- *Booklet 3: 'How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation' provides a conceptual framework and introduces a series of benchmarks to measure children's participation.*
- *Booklet 4: 'A 10-step guide to monitoring and evaluating children's participation' looks at involving children, young people and adults in the process. It includes guidance on identifying objectives and progress indicators, systematically collecting data, documenting activities and analysing findings.*
- *Booklet 5: 'Tools for monitoring and evaluating children's participation' provides a range of tools that you can use with children and young people, as well as other stakeholders.*
- *Booklet 6: 'Children and young people's experiences, advice and recommendations' has been produced by young people who were involved in piloting the toolkit.*

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- 3 ‘Conceptual Framework for Measuring Outcomes of Adolescent Participation’, UNICEF, 2019, <www.unicef.org/media/59006/file>; Pritzker, Suzanne, Alicia La Chapelle and Jeremy Tatum, “‘We need their help’”: Encouraging and discouraging adolescent civic engagement through photovoice’, *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 34, 2012, pp. 2247–2254; The Coalition for Adolescent Girls, ‘Partners and allies toolkit: Toolkit for meaningful adolescent girl engagement’, December 2015, <https://coalitionforadolescentgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CAGPartnersandAlliesToolKit_10.compressed.pdf>; The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, ‘Guidelines for Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian Settings’, 2019; Committee on the Rights of the Child, ‘Day of General Discussion: The right of the child to be heard’, 29 September 2006, <www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/DiscussionDays.aspx?>.
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DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAGE

Document Title	Engaged and Heard! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement
Document Number	GUIDANCE/PD/2020/002
Effective Date	15 July 2020
Mandatory Review Date	15 July 2024
Responsible Business Owner	Programme Division
Responsible Manager	Jumana Haj Ahmad
Document Summary	<p>The Guidelines provide information on the ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how-to’ of adolescent participation and civic engagement. The main sections include guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptual understanding - Main strategies and key interventions - Organizational commitment and processes - Monitoring and evaluation <p>The appendices provide sector-specific Guidelines for adolescent participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health, WASH, Nutrition and HIV - Education - Child protection, care and justice - Disaster risk reduction, climate change and environmental protection - Peacebuilding and humanitarian response
Regulatory content the Document Replaces	N/A
Topics Covered	Adolescent participation and civic engagement
Corporate Risk Area	Results-based Management and Reporting
Reference / Links to Enabling Legislation and Background	N/A
Links to Relevant Policy	N/A
Links to Relevant Procedure	N/A
Links to Relevant Guidance	Programme Guidance for the Second Decade (PD/GUIDANCE/2018/001)
Links to Relevant Training Materials	Agora training on adolescent participation and civic engagement (upcoming)
Links to Other Knowledge & Information Resources	N/A

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