Remember that young people have unique perspectives and experiences.

Allow them to input their own ideas and needs in their own words without making assumptions! Celebrate young people’s unique perspectives. Young people are innovative, and often come up with new, out-of-the-box, solutions to address old problems.

How?

One way is by asking open questions!

How can this programme be improved?

This would enable a wider range of responses that would make your programme be improved if we do XYZ?

Do not consider young people as a monolith - consider the intersectional identities and unique experiences and perspectives when consulting with young people.

Young people may busily with school, family, or other commitments. Consultations need to be carried out at times appropriate to their availability and interest.

Make communications more accessible!

Consider ‘language and visual’ inputs to your audience! (Is this going beyond young people?

This means avoiding jargon and tailoring your message. It may be necessary to provide more background and context to provide young people with the information they need to feel comfortable sharing input - but remember to do this without patronising them!

We’re not meeting young people where they are - It’s thinking about how we can reach out to and where they are - It’s listening to what they have to say and adapting, so it is easier for more young people to get involved.

And then there’s also recognising that young people are not passive participants in the communities where they are. Young people are implementing innovative solutions to the day-to-day challenges in their communities.

So then what becomes important is providing access to funding and resources for young people. Access to flexible funding and resources is critical for young people for organisations that want to support young people's ideas and keep them engaged.

Because when funding and resources are available, young people can initiate and implement projects that address some of the social challenges that we face. Check Memo: Women’s Development, Global Space and Democracy Management.

Check in often with your youth staff members. Make sure you are meeting their needs and that they feel able to thrive and grow.

Check feedback loops. Ensure that you follow up with young people and show how their feedback was taken.

The all important communication strategy includes young people as one of the target audiences and develops messaging, feedback platforms and communication channels and ways for young people in. Do not develop these strategies for but with young people! Connect them when developing strategies to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected.

Close feedback loops. Share with stakeholders on becoming disenchanted and feeling that their participation was tokenistic and that their ideas and opinions are not valued.

Are you interested in how to build a great online feedback mechanism? Check out our guide!

Youth are a significant segment of our society, if we are talking in terms of numbers, we are talking about 1.8 billion people and we cannot sideline them.

Vanessa Ogbonna CIVICUS. Youth Action Project.

Including young people and valuing their perspectives is essential, as they bring fresh ideas, innovative thinking, and unique insights that can drive positive change and a better future for all.

Continue reading for 7 key considerations for organisations aiming to be more inclusive and ensure a more enabling space for young people to participate and make decisions.

Promoting inclusivity and valuing diverse perspectives is crucial for organisations to thrive in today’s rapidly changing world.

We Asked - Youth Answered: 7 Tips for Meaningful Youth Engagement

While young people may initially require more support than someone with more years of experience, by working and supporting youth to learn and grow you are investing in a more sustainable future and supporting young people to become confident leaders.

To support young people, especially young women to lead. World Vision Rise Up! podcast series provides tools and resources on advocacy and training. Each episode features a conversation with a prominent feminist on the challenges that young women face today.

Equip young people with the support and resources they need to grow into confident leaders! Consider membership opportunities.

Young people are often reported about, rather than engaged in. When and how do they want to be engaged? We have been getting their feedback from social media, online surveys and focus groups.

And when there is another vision recognising that young people are not passive participants in the communities where they are. Young people are implementing innovative solutions to the day-to-day challenges in their communities.

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Design mechanisms that encourage young people to share feedback and gather feedback in various ways. Some may not feel comfortable sharing their voice to power holders so ensure they can share feedback in an anonymous way, through online and/or offline mechanisms etc.

Acknowledge power dynamics before entering into a conversation and make considerations to ensure that young people’s voices are heard. Create a safe space and lead by example: show that it’s ok to ask questions or initiate conversations.

Consider how you can multi-communicate with young people, ensuring young people are one of the target audiences and develop messaging, feedback platforms and communication channels and ways for young people to lead. Do not develop these strategies for but with young people! Connect them when developing strategies to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected.

When designing any internal communication strategy, include young people as one of the target audiences and develop messaging, feedback platforms and communication channels and ways for young people to lead. Do not develop these strategies for but with young people! Connect them when developing strategies to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected.

We want to hear from you!

Do you have ideas about other ways that organisations can ensure youth inclusivity and accessibility, youth voice, youth leadership, or more?

Take a step further! Don’t just allow youth voices to help shape your work but create spaces for young people to lead.

Engage young people throughout all stages of your work! Not only in programme design, but also in leading implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Shared ownership will foster more buy-in from young people and drive more sustainable results.

Also avoid ‘box ticking engagements’ - as we heard from Vanessa in our accompanying Accountability Pill podcast - if a young people’s voice is the only one with all the intention to participate, but the participation leads nowhere, it becomes a tokenistic rather than an enabling space.

There are many ways that organisations can truly provide spaces for young people to lead; for example forming youth advisory panels, or hiring youth coordinators.

Our member Restless Development goes one step further, establishing positions for youth board representatives and additionally making a young person to each Global Board Meetings to share their experiences within the organisation and add their perspectives into leadership conversations.

Allow young people to hold power holders to account!

Young people should be engaged to lead accountability processes and hold funders and organisations deliver on their commitments. With some support, resources and training to strengthen their capacities in holding power holders to account, young people help ensure that programmes are delivering lasting positive impact for the communities they aim to serve.

Check out INTRA’s Cookbook for Youth-led Accountability, with evidence gathered through the Development Alternative project led by Restless Development and coordinated in collaboration with Accountable Now, Integrity Action, Dot Lebanon, War Child, 1 Care International, and the YMCA Madagascar that aimed to challenge traditional development models and shift power to communities and young people so that they can hold development actors to account, and lead the design of solutions to problems they face.

Close feedback loops. Ensure that you follow up with young people and show how their feedback was taken.

The all important communication strategy includes young people as one of the target audiences and develop messaging, feedback platforms and communication channels and ways for young people. Do not develop these strategies for but with young people! Connect them when developing strategies to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected.

Check in often with your youth staff members. Make sure you are meeting their needs and that they feel able to thrive and grow.

Youth can become disillusioned and feel that their participation was tokenistic and that their ideas and inputs were not valued.

Post - are you interested in how to build a great online feedback mechanism? Check out our guide!

We want to hear from you!

Do you have ideas about other ways that organisations can ensure youth inclusivity and accessibility, youth voice, youth leadership, or more?

Let’s not make this a bottom line issue. Let’s talk about a vision where young people are heard, respected and included in meaningful ways.

Close feedback loops. Share with stakeholders on becoming disillusioned and feeling that their participation was tokenistic and that their ideas and opinions are not valued.

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