

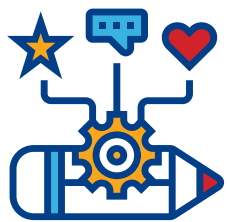


Civil Society &  
Testing Change

# YOUTH INCLUSION PROCESS



**INTRODUCTION:** The members of the Civil Society and Testing Change project youth engagement working group have been involved in efforts to better integrate youth into their organisations. This document is a work in progress and includes some of what we have been learning. We hope that it will be useful to others as well.



## NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE (FOR SUCH AN EFFORT TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND SUSTAINABLE):

**1 Commitment from senior management;** clear expectations and ideas on why we want young people involved and how much time commitment we expect from them. Not just a token, but be willing to take some action.

**2 Value clarification:** what youth should expect by engaging with an NGO and define what kind of engagement they would like to have

**3 Needs to be customised to your organisation:** a tailor-made model of youth-adult partnerships

**4 Start with a baseline assessment or checklist:** how do you currently integrate young people into your organisation (tokenistic? Meaningful?)

**5 Changing the paradigm** (youth are also shapers and givers, not just learners and 'takers');

**6 Be willing to change;**

**7 Budget allocations;** Value the time and effort of youth participants with appropriate financial compensation (also helps reduce the perpetuation of privilege). Offer mentorship and professional development opportunities

**8 Flexibility:** context changes, and the expectations and availability of young activists change.

**9 Dynamic accountability** to young people involved at all levels.

**10 Strategy for including youth from diverse backgrounds and how to reach them.** Youth is a broad category, and if one is not intentional, you will not reach traditionally excluded youth.



# STEPS TO TAKE:



**1 Dialogue between youth (members) and senior leaders;** Keep open minds. Older staff need to better appreciate the experiences and skills of young people and not underestimate them, and young people need to learn from older staffs' experiences. It is important for older staff to be open to unlearning or at least interrogating their assumptions.

**2 Ways to integrate youth perspectives into the organisation's general work:** It is important for the organisation to identify the scope of this work upfront: How are they going to operationalise this on both the organisational/ governance level and program level? Moving from organisational to programming usually works best for sustainability.

**3 Modify data gathering –** how will you know you are successful/changing behaviours?

**4 Integration throughout the organisation –** governance through programs/services

**5 Recognising the importance of all to participate**

## EVALUATING PROGRESS:

**Internal (behaviour/process) change** – perspectives of young people re: their involvement; external evaluation; senior staff changing their behaviours. Start with a baseline assessment or checklist: how do you currently integrate young people in your organisation (tokenistic? Meaningful?)

**External (impact change) –** Participation, energy, creativity, challenging can lead to better organisational decisions?? (eg, advertising salary for the position can help expand access and minimise privilege). More active youth participation (civic engagement) in the world.



**Tracking long-term impact on youth and organisations**

### CONSIDERATIONS TO BE AWARE OF

## 'LESSONS LEARNED':

**Better balance between 'guidelines' and 'detailed action plan'** to point in the right directions but also allow room for flexibility at national and local levels.

**Effective partnerships** (aligning/balancing expectations and equal roles)

**Things change especially quickly with youth** – guidelines that can be adapted easily.

**Ensure youth perspectives are integrated in a meaningful way** rather than a tokenistic approach of having "the youth voice on the table."

**When internal teams have different donors,** it can be a barrier to consistent strategy implementation.

