

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The following section contains a series of reflection questions and practical activities for you and your team to use in designing your approach to child and youth participation. These activities can be undertaken over several separate sessions or in one to two days in a workshop style. They include a Think about who needs to be in the room to go through the activities in this section and to answer the reflection questions. It might be helpful to convene a small internal team or to have one staff member do an initial review to prepare.

I. WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



A. Current practices and attitudes towards working with children and young people

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How are you currently working with children and young people? Do you consult them in your work? Do they have any decision-making power? Have you ever co-designed with children or young people? Do you direct resourcing to child- and youth-led groups? Are you funding adult-led organizations that work with children and young people and support their participation?

Is child and youth participation formalized in your strategy and if so, how? Is this at the organizational or programmatic level?

Do you tend to invite young people to one-off consultations or events or have you built relationships with any groups?

What is the level of understanding among staff and among leadership on working with children and young people? What are the attitudes toward children and young people? Are there any potential blockages or challenges?

ACTIVITY: MINI NETWORK MAPPING

Think about which children and young people you have in your network. On a flipchart, Mural and Miro brainstorm all the various groups, organizations, and networks you are connected to and cluster them based on whether you are working with them directly or indirectly. Use the following questions as a prompt:

- Are you working with any child and youth groups directly? E.g., through existing advisories, youth panels, or grantee groups
- If you work with adult-led child- and youth-serving grantee partners, do they work with local, national, or regional child and youth groups?
- Do you have ways to connect with broader movements, through your partners or through your social media channels?

Once you have a basic mapping done, reflect on its make up using the following questions:

- Are there any identity or geographical gaps that are not reflected in your mapping? E.g., adolescent girls, gender diverse youth, children and youth from rural areas, children and youth living with disabilities, Black and Indigenous youth.
- Do you know if the groups are registered or not? Are they faith based or secular?
- How do they define themselves?
- Are you primarily connected to child and youth groups led by boys and men?
- Are you working with adolescents?

Lastly think about your relationship with them:

- Do you hold a partnership with them? Are they connected to an adult-led grantee partner?
- Is the relationship more tenuous (e.g., groups associated with a partner or part of an autonomous network or movement)?

If you are very early in your journey, do not worry too much. Do an initial mapping using this activity and then come back to reflect on the mapping based on who you would like to work with.

B. Team make-up and expertise

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Do you have young people working in your organization? Do you have staff members with expertise in working with children and young people?

How diverse is your team? Do you have representation of people from diverse backgrounds including Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, diverse sexual and gender orientation and identity, migrant or refugee communities, or people with disabilities? Is your team primarily based or from the Global North? Are you working with people that have lived experience from different communities?

Is there a strong understanding of colonialism, anti-racism, and gender equality?

Is there experience within the team and organization in navigating power dynamics?

If not, is there openness to learn and invest in training to deepen knowledge and expertise?

C. What policies and procedures are in place or need to be developed?

ACTIVITY: GETTING THE BASICS IN PLACE

Thinking back to Section 3, which policies, approvals, and procedures are in place already and what needs to be developed?

Use a traffic light system to mark your progress in putting these into place.

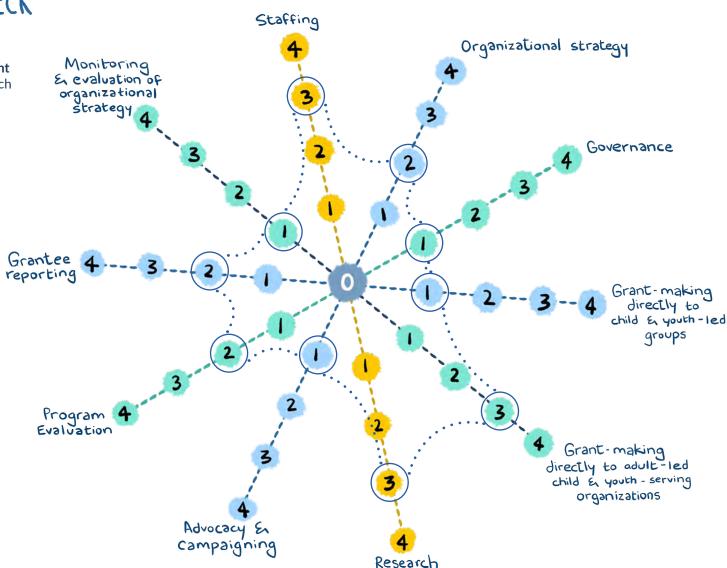
| | Yes / No / In Progress |
|---|------------------------|
| We have senior leadership buy-in (team or organizational level) to support a participatory process. | |
| We have dedicated budget to support a meaningful process. | |
| We have staff with child and youth participation expertise. | |
| We have a compensation policy or approach in place (or an approach to be tested). | |
| We have a safeguarding policy, reporting process, and focal point in place. | |
| Staff have been trained on power, privilege, and bias. They have a good understanding of meaningful participation, intersectionality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, safeguarding, and inclusion. | |

2. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE? Identifying entry points

ACTIVITY: HEALTH CHECK

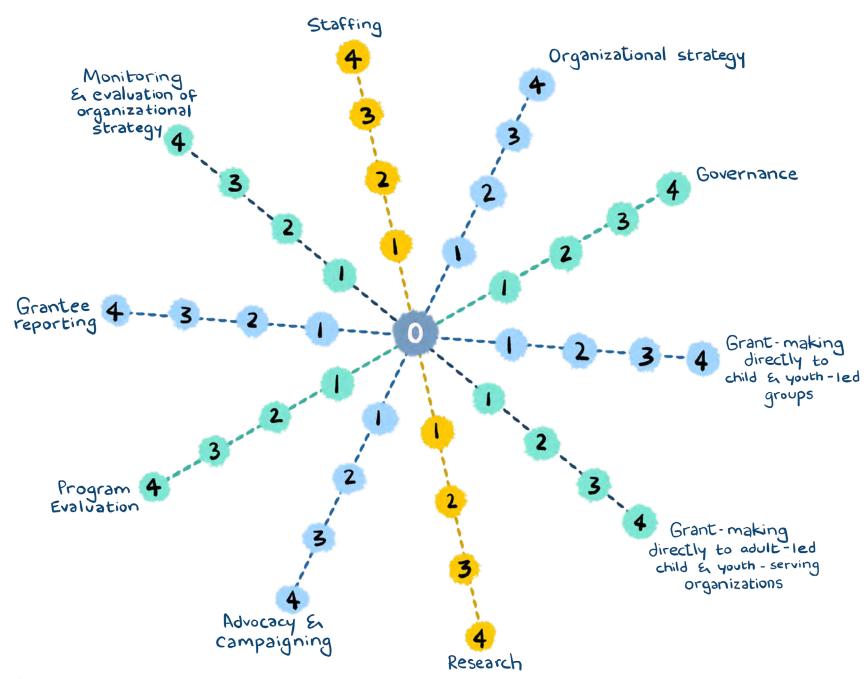
Using the spider web, mark where you are currently for each type of engagement and mark where you want to be. Give yourself a mark out of 4 each and note this on the table below.

- O We have not yet begun!
- OK. We're starting to think about this and get the foundational pieces in place.
- 2 Pretty good. We have started work on this but have a long way to go.
- 3 Great! We have some solid work underway but there is some room for improvement.
- 4 Awesome! We are confident we are doing a great job.



Please note: we have completed this web as an example. See printable blank web on the next page to complete yours!

ACTIVITY: HEALTH CHECK



This table reflects the entry points and participatory mechanisms in Sections 3 and 4. Use your answers from the Health Check to fill out the columns.

| Entry point | Type of engagement | Mechanism | Where are you now? (0-4) | Might this be a possible entry point? Why/why not? | Where do you want to be? (0-4) |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Organizational and operational strategy | Staffing | Hiring young people and creating supportive policies and culture | | | |
| | Organizational strategy design | Participatory strategy development | | | |
| | Governance | Youth board members | | | |
| | | Youth membership | | | |
| Programs / Grant-making | Program / grant-making strategy | Participatory grant-making and accompaniment | | | |
| | | Flexible resourcing to child- and youth-led groups - Resourcing as ultimate participation in itself! | | | |
| | | Funding participatory adult-led child- and youth-serving organizations | | | |

| Entry point | Type of engagement | Mechanism | Where are you now? (0-4) | Might this be a possible entry point? Why/why not? | Where do you want to be? (0-4) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Influencing | Advocacy and campaigning | Child and youth participation in advocacy, strategic partnerships, and communications | | | |
| Influencing | Research | Participatory research | | | |
| | M+E of organizational strategy | Child- and youth- led or centered indicators such as participatory | | | |
| Monitoring, evaluating, | Grantee reporting | monitoring, evaluation and learning | | | |
| research and learning | Research | Participatory research | | | |

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Based on the activity health check, what entry points are most feasible? Which ones are exciting to you and the team?

Dreaming of a more participatory world

ACTIVITY: DEVELOPING YOUR VISION

Draw or write down your vision for meaningful participation within your organization. It can help to get creative. Use colored pens and paper, or explore the pictures and GIFs section of Mural. Whatever is needed to get your creative juices flowing!

Think of your institution in 5 years time...

- What do you want staff and leadership to think, feel, and do?
- What do you want children and young people to think, feel, and do?
- How have attitudes toward children and young people's participation changed? How have practices changed?
- How has your impact on the people you aim to serve changed?

With this initial brainstorm, create the front cover of a newspaper in 5 years time...

- What are the headlines you would like to see?
- What is the main story?
- Who is featured?

Examples:

- 'Children and young people are driving our strategic direction and have real influence over our programs, influencing, and research.'
- 'Our impact, and how we measure it, is grounded in the rights, needs, and priorities of girls' movements.'
- 'Any partner we fund is intentionally and meaningfully engaging children and young people in all aspects of their work.'

Getting specific:

- Can you think of 2-3 objectives to help you meet your vision? Get specific here what would you like to achieve in the short, medium, and long term?
- Will you start small with one mechanism or is there potential to bring several together into something of a participatory journey (e.g., setting up an advisory group to develop a programmatic strategy, with potential for participatory advocacy and research)?
- Go back to your Policies and Procedures Checklist. Are there any gaps that need to be dealt with first?
- Think back to the 'Tips for Getting Started'. Do you have the right people in place with experience, knowledge, and expertise? Are they informed and aware of their own power, privilege, and bias? Have they received training on meaningful participation, intersectionality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, safeguarding, and inclusion?
- Go back to your Network Mapping. Which groups will you engage and what are potential pathways to reach them?

3. PRACTICAL STEPS TO SET UP A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

The practical steps to set up a participatory process will depend on the mechanism(s) you choose. The following checklist provides statements that will be relevant for most mechanisms. Cross-check this with the more specific considerations in the previous section.

| | Yes / No / In Progress |
|--|------------------------|
| Getting the conditions in place: real influence, budget, compensation, safeguarding, articulating the role of the children and young people | |
| We have a dedicated staff member who can coordinate the process. | |
| We have sufficient budget. | |
| We have conditions in place for children and young people to have real influence, e.g., senior leadership buy-in, clear decision-making power. | |
| We have designed a process of engagement that is inclusive, accessible, and non-extractive. | |
| We have enough time to set up the group / panel / co-design team and for them to engage in the process, e.g., aligned to our programmatic planning or organizational strategy, with enough run in time and flex for iteration. | |
| We developed a TOR with clear expectations, compensation, role, and time commitment. | |
| Recruiting and identifying children and young people | |
| Looking at our Network Mapping, we are clear on which children and young people should be involved. We know those with which we hold existing relationships and where we might need to activate our networks. | |
| We have agreed on our outreach and recruitment approach, e.g., doing an open call, sharing through specific networks, or inviting children and young people who work with grantee partners? • If it's the latter, recognize the power you hold over the partners; consider the administrative lift from their side, and whether additional support, compensation, and recognition is required for them. | |
| We have measures in place to ensure the group is diverse, e.g., we have a plan to reach children and young people who are from rural areas, who are gender diverse, who are different ages, who are living with disabilities, who may not be digitally literate, etc. | |
| We have considered what access needs we might need to consider and budget for. | |
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| If creating a group or a panel, we have a simple application process, e.g., a short survey which helps to collate and analyze responses or asking them to send a short bio answering a few questions. • Avoid lengthy application processes or asking for CVs (particularly for adolescents). Consider different ways that people can apply: over email, Whatsapp, or a survey. | |
|--|--|
| We have a selection process to identify the group. We know who will be involved in making the decision and we have reflected as a group on what biases and power we might hold, e.g., adultism, prioritization of merit. | |
| Holding introductory calls and agreeing on ways of working | |
| We are informed of where the children and young people are from, what time zones they are joining from, and what other commitments they have. | |
| Based on this, and in consultation with the children and young people, we have developed a meeting schedule taking into account different time zones whilst considering school times and other commitments. If needed we can hold meetings on the weekend or in the evenings. • It can be helpful to agree on the times and dates well in advance so that children and young people can plan accordingly. | |
| We have decided what platform to use with the children and young people, e.g., Zoom, Teams. | |
| All the children and young people have the devices and internet connectivity to join. • If they are using family members' devices, how can you support them to be digitally safe (e.g., using passwords, logging out)? | |
| If needed, we have translation and interpretation available for calls, documents, and presentations. | |
| Safeguarding, wellbeing, care, and risk management | |
| We have reflected on the potential risks faced by the group and faced by them as individuals including new or heightened risks given their identities, areas of work, or civic space contexts they operate in. We and they are all clear on our roles and responsibilities when it comes to risk management and safety. | |
| We have explained our safeguarding policy and any associated processes. There is a clear safeguarding focal point. | |
| We have agreed when to collect consent and when it will be reviewed, e.g., if political contexts change. | |
| We have worked with the group to create a collective care plan, grounded in a shared understanding of joy and wellbeing; we have measures in place to support the group's wellbeing. | |
| | |

| Compensation | |
|--|--|
| We have a clear compensation policy which includes financial and non-financial compensation. | |
| We have a clear plan, in agreement with our finance team, for how to move the money and can do this in various ways if needed. | |
| Managing relationships and accountability | |
| We are clear on who will manage the relationships with the individuals, including a main focal point. | |
| We have a plan for how to create space for the group to build connections with each other. • Are there fun activities you can do alongside the actual design/strategy process? | |
| We have or will discuss how to create space for feedback and learning with the group. This includes agreeing with them how to share back the findings, strategy, or other outputs for validation so that the group can see where their contributions have landed. | |
| We have left enough time (and additional time on top of that!) for the group to share feedback and recognize their other commitments and that this is a voluntary role. • Think about whether you are setting realistic deadlines and think about your own response times. Are the expectations the same? If you are not sure, have a conversation with the group to agree on a fair process. | |
| Evaluation and learning | |
| We have a process to capture what we have learned from the process so that both the group and we as an organization can benefit. | |
| We have or will create space for two-way learning dialogues throughout. | |
| We have or will create a plan to share your progress with other organizations and with other teams in your institution so we are contributing to broader change within the sector. | |

4. TIPS AS YOU EMBARK ON YOUR JOURNEY!

- This is not a linear process! Remember the principle of experimentation and iteration take time throughout to pause and reflect. Are things going as planned? Is there anything you can do differently? What feedback are you getting?
- **Don't be afraid to get it wrong.** Remember the principle of bravery and discomfort be transparent and vulnerable with the children and young people you're working with.
- Find spaces for solidarity, shared learning, and support from other funders; for example, through funders' networks or spaces like the Participatory Grant-making Community.
- Share what you're learning! Write blogs (with children and young people where appropriate) and be honest about what is going well and where you have learned from mistakes.
- **Use your power!!!** Advocate for others to be bolder in their approach to participation. Where you see dated practice and attitudes, call it out.

We hope you enjoyed reading this and that you find the tool useful for your work. We hope you feel equipped to start your journey, however small that is. Good luck - sending solidarity and positive energy to you and your institution!