

WEAVING A
COLLECTIVE TAPESTRY

A FUNDERS' TOOLKIT FOR CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION



Elevate Children Funders Group is the leading global network of funders focused exclusively on the well-being and rights of children and youth. We focus on the most marginalized and vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

We support children and youth by building a community of funders and creating spaces for:

- Greater learning and effectiveness in how we use our individual resources.
- More collaboration and alignment across our philanthropic strategies.
- Collective action for more and better funding, and support for our wider field.

Established in 2011, ECFG now counts 23 members, including many of the leading global funders and philanthropic advisors funding the wellbeing and rights of children and youth. Between 2011 and 2020, ECFG members contributed more than \$1.2 billion to children facing adversity.

ECFG works on the premise that we are "better together." We believe our potential impact as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts and that together we can drive greater sustainable change than as individual foundations working alone.

CREDITS

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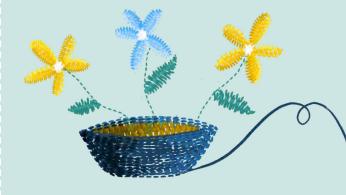
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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meaningful child and youth participation in philanthropy can be a powerful catalyst for increased impact and transformation at multiple levels, from the individual to the systemic. Funders increasingly recognize that child and youth participation (CYP) is not only a child's right and a powerful tool for shifting power to the communities most affected, but also contributes to better strategic outcomes, even for programs that don't appear to address children and youth.

Even so, many funders still shy away from implementing meaningful participation across their work. Some don't understand its value, while others don't know where to start. Some raise important questions about safeguarding, compensation, and what's meaningful. Others lack an understanding of the different ways children and youth can be engaged in a philanthropic organization's work. Still others recognize that this work is challenging, and are afraid to get it wrong, given the high stakes of working with young people, particularly in vulnerable or marginalized groups.

Despite the many excellent resources available for nonprofits and development agencies addressing child and youth participation, few resources exist that address the unique, practical needs of funders. This guide aims to fill that gap.

Co-created by an amazing group of young leaders, and with the guidance of an advisory committee and the ECFG Child and Youth Participation working group, this toolkit is the first of its kind to offer support and guidance on the substantive "how-to" of CYP - tailored specifically to funders and philanthropic organizations. It looks at the full spectrum of CYP, including organizational structure, strategy development, grantmaking, MEL, and governance.

Whether you're just getting started or are a seasoned pro, we hope this toolkit will support your work as you:

Build your foundational understanding of meaningful CYP: See Section 2, which reviews key findings and insights from the desk review, KIIs, and youth participants.

- Work to convince your leadership or board of the value of meaningful CYP: See page 13 for an overview of the evidence supporting the power and value of youth participation.
- Get started or look to improve current practice: See Section 3 for a new funder-focused model, practical guidance, case studies, and resources on budgeting, compensation and safeguarding, care, and wellbeing. Section 4 dives deeper into the practical considerations for different types of participation across a philanthropic organization.
- Engage your wider team: Section 5 offers practical activities and reflection questions for engaging your colleagues in designing your approach.

This toolkit would not have been possible without the contributions of the authors, ECFG members and partners, and ECFG staff, but I want to highlight particularly the incredible insights of the many youth leaders that came together to influence its creation. In the true spirit of participation, I now hand the mic to them (the true experts here) to reflect on their experiences in philanthropy, the creation of this Toolkit, and what they want funders to hear...

A MESSAGE FROM THE YOUTH CO-CREATION GROUP

Young people are highly affected by social injustices and gender inequality. We also lead change and challenge cultural norms and structural power at the grassroots level. Yet, too often, our experience is that, even when funders engage in CYP, it is most often symbolic and tokenistic rather than meaningful and truly impactful.

Inequitable power dynamics exist between philanthropic organizations and the young people they seek to help, particularly in the Global South. While many organizations create youth groups, they then tell the groups what to do, which makes their very existence irrelevant.

The Toolkit's recommendation that funders examine their resistance to holding political stances resonates deeply with us. In a world marked by histories of colonialism, imperialism, sexism, and other -isms, neutrality is

fundamentally problematic. The implicit character of neutrality vis-a-vis explicit oppression ultimately creates environments where inequity and injustice are able to dwell outside of the realm of accountability; neutrality and silence become part of the problem.

The toolkit's recommendation that funders work with children and young people to co-create an ideal funding relationship is one that redistributes power and demonstrates trust and respect for the agency of young people. In allowing children and young people to design a relational hierarchy and power structure that benefits both parties, the infantilizing hierarchy that exists within the philanthropic space that positions us as passive recipients of aid, as opposed to free agents with the remit to create our own power dynamics, is redressed.

While this toolkit is a compelling entry point and best practice to increase child and youth participation across the philanthropic life cycle, the guidelines are not exhaustive. They should be adapted to country contexts and needs. When following the advice in this document, funders should understand and pay close attention to the various contexts in terms of children and youth inclusion, diversity, and participation. It is critical to recognize that the tools and mechanisms that will work in one place might need adjustments to achieve similar results in another. Context matters.

To young people: Here is your evidence. Use this Toolkit to advocate for change. It is our hope that young people will own this toolkit and its recommendations and take action to get commitments from funders in their respective countries.

To funders: Trust us - not just as young people with important perspectives, but as experts in our fields. Consider our value - not only in terms of participatory grantmaking, but from strategy development through evaluation, and in your governance and leadership structures. Work with us to achieve our shared goals.

In Solidarity,

Anne Muthoni, Daniela Martuccelli, Giovanna Basso, Pauline Faith Gator, Sabir Ali, Sasha Kantser, Solomon Tawanda Ndondo, Taibat Hussain, Tatianna Ennin, Thomas Kingsley, Justice Lebbie the Youth Co-Creation Group

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ADULTISM:

Adultism is the combination of "behaviors and attitudes based on the assumptions that adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon young people without agreement. This mistreatment is reinforced by social institutions, laws, customs, and attitudes, (which underlie) the systematic mistreatment and disrespect of young people." ¹ Three core parts are:

- Favoring adults by dismissing young people.
- It is also the addiction to the attitudes, ideas, beliefs, and actions
 of adults.
- Because adultism is bias towards adults, it inherently and obviously leads to discrimination against children and youth.²

ADULT-LED CHILD AND YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS & GROUPS

Groups, organizations, networks, and collectives, informal and formal, that have a focus on child and youth rights but where adults make up the majority of leadership. Adults are responsible for making decisions.

CHILD AND YOUTH-LED

The process, or pre-defined parts of the process, are completely led by children and young people. They are equipped to and have the power to make decisions. Adults might be on hand to offer support if it is needed, but they should be guided by the children and young people.

CHILD AND YOUTH-CENTERED

The process to design an initiative, program, or strategy engages children and young people meaningfully and is deliberately intended to respond to their needs, priorities, and realities. Adults are usually leading the process.

CHILD AND YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Groups, organizations, networks, and collectives, informal and formal, where young people make up the majority of leadership. Young people are responsible for making decisions.

MEANINGFUL CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Children and young people have a right to be heard on matters that affect their lives. This right is enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Meaningful child and youth participation means that children and young people are engaged in a process through consultation, through shared decision-making, through co-designing programs, strategies, and initiatives and/or by having access to flexible resources to support their own child- and youth-led efforts. For this reason, mechanisms have to be in place for children and young people to have influence, to be respected, and to be included safely.

SECTION I. BACKGROUND



ABOUT THIS TOOL

Elevate Children Funders Group (ECFG) is the leading global network of funders focused exclusively on the wellbeing and rights of children and youth.

This toolkit was developed with and for our members and other philanthropic funders who want to better understand how to support child and youth participation. It builds on an ECFG study published in 2021, Shifting the Field: Philanthropy's Role in Strengthening Child- and Youth-Led Community Rooted Groups, which maps current practices in philanthropic support for child- and youth-led work at the community level and provides strategic advice to donors on how to strengthen their funding modalities through participatory approaches. Following this study, a number of ECFG members came together to form a working group on child and youth participation to explore practical tools for realizing the goal of increased child and youth participation across the philanthropic life cycle.

In 2022, ECFG commissioned this practical toolkit to support grantmakers in better understanding and implementing meaningful youth participation. It presents a new, adaptable model for participation tailored specifically for funders. This Funders' Toolkit includes research findings, a new adaptable model, an overview of current known participatory mechanisms for children and young people, and practical activities to help funders as they embark on this journey or seek to deepen their existing initiatives.

To create this tool, we collected and analyzed the following data:

- Literature, reports, articles, research, and internal documents from funders including evaluations, practical tools, and program guidance.
- A survey with Elevate Children Funder's Group members.
- Six interviews with funders of different sizes and types.
- A focus group discussion with children and young people.

We did this with the guidance and leadership of an Advisory Group made up of eight ECFG members and external experts, the input and guidance of the ECFG Child and Youth Participation Working Group, and a Youth Co-Creation Group of ten members.

WHO IS THIS TOOL FOR?

This Toolkit is intended for funders and organizations that seek to improve their capacity to engage children and young people in their grantmaking. This includes those who currently or aim to provide financial resources directly to children and youth, involve children and young people in their grantmaking processes, or better support the participation of children and young people in the

work of their adult-led grantees.

It is designed to support them to:

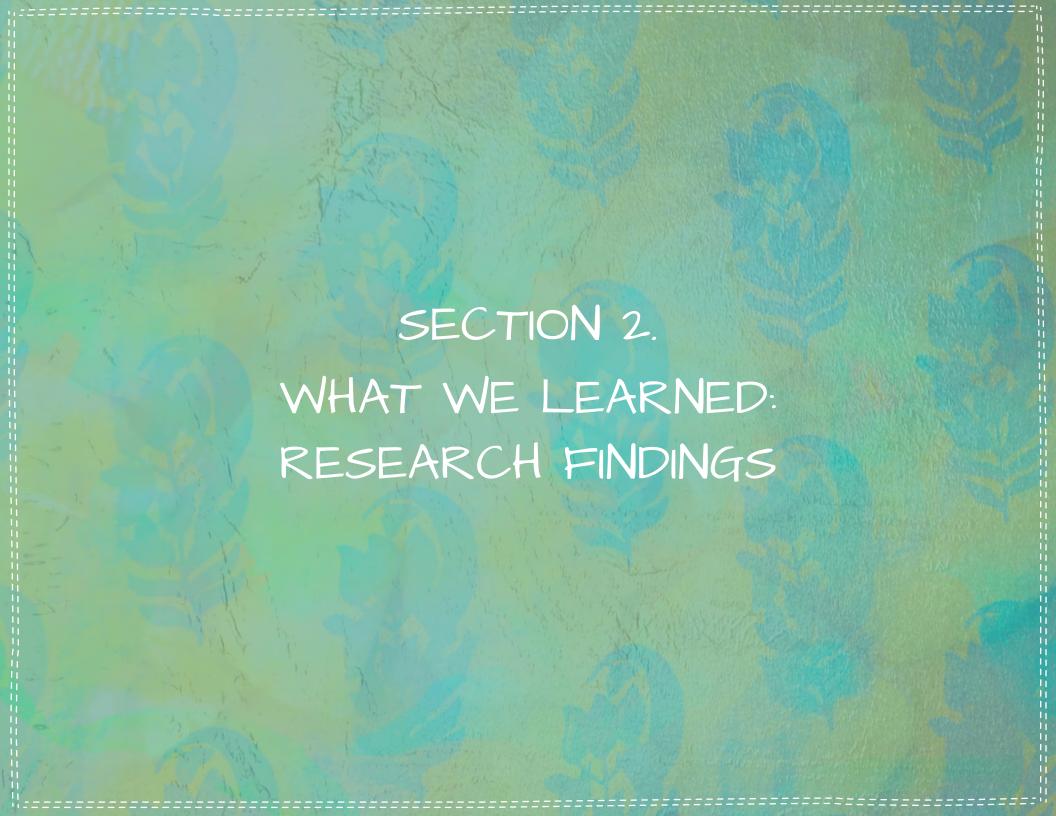
- Understand participatory mechanisms, principles, and minimum standards.
- Assess readiness and entry points within their institution.
- Make decisions on the most suitable way forward, including concrete steps.

It includes:

- · Research findings.
- Evidence to help you make the case within your organization.
- A visual model for child and youth participation for funders with:
 - An overview of entry points and participatory mechanisms.
 - Consideration for which young people you might have in your network.
 - Four depths of child and youth participation.
- A detailed exploration of the participatory mechanisms accompanied by case studies.
- Practical questions and activities to help you develop your own, tailored approach.

While the primary audience for this Toolkit is funders, we encourage young people and civil society organizations to use the tool in their own advocacy. We encourage any organization reflecting on its role in the funding ecosystem to explore the Toolkit and use it in any way that is helpful.





OVERVIEW

Meaningful child and youth participation is a powerful catalyst for transformation at multiple levels, from the individual, to grant-making. to systemic change. At the heart of meaningful participation is an intention and commitment to shifting, sharing, and re-negotiating power in authentic ways. In much of philanthropy, power sits with hierarchical, adult-led organizations that tend to reflect the patriarchal system within which they operate, rather than actively attempting to dismantle them.³⁴ A look at philanthropy and development in the Global South shows us the persistent control of resources in the Global North, reinforcing neocolonial and patriarchal structures. 567 This structural power imbalance is a critical truth that needs to be acknowledged if we are to rethink and reimagine how funders can meaningfully engage and work with children and young people in decision-making, share power with them, and trust in their leadership and political movements.

INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND POLICIES ON PARTICIPATION

The right to participate is enshrined in the General Principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under Article 12: The right to be heard. The General Comment on the right to be heard recognizes the unique status of children as lacking the legal autonomy of adults whilst having a right to express their views on matters that affect their lives.

The Agreed Conclusions of the sixty-fifth Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021 recognizes girls as change makers, explicitly notes the exclusion of young women from public life, and calls for more investment in efforts to support girls' and young women's participation. However it falls short of calling for girls' 'full and effective participation'.'

Let us take a step back first. The legal recognition of children's right to participate in the Convention on the Rights of the Child has led to great improvement in the participation of children in decisions that affect them. There are countless tools on meaningful participation developed by NGOs and several useful models employed in the development sector, including Hart's Ladder of Participation¹⁰ and CHOICE's Flower of Participation.¹¹ Some governments have developed their own definitions to ground their child and youth strategies. 12 The evidence of the impact of child and youth participation on national plans, policy development, and in shadow parliaments shows that levels of influence vary. 13 The meaningfulness of these types of participation in the development sector is mixed: many adult leaders still tout the outdated perspective that children and young people are beneficiaries who lack agency and need protection.¹⁴

When it comes to the participation of children and young people in funding decisions and practices, the literature is lacking in comparison. We know that funding for child- and youth-led initiatives is still limited, particularly for groups led by adolescent girls, gender diverse young people, and children and young people living with disabilities despite the growing number of child- and youth-led associations, collectives. and groups. 15 There is a wealth of lessons to be learned from existing models of participation, which provide insight on what to keep and adapt, as well as what to avoid. This research has surfaced numerous

participatory mechanisms. as well as an illustrative model and a practical tool: these resources can be employed by funders who wish to more meaningfully support the participation of children and young people. To begin with, the desk-based research and primary data collection brought to light several key insights and findings.



WHEN AND WHEN NOT TO DO PARTICIPATION

It is important to recognize that while participation can be critical in many circumstances and situations, it is not always the right choice. Some of the reasons when participation does not make sense can include the following:

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL FACTORS:

- If a community feels overwhelmed, exhausted, has other priorities, and does not have the time to work closely with you.
- When constituencies you are working with are directly impacted by a crisis or humanitarian emergency; while participation may be possible, it may not be the right time. It is important to be led by them.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL FACTORS:

- You do not have adequate capacity or resources to implement a participatory process well.
- You do not have buy-in or commitment from the leadership, which means there is a risk of the decisions made by children and young people not being respected.
- You do not have the time to ensure a meaningful process.

To better navigate if participation makes sense for you, where possible, open a conversation with the children and young people you are working with and understand their needs, capacity, interest and expectations around participating in your work. Sections 3 - 5 of this Toolkit include activities, tips, and recommendations to ascertain your readiness, determine the appropriateness of participation, and learn how to build a practical approach.

WHY CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

"100% of organizations who are supporting child and youth participation would recommend it to other organizations." -Philanthropy European Association (Philea).¹⁸

Meaningful child and youth participation can be a powerful and invaluable catalyst for change and impact at multiple levels. Not only is it children and young people's human right to participate in decisions that affect their lives, 16 but it also contributes to better outcomes. Whether you start small or big, you will see the positive impact. It clearly improves grant-making and contributes to a more equitable and impactful funding landscape. 17 The outcomes are also evident from the individual, personal level for children and young people (confidence, civic education, and self-esteem) to the strengthening of childand youth-led groups, intergenerational movements, and the creation of more democratic societies. The impact can be seen even when children and young people are engaged on issues that might not traditionally be considered to be child or youth-related: "It's not a case of 'you're youth and you only do youth projects'. They're involved in all of our projects which we've found has been very

beneficial as they bring a different thought to some of the programs or think about how youth respond," shared one public funder.

From a philanthropic perspective, meaningful participation and coownership not only leads to more impactful grant-making programs, but it transforms funders' attitudes and practices, breaks down patriarchal and colonial structures and shifts power within the broader funding landscape. From a feminist perspective, by analyzing the impact of participatory approaches on children and young people, starting with the impact on them, their organizations and their communities, we can see just how political participation really is. The impact starts at the individual, or personal, level with them as political actors and ripples to their groups, communities and broader society.

OUTCOME **EVIDENCE** BENEFITS The Sillerman Centre, From Beneficiary to Active Agent How Youth-Led Grantmaking Benefits Improved confidence, empathy, self-esteem, Young People, Their Communities, and the Philanthropic Sector. skills in collaboration, and civic education.¹⁹ ChildFund Australia, The Role of Child and Youth Participation in Development Effectiveness.²⁰ **Positive** impact on the "It is really empowering for young children to hear that their voice matters. It's not individual something that's often gathered in research. We want to know the best way to design a play experience and we tell children, you're the expert on play. And they love that." -Researcher from a large corporate children's foundation interviewed for this research.²¹ Provides access to more funding opportunities MamaCash, New Perspectives. New Solutions: Funding Organising Led by Girls and Young Women. with stronger networks and a deeper Strength and understanding of the funding ecosystem. resourcing of "After participating in the proposal evaluation process, youth committee members child- and youth-Builds skills and capacities in the group members, noted that they were better able to see shortcomings in their own projects, became led groups and e.g., new monitoring and evaluation skills when more sensitive to diversity issues, and felt their own dignity and usefulness as they not organizations involved in participatory monitoring only gave advice, but their advice was heard."23 and evaluation.22 Improves the quality of the work of organizations ChildFund Australia. The Role of Child and Youth Participation in Development Effectiveness. and their relevance to the communities they Devi Leiper O'Malley and Ruby Johnson, A young feminist new order: an exploration of why young seek to support. They are more in tune with their feminists organise the way they do. community by actively sharing power. 24 Creates more skilled researchers within Stronger "Groups review each other's proposals, making groups more aware of other initiatives a community. 25 communities and strategies that may complement their work. This contributes to their overall In times of crisis, participatory processes provide space for shared collective problem solving, awareness of larger networks and potential movements they can join - which are important resources for their work beyond funding."26 community, and solidarity. Contributes to intergenerational collaboration. Annie E Casey, A framework for effectively partnering with young people. Strengthens children and young people's Global Resilience Fund, Weathering the Storm. broader commitment to and understanding Joining Forces - ChildFund, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS, Terre des Hommes, of democracy by encouraging democratic and World Vision, A second revolution: 30 years of child rights and the unfinished agenda. processes like voting and consensus building.²⁷ Stronger The Sillerman Centre, From Beneficiary to Active Agent How Youth-Led Grantmaking Benefits Leads to concrete policy change, e.g., via child/ movements Young People, Their Communities, and the Philanthropic Sector. and more youth-led influencing strategies democratic Builds solidarity and room for coalition/ "The result we have seen is that [our youth philanthropists] go on to college, [and] most societies²⁸ movement building by bringing grantees of them in their first year, in their college get involved in community service . . . and together. then, because they have been doing it so long it comes full circle, then they pick jobs

that have service and philanthropy as a part of the mission of the organization."29

EVIDENCE OUTCOME BENEFITS Devi Leiper O'Malley and Ruby Johnson, A young feminist new order: an exploration of why young Creates a ripple effect among funders by building curiosity and intrigue and sparking feminists organise the way they do. ---------practice change (participatory grant-making). Global Resilience Fund, Weathering the Storm. A more just Contributes to more credible and authentic Stanford Social Innovation Review, How Listening to Constituents Can Lead to Systems Change. and fair funder practices. funding Improves the diverse distribution of resources. "The process of building feedback mechanisms created more equitable practices across ecosystem organizations and advocacy efforts. The impetus to seek stakeholder input in one area triggered an instinct to do so in others."31 Leads to better decisions, policies, and grant-Global Resilience Fund, Weathering the Storm. making strategies. The Sillerman Centre, From Beneficiary to Active Agent How Youth-Led Grantmaking Benefits Creates a ripple effect across the organization. Young People, Their Communities, and the Philanthropic Sector. Safer Young Lives Research, Our Voices Programme - participatory action research. Surface the 'why' rather than just the 'what'. Allows funders to discover nascent groups they would otherwise not have been able to find Better funding "We had a programme about online safety tied to a police department. And the police (participatory grant-making). practices and department representative said, 'It's very easy to navigate, so many people are open and Improves the quality of data and its interpretation, impact³⁰ talking.' And it took one of our youth council members to say, 'You may think it's really accessibility, recruitment of participants, easy, but you don't understand that I was raised not to talk to the police. You can have credibility of research, and communication of all the helpline resources; I would never call you.' So we were like, 'Ok what should we findings; therefore enhancing its influence and add to the programme or what would help you cross that barrier.' And if they were not impact (participatory research). in that conversation. I think we all would have continued to think that the programme was perfect and ready to go if we hadn't had that youth voice." -USA Public Funder we interviewed for this research CIVICUS, Resourcing Youth-led Groups and Movements. Builds greater collective understanding and co-ownership. Youth Do It, Investing in Youth Impact Toolkit. More trust-Builds trusting and equitable relationships. Elevate Children Funders Group, Shifting the Field. based, equitable Helps to dismantle funder-grantee power relationship relations through power sharing. "Definitions such as efficiency, effectiveness, and impact have traditionally been between funders and young defined by donors and monitoring and evaluation experts in ways that do not people necessarily fit in with children and youth organizing. Thus, it becomes difficult for their

elevate children funders group

groups to showcase the real importance of their work."32

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

The research brought up four areas of insights and findings. You can read through them all or click through using the hyperlinks in the headings.

1. WHY PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT

Meaningful, inclusive participation can lead to more effective grant-making programs, more equitable funding ecosystems, and more democratic societies.

- Participatory grant-making can be one of the most impactful ways to build individual confidence, strengthen groups, and shift power within philanthropy.
- Meaningful participatory grant-making means young people have real decision-making power.
- Participation is an opportunity to build connections between movements. But... Not all participation is good participation.

2. FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS FOR MEANINGFUL CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- Meaningful participation is a long-term process, not a one-off project or initiative.
- Inclusion must be centered from the beginning It matters which children and young people you engage.
- Compensating young people for their time and expertise is not only fair, it is a necessary condition for equal and inclusive engagement.
- ▶ Don't limit young people's engagement to youth-focused projects.

3. KEY SHIFTS TO BE MADE INTERNALLY

- Meaningful participation has the potential to redistribute power but requires recognition of the wrongs of philanthropy's history.
- Trust building starts at the beginning and it takes time.
- Know your accountability lines and stay true to them.
- Participation requires rethinking your communications approach and, where appropriate, engaging young people to take the lead.
- If funding political work, holding a political stance as a funder builds trust and authenticity.
- And an important question that came up through the research... is direct resourcing to children and youth-led groups, collectives, and movements in itself the most necessary and political form of meaningful participation?

4. OBSTACLES TO MEANINGFUL CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- Adultism is ongoing and is causing intergenerational tensions.
- Funders can navigate intergenerational tensions by working with families and communities.
- Young people do not feel like they are being taken seriously by funders.
- ▶ The digital divide is making it difficult for trust to be built.
- Additional measures are required for working with under 18s.
- ▶ There is a fear of working with children stemming from a lack of expertise.



I. WHY PARTICIPATION IS SO IMPORTANT

Meaningful, inclusive participation can lead to more effective grantmaking programs, more equitable funding ecosystems, and more **democratic societies.** There is growing evidence from progressive, brave and, often, feminist funders that participation is not only a human right, but that it can also shift power and resources.³³ Firstly, it tips the balance of power within philanthropic organizations by moving decisionmaking into the hands of children and young people. It then strengthens intersectional movements by building solidarity between groups and collectives who come together for the process.³⁴ It also spurs civic engagement in broader society by building skills, experience, and interest in democratic processes such as voting and consensus building.³⁵ In 2021. the Stanford Social Innovation Review found that "the process of building feedback mechanisms created more equitable practices across organizations and advocacy efforts. The impetus to seek stakeholder input in one area triggered an instinct to do so in others."36 Research by the Sillerman Centre also found that young people who had been included meaningfully in participatory mechanisms were more likely to stay engaged civically in the years afterward. 37

Participatory grant-making can be one of the most impactful ways to build individual confidence, strengthen groups, and shift power within philanthropy.

"Honestly having them be part of the process and listening to them and how insightful they were, and the questions they had for the grantee partners ...that was my AHA moment! Because you can't help but think they would do this job better than I am doing it."

-Public funder interviewed for this research

Pioneered by FRIDA, participatory grant-making puts the decision of where funding goes, into the hands of those most affected by it. The power of this model was reiterated by the children and young people and funders who took part in this research process: "...when it comes

to participatory grantmaking and when you are involved in the designing process, then it makes you powerful, because you know what the context is, and you know what the outcome of the interventions is..." said one girl activist from Brazil that we interviewed. Participatory grant-making has also been found to be a powerful tool to enable girls to better understand money and feel more comfortable making decisions about money in their personal lives. She also reflected that her involvement in the grantmaking process has changed her perspective from viewing money "as a bad thing", to seeing it as a tool for decision-making. She told us "We have been shaping the way we understand money, and almost as a good thing to literally help us to help girls be able to make decisions, decisions that they want to make that benefit them."

"...when it comes to participatory grantmaking and when you are involved in the designing process, then it makes you powerful, because you know what the context is, and you know what the outcome of the interventions is..."

- girl activist, Brazil

EXAMPLES

Global Fund for Women piloted its participatory grant-making initiative in 2020, inviting the Adolescent Girls' Advisory Council made up of 12 adolescent girls to review proposals, reflect together, and decide who to fund. This model was faciliated with the support of a team of consultants who held orientation sessions with the girl advisors to reflect on their relationship to money in relation to their diverse cultural contexts, and discuss the difference between conventional philanthropy and feminist funding. The girls scored proposals and reflected collectively.

Global Fund for Children partnered with youth-led groups to roll out its participatory grant-making process through the Spark Fund, where young people from four different regions have been engaged in deciding where funding goes. This approach allowed the Global Fund for Children to reach nascent groups they otherwise would not have reached.

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Meaningful participation means children and young people have real decision-making power. A youth activist we spoke to from the UK described participatory grant-making as a way to engage young people "in a comprehensive way" as opposed to limiting their involvement to consultations at the beginning of the process. She views meaningful participation as a learning journey where young people are engaged in each phase of the grant-making lifecycle. She told us: "It's not good enough to just consult young people. It's also important to create a forum where they can be meaningfully included in conversations between funders themselves, various funders, and then actually being in the room and at the table when it comes to deciding which programs can we create and how we can fund this kind of work".

Participation is an opportunity to spark connections between and within movements.³⁸ Whether building a new advisory group or convening grantee partners from different contexts or regions, participatory mechanisms provide a unique opportunity for strengthening coalition-building and solidarity between movements. While not child-

and youth-focused, AWID's 'Towards a Feminist Funding Ecosystem' research also recognizes the powerful role that participatory processes can play in breaking down siloes and supporting cross-movement work.³⁹ Coming together in times of crisis or to collectively problem-solve shared challenges builds empathy and fosters a 'culture of caring.'⁴⁰ By committing to a long-term participatory process, funders are providing space for movement actors to come together several times, to build relationships with each other, and to spark opportunities for collaboration. Some funders go even further by providing collaboration grants for grantee groups who wish to work together on a project.

But...not all participation is good participation.

"I learned in my own experience and in working with funders now...you have to figure out where participation is helpful and where you're just saying participation because participation has become 'the right' way to do something. Meaningful engagement requires us to think deeply about the 'why' behind participation. We need to examine questions such as, what our intentions are, are we able to be accountable to young people as a result of the process, and what young people are gaining from the experience?"

-Jody Myrum, Former Director of the NoVo Foundation

Funders need to be careful about the tokenistic use of the term 'participation,' reflected Jody Myrum who we spoke to for this research. There is a real risk of causing harm if the conditions for participation to be truly meaningful and influential are not in place. An advisory council in a feminist organisation is more likely to have the foundations and accountability mechanisms in place to be influential because it is more likely to have an institutional understanding and practice grounded in an intersectional feminist lens. For example, senior leadership are more likely to recognize the power imbalance between adults and children, or between English speakers and those for whom English is not a first language. On the other hand, these models can be tokenistic in institutions that are traditionally adult-centric and patriarchal because the foundational conditions are missing: "While participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, it may also be the means through which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced."⁴¹

elevate children funders group

2. FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS FOR MEANINGFUL CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Meaningful participation is a long-term process, not a one**off project or initiative.** By analyzing participatory approaches implemented by a variety of organizations and funders, we see a pattern emerging: participation is a process, not a check box or a one-off project. It is possible to start small, with whatever is feasible within your organization, but meaningful participation requires sustained effort, resources, and political will as well as a willingness to be brave, uncomfortable, and vulnerable. It also shows that you can have the most impact when you start engaging children and young people from the design phase. 42 43 The research also shows that meaningful participation, when facilitated as a process, can have a ripple effect. Research into funders of young peacebuilders found that including young people from the design phase led to more meaningful participatory grant-making models and youth-responsive, dialoguebased learning. 44 Similar ripple effects were seen across virtually every funder that was interviewed.

Inclusion must be centered from the beginning. The research shows that when funders center inclusion in a participatory process it. too, can have a ripple effect. The Global Resilience Fund found that "bringing an intersectional lens from the beginning enables funding to reach girls and young women who are often excluded from funding opportunities."45 The participatory nature of the fund, which created regional panels to advise on participatory grant-making, was vital in supporting this. If they had not worked in a participatory way, the Global Resilience Fund would not have reached the groups that they did, including those who were "often excluded from funding opportunities, such as trans girls and young women, non-binary young people, and those working on disability rights."46 For the Equality Accelerator platform⁴⁷ girls designed every aspect of the fund mechanism. This resulted in a percentage of funding reserved for girl-led groups, Indigenous and Black-led groups, and informal. nascent groups. Being inclusive from the beginning in the creation of the participatory grant-making mechanism led to more diverse distribution of funds. This experience was echoed by the Sillerman

Centre, which found that youth-led grant-making can lead to a more diverse and representative distribution of resources. 48 If you are working with children, an inclusive process also means thinking about what hours they are in school and ensuring you have expertise in the team to adapt methodologies to different age groups. For adolescent girls in contexts where girls' participation in decision-making is not widely accepted, you might need to spend more time working with their families and communities to ensure their participation is understood and supported. 49

Compensating children and young people for their time and expertise is not only fair, it is a necessary condition for equal and inclusive engagement. While most funders are now aware of its importance, very few organizations have a clear or consistent policy and approach. As participatory practices become more common, the demand for young people's time and expertise will increase and this free labor cannot go unrecognized. For some funders, there is pushback from senior leadership given the risk in monetising traditionally unpaid volunteering commitments. Many face internal procedural challenges which prevent them from compensating young people (especially children) directly. For instance, one public funder we spoke to had to navigate a tricky situation when trying to compensate a young person who was living in a shelter sponsored by one of its partners. The partner organization had a policy which does not allow giving money to young people. She said: "It ended up

being a grant to the organization and they bought sports equipment for all the young people. But how did that feel to that young person that they didn't get that funding or that recognition for their individual efforts?" When broaching the subject of compensation for under 18s, there are new and heightened safeguarding challenges and potential legal obstacles with moving resources to minors in



different contexts. It is also important not to forget non-financial compensation, which was recognized as particularly important by young people in the Global South. The value of trainings, networking opportunities, access to decision-makers, letters of recommendations, and references were all shared as examples of good practice recognition and compensation. *The Getting Started: Compensation and Budgeting Section* has some tips and practical resources to help organizations develop their own policy on compensation.

EXAMPLE

World Childhood Foundation USA recognized the need for an hourly stipend because it allows inclusion of those who cannot afford to volunteer for free. For young people who have other responsibilities like caring for family members or working to contribute to the family, financial compensation allows for them to engage.

Don't limit young people's engagement to youth-focused projects. There is a tendency to facilitate participation of young people only in projects or areas that are deemed "youth" issues, mirroring a similar tendency in the development sector. The research shows the power of engaging young people across any area of work that they are interested in. World Childhood Foundation USA included a youth representative on its program advisory council, which provides strategic direction for all of the organization's grant-making. The council is responsible for reviewing all grant program proposals twice a year. The youth representative is an equal member of the advisory council and their role is not limited to only youth projects. This approach helps bring youth perspectives to the other projects, which the organization has benefitted from. Nicole Epps, the former Executive Director told us, "It's not a case of 'you're youth and you only do youth projects.' They're involved in all of our projects which we've found has been very beneficial as they bring a different thought to some of the programmes or think about how youth respond."



3. KEY SHIFTS TO BE MADE INTERNALLY

Meaningful participation has the potential to redistribute power, but requires recognition of the wrongs of philanthropy's history. When facilitating child and youth participatory processes to develop funding strategies, it is important to ensure "it's meaningful, it's reciprocal, it's accountable, and it can actually play a role in influencing," as Jody Myrum told us. To achieve this, funders need to consider what they can do to rebalance the unequal power distribution between funders and grantees. At Global Fund for Children, engaging the entire organization, including communications, operations, and finance, in conversations around shifting power was vital for critical reflection. The team had internal conversations about the power all of their roles hold, and the ways they can share or give up power. The principle of 'shifting the power' is now reflected in the organization's ways of working: "It was very intentional that this isn't something just for the programs team but something to be integrated throughout our organization. We all have a role to play, and we all have power and privilege that come out in the decisions we make". This can often be an uncomfortable space for funders. Shifting power requires critically reflecting on the wrongs in philanthropy's history and putting in extra efforts to reach out to children and youth from more marginalized backgrounds or who are traditionally excluded, e.g., ensuring enough time to seek consent for under 18s, developing non-digital ways to participate for those with limited access to the internet, etc.

Trust building starts at the beginning and it takes time. Most of the funders, children, and young people we spoke to attested to the importance of trust as a foundational component of meaningful participation. A former director at NoVo Foundation shared that by building a long-term trusting relationship, grantee partners felt comfortable opening up about shared problems and tensions between movements, which otherwise would not have been shared with a funder. It led to much more honest dialogue and insight into the needs of movements and what role a funder can play through resources and accompaniment: "When you create relationships and work to remove those barriers, as much as possible, you can have really honest and transparent conversations, even the really difficult ones. It takes time and you as the funder also need to be willing to be vulnerable" said Jody Myrum. Building trust is not a short term project. With funding from one private funder to design the new participatory Children's Rights Innovation Fund, an initial design period of one year was agreed, recognising the time and effort needed to build trust in local communities and to design a multi-language participatory process.⁵¹

Participation requires rethinking your communications approach and, where appropriate, engaging young people to take the lead. Children and young people primarily get their information from social media, a complicated space where they are consuming mis- and disinformation daily.⁵² Therefore, funders need to rethink their communication strategy for engaging children and young people and, if they do not have this expertise in-house, consider hiring young people or outsourcing to youth consultants. For example, the World Childhood Foundation USA has engaged a 14 year old blogger to develop communication materials. Nicole Epps, the former Executive Director whom we interviewed, said "This is a generation that is very engaged and we do a disservice to our work if we're not including them. Much of the work that's been done has come from a fantastic place and we all want to make an impact and we all want a change. If we're not including youth voices, we're missing them."

It matters which children and young people you engage. Participation in itself is a political issue. Think about who is involved, how they are identified, and what power they hold.⁵³ Participation can shift power in philanthropy, but if it is not grounded in principles of intersectional feminism, anti-colonialism, and anti-racism, it risks reinforcing an already exclusive space.

"when inviting children and young people to join conversations, it is important to look beyond charisma to make sure they legitimately represent their constituencies and are already situated within strong networks." 55

Efforts should be made to engage diverse groups of children and young people, including those with less experience of such initiatives, those from rural areas, those with limited or no access to the internet or digital devices, under 18s including adolescent girls, LGBTQIA+ youth, children and young people with disabilities, Black and Indigenous youth, and those

for whom English is not the first language. As outlined in one paper, "when inviting children and young people to join conversations, it is important to look beyond charisma to make sure they legitimately represent their constituencies and are already situated within strong networks." The research process demonstrated that many children and young people are on multiple advisory or participatory grant-making panels. For in-person opportunities, those who can easily access visas, have prior experience, do not need

chaperones (usually over 18s), or speak English tend to be invited through a cherry-picking process rather than one that recognizes the diversity of experience and builds in the necessary time for preparation, capacity strengthening, and lengthy visa processes. Under 18s tend to be excluded because they have fewer years of experience than their older counterparts.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TAKING A POLITICAL STANCE?

New research on resourcing girls puts forward the idea of a transformational funding framework which provides

"a conceptual foundation that acknowledges the systemic oppressions that perpetuate inequality, flowing resources directly to girls and/or their allies to challenge and transform power relations and structures." The researchers compare this to a transactional framework "that sees girls as beneficiaries of particular services and meeting of basic needs, while failing to recognize their agency. It is often attached to achieving a particular goal, wholly disconnected from the social, political, economic or other systems and contexts into which that funding flows." Within a funding context, participation is political because it means having a say in where power lies and where it moves to. This could be financial power (deciding which groups receive money), strategic power (deciding what the funding priorities are), or even knowledge power (having the information, language skills, and tools to be able to navigate the system). When we talk about taking a political stance we are talking about the need to recognize this power imbalance, acknowledge where power lies, and think about how it could be redistributed more evenly. We are talking about the need to recognize the agency of children and young people. Without centering participation in an understanding of power, funders risk reinforcing those power imbalances, e.g., by only engaging children and young people who speak English and have previous experience. They also risk dealing with a symptom and not the systemic root of the problem, e.g., by continuing to only fund Global North-led, adult-led organizations as opposed to those leading social justice struggles in their own communities.

If funding political work, having clarity in your beliefs and what you stand for builds trust and authenticity. In their 2019 research into the feminist funding ecosystem, ⁵⁸ AWID called on funders to use their power to advocate for change: "call for more meaningful participation from other funders. Use your power and connections with other funders and with other decision-makers, including governments." As well as recognising funding as political work, it is important to also recognize children and young

people as political actors. "Funders feel less comfortable resourcing youth movement building and activism," shared Vanessa Stevens who we spoke to from Global Fund for Children. Contributions from youth activists to this research demonstrated how important this acknowledgement was not only in building trust and credibility for funders, but because this understanding is core to being able to do meaningful participatory work.

EXAMPLE

From its inception, FRIDA, the world's only young feminist-led participatory fund, has been intentionally and unapologetically political and conscious of its power and the capitalist and patriarchal system within which it perates. Former Co-Executive Directors reflected that "If we really want to see change, we need to ensure we do not recreate the same oppressive structures and internalized patriarchy in our own organizations, groups, and collectives." A recent article by Co-Executive Directors of FRIDA on the \$10,000,000 gift from MacKenzie Scott (ex-wife of Amazon owner Jeff Bezos) sheds light on new thinking about the politics of receiving funding from corporations responsible for human rights violations across the globe. 66

Know your accountability lines and stay true to them.

"Funding movements and activists should be seen as a privilege. In a world that is so unequal and those with money and resources have for so long held the power, it is normal for us to function in a system where funders hold grantees or activists to account to follow their restrictions. But if we really want to shift power and start to unravel oppressive and unequal systems, we need to ensure that when money flows, funders are not only focusing on accountability to donors, but to the activists to whom they channel funds." 64

The Human Rights Funders Network recommends accountability as a core grantmaking principle, defining it as "Accountability to recognize our own institutions and selves as accountable to the organizations, activists, and movements we support." What does this mean in practice? Based on the desk review and interviews we conducted, it means developing child- and youth-centered accountability mechanisms, and sharing back findings and recommendations (in accessible, digestible language) after seeking contributions from children and young people. It means sharing information about your internal processes, policies, practices, finances, and youth participation approach. For children and young people, but for younger adolescents in particular, you might need to spend time

simplifying language and removing any jargon. It means building your community, whether that is through membership or through grantees, advisors, and supporters, and providing meaningful ways for them to influence decision-making at different levels. For example, having your community or membership elect the Board of Directors.⁶¹

An important question came up through the research: is direct resourcing to children and youth-led groups, collectives, and movements in itself the most necessary and political form of meaningful participation?

It felt like the elephant in the room to not mention the importance of flexible, sustainable funding for child and youth groups. The wealth of evidence from FRIDA 62 and MamaCash 63 as well as from new research on the adolescent girls' funding landscape reiterates the importance of direct funding and associated non-financial support and accompaniment. A youth activist from Ukraine said: "As an organization, when we receive flexible funding, we read it as like direct and honest feeling, honest connection, and you feel like you would not, you would never betray that trust." This toolkit reflects on where direct resourcing falls on the spectrum of participation and recognizes that it cuts across everything.

"As an organization, when we receive flexible funding, we read it as...honest connection, and...you would never betray that trust."

- youth activist, Ukraine

SPOTLIGHT:

THE
CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
INNOVATION
FUND (CRIF)

"When have you put resources in the hands of girls, which is power, and something powerful and beautiful wasn't created?" -Dr. Ramatu Bangura, Director of CRIF

The Children's Rights Innovation Fund (CRIF) is supporting participatory strategy development and grant-making with children and young people in West Africa and the Americas. CRIF was originally seed funded by a private foundation who recognized the importance of centering the experience of those most affected, but also acknowledged its own limitations in facilitating participatory mechanisms. One challenge is that private foundations are often not set up to implement youth-centered participatory grantmaking or to do a high volume of local grants across multiple countries, in particular with young people or unregistered groups. Recognizing that they could not support participatory grant-making directly, the funder wanted to contribute to shifting systems and power with others. CRIF is grounded in principles of intersectional feminism, meaningful participation, anti-racism and anti-colonialism and serves as an opportunity for funders to shift power through participatory grantmaking.

CRIF hired an experienced grant-maker with a background in youth work, vital expertise for a meaningful participatory fund for young people. Recognizing that their main constituency was children and young people, CRIF started there, designing its first participatory grant-making portfolio with a global panel working in four languages. With the panel they thought about where power currently resides and where they want it to reside. The seed funder did not give a deadline and said to take the time that was needed to do the necessary research and relationship building. The design process for CRIF was all virtual given the pandemic. CRIF provides compensation, and they decide what additional support to give through conversation with young people. They have learned that it is important to be clear on the terms and expectations, but to allow for flexibility in the strategy and budget to meet the needs of young people as they emerge. CRIF's Director, Dr. Ramatu Bangura says that "to tackle adultism we need to move the money to young people. They are the surest bet in this sector. Those who have squandered resources are mostly the wealthy and mostly adults."

4. OBSTACLES TO MEANINGFUL CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Adultism is an ongoing problem and continues to cause intergenerational tensions across organizations, movements, and philanthropy. One youth activist shared that when she was working with older activists, her opinions were disregarded; she was treated as though she did not know as much and that she lacked experience of the system within which they were all trying to affect change. These experiences made her feel powerless and unable to meaningfully participate in conversations: "For them, having been in the system for years, they know how things work, and what works and what doesn't. And so they felt powerful enough to just take over the conversation. And in that particular point, to be very honest, I felt very powerless." A youth activist from Sierra Leone shared that undermining young people's opinions can silence them and stop them from engaging further. By not acknowledging and addressing adultism, we risk losing the opportunity for rich intergenerational movement-building and collective action. Being intersectional must include a recognition of adultism and giving space to children and young people to share their world views: "Because we're a feminist fund, we're committed to being intersectional. When you say intersectional this implies being intergenerational," said Aissata Sall from Global Fund for Women, Ingrained, internalized adultism also means it may take a little longer for children to feel comfortable and to open up. One researcher from a large corporate children's foundation recalls this: "in one of our research projects it just took a little bit longer to build rapport with the child, because they weren't used to an adult asking them questions. So, it may take longer or you may have to incorporate a playful opening to help children feel comfortable."

"...having been in the system for years,
 [older activists] know how things
 work...so they felt powerful enough to
 just take over the conversation....in that
 particular point, to be very honest, I
 felt very powerless.""
 - Youth Activist

Funders can navigate intergenerational tensions by working with families and communities.

"Be in partnership and build meaningful relationships with those who are close to children and young people in that region and/or directly with young people depending on how you are structured and what is appropriate. I remember someone once calling it the 'swoop and poop,' when a funder just comes in, extracts what they need, and goes away. When interactions are transactional and void of relationship building, it is not possible to have meaningful engagement with anyone."

-Representative of a private foundation we interviewed

Jody Myrum, a former director at NoVo Foundation, noted that intergenerational tensions also arise in movements: "When you are supporting young people in movements, it's really important to both talk to young people and others in the movements they are a part of so you can understand the full breadth of work that is happening and consider ways to support the work that doesn't perpetuate these tensions." Aissata Sall from Global Fund for Women provided another example of intergenerational tension in the community stemming from social gender norms that limit girls' participation and leadership. There were concerns from adults in the community that a focus on girls would politicize them, and that girls should be at school instead of organizing and leading: "There is definitely a shift that needs to happen in some regions within the movements ... We want to support intergenerational solidarity and conversations. We think they're so important because adultism is real." It shows the importance of

engaging with the adults who play critical roles in children and young people's lives, such as family and community members, and traditional and religious leaders.



Children and young people do not feel like they are taken seriously by funders.

"In terms of barriers, I would say that we are not being [taken] seriously. We are Gen Zs and we are technology oriented. We act fast. And in the world of grant making there [are] a lot [of] bureaucracies that do not let us act fast. For example, the advisory group wanted to have an Instagram account but the funder did not let us have one because they did not trust us to manage the account."

-Girl activist from Brazil

This attitude toward young people is often veiled under "bureaucracy" or "protocols" and often develops a sense of distrust, which hinders young people's meaningful participation. One young leader from Zimbabwe shared that he felt disheartened when the agreement to include a young leader from an advisory group in the Board was not honored: "... at times when they want things from us, they're always pushing for us to deliver. But when we ask for something like this, they take their deliberate time and to me, I feel like it's just some kind of delaying tactic or they now see us as some form of being there just for probably, PR purposes?" This experience demonstrates the need for expectation-setting at the beginning and throughout, transparency about what is possible, and agreement as equal partners on how to communicate and work together. A youth activist from the UK shared that adults only respect young people if they have already previously engaged in similar work: "...they [funders and philanthropists] will say things like...we are choosing you because of your experience doing this, because of your great accomplishments doing that. And I think that is the standard for validating what we do, but it makes me wonder what about those that don't have experience or haven't accomplished things like that? So I think by scrapping meritocracy, I think funders can be more trusting and empower more young people." A recruitment approach based on meritocracy is also much more likely to exclude under 18s, particularly adolescent girls and those with limited digital access who will not have had as much previous experience.

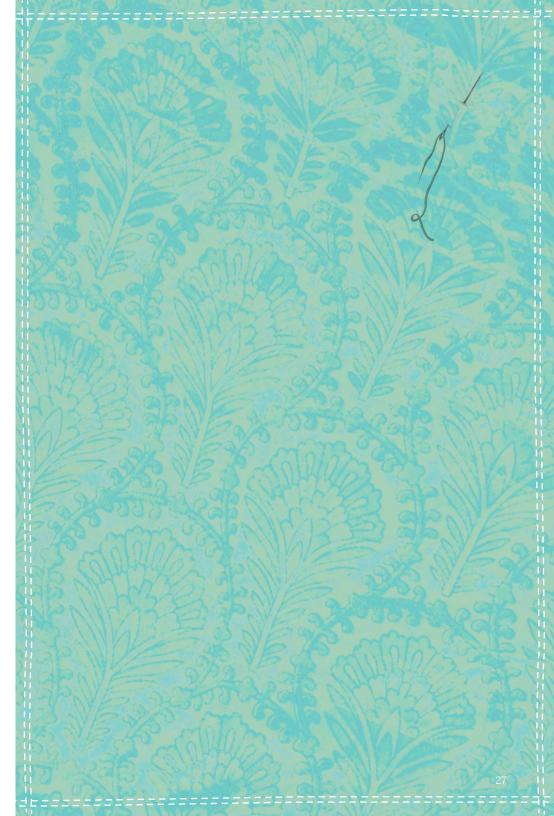
The digital divide is making it difficult for trust to be built. A youth activist we interviewed noted the huge digital gap in terms of infrastructure between countries in the Global North and countries in the Global South.

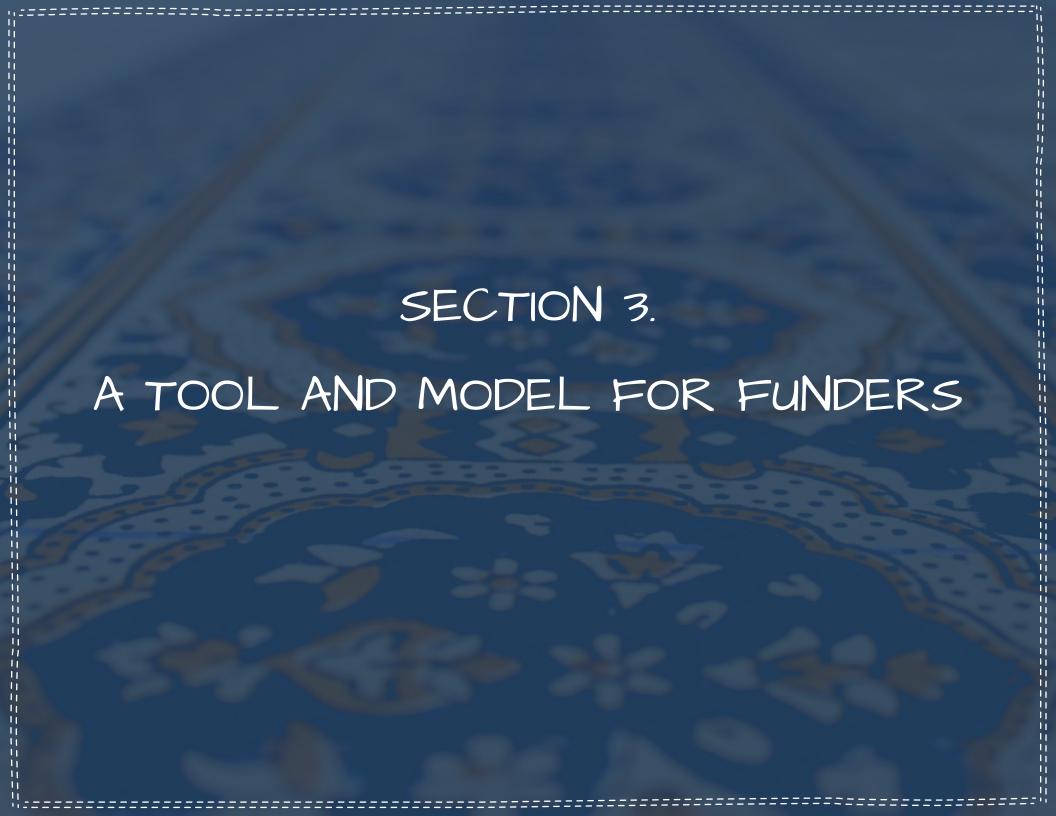
For many communities based in the Global South, internet access and access to a device is considered a luxury, particularly for adolescent girls.⁶⁷ Children and young people often borrow phones or laptops from

family members to take part in virtual forums. This is not often understood by Global North based funders who do not always budget for the additional access needs for those who have digital limitations, e.g., devices or data packages. It can also make it difficult for building a trusting relationship, and has been exacerbated with COVID-19. She said: "And so if the donors initially were not trusting the young people, how would they even trust them now when they cannot even see them? So how would they trust people who don't have a stable internet? I just feel like this current situation has only made the trust worse." Another girl activist from Peru echoed that when young people cannot communicate properly due to unstable internet connections, funders often interpret it as them not taking the job seriously.

Additional measures are required for working with under 18s. It would be remiss not to mention the tendency of funders to work with older young people, over 18 or even in their late 20s, thereby either intentionally or indirectly excluding under 18s. This is often because of safeguarding concerns, which are heightened when moving money to adolescents. One public funder we interviewed said: "In terms of safeguarding and other considerations, I don't think the team felt quite ready for that. So that's one big question we have is how do we do that? And how do we do that well and safely? It brings up lots of questions about the recognition and the payment, where that just gets a little messy and complicated." There are mixed opinions about when to obtain parental consent for political work that they might not be supportive of. In many countries, there are also legal restrictions when transferring money to under 18s. However it is not impossible. Several funders and INGOs⁶⁸ have worked with girl-led and centered groups to move funds safely and provide the additional accompaniment and support needed to manage the money.

There is a fear of working with children stemming from a lack of **expertise.** Another obstacle to working with children is the fear of getting it wrong or not having the expertise for working with under 18s. One public funder shared that this fear was held at the team level: "A lot of our team, when they were hired, they weren't necessarily hired for having child and youth participation skills. So it's a mix of experiences on the team. So some folks feel more comfortable working with 20 year olds as opposed to adolescents." Where organizations are supporting meaningful participation with children, they have hired people (often young people) with deep experience in facilitating child-centered methodologies. They have also provided training on safeguarding, meaningful participation, power, and privilege for staff across the organization, not just with the teams that are in direct contact. This means that the finance team or grants team is also experienced and ready to move money to adolescents or to engage with them, their families or local partners.





THE TAPESTRY OF PARTICIPATION

TAPESTRIES OF THREAD AND FABRIC, WOVEN TOGETHER WITH INTENTION, IN A PROCESS TO CREATE VISUAL STORIES.

The Tapestry of Participation offers a collective process to weave a shared story together, co-creating something beautiful that will last for generations. Each tapestry is unique depending on who comes together to create it.

The research and desk review surfaced a 4-step process for designing a participatory approach:

- 1. **Grounding principles** as the foundation for participatory practice.
- 2. Four levels of participation with an organization (organizational/operational, programmatic/grant-making, influencing, monitoring, evaluating, and learning), with associated entry points and participatory mechanisms.
- 3. Deciding which children and young people to work with based on who is in your network.
- **4. Four depths of participation** (consulting, decision-making, co-designing, and resourcing child- and youth-led organizing).

The model layers one on top of the other, tailored to the institution and how they currently are or wish to work with children and young people. This section delves into the four steps and includes some practical foundation guidance on budgeting, compensation and safeguarding, care and wellbeing. It also includes two examples of participatory approaches.

The following section gets even more practical, with activities and reflection questions for funders to work through.





I. GROUNDING PRINCIPLES

recognition throughout.

The research brought to light 10 key principles that are interlinked. If a participatory process is safe but not inclusive, it won't be meaningful. If it is political but does not leave room for experimentation and iteration, it won't be meaningful. Likewise, designing a participatory process that intentionally applies each principle and recognizes their connectivity will ensure one that is meaningful and much more likely to be successful.

PRINCIPLE	WHAT DOES MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION LOOK LIKE WITH AND WITHOUT THIS PRINCIPLE?
1. A process, not a project - Even if you start small, ensure you have the resources, time, and committment for it to be meaningful	With: Commit to more than a one-off engagement. This could be several months, a year-long, or ongoing with dedicated staff and a clear plan from start to finish. Without: A one-off consultation engaging young people who have no prior relationship with the organization.
2. Co-ownership - Provide opportunities for real influence over part or all of the process.	With: Clarity of where and how children and young people will have a decision-making role in a process, clear roles outlined in a Terms of Reference. Without: Children and young people are consulted but are not sure how their contributions will be included, with minimal control and active ownership.
3. Safe and consistent - Do no harm and mitigate any potential risks to children and young people.	With: A clear reporting process and focal point for a participatory process, all children and young people understand their responsibilities and those of staff. Without: No plan in place if a safeguarding incident happens or is reported. No safeguarding expertise within the team.
4. Inclusive - Center inclusion from the beginning and work to create the conditions for diverse children and young people to participate and lead.	With: Process is responsive and accessible to the needs of children and young people from diverse identities and backgrounds. You are flexible and provide additional support and resources, such as language and disability justice. Without: Working with a homogenous group, not budgeting for access needs or language inclusivity.
5. Intersectional - Recognize the diverse and intersecting identities and realities of children and young people.	With: Make space to understand and respond to the complexity of children and youth with multiple, intersecting social and political identities, and how this results in varying discrimination and or privilege. Work to break down silos across issue areas in your funding. Without: You approach young people with a single issue lens, glossing over the complexities they face.
6. Non-extractive and Compensated - Value people's time, expertise and contribution, be clear about your intentions, and build in feedback and recognition throughout	With: Having a fair and clear compensation policy (financial and non-financial) which might include a stipend, training opportunities, and a reference letter. Children and young people feel valued and recognized. Provide information upfront on how contributions will be used and where you can seek ways to model reciprocity.

elevate children funders group 32

Without: No tangible recognition or feedback is shared for the time and expertise is given to children and

young people after their contributions are made and their perspectives are co-opted.

PRINCIPLE

7. Experimental and iterative - Build in enough time and flexibility for ongoing learning and adaptation.

8. Brave and open - Be ready to have uncomfortable conversations, take calculated risk, and be open to vulnerability.

9. Holding power to account - Recognize children and young people as political actors. Embrace the systemic change work you have to do also.

10. Intentional and patient - Have a clear plan and build in enough time to do it right.

WHAT DOES MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION LOOK LIKE WITH AND WITHOUT THIS PRINCIPLE?

With: Enough time built into the planning process to test ideas and adapt. Creation of learning dialogue spaces to foster honest reflection.

Without: Limited time frame with no room for changing course if needed or for testing out ideas put forward by young people.

With: Spaces within teams and with young people for honest dialogue and feedback. Being ready to receive criticism, to feel silly, and to learn.

Without: No openness to feedback, avoiding participatory processes for fear of getting it wrong.

With: Call out neo-colonialism and patriarchy within the philanthropic space, use your power to advocate for others to shift their power.

Without: Continued language to describe children and young people as beneficiaries, resistance to talking about or funding movements and activism.

With: Develop a long-term participatory process with room to maneuver and adapt. Take time to provide training for staff.

Without: Rushing to meet an internal deadline, trying to start a participatory process without the basic foundations in place.

2 ENTRY POINTS AND PARTICIPATORY MECHANISMS

The research showed four entry point levels within an institution where participation is possible and can be meaningful:

- 1. Organizational / Operational
- 2. Programmatic / Grant-making
- 3. Influencing
- 4. Monitoring, Evaluating, Learning, and Researching

For each of these, we have identified the opportunities for engagement and the specific participatory mechanisms. Funders can choose to use one or multiple entry points and associated mechanisms. There is some natural connectivity between them.

I EVEL

Organizational & operational strategy

OPPORTUNITY

- Organizational strategy design
- Staffing
- Governance

PARTICIPATORY MECHANISM

- → Participatory strategy development
- → Hiring young people and creating supportive policies and culture
- → Youth board members

LEVEL	OPPORTUNITY	PARTICIPATORY MECHANISM
Programmatic / grant-making	Program / grant-making strategy	 Participatory grant-making and accompaniment Flexible resourcing to child- and youth-led groups - resourcing as the ultimate participation in itself! Funding participatory adult-led child- and youth-focused organizations
Influencing	 Advocacy, strategic partnerships, and communications 	 Child and youth participation in advocacy, strategic partnerships, and communications
Monitoring, Research, and Learning evaluation	ResearchM&E of organizational strategy or programsGrantee reporting	Participatory research Participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning

3. YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR NETWORK

There are different groups and networks from which you can invite children and young people to take part in a participatory process. The reflection questions and activities in **Section 5** will help you to reflect on how your organization is already working with children and young people, support you to decide on which children or young people to engage with, and show you how to apply an inclusive and intersectional approach. Example groups are:

- Younger staff or youth consultants
- Child- and youth-led grantee partners
- Children and young people connected to or working with your adult-led, child- and youthserving grantee partners
- Youth board members
- Youth members (for membership organizations)
- Broader child and youth movements
- Partners' grantees and networks

A common approach is to create diverse advisory groups or councils from the list above.



4. FOUR DEPTHS OF PARTICIPATION

Users of this model should understand the non-meaningful forms of participation put forward by existing models including tokenism, decoration, and manipulation. They are not included here as they do not constitute meaningful participation and should not be considered as viable options. Instead, this model puts forward 4 depths of participation:

FLEXIBLE +

TRUSTING RESOURCING

CO-DESIGN

MAKING

DECISIONS

CONSULTING

RESOURCING CHILD- AND YOUTH-LED ORGANIZING:

By providing truly flexible resources, directly or through a participatory grant-maker who directly supports child- or youth-led groups, a funder can achieve its programmatic and organizational aims through this most trusting participatory approach.

MAKING DECISIONS

Children and young people have clear decision-making power in the process. This is pre-agreed and expectations are managed if there is a possibility their recommendation will not be used. They might have shared decision-making power with staff, intergenerational decisionmaking with other adults outside of the organization, or they might have sole decision-making power over certain elements, e.g., in a grant-making process they might design the application process or set the criteria for groups. This could be with: younger staff, child- and youth-led grantee groups, advisory groups, and/ or children and young people working with child- and youth-serving grantee groups.

CO-DESIGN

This is a deeply collaborative and resource-intensive process

where children and young people are involved and hold decisionmaking power throughout the entire process. Co-design is increasingly being employed as a methodology to co-create programs, campaigns, and strategies with children and young people. It requires time, dedicated and experienced staff, financial resources (to ensure accessibility as well as recognition for the time and expertise of those involved), openness, and vulnerability. Ordinarily, this will be with an advisory group which could be made up of a) children and young people external to the organization but with relevant experience or identities, b) children or young people connected to adult-led grantee partners, or c) representatives from child- and youth-led grantee partners.

CONSULTING

Asking for advice and contributions which you may or may not take on board. This should still form part of a process, e.g., seeking advice from a long-term Advisory Group or input from a youth membership, and should be grounded in the key principles, e.g., be inclusive, provide compensation, and give feedback where the consultations have landed. This could be with: younger staff, child- and youthled grantee groups, advisory groups, and/or children and young people working with child- and youth-

serving grantee groups.

DEPTHS OF PARTICIPATION

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

Here we share general recommendations and considerations for any funders wishing to support child and youth participation. It might be helpful to read through these as a precursor to the practical, more detailed activities in **Section 5**.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Assess where you are in your journey and what is possible. If needed, start small and make sure the conditions are in place for meaningful participation and influence.
- Ensure senior leadership buy-in. You might need to pull together relevant case studies and examples. The 'Why Child and Youth Participation' Section in this Toolkit may also be helpful.
- Move from one-off to process. Developing a child and youth participation strategy can be a good starting point.
- **Dedicate specific budget** for accessibility, interpretation, inclusion measures, staff/training, data packages, and compensation.
- If you are working with under 18s, think about what consent you will need to obtain from parents or guardians. Think about the different ways you can obtain consent that take into account limited digital access, e.g., over a call, via Whatsapp. Ensure that any consent forms are simple accessible and translated into the local language.
- Provide training for adults within the organization not just on meaningful participation but on intersectionality, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, safeguarding, and inclusion. You might consider partnering with organizations, including youth-led organizations to deliver this. If you plan to work with under 18s, these organizations should have practical experience working with children. Resources for personal and team learning include:
 - → <u>Me and White Supremacy</u> by Layla F. Saad
 - → A guide to ally-ship from Black Lives Matter
 - Anti-racism resources for white people (including books, podcasts, articles, film and TV series, organizations to follow on social media and more)
 - For UK-based organizations: The EW Group training
 - → CIVICUS' <u>Diversity Tool</u>
- Develop policies on safeguarding, risk management, and compensation. Consider developing these with children and young people. Ensure a safeguarding policy that balances safety and agency. If needed, seek training from a digital safety organization to provide

- training for staff, children, and young people.
- Use the network building activities in Section 5 to agree which children and young people you will engage, and learn how to ensure the group is diverse and inclusive including thinking through language inclusivity, school/work hours, and other access needs.

GETTING STARTED:

- Work with children and young people to create a shared vision for change and a shared ideal funding relationship. Ensure there is common understanding on the terms of engagement.
- Start at the design phase as this is where trust is built. Co-creation takes time and resources. Build it into your work plan and budget.
- Center disability rights from the beginning. Consider paying for expert advice from disability rights organizations. Budget properly for any accessibility needs that children and young people might have.
 - The Disability Rights Fund has developed '<u>A Donor's Guide</u>
 <u>to Inclusion'</u> with practical recommendations for planning,
 working with and funding persons with disabilities.
 - OIVICUS has developed a <u>Diversity Tool</u> to assist civil society organizations and movements in their journey to become more inclusive, diverse, and sensitive to the needs, identities, and backgrounds of their people.
- Don't be afraid of working with under 18s! Take time to understand children and young people's developmental stages.
 Hire staff who have experience working with children and young people of different ages.
- Provide access to healing and spaces for joy and care, recognizing that many children and young people have experienced trauma and have not had access to support mechanisms.
- Develop a referral process for what your organization cannot offer.
- Be accountable to children and young people. Develop child- and youth-centered accountability mechanisms. Identify your lines of accountability. Feedback, share back where their contributions have ended up.

RECOGNIZING AND USING YOUR POWER:

- Reflect on the potential power dynamics of asking children and young people who may be receiving funding from you or working with organizations that are to engage in a participatory process.
 Might you want to hire external consultants to facilitate any sensitive conversations or create ways to share feedback anonymously?
- **Practice what you preach.** If funding political work, funders should be political themselves, in their policies and practices.
- Distinguish and breakdown silos. Participation initiatives provide an opportunity to build connections, supporting more coalition building and cross-movement collective action.
- Call for more meaningful participation from other funders. Use your power and connections with other funders and with other decisionmakers, including governments.

GETTING STARTED: BUDGETING FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Rather than provide detailed budget considerations for each mechanism, there are general recommendations and considerations that can be tailored depending on your approach. The budget lines will depend on the entry point, participatory mechanism(s) you have chosen, and which children and young people you are engaging. There may also be additional costs to consider if you are engaging under 18s.

GENERAL BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:

- Staff costs hiring experts and / or outsourcing to experienced consultants, including youth consultants.
 - If you are working with under 18s, the consultants should have experience working with adolescents, not just young people broadly.
 - You may also need to cover additional safeguarding support such as a dedicated safeguarding focal point.
- Direct grantmaking (includes grants awarded through participatory grant-making).
- Convening or collective action grants.
- Budget to cover out-of-pocket expenses such as the cost of data, travel, and childcare.
- Stipends for Advisory Groups, co-design panels, and review panels for participatory grant-making.
- Budget to cover the cost of non-financial compensation such as training sessions.
- External participatory evaluation consultants.
- Advocacy campaigning activities and preparation.
- Collective care and healing, e.g., psychosocial support, wellbeing sessions with consultants, etc.
- Translation and interpretation, including the translation of consent forms if you are working with under 18s.
- Disability access costs, e.g., audio-visual aids, sign language interpretation.
- Data packages for virtual convenings.
- Collaboration budgets to allow for and encourage activities that bring groups together and are self-organized.

EXAMPLE COSTS FOR AN ADVISORY GROUP TO PARTICIPATE IN A STRATEGY DESIGN PROCESS:

- At least one dedicated staff member to coordinate the group and hold the relationships. This could be a full time staff member or at least 50% of someone's role.
- Budget for interpretation, translation, and other access needs.
- Data packages and potentially devices if members do not own a phone/laptop and will need one to participate in meetings.
- Budget for in-person travel if you plan to bring the group together in person (see budget example below).
- Budget for wellbeing, care, and joy activities, e.g., healing sessions with a wellbeing practitioner, small grants for child- or youth-led wellbeing activities.

EXAMPLE COSTS FOR SETTING UP A PARTICIPATORY GRANT-MAKING PROCESS:

- 1-2 dedicated staff members to coordinate the process and, if relevant, manage the panel, e.g., program manager and program officer.
- A percentage of staff time from grants and finance, administration, and safeguarding.
- Budget for interpretation, translation, and to support other access needs.
- Data packages and potentially devices if members do not own a phone/laptop and will need one to participate in meetings.
- Budget for in-person travel if you plan to bring the group together in person (see below).
- Budget for wellbeing, care and joy activities, e.g., healing sessions with a wellbeing practitioner, small grants for child- or youth-led wellbeing activities.
- Budget for financial and/or non-financial compensation (see the next section for more information).



EXAMPLE COSTS FOR IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS:

For in-person international travel, including for convenings and workshops, budget for approximately \$3,000 per person traveling, which is a very generous estimate for:

- Transport (not just for transport to the workshop but also travel to visa appointments and to the capital city before and after the international flights).
- Visa costs.
- Insurance.
- Accommodation (at the capital if the children and young people are not based there and need to stay over before international travel, and at the convening/workshop/event itself).
- New clothes / luggage if the child or young person has not traveled before.
- A phone / call card.
- Per diems / expenses.
- Toiletries, menstrual hygiene products.
- Spending money for souvenirs and gifts.
- A free day for sightseeing / tours.
- For under 18s, you will also need to budget for a chaperone who should speak both the local language and convening workshop language. They should be experienced in this area of work and receive training if not.

OTHER BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS FOR IN-PERSON CONVENINGS ARE:

- Interpretation and translation.
- Venue hire.
- Additional staff to support general needs, safeguarding, and logistics.
- Wellbeing staff / practitioners / counselors.
- Costs to cover child care or lost earnings if the young person coming has care responsibilities or works.
- Drivers / transport.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- University of Northern Colorado, Budgeting for Access recommendations for budget implications for an accessible event.
- Disability Rights Fund, A Donor's Guide to Inclusion includes tips on inclusive budgeting.



GETTING STARTED: COMPENSATION

Funders approach compensation for participatory grant-making in different ways. This includes non-financial compensation such as training and networking opportunities, access to power-holders (other funders, advocacy targets, etc), certificates, and recommendation letters. An upcoming discussion paper, shared in the tools section below, encourages organizations to develop a compensation and volunteering policy, distinguishing between participants, volunteers, and paid employees. It includes: principles, considerations, and a decision-making approach that organizations can use to develop their own internal policy.



The paper suggests the following process as a way to begin to build a compensation policy:

- Organizations need to determine the role and tasks the young person is undertaking when setting a volunteering and compensation policy: Participant, Volunteer, or Worker.
 - Who does the work benefit?
 - Who has control over the tasks, hours, and time commitment?
 - Would the activities otherwise be completed by an employee?
- Organizations can then apply a consistent and fair compensation policy to each one. It is also important to see if and how someone's role changes over time, e.g., starting as a project participant and gradually taking on more responsibility. The paper includes a decision-making tree to help organizations decide.
- Organizations then need to decide on the type of compensation:
 - a) financial or in-kind appreciation/incentivisation such as t-shirts, paid online classes, or gift cards.
 - b) reimbursement to compensate for out-of-pocket expenses such as stipends to reflect estimated expenses including travel, childcare, wear and tear of equipment, etc.
 - c) payment such as a wage or lump sum. This should be in line with the organization's employment policy.

The paper does not set out guidance for honorariums or stipends for a more long-term initiative such as a co-design process, where the benefit is mutual, the hours and commitment are flexible, but it still requires a significant amount of time and effort. For this, a good first step is to discuss this with children and young people if you are working with any already in your network. An honorarium, for a role that might otherwise be a worker role, should not be a way to avoid paying a decent salary or to avoid labor laws. Seek advice from your HR teams and peers in the sector.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IF YOU ARE SETTING UP A COMPENSATION POLICY:

- Do not forget the value and importance of non-financial compensation!
 This is not only about financial payments and reimbursement. When developing your compensation approach, spend time to understand what would be of value to children and young people in terms of training, access to networks, or other contacts.
- For a global or regional panel bringing together young people from different parts of the world, evidence shows that a set, equal stipend works best. Note the consideration below on market values. For groups coming together in one country of context, compensation could be aligned to the local cost of living.
- In terms of practically paying financial compensation, methods can include: bank transfers, wire transfer, payment to a parent or guardian, PayPal, payment to a local partner organization, or payment in cash.
- If making payments to children and young people is new for your organization, speak with your finance team early on so they can give the process plenty of time. They might also need information such as IBAN/ SWIFT codes that can be tricky to find.

- Speak with children and young people at the beginning of a process to understand how payments might be made. You might need a tailored approach for each. Manage expectations if the process is likely to take time.
- Some funders that run Advisory Groups or Panels are engaging the same adolescent girls or young people who are receiving hundreds or thousands of dollars from various organizations without adequate management of associated risks such as community backlash or jealousy from peers. When creating a new group, ask about other commitments and explore potential risks and ways to mitigate them.
- If reimbursing expenses, try to organize a per diem with your finance team rather than asking for receipts which can be cumbersome and not always possible in every context.
- The paper notes that whether you are making payments to children or young people, rates should not be so high that they are excessively above market value. This runs the risk of backlash from families, communities, and friends.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18:

- Ensure you have parental or guardian consent to transfer financial compensation. There are safeguarding risks that come with having access to money, and parents or guardians should be aware so they can offer whatever support is necessary to manage that money safely.
- Check the local laws within that country to ensure you are not at risk of infringing them by transferring money to a minor.
- Where it is not possible to move money to a minor, explore non-financial compensation such as gift cards, training opportunities, and gift vouchers for sites like Spotify. If possible, talk with the children about the different types of non-financial compensation to understand what would be most useful and interesting to them.

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EXAMPLE: COMPENSATION FOR A PARTICIPATORY GRANT-MAKING PROCESS⁶⁹

An intermediary public funder is designing a participatory grant-making process. The process will last for 12 months and the organization is recruiting a group of 12 children and young people aged 15 - 20 to act as the advisory panelists. In terms of benefit, the programs team believes it will benefit both the organization and the advisory panelists. The organization will benefit as this will help it achieve its mission to be more youth-centered. It may also unlock new funding opportunities from source funders that only resource participatory organizations. The young people will also benefit. They will have access to training opportunities; they will build new skills in project management, grant-making, and financial management; and they will create new connections with other youth groups.

In terms of who has control over the time frame and tasks to be completed, this is mixed. The grants need to be released by the end of the financial year, which is 12 months away. Recruiting the group takes three months, so there are nine months left to run the process. There is some flexibility with the actual design and decision-making process. The program team and panelists decide together how and when they will meet. They will meet in person for an initial 3-day design session and the rest of the meetings will be virtual. The time commitment will be 2 - 4 hours a month. The panelists understand that they can be less involved when they are busy, e.g., with exams. If needed, the programs team will work weekends and evenings to fit around the panelists' work and study schedule and take the time back in lieu. In terms of whether the tasks would otherwise be completed by a staff member, the activities of the panel would not ordinarily be done by a staff member, because it would no-longer be a participatory process. The team decides the panelist role is a volunteer position and they need to develop a compensation approach that incorporates financial and non-financial compensation.

The panelists are all from Latin America, which is the focus of the program. For those under 18, the team obtains parental consent via Whatsapp calls with the parents during which the team reads through the consent form and answers any questions they have. The parents are also sent the form and send an email or Whatsapp confirming consent. The funder has not given compensation before so the team asks their peers and decides on a set rate of \$1000 plus per diems for the travel days. The \$1000 stipend is paid 50% at the beginning and 50% at the end. All out-of-pocket expenses will be covered including data packages, child care during travel for one panelist who is a mother, and the purchasing of a phone for a 15 year old panelist who does not own his own device. For those under 18, the money is paid to their parents or to a partner, adult-led NGO in their community. Non-financial compensation is decided with the panelists and includes training on project management and budgeting, a certificate, and a letter of recommendation from the CEO.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- CIVICUS, & Restless Development Maximising Benefits: A Recommended Framework for Volunteerism and Compensation for Young People
- Research study: Volunteer Engagement, Indirect Compensation and Youth Experience
- Young Feminist Europe GEF Young Feminist Manifesto: A bold and transformative vision for change

GETTING STARTED: SAFEGUARDING, CARE, AND WELLBEING

A grounding principle for this tool is that any child and youth participation process is safe. Based on insights from the research (on the importance of care and the reality that children and young people are political actors), we are offering a broader understanding of safeguarding: safeguarding should be grounded in a commitment to do no harm, encompass care and wellbeing strategies as political strategies, balance the agency of children and young people, and include an understanding of civic space as the basis for a safeguarding approach.

The Funders Safeguarding Collective has identified the following requirements for building and implementing a responsible safeguarding approach:70

- A culture of safeguarding.
- Policies and procedures (board approved policy, named lead/focal point with the right oversight).
- Training, guidance, and support not just to staff that are directly working with children and young people.
- Modeling and reinforcing expectations.
- Reporting, reflecting, and learning (open way for people to speak up, active response to incidents, action with those affected).
- Building into recruitment processes.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Set up a clear Safeguarding Policy in place before setting up any child or youth participation initiative. Even if young people are over 18, there are safeguarding challenges at play and you do have a duty to do no harm. They might have other vulnerabilities or face risks as a result of identities they hold or experiences they have.
- Agree on a reporting process for incidents and identify a designated safeguarding focal point. Any staff working with children directly should hold an advanced security check.
- Explore different ways to obtain consent, e.g.,voice-note on Whatsapp or conversation via phone to explain the process fully before seeking written consent over email, Whatsapp, or SMS. Alternative ways can be particularly helpful if parents speak a local dialect and also to build trust with parents and guardians.
- If you have consent to use someone's image, name, or quote, consider checking consent every month or so even if you have consent to use it for 6-12 months (or indefinitely, which is sometimes the case). With political work, the risks can change rapidly within a political context. While it might have been safe 2 months ago, it may no longer be.
- Have a clear policy for obtaining consent. You might decide to obtain
 parental consent at all times or you might choose to discuss with
 children and young people when and why to obtain parental consent.
 For example, parents might not be supportive of political work and so,
 for closed, private organizing spaces (as opposed to public fora), you
 might decide not to obtain parental consent.

- **Provide safeguarding training to all staff** on power, privilege, and bias rooted in an understanding of colonialism, the patriarchy, and anti-racism.
- If the children and young people you are working with are engaging in
 political activism or advocacy, consider developing a risk assessment
 with them, grounded in an understanding of civic space. This can be
 a simple discussion to brainstorm risks and the associated actions to
 mitigate those risks. If appropriate, trusted adults from the context or
 region should also be involved in helping think through possible risks.
 - A risk assessment should be a live document that you revisit over time with relevant colleagues, children, and young people.
- If you are providing financial compensation to children and young people, think through and mitigate any potential associated risks (e.g., backlash from family or community, jealousy from peers, local laws that restrict money being transferred to children or to informal groups).
- Don't just think about harm from adults to children but also between children and young people. For mixed age and identity groups, be aware of power dynamics within the group; develop a shared agreement for how to behave and treat each other. If there are under 18s, or those with other vulnerabilities that might put them at risk in the group, think about whether additional measures are required, such as having a staff member in breakout groups or agree on rules about 1:1 communication.
- For virtual events, workshops, and sessions, consider new or heightened risks related to digital safety and data protection. Platforms like Zoom have measures that can be put in place, such as no 1:1 chat or limited access to screen-share.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT:

- For Advisory Groups, consider developing a collective care plan with the members to help avoid burnout and to foster a space of joy and collective care.
- For participatory research, if you are working on sensitive issues, you may risk triggering or re-traumatising children and young people with lived experience. Plan to provide additional support and seek advice from experienced researchers on how to manage the process ethically and without harm.
- For participatory grant-making, making funding decisions that have implications for people in your community is a burden and one that can cause stress and anxiety. Create space to reflect on this challenge throughout and ensure you have budget and staff resourcing to provide additional wellbeing, care, and mental health support.
- For participatory grant-making, make sure to remove any sensitive or personal data from applications before they are shared for review. Anonymising not only leads to a fairer decision-making process, but it also ensures data protection and limits the risk of a data breach.
- For grantee partners that need additional support with safeguarding, consider providing safeguarding training for grantees, one-to-one support for grantees, help writing safeguarding policies for a project, and learning spaces between grantees.

FRIDA's Feminist Safeguarding Policy

In 2020, FRIDA published their feminist safeguarding policy⁷¹ which intentionally balances children and young people's safety and agency. According to FRIDA, a feminist approach "incorporates children and young people's agency and accounts for their activism in assessing and managing the risks they are facing." It also involves an explicit analysis of the patriarchy to understand the heightened risks that girls and young women face when engaging in political activism and organizing, such as backlash at the community level or from families. A feminist approach explores the impact of toxic masculinity on safeguarding. Put into practice, it involves including children and young people in the risk analysis process, holding conversations with them about the risks they face in their context, and also discussing consent with children and young people including whether and how the consent of parents should be sought or not.⁷³

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- Adolescent Girls Investment Plan Safeguarding Kit, Consent Form and Event Risk Assessment Tool lots of useful tips for virtual meetings and planning sessions with girls and young people.
- Amnesty, <u>Staying Resilient While Trying to Save the World (Volume 2): A Well-Being Workbook for Youth Activists</u> -also available in French and Spanish.
- FRIDA's <u>Safeguarding Policy</u> and <u>related article</u>.
- Funders Safeguarding Collaborative website is a wealth of resources and tools.
- FRIDA's <u>Happiness Manifesto</u>.
- United Edge <u>Transformative Safeguarding Course</u>.
- Risk management template.
- Safeguarding Resources | Global Fund for Children | Recursos de salvaguarda | Global Fund for Children.

DEEP DIVE: CO-DESIGN FOR PROGRAM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Entry point: Organizational strategy development

Mechanism: Participatory accompaniment and grant-making for adult-led child- and youth-serving grantees

Level: Making decisions

"Co-design is a highly collaborative practice where people bring together their skills, expertise, cultural context, and lived experiences to produce solutions to pressing challenges. This methodology centers the lived experiences of those who experience the realities of the challenges in question."⁷⁴

Co-design involves engaging children and young people from the inception of a process and co-designing all aspects, or those they find most interesting. For a funder, designing a grant-making process might include defining priorities for the fund, setting the eligible criteria, coming up with application questions, and planning outreach strategies. The process builds trusting and equitable relationships and can spark other types of engagement and partnership, e.g., participatory grant-making or participatory monitoring and evaluation. It builds skills in fundraising, collaboration, and strategic planning.

GOOD FOR...

Funders of all sizes, particularly where there might be more opportunity at the programmatic level than at the organizational level for influence. Codesigning one program, campaign, or initiative allows for investment in a resourced, dedicated process without an organization-wide commitment.

MUST HAVES:

- **Enough time!** 6 12 months depending on the type of program they are co-designing and if the model will be iterated based on learnings throughout.
- Clear roles for the co-design team and the staff members involved.
- At least one staff member with experience in co-design and participatory methodologies, ideally with lived experience as a youth activist.
- Budget for interpretation and translation (if you are working with more than one language) and support for other access needs (e.g., if you work with young people with disabilities).
- Data packages and potentially devices if children and young people do not own a phone/laptop and will need one to participate in meetings.
- Clear compensation for the time and expertise you are asking from the young people.
- **Budget for in-person travel** if you plan to bring the group together in person, and travel insurance where relevant.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Given the importance of relationship building to co-design, workshops are recommended, ideally in-person. For any in-person workshops where you will bring together young people from different countries, allow 2-3 months minimum for visa and travel logistics.
- If facilitating a virtual co-design process, plan out the sessions over several months with no longer than four hours for each session (with movement, energisers, and breaks built in). Setting up small group tasks between sessions is a good hybrid model and encourages deeper relationships between group members
- If working with adolescents or facilitating mixed age groups, the staff member(s) should have experience working with adolescents and developing child-friendly methodologies.
- There might be a need for training within the group on power privilege and bias, or reflection on what power-sharing looks like within a group.
- For children and young people who have less experience engaging in such processes, consider setting up briefing and preparation calls in small groups or on a 1:1 basis. Check in with them after design sessions and, when facilitating, be conscious about how much or little they are participating.
- Create channels for ongoing communication.⁷⁵ This should be decided with the group and recognize varying degrees of digital literacy and access.

CONSIDERATIONS, CONTINUED:

- Provide feedback! Validate! It is vital that you share back what the
 co-design sessions have led to with those who fed in. This builds trust,
 ensures the process is not extractive and allows for better alignment.
- If working with adolescents or mixed age groups, consider what is appropriate for smaller groups (e.g., not pairing a 15 year-old girl with two 24 year-old young men). There are gendered power dynamics at play and safeguarding risks. Consider including a staff member for such groups.
- Similarly, think about how to support collaborative work between individuals with different levels of experience while being conscious of how this may play out in a small group setting; e.g., more experienced young people taking up space.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

- Global Resilience Fund co-designed the participatory grant-making process with young people: *Weathering the Storm*.
- Adolescent Girls Investment Plan Girl and Youth Engagement Strategy codesigned with girls and young people.
- <u>CIVICUS Youth Action Lab</u> co-designed and implemented with youth movement actors.

DEEP DIVE: ADVISORY GROUP TO ADVISE ON STRATEGY DESIGN AND PARTICIPATORY GRANT-MAKING

Entry point: Programmatic/grant-making

Mechanism: Participatory strategy development

Level: Co-design

"It's not enough to give them a seat at the table; we need to make sure they are involved in setting up the table and are taking part in the journey from the very start."⁷⁶

Child and youth advisory groups or councils are usually made up of 10-15 people who advise on strategy development, program design, campaigning, and participatory grant-making. The groups usually have a term of 1-3 years and their role, which is voluntary, is outlined in a clear Terms of Reference or agreement, written in accessible language, ideally with the children or young people involved. A good idea is to stagger turnover (e.g., members leave when they have aged out or when their term is up). This allows for peer learning and orientation. Several funds, as well as NGOs, create advisory groups for one purpose, e.g., program design, and they continue on to advise on other processes, e.g., grant-making. When setting up a group, it is really important that there is enough time for meaningful engagement and that the conditions are in place for the group to have influence, as unlike participatory grant-making or monitoring and evaluation, the mechanism itself does not have decision-making and influence built in. It requires those conditions to be put in place by experienced, dedicated staff members.

GOOD FOR...

Funders of all sizes to advise on program or organizational strategy or to advise on a variety of initiatives.

MUST HAVES:

 At least one full-time staff member with experience in coordinating groups and facilitating participatory methodologies.

MUST HAVES, CONTINUED:

- Clarity over roles so that the demand does not become too much. This should include how their insights will be used and the extent of their decision-making power in that role.
- Budget for interpretation, translation, and to support other access needs.
- Data packages and potentially devices if members do not own a phone/ laptop and will need one to participate in meetings.
- Clear compensation for the time and expertise you are asking from the young people.
- Budget for in-person travel if you plan to bring the group together in person.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Consider the criteria for such a group to ensure it is as diverse and representative as possible, e.g., levels of experience needed and diverse and intersectional identities to be represented.
- Think about recruitment and whether you will have an open call, leveraging your networks, or whether you will build a group from grantee partners.
- Take time to understand whether the applicants are also members
 of other advisory panels/councils. If so, there is a risk of burnout and
 of reinforcing exclusive spaces rather than sharing such opportunities
 with children or young people who are new to the experience.

- If working with adolescents or facilitating mixed age groups, the staff member(s) should have experience working with adolescents and developing child-friendly methodologies.
- There might be a need for training within the group of power privilege and bias or reflection on what power-sharing looks like within a group
- For children and young people who have less experience engaging in such groups, consider setting up briefing and preparation calls in small groups or on a 1:1 basis.
- Create channels for ongoing communication.⁷⁷ This should be decided with the group and recognize varying degrees of digital literacy and access.
- Coordinating such a group takes time and requires trust and relationship building. Ensure you have dedicated staff in-house who can manage the group and hold these relationships.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

- CRIF's Learning brief on the decolonize! Fund and associated youth collective.
- Global Fund for Women's <u>Adolescent Girls Advisory Council</u>, which advised on strategy development.

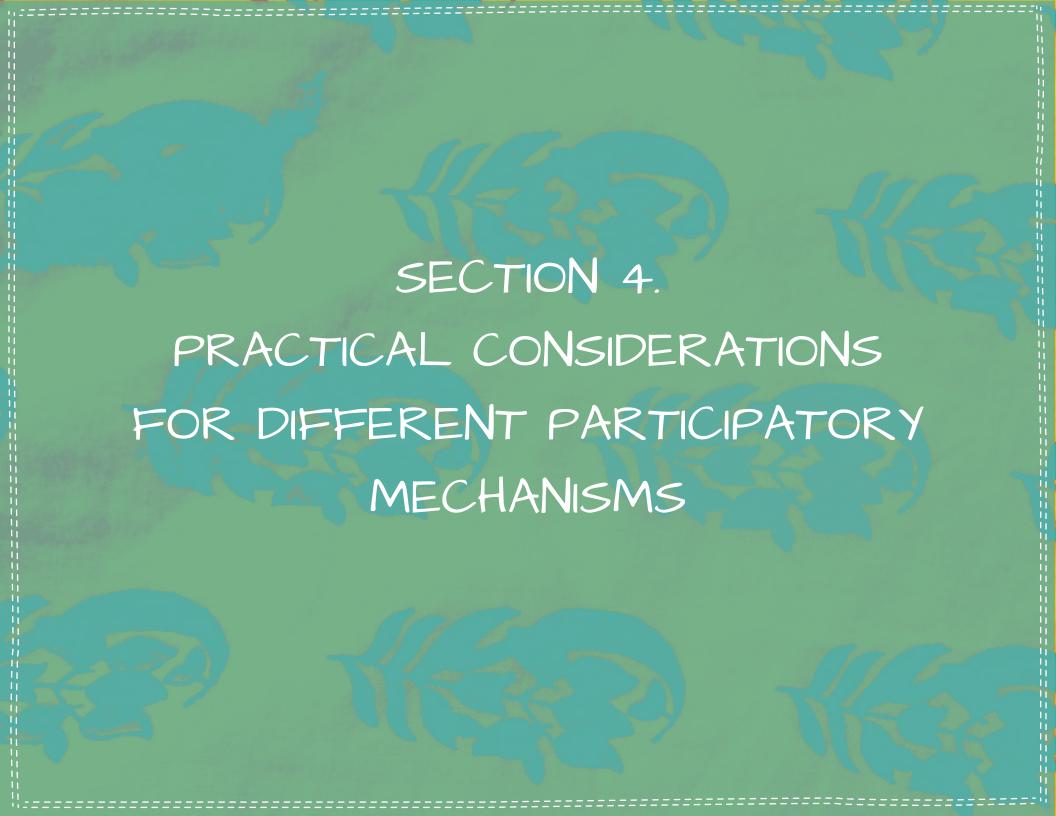
TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

 FRIDA's <u>Call for Applications: Girls Advisory Committee</u> - a great example of a TOR and application form.

SPOTLIGHT:

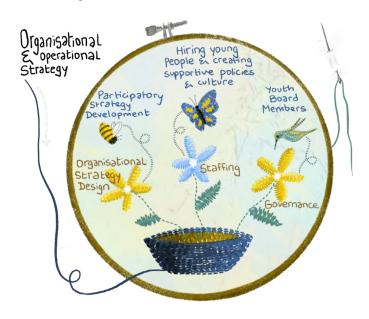
Global Fund for Women's Adolescent Girls Advisory Council

Global Fund for Women's Adolescent Girls Advisory Council (AGAC) is made up of 12 girls from different countries who inform the organization's program strategy; they make decisions related to funding and have a 3-year term. The members of the council receive financial and non-financial compensation. The stipend was paid upfront for the year to ease logistical burdens and to demonstrate the trust that they have with the group. To set up the council, Global Fund for Women made an open call. The information was shared with grantee partners but was not limited to them. The open call was made in multiple languages to ensure representation across different regions. Global Fund for Women have invested in a care and wellbeing strategy to support the advisory group members. This involves working with wellbeing practitioners who bring deep experience in this area of work.



The research brought to light twelve participatory mechanisms. These are often connected with each other and there is overlap. This section provides more detail including an overview and practical considerations for each.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS





HIRING YOUNG PEOPLE AND CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, POLICIES, AND CULTURE THAT GIVES THEM INFLUENCE

Hiring child and youth engagement experts is vital to support any meaningful participation. A good approach, where possible, is to hire young people themselves to lead this work. Hiring young people to manage participatory processes, youth-centered codesign processes, and youth partnerships helps to build trust and open dialogue. Being young, however, does not automatically make you an ally to child and youth groups. Their values and experience must align with the child and youth groups they are working with and, like any adult working with young people, they should have a deep understanding of the privilege and power they hold within a fund and the bias they might have.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

 Restless Development is an example of an organization intentionally restructuring its leadership and bringing in more young people. Their hiring page is more "youth-friendly" including <u>Tips to Apply</u> and transparent pay scale and benefits.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide training, as with all staff, on safeguarding, power, privilege, and unconscious bias.
- Consider developing a peer mentoring scheme, pairing younger and older staff for a mutually beneficial experience.
- Provide opportunities for growth, learning, and exposure, e.g., support younger staff to represent their own work with senior leadership, represent the organization externally, and undertake professional development training.
- Encourage internal support and solidarity groups and networks.
- Provide feminist leadership training for all, particularly those who are managing others.
- Develop clear career progression pathways.
- Salaries and benefits should align with your organization's human resources policy, while recognizing that paid experience is not the only experience of value. Volunteering and organizing experience can also contribute to someone's experience, knowledge, and expertise, and should be reflected in the budget.
- Consider budgeting for professional development opportunities.
- Young staff members or paid interns should be compensated as per your organization's human resources policy. If they are based in the Global South and working remotely, consider providing additional funds for needs like wifi or co-working spaces.
- Where there are prohibitive policies on years of experience, work to build organizational capacity on valuing lived experience of young people and toward reducing barriers.
- Reflect on the experience they are bringing to the organization. While a young person might not have 10 years of paid work history, they may have 10 years of volunteering, organizing, and movement building experience. This does not equate to an entry level role and salary.

PARTICIPATORY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

"When we were developing NoVo's advancing adolescent girls' rights strategy, our strategy [for working with girl and young feminist led and centered organizations] ended up being so much better because it was done in a participatory way, and in deep relationship. We learned a lot about how we could support girls where they are, in the movements they are a part of, and with the kinds of resources they need. This also meant we could contextualize our support, based on time and place." -Jody Myrum, NoVo Foundation's former director

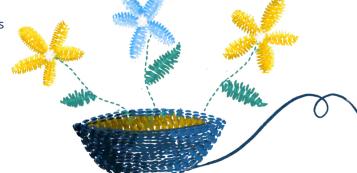
Engaging children and young people in strategy development is an approach that can be adopted by funders of any size. It can include organizational strategy development or the development of a youth participation program or grant-making strategy. For larger, private funds, starting with a programmatic strategy allows for a participatory process while containing it within one team. It is helpful to convene an advisory group for the process, which can be made up of child- and youth-led grantee partners, children and young people from adult-led grantee partners, or children and young people who respond to an open call. The advisory group could also be supplemented by engagement or validation with broader networks and movements through social media, town halls, or focus group discussions. Strategy development processes alone take time - months or years. This is no different when engaging children and young people and which can, in fact, take more time. Being flexible and building in time for iteration and learning is important. When done properly, participatory strategy development can spark other forms of participation, such participatory research, evaluation, and grant-making.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Define a clear Terms of Reference for those who will take part. Include expected time commitment and responsibilities, as well as clarity on whether they have decision-making power of some or all components, or whether this is just a consultative process.
- Hold a series of listening sessions, virtually or in-person, to collect initial input and then design sessions to co-create elements of the program.
- If you are starting a new program in an area where you do not have existing networks, engage children and young people through local partners, groups, and organizations. This helps to build trust from the beginning.
- Hire local facilitators to tailor the session plans and learning questions to the local context and to lead the sessions themselves.
- Allow enough time! Nine to twelve months minimum is ideal to allow for relationships to be built and for advisory groups or local partnerships to be formed.
- Build in accountability mechanisms from the beginning. Decide in advance when and how you will share back your analysis from the process and how it has shaped your strategy. Validation or feedback sessions can also provide a space for coalition building and collective cross-movement work.

- Be open to experimentation and iteration. If ideas are coming up that you would not have thought of or chosen, can you build in time to test these or sense-check them with other stakeholders?
- Be honest about what decision-making power the children and young people will have. It is fine if you are only consulting; however, it is important to be clear about their level of influence. What other layers of sign off and input might affect the outcome? If a recommendation has not been taken

up, be prepared to explain why and manage expectations in advance.



SPOTLIGHT:

NoVo Foundation's adolescent girls' rights initiative's strategy

In an effort to shift unequal funder-grantee power-dynamic between funder and grantee, in 2016-2017 NoVo Foundation partnered with trans and cis girls, young non-binary people, and their adult allies to organize listening sessions across the US as part of developing their grantmaking strategy. NoVo targeted regions with the least philanthropic investment, including the US South, Southwest, and Midwest, and held listening sessions across diverse communities in those regions. Youth and adult facilitators who work with girls and young people were hired to design and hold unique listening sessions for each of the regions, so they were context specific. NoVo staff attended as listeners and learners while a cultural anthropologist accompanied the team to document the process. Separate sessions were organized with partners, allies, girls under the age of 18, and non-binary children and adolescents.

After each session NoVo worked with the facilitators to make sense of the learning and start to translate that into a philanthropic strategy. Recognizing their accountability to all who contributed to the process, after there was a draft strategy developed based on the listening sessions, people from different regions were invited back into the process to a session in New York where the strategy was presented and people could give critical feedback. During the feedback session they shared what was working, what was missing and what needed to change. This validation process further shaped the final strategy.

This participatory approach transformed NoVo's strategy: "It's a way to build knowledge and to get input into your strategy because you're iterating and learning as you go, with people who are actively doing the work ... there were definitely nuances in the strategy and the strategy changed as a result of the sessions," stated Jody Myrum, NoVo's Former Program Director, "It was also really important that while we took the time to do this listening and co-design with girls, young people and their adult allies, we never stopped grantmaking. One of the greatest ways to learn is to make grants and build relationships with people doing the work. This should not stop while building strategy- both because of the depth of learning it provides and because our job as grantmakers is to move money."



"How comfortable can a young community organizer be to speak up when they're sitting next to someone who has worked in philanthropy for decades, or when they're outnumbered at that table by wealthy, white donors, whose money it is they're deciding how to spend?"80

Where possible, a priority for Global North-based funders should be the diversification of their boards to be more reflective of the communities they serve and fund. This could be a long-term goal with a short- or medium-term goal of board readiness, board training, and one or two youth board members. Shadow youth boards, like child/youth parliaments, should be avoided, as they rarely have the decision-making power needed for real influence. The engagement of children and young people in formal governance has the potential for huge influence but also harm, if not done properly. If your board is primarily adult, white, and lacking experience working with children and young people, it might cause more harm than good. Consider whether your board is ready to meaningfully engage a young person. If not, it can be a waste of time and energy to push for a youth board member. Instead, focus on facilitating a participatory strategy development process. Membership organizations or organizations where community members have legitimate decision-making power, such as CIVICUS, also have an opportunity to intentionally diversify and build membership with certain groups or communities. Amnesty International, for example, developed a youth strategy with a specific goal of growing their youth membership.⁷⁹

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Consider bringing together relevant staff and community members to reflect on these questions:
 - Is your board open to diversification and to the inclusion of young people on it?
 - Is your board ready to support the meaningful participation of young people?
 - What is the current makeup of your membership and is there an opportunity to diversify it?
 - Are the conditions in place for young people to feel valued, included, and respected?
 - Are there other mechanisms that might be more meaningful and a better place to start?
- Talk with children and young people in your networks, share information to explain your governance structure and internal processes. They can then make an informed decision about what type of engagement in your governance structure would be helpful and meaningful.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHERS:

- WAGGGS recruited its first ever youth board member in 2018.
- FRIDA's board is made up of young feminists from the Global South who hold diverse identities and experiences.
- <u>African Movement of Working Children</u> is a child- and youth-governed organization.

- For board membership:
 - Develop your short-, medium-, and long-term goals. For example, providing board training and readiness (short-term), adding 1-2 young people to the board, or forming a hybrid, intergenerational group (medium-term), and creating a fully diverse and representative board (long-term).
 - Provide training on meaningful participation, safeguarding, power, privilege, and bias for all board members.
 - Provide board training and a mentor for any youth board members.
 - Commit to having more than one spot on the board for young people so they have peer support.
 - Provide training for anyone on the governance team or other staff involved in preparing board documents and meetings so they are inclusive and accessible.
 - Have your community vote on the board and feed into board nominations and decision-making.
 - As with any board, members should not receive financial compensation. However, a youth board member may require additional support to be able to participate equally, such as additional training, data packages, and a laptop or computer.
- For membership organizations, consult your members on the question of diversification and youth participation: What might this look like? What considerations such as access needs should be considered? This could be through town halls, focus group discussions, or polls.

SPOTLIGHT:

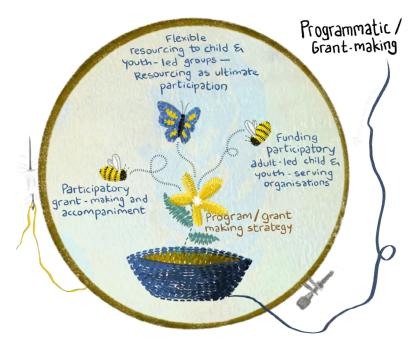
Learning for Well-being Foundation

Learning for Well-being Foundation, a child rights and wellbeing foundation based in the Netherlands, began a process two years ago to create an intergenerational board. As a result of the process, half of its members are aged 15 to 24, and have equal voting rights and shared responsibilities. The model was designed through a 3-day participatory workshop with young people and older adults. The young people were briefed before the workshop to help them prepare and the workshop was viewed as the beginning of a learning journey for the whole group. They decided against a "shadow board" and felt that the intergenerational model would be more meaningful.

To recruit new board members, the foundation reached out to young people in their networks who applied through written letter or voice or video recording. The criteria was that these young people had experienced the foundation's work, either by being beneficiaries of programs led by the foundation or partnership projects with other organizations. The board voted on the new members just as they would have with prospective adult board members. Both the young people and the adult members had misconceptions about what the experience would be like. Some adults were worried about the young people's capacity to grasp the financial responsibility and the young people were concerned about potential rigidity. These concerns were allayed as the board began to work together, though the journey of learning continued.

Young people received orientation before each meeting to ensure they understood the board papers. Older board members learned how to adapt the papers to be more accessible and transparent. Both felt the process has been a positive one: "The younger board members have brought new perspectives into governance discussions, not simply due to their age but also in light of their lived experience and the intersectional identities they represent. The older board members also express a sense of appreciation for the renewed dynamic in the board which now feels more human, and more meaningful for each contributor."

GRANT-MAKING



The area of participation is unique in that there is crossover and nuance depending on whether you are working with child- and youth-**serving** organizations (supporting participation through participatory grant-making or by explictlicity funding participatory organizations) or with children and youth-**led** organizations (through participatory grantmaking and accompaniment or by providing flexible funding that may not be distributed through participatory grant-making).

To keep things simple, we will present the following general mechanisms and explain within them the nuance of working with child- and youth-serving organizations versus child- and youth-led organizations:

- Participatory grant-making.
- Direct and flexible resourcing to child- and youth-led organizations.
- Funding participatory adult-led child- and youth-serving organizations.



PARTICIPATORY GRANT-MAKING AND ACCOMPANIMENT

"I was part of the initial stage of designing the Takura grant-making - in fact, for advocating for it in the first place for it to come...and secondly, when it [came], we initiated it, we designed the plan together. Thirdly, we also distribute the funds together to young people, we select them and distribute the funds together. We monitor the young people together, you know, and we are in the third phase of the grant making process and that has been an exciting moment when young people take the lead." -Youth activist, Sierra Leone

Participatory grant-making might be the most powerful way that a funder can truly shift power into the hands of children and young people. When done well, it will enable a process of trust-building, mutual learning, and genuine influence over decision-making. It has the potential to have a positive impact on the individuals involved and strengthen their groups with increased capacity in financial management. It helps to lift the veil on the elusive funding ecosystem and enables funders to connect with more diverse, nascent, and hard-to-reach groups. Participatory grant-making may involve the funding going directly to child and youth groups (e.g., Global Resilience Fund) or it may be that children and young people decide on how funding should be distributed to organizations that are working directly with children and young people (e.g., EMpower).

CONSIDERATIONS:

- If the aim is for children and young people to decide on funding that
 is being distributed to child- and youth-led organizations, determine
 which children and young people will be making the decisions;decisionmaking could involve current grantees, former grantees, or
 representative regional panels.
- If the aim is for children and young people to decide on funding that is being distributed to adult-led, child- and youth-serving grantees, you could create an Advisory Panel with representatives from the region, country, or context drawing from your existing networks, partners networks, or through open call.
- Commit to an inclusive and accessible process from the beginning.
 If creating an Advisory Panel, think about the different identities that should be reflected and build an outreach plan based on this.
 Invite disability rights activists to sit on the panel, pay for advice from disability rights groups on how to design a process that is inclusive e.g., what technology to use and what accessibility measures to plan for.
- Design a simple application process. This will be helpful not only to the groups applying but also to those who are reviewing and scoring applications. Provide training to everyone involved and build in enough time to do this.
- Decide on a decision-making process. This might be an online, anonymised voting process whereby applications are reviewed and then scored. This might be individual scoring followed by group discussions to explore nuance and varying opinions.
- Consider building diversity into the decision-making: decide whether a percentage of grants will be reserved only for girl-led groups, LGBTQIA+-led groups, Black- and Indigenous-led groups, etc.
- Be honest about any limitations. For example, where a due diligence process might affect a recommendation from the panel.
- For groups that are not selected but are strong nonetheless, think about other funders that you are connected to. Might you be able to share profiles or applications (with data protection and consent in mind)?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- CRIF's <u>learning brief on the decolonize! Fund</u>, a participatory grantmaking initiative.
- FRIDA's 'Letting the Movement Decide.'
- Disability Rights Fund 'Reflecting a Movement's Principles in Grantmaking Structure: Evidence of the Benefits of Participation from the Disability Rights Fund and Disability Rights Advocacy Fund.'
- Equality Accelerator platform through which participatory grant cycles can be run.
- Participatory Grant-Making Community.
- Spark Fund's <u>example TOR for panelists</u>.
- Purposeful's <u>Weathering the Storm</u> report includes information on how to engender disability inclusion from the beginning of a participatory grant-making process.



SPOTLIGHT:

Fund for Global Human Rights and Purposeful's Tar Kura Participatory Grant-Making Initiative

"For young people, the value of this experience went far beyond the money they received to implement their work. The true value was in the trust that was placed on them, in having someone else believe that they were capable of making a difference."85

FGHR and Purposeful collaborated to design the Tar Kura initiative, a participatory grant-making initiative. Through an open call, nine youth panelists from across the country were selected, including seven young women. They received capacity building training and support throughout. The panelists defined the eligibility criteria for the grantee groups, led the selection process, and made the final decision. This was also a power-sharing partnership between FGHR and Purposeful. They agreed it would be an equitable partnership from the beginning, regardless of who provided funding. They identified shared feminist values at the beginning and grounded their partnership practice in this. An external evaluation of the project found that "the rebalancing of power...was based on something essential: trust between FGHR and Purposeful and between them and the young people."82 Efforts were made to ensure the process was inclusive and responsive, including working around school timings; ensuring application processes in English and Krio, the local language; and designing different outreach strategies like radio, flyers, and Whatsapp. Non-financial compensation was provided to panelists and grantees throughout the project including leadership training, networking opportunities, and skills training on project management, monitoring, reporting and financial management. Chaperones were also provided for panelists under the age of 18. Staff worked closely with chaperones and parents to support safe travel to and from convenings.

Staff members purposefully developed an initial shortlist of 45 eligible applications based on an initial 136 applications. The youth panelists then reviewed this list to decide where funding would go. The funding was not limited to a geographical or thematic area to ensure as much flexibility as possible. Where groups were not legally registered, grantee partners worked with fiscal sponsors who also received capacity building. The evaluation noted that many fiscal sponsors still held "preconceptions about young people and a highly paternalistic attitude." Another challenge, and practical consideration, is the time taken to ensure a truly inclusive process. The project timeline was determined with youth panelists. Being part of the review panel strengthened skills in teamwork as well as in safeguarding approaches and participatory processes. Young people also noted that the process gave them "an opportunity to interact with youth beyond their immediate circles." Both panelists and grantees were involved in defining success, which contributed to participatory evaluation and youth-responsive reporting.



FLEXIBLE RESOURCING TO CHILD- AND YOUTH-LED GROUPS

"As an organization, when we receive flexible funding, we read it as like direct and honest feeling, honest connection, and you feel like you would not, you would never betray that trust." -Youth Activist, Ukraine

If your organizational or program strategy has a focus on strengthening child and youth movements, providing direct flexible, multi-year funding to child and youth groups directly or through a truly participatory girls, youth, or women's fund might be the most trusting and important thing you can do. On the spectrum of participation, providing flexible funding ensures children and young people's self-led and self-organized work is resourced and lifted up. It requires letting go of traditional partnership agreements, reporting processes, and ways of working.⁸⁶

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Consider whether you are best placed to fund groups directly or whether it would be more efficient and effective to work with an existing fund that is already set up to partner meaningfully with child- and youth-led groups.
- If you are resourcing groups directly, think about whether any
 of the participatory methodologies in this toolkit can help build
 a trusting and meaningful relationship, e.g., participatory grantmaking, grantee-centered reporting, and so on.
- Rethink your partnership agreement, co-developing one with youth partners. Plan International's toolkit below can be helpful in thinking through each step of the partnership.
- Spend time reading through the 'tools and resources' listed to the right, particularly <u>No Straight Lines</u> and the <u>CIVICUS Resourcing</u> Playbook.
- If you are not already set up to move resources directly to children and young people, a strong recommendation from feminist- and youth-led funders^{87 88}, is to fund girls, children, youth, and women's funds to disperse the funding and provide accompaniment.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- CIVICUS Resourcing Playbook.
- FRIDA No Straight Lines.
- FRIDA and Mama Cash Girls to the Front.
- Plan International A Toolkit: <u>Pathways to Partnering with Youth-led Groups and Organizations</u>.
- We Trust You(th) Resources & Recommendations for Funders.

Global Resilience Fund The Global Resilience Fund (GRF) was launched in May of 2020. Housed and facilitated by Purposeful, the GRF was launched by a cross-section of 25 funders as a pop-up COVID-19 response fund to directly resource girls and young feminist's brave and transformative strategies. From May to December 2020, the GRF moved \$1M to 234 organizations led by girls and young feminists from around the world. The fund has been able to move money quickly and directly to girls and young activists in varied amounts and timelines, depending on individual needs. The GRF focused on finding concrete and flexible ways to distribute funds, such as via Paypal and Western Union and through fiscal sponsors... A critical feature of the fund has been working with partners to determine who is best placed across the funding ecosystem to move money quickly and in responsive ways. In some cases this has been directly through the Global Resilience Fund, which offers to be a fiscal sponsor for organizations and funders who experience difficulty in moving money to informal or unregistered groups. In other cases, GRF has moved money through partners who are better-equipped to do so, given their local relationships and networks in that crisis context.

The fund engages young activists in a participatory panel, whereby they make decisions on funding and drive key initiatives around accompaniment. In 2022, the GRF has focused on supporting young feminist activists through emerging and intersecting crises. Called to action by activists who were funded in earlier rounds and GRF panelists from the region, the GRF has focused its energies to resource and respond to young feminists who currently reside in or are fleeing from Ukraine. To date, our support has been focused on emergency funding and in bringing funders and activists together for critical dialogue. As crises continue to unfold around the world, the GRF continues to be called on by activists and funders to move resources to girls and young feminists who are impacted by and responding to crisis in their contexts.



FUNDING PARTICIPATORY ADULT-LED CHILD- AND YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

For larger donors that may not be well placed to work directly with children and youth - such as private foundations, public foundations, and bilateral and multilateral donors - resourcing child- and youth-serving organizations is an important way to support meaningful child and youth participation. Ensuring that the partners have participatory and powerbuilding practices when working with children and young people can be a positive way to contribute to this work. There is a spectrum of how rigorous the approach can be, from including a question in your application form, to having participation as a criterion for grant-giving, to creating ongoing space (and resources!) for deepening participatory practices.⁸⁹ The intention is a critical first step; it should be clearly outlined in your grant-making strategy and formalized through policy and procedure where possible. It is important to remember the power dynamics at play between a funder and grantee partner; however, if the intention is built into the application process from the beginning, it can be managed respectfully and sensitively. In the best-case scenario, if you can define joint learning agendas and use an approach rooted in the needs and rights of children and young people, you will have stronger outcomes.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- As a funder who is also navigating your own power, how you open these conversations is critical. If a grantee partner is not committed to power-sharing or meaningful participation with children and/or young people, be cautious not to push them toward this trajectory.
- Commit to including participation as a criterion for new grantees so that, if you are working with child- and youth-serving grantees, there is a demonstrated commitment to working with young people in ways that center their power and decision-making.
- Include relevant questions in the application form with a clear plan for how to put them into practice and follow up.
- Prioritize organizations that have clear experience in supporting participatory processes and a commitment to working in ways that shift power and decisions to young people, including through participatory grantmaking or governance.
- Convene peer-learning spaces on meaningful participation to deepen and strengthen participatory practices between grantees, whilst building connections and sparking cross-movement collaboration. This should be grounded in the needs of grantees and driven by their support and accompaniment needs.

- Provide funding that is flexible in how it is used and by when so that grantees can take the time needed to support meaningful participation processes. For example, if your grantee partner is telling you that a participatory process can take up to a year, allow them that time.
- Provide training or grants for training on participatory action research, monitoring and evaluation, and co-design.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- CIVICUS' <u>Solidarity Fund</u> is an example of participatory grantmaking with adult grantees.
- Institute of Development Studies' <u>Rejuvenate project</u>, which includes a living archive of child and youth participatory practices, ongoing blogs and articles including a <u>published paper</u>.
- FRIDA *No Straight Lines*.
- Anonymised sample Safeguarding Policy from a Private Funder that is shared with grantees.

SPOTLIGHT: EMpower EMpower includes participation as a criteria for adult led grantees in a variety of ways. Rooted in our Girl Strategy, it is a question posed in grant applications as well as our grant review parameters. In this way, it becomes one of the elements of review. The other ways EMpower builds and supports participation for adult led grantees is by incentivizing and providing frameworks to support participation, sourcing insight, when needed, from both our grantee partners and the young people they work with. EMpower convenes and curates regional spaces that enable grantee partners to cede seats or spaces to the girls and young people they work with.

Grantee partners are required to report on their child and youth participation approach as well as the outcomes i.e. what did the participation inform or result in. EMpower works with grantee partners on a demand basis to provide resources and support around critical elements of meaningful participation including tokenism, remuneration, setting up for success, and safeguarding.

Like EMpower, any grantee partners are on a learning path. For some of the more recent partners, their engagement with EMpower is what triggers the space and resourcing to incorporate meaningful participation in their activities. Therefore, there is a spectrum of how grantee partners support meaningful participation, that ranges from program design to leadership and governance transitions.

INFLUENCING



CHILD- AND YOUTH-LED OR CENTERED ADVOCACY, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Influencing involves deploying a combination of approaches to call for policy or practice change from people and institutions that hold power. This could include one or more of the following: advocacy, communications, public mobilization, and strategic partnerships. There is usually a strategic goal or objective, with clear decision-making targets whose behavior or beliefs you are trying to change. Decision-making targets might include individuals within international bodies like the United Nations, national governments, corporations, philanthropy, the media, or segments of the general public. The ability to influence public policy differs depending on the lobbying laws within the context where the funder is operating. For example, within the US, private foundations may engage in advocacy and fund advocacy activities although they cannot engage in direct or grassroots lobbying. It also differs depending on the funder's internal expertise, e.g., whether they have advocacy or campaigning teams in-house.

There are different ways to influence as a funder. Intermediary or public funders might have more freedom to undertake direct advocacy or to support their grantees to do so. Others might work with partners who are better equipped and able to influence, including NGOs. Source funders in contexts with more limited lobbying laws might only do communications or engage in conferences and other convening spaces. Whatever the approach, it involves institutions working, directly or indirectly, to influence the external landscape; there is usually space for meaningful child and youth participation.

Funders can:

- Consult children and young people (from grantee groups or advisory councils, for example) on what advocacy or messages and recommendations should be communicated with decision-makers.
- Engage children and young people in convenings and conferences with decision-makers. This should only happen if the children or young people are part of an ongoing participatory process to avoid the tokenism that comes from one-off events.
- Showcase children and young people's own advocacy and campaigning efforts through storytelling and communications.
- Co-design advocacy campaigns and strategies with children and young people.

Engaging children and young people in influencing strengthens individuals' and groups' advocacy, partnerships, and communications capacity creates connections between youth groups and decision-makers, and opens doors to decision-making spaces and places of power, ultimately resulting in powerful policy and practice change. ^{91 92} In terms of the connectivity between participatory mechanisms, participatory influencing can be a natural lead-on from participatory research. It can also be a way to advocate for more and better resources to be used in a participatory grant-making process.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- An advocacy or campaigning strategy takes time to develop. If you plan
 to co-design a campaign, allocate several months, as well as dedicated
 advocacy and campaigning experts within your organization, to support
 the process.
- If your advocacy, partnership, or communication teams do not have youth engagement expertise, outsource it or ensure any youth leads within the organization are involved.
- Be clear about the room for decision-making. Does your organization have set influencing priorities for which you wish to consult on the strategic approach and tactics?
- If you have a general thematic area, identify child and youth groups that share your focus and explore a collaborative partnership with them, with funding attached.
- If you are engaging children and young people in digital influencing and communications who have little prior experience, provide training on risk management, digital safety, and civic space monitoring.
- If children or young people are being invited to advocate toward funders
 or funder networks, think about the unequal power dynamics and about
 how to navigate that in the physical or virtual space, e.g., will that child
 or young person be worrying about affecting current funding to their
 group or associated organization? How can you manage expectations
 so the child or young person does not feel personally responsible for
 fundraising?
 - Manage expectations and make it clear from the beginning if the event or influencing opportunity is a 'no pitch space', e.g., that participants are not allowed to pitch their own projects or organizations and what this means.
- Remember that influencing is not a one-off event. Inviting young people
 who have not been part of a previous or ongoing process to speak in oneoff events or to join one-off consultations is tokenistic.
 - This does not need to be an ongoing participatory influencing process. Rather, it is important that the child or young person is engaged in your organization's work in some way and has a focal point so that there is support before, during, and after the engagement.
 - With a one-off event, efforts should be made to ensure the following:
 - The child or young person has autonomy over their talking points and questions.

- The child or young person receives adequate financial and non-financial compensation (honorarium, expenses, training) and is able to attend the full conference or event where relevant (not just joining for their one speaking engagement or session).
- The design process is participatory and sparks mutual learning and new insights that furthers the work on the topic.
- The child or young person receives a comprehensive briefing and is supported as needed to prepare their talking points or intervention.
- The child or young person is followed up with after to debrief, and support is provided to them, e.g., to share back to their groups.
- The child or young person has an opportunity to meet with other young people and, where relevant, with decision-makers and other strategic stakeholders for network building opportunities.
- If you are working with children and young people who have their own public profiles as activists or leaders, explore risk with them. If you showcase their work on your social media channels, might they face new or heightened risks from the publicity, e.g., trolling, community or government backlash, burn out?

If there are multiple opportunities to engage in influencing, are you sharing those opportunities to avoid the "celebritization" of children and young people?

When working with under 18s, ensure you have parental or guardian consent. If children are traveling internationally or taking part in public events, consider bringing two children from the same group or community for peer support.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- The Count Me In! (CMI!) consortium is a strategic partner of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CMI! Is made up of: Mama Cash (MC), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), CREA, Just Associates (JASS), and the Sister Funds or Urgent Action Fund (UAF) and Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa). They have a <u>dedicated advocacy strategy</u>, developed with feminist movements. While it is not clear if girls and young women were engaged explicitly, there are still lessons to be learned on the influencing role funders can play and the participatory potential of advocacy.
- Global Fund for Women's Adolescent Girls Advisory Council was formed to advise on strategy and grant-making but is also involved in their <u>International Day of the Girl</u> campaigning.
- In 2020, as part of effort to ensure the full and effective participation
 of Indigneous women in the review of the Beijing Platform for Action,
 the <u>International Indigenous Women's Forum</u> (FIMI) partnered
 with MADRE to develop a joint campaign "CEDAW⁹³ for Indigenous
 Women and Girls." This was an intergenerational effort with young,
 adult, and older women.
- In 2015, FRIDA partnered with environmental NGO, WEDO on the <u>Young Feminist Fellowship for Climate Justice</u>. The aim was to mobilize young feminist groups to advocate in the run up to and during United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and COP21.
- In 2022, With and for Girls Collective, housed at Purposeful, is commissioning analysis of the Generation Equality financial commitments and engaging girls and young feminist groups through a participatory process to develop advocacy recommendations and key messages.
- When interviewed for this research, World Childhood Foundation USA shared that they have hired teenage youth bloggers to develop their communications content. They recognized that young people primarily get their information from social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat. Therefore, donors need to rethink their communication strategy for youth engagement.

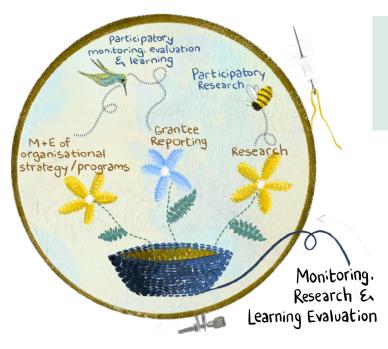
TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- Mama Cash and FRIDA, <u>Girls to the Front</u> engaged girl advocates and activists as co-researchers.
- Let Girls Lead, <u>Girl-Centered Advocacy Toolkit</u> comprehensive tool for supporting girl-led and centered advocacy as an NGO or funder.



MONITORING, EVALUATION, RESEARCH, AND LEARNING





"We need to deconstruct what funders count as impact, and challenge the notion that change is only equated with scale. Sometimes it is the smaller pockets of change that build meaningful power at an individual and collective level, create safe spaces to thrive in these volatile contexts, and fuel movements that make ripples in our history." ⁹⁵

Funders have traditionally defined the standards for efficiency, impact, and effectiveness. These are often heavy, complex, and misaligned with how children and young people organize, making it difficult for groups "to showcase the real importance of their work." Participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning can help to shift power, build trust from the beginning of a program, and create a partnership of mutual respect. It also enables children and young people to define the terms and parameters by which they understand and document the change they are making. Participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning can take many forms, which can be distilled into four participatory activities:

- Child- and youth-led or centered indicators for programs or organizational MEL.
- Participatory evaluations (of programs or of an organizational strategy).
- Grantee-led or centered reporting or documentation.
- Learning dialogues and spaces.

Ideally, children and young people are engaged in monitoring, evaluation, and learning from the beginning. By engaging children and young people in codesigning the monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach for a program, funders facilitate co-ownership and mutual respect. Further, if children and youth are receiving grants themselves, deciding together what needs to be reported on can strengthen collaboration between grantees and funders. In this approach, instead of extracting information from partners for monitoring, partners are invited to design the monitoring, evaluation, and learning process from the beginning so the system can be useful for their work too. For larger private funders that are not equipped to work directly with children and young people, a good option is to make it a criterion for external evaluators to only work with evaluators that are experienced in facilitating participatory processes with children and young people. The benefits are clear. Moving from intensive monitoring to ongoing, "learning-based dialogue yields richer and more relevant learnings." It also strengthens child- and youth-led organizations as the individuals involved bring these skills and capacities back to their groups.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Decide which children and young people will be involved. This might be obvious if you are co-creating a monitoring and evaluation framework with grantee groups. Whether it's for an organizational strategy evaluation or evaluation of a grantmaking program, think about how to build a diverse and representative group.
- For child- and youth-led grantee groups, if the groups have interest and time, explore how to co-create indicators with grantee groups so that you decide together what needs to be reported on and why⁹⁹ and agree reporting approaches together (e.g., photo or video storytelling).
- If engaging children and young people who have little experience in monitoring and evaluation, consider providing training or peer-led capacity strengthening.¹⁰⁰
- Engage your monitoring, evaluation, and learning team/lead to support the process. They should have experience working with children or young people or be willing to undertake training.
- Hold learning dialogues throughout a project or program to create space for reflection, mutual learning, and feedback.
 - These can be spaces just for grantees, which provide opportunities for peer learning as well as reporting back, with predetermined areas for exploration depending on grantee's learning priorities.
 - These can be dialogue spaces between the funder and granted, recognizing the power imbalance here, to share feedback and experiences. These should include space for two-way conversation and not be extractive or purely to meet the needs of the funder.

- If you are an intermediary funder and are working with a grant from a source donor, ensure you have senior leadership and donor approval when developing alternative reporting and documentation approaches with grantees.
- When hiring participatory evaluators who are experienced working
 with children and young people, allow enough time and resources to
 engage in a meaningful process. If you're not sure, take advice from
 experts on how long the process should be likely months or a full year.
 It is not possible to facilitate a meaningfully participatory evaluation
 process in one to two months.
- In addition to the budget considerations set out in Section 3, granteecentered reporting may also require additional budget and staff time supported within the grant to translate photos, videos, and other alternative reports into donor-compliant reports.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- Council of Europe <u>Child Participation Assessment Tool</u>.
- Dag Hammerskold, <u>Overcoming Barriers to Resourcing Youth</u> <u>Peacebuilders</u>, includes findings and recommendations on youth-centered monitoring and evaluation.
- MamaCash, <u>New Perspectives</u>, <u>New Solutions</u>: <u>Funding Organising Led by Girls and Young Women</u> report with practical reflections on supporting participatory monitoring and evaluations.
- Save the Children A series of 5 booklets with guidance on how to monitor and evaluate the quality and scope of children's participation (with children).

Mama Cash and partners

Research into the impact of their communities of practice to facilitate participatory grant-making shows the potential for meaningful participatory monitoring and evaluation as part of that process. The community of practice comprised 11 women's funds and began in 2011. Mama Cash held conversations with girls and young women to shape what monitoring and evaluation systems and processes should look like. The women's funds involved, began testing and adopting new girl- and young women-centered ways to monitor progress, learning, and evaluation projects. This included: engaging girls in participatory evaluations of programs, tracking grantee groups' activity on social media, compiling reports from that to lessen the burden on them, and creating indicators with girl- and young women-led grantee groups. The approach of learning and testing through a community of practice is also interesting here, as it provides an ongoing space for learning, dialogue, and practice change.



"Children and young people's involvement is a fundamental requirement of ethical and protective practice that seeks to redress the power imbalances inherent within the relationships of child versus adult; service user versus service provider and research participant versus researcher/research institute." ¹⁰³

Child- and youth-led research provides a way to conduct research on sensitive issues, while building skills and capacities of children and young people as researchers themselves. It generates data that is richer, more credible, better communicated, and more impactful. Given the sensitivities of the topics at hand, it is important that all staff involved are deeply experienced or that experienced research consultants are hired to accompany the youth researchers and guide the process. Participatory research can be used to develop standalone research or can be connected to child- and youth-centered or led influencing efforts. In this case, children and young people are involved from the very beginning by identifying research topics based on their advocacy priorities. They then work collaboratively to design an advocacy strategy grounded in the research findings and insights.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Develop ethical research standards if you do not have these already.
- Decide the level of participation. Will children and young people lead from the beginning, including deciding on thematic areas? Or will they be collaborating on a research idea that has already been conceptualized?
- Decide whether this expertise is held in-house or needs to be outsourced to an experienced consultancy group.
- Follow a check-list, such as that developed by the Safer Young Lives Research Centre (see right).
- Develop a plan for recruiting a youth research team, e.g., a Youth Research Panel or hiring young research consultants.
- In addition to the budget considerations set out in Section 3, participatory research also requires training for youth researchers including navigating their own trauma and working with those living with trauma.
- Given the sensitivity of working with children and young people with lived experience of an issue, all staff members should be deeply

experienced in navigating these issue areas including being aware of how to manage trauma and how to avoid triggering or retraumatizing the youth researchers and research participants.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

- Safer Young Lives Research Centre Working Paper includes a checklist for participatory research and resources page with tools, podcasts, and methodologies.
- Girl Effect's <u>Technology</u>
 <u>Enabled Girl Ambassadors</u>
 (<u>TEGA</u>) is a girl-led research approach.

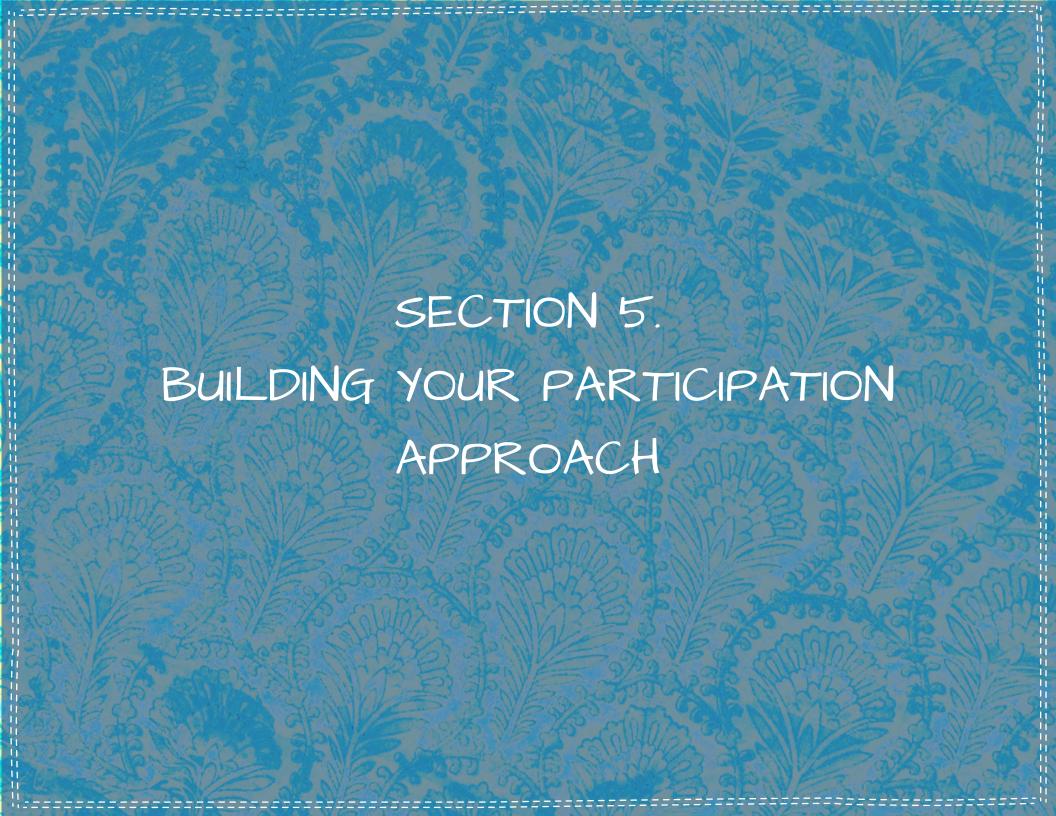


SPOTLIGHT:

Anonymous large corporate children's foundation

The participation of children in research projects is meaningful partly because it stemmed from the history of designing with children. The team has a child-centered, play-focused approach in some of their research such as using puppets and games to understand children's perspectives. We spoke to a researcher who said, "We are really about the children ... it's really at the heart of what we do." The research team also took the time to build rapport with the children and to recognize they are the experts: "we had a child in the pilot for the research study and when we said, you know, you're really the expert on this. And he was like, yeah, I am, you know! You should be asking me! And he wanted to know the findings of the research, he was really empowered, you know?" Conducting research with children also requires a deep understanding of the country and cultural context when working closely with families and guardians. One colleague shared that in some cultures it may not be appropriate to ask children about their thoughts or feelings so you have to be sensitive to that and ask families or community members about social norms.

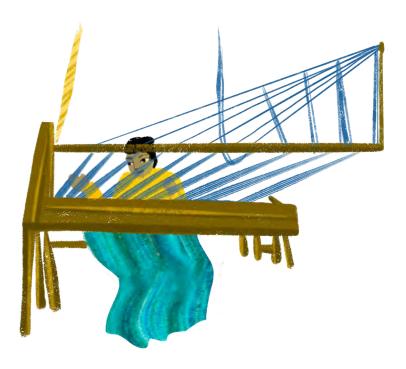
"We had a child in the pilot for the research study and when we said, you know, you're really the expert on this. And he was like, 'yeah, I am, you know! You should be asking me!"



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.

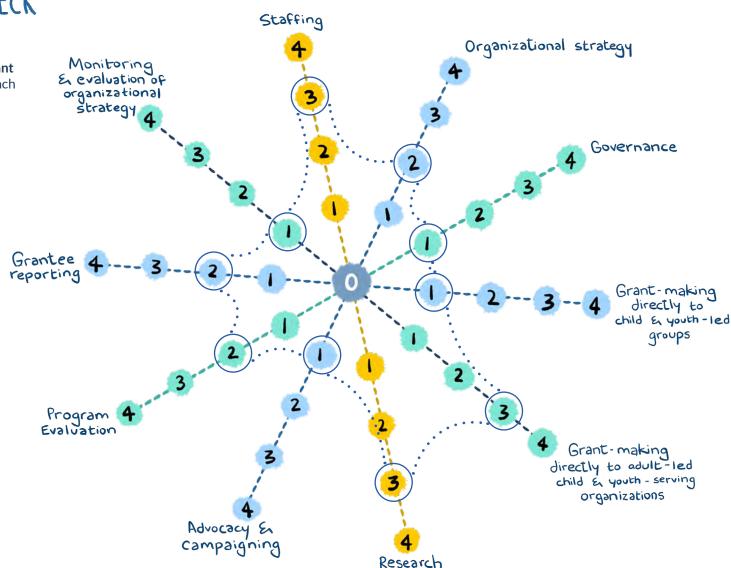
	Yes / No / In Progress
We have senior leadership buy-in (team or organizational level) to support a participatory process.	
We have dedicated budget to support a meaningful process.	
We have staff with child and youth participation expertise.	
We have a compensation policy or approach in place (or an 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

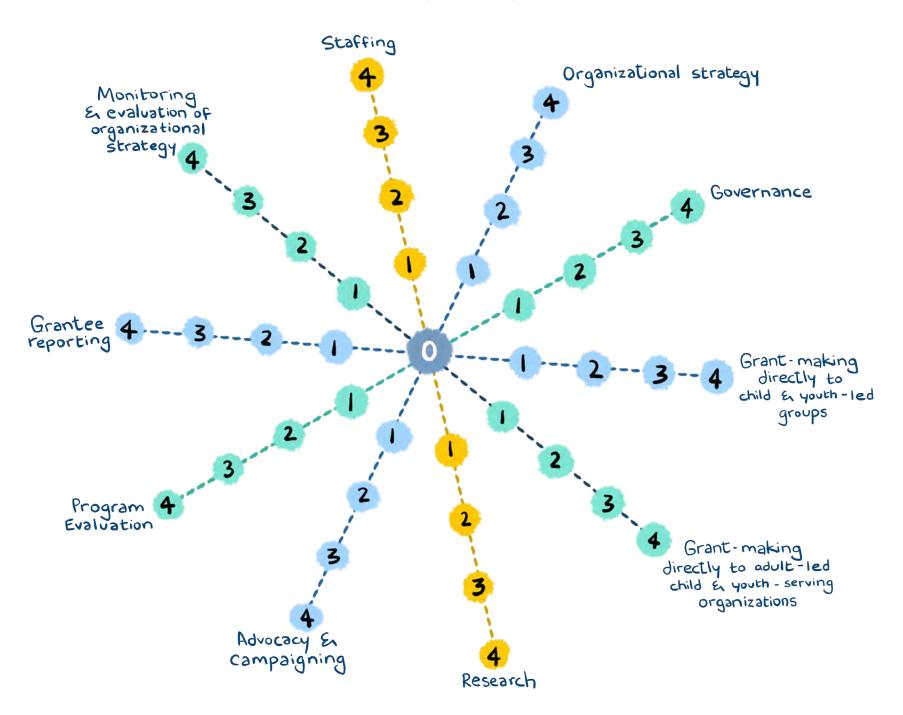
Using the spider web, mark where you are currently for each type of engagement and mark where you want to be. Give yourself a mark out of 4 each and note this on the table below.

- 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)
	Staffing	Hiring young people and creating supportive policies and culture			
Organizational and operational strategy	Organizational strategy design	Participatory strategy development			
	Governance	Youth board members			
		Youth membership			
		Participatory grant-making and accompaniment			
Programs / Grant-making	Program / grant-making strategy	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			
mindencing	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.	

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!



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THANKS FOR READING



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