

Participate: The voice of young people in programmes and policies



Inspire > Participate

Inside this guide ...

Encourage

Sustainable dialogue, mutual respect and understanding ... benefits of youth participation 3

① Empower

Understanding youth participation ... participating and power sharing 5

② Explore

Self-assessment ... translating the rhetoric of youth participation into practice 13

③ Exercises

Where do we go from here ... planning for participation 20

Experience

Lessons learned from the self-assessment exercise ... participation pilot 23

Examples

Regional and national approaches ... youth participation case studies 24

References

Further reading ... participatory approaches 28

Equality

IPPF policy 4.7 ... sexual and reproductive health and rights 29

Appendix 1

Workshops to introduce the self-assessment tool ... pathway to participation 31

Appendix 2

Technical assistance decision making model 34



This toolkit is part of IPPF's *Inspire* pack, which offers standards, guidelines and self-assessment tools on a variety of strategies and activities that contribute to rights-based and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health programming for young people.

Encourage Sustainable dialogue, mutual respect and understanding ... benefits of youth participation



IPPF/Philip Weinreich, Dominican Republic

Why was this guide developed?

For many years, young people have been participating in the International Planned Parenthood Federation's (IPPF) programmes as peer counsellors and educators. However, the commitment to share decision making powers with young people is relatively new. Now that youth participation is enshrined in IPPF's Adolescent/Youth Strategic Framework we recognize that there is a need for a toolkit to support Member Associations in their efforts to involve young people at all levels.

This guide has been developed to motivate IPPF and Member Associations to make self-assessment an ongoing activity and encourage sustainable dialogue, mutual respect and understanding among young people and adults. We hope that you will use it to evaluate your current position on young people's participation and find innovative ways of moving forward.

Participation is an essential component of our work in young people's sexual and reproductive health, rights and development – this guide will help you to make young people's involvement a reality.

The terms 'organization' and 'Federation' have been used throughout this guide to refer to IPPF Member Associations, Regional Offices and Central Office.

Who is this guide for?

Although the guide can be used at all levels of the Federation, it is most relevant for Member Associations and any agencies interested in reviewing and planning their development work with young people.

When implementing these self-assessment guidelines, it is important to include a diverse group of stakeholders and make particular efforts to include vulnerable and marginalized young people, such as young women, young people living with HIV/AIDS and young people with different sexual orientations.

How was this guide developed?

Following the Youth Working Group Meeting on Participation in 2000, IPPF recognized the need for a tool on the 'how to' of youth participation to help Member Associations move a step forward in implementing the goals of the Youth Manifesto.

A consultative meeting was organized in 2003 attended by young people and youth programme officers from IPPF Regional Offices and Member Associations. The aim was to take a critical look at youth participation within IPPF – where we are and where we want to go. The meeting succeeded in developing the first draft of the self-assessment guide.

Field testing the self-assessment guide

The self-assessment guide was discussed and field tested in all IPPF's Regions. The aim of introducing the tool was not to provide a Federation-wide uniform approach, but rather to provide guidance on how to address issues such as shared values, organizational capacity, recruitment, training and motivation, and roles and responsibilities. We found that it also encouraged Member Associations to be innovative in identifying approaches to youth participation. The guide was also shared at many international meetings and with colleagues in other international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Family Health International (FHI).

Many Regional Offices field tested and discussed the guide at the Member Association level too,



including Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, China, Indonesia and India. The European and Arab World Regional Office went one step further, by organizing a regional workshop to build capacity and discuss youth participation in Member Associations and included the review of the toolkit in its programme. The Member Associations of Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia and Poland worked with the self-assessment guide to improve the level and quality of youth participation in their organizations.

Most young people and adult staff involved in the discussions expressed the importance of young people having a voice at all levels of the Federation. Furthermore, they acknowledged the importance of the self-assessment tool not only to evaluate the status of youth participation at the Member Association and regional levels, they also felt that this guide can be used to raise awareness and formalize structures for meaningful participation.

The tool was adapted according to the outcomes and recommendations of all staff and young people involved. We would like to acknowledge their expertise, enthusiasm and critical contribution to the development of this guide. Particular thanks go to Kathryn Faulkner for all her contributions to this publication.

How to use this guide

While this guide is not a training tool, it can be used in conjunction with training workshops to help make the self-assessment process more empowering. We hope that the case studies showing innovative approaches from different parts of the world will provide some inspiration for your own work.

The self-assessment approach should provide an opportunity for staff and volunteers, young and adult, to come together, discuss ideas, share suggestions and work out solutions.

The self-assessment guide is in three sections:

- ➊ **Empower:** Understanding youth participation ... participating and power sharing
- ➋ **Explore:** Self-assessment ... translating the rhetoric of youth participation into practice
- ➌ **Exercises:** Where do we go from here ... planning for participation

Section 1 introduces youth participation in decision making and brings out some of the recent definitions and debates on participation. It is important to note that there is no 'one button' approach to youth participation and that it should be seen as a continuous process which provides for flexibility and innovation.

Section 2 explores the aim of the self-assessment process in stimulating dialogue among all stakeholders, including young people.

The standards cover four major areas of working with young people:

- A shared values
- B organizational capacity
- C selection and recruitment, and sustaining youth participation
- D responsibilities and roles of all involved

Each topic has two elements:

- general comments – these provide a short explanation of the standards
- standards with questions – these are for everyone involved to ask themselves to help assess the level of achievement of the standard

Section 3 includes log frames that can be used as guides to plan ahead. This is where creativity, innovation and cost-effectiveness are crucial.

1 Empower

Understanding youth participation ... participating and power sharing



IPPF/Chloe Hall, Mauritania

Working for young people and with young people

In recent times, there has been a shift from 'utilizing' the peer education approach from prevention (addressing problems) to preparation (building skills), participating and power sharing. In the past, young people only participated in the design and planning (often as passive subjects of needs assessments) and implementation (as peer educators). Young people now frequently participate in governance, advocacy and project development.

For IPPF, youth participation is valued as a human right. It plays a crucial role in maintaining democratic principles and is key to the development of young people. During the IPPF Members Assembly in Prague in 1998, a group of 55 young people presented the IPPF Youth Manifesto – the organization's mandate to working with young people. Goal two of the manifesto states that:

'Young people must be able to be active citizens in their society.'

In 2001, a resolution was presented to and passed by the Governing Council of IPPF 'strongly urging Member Associations and Regions to attain at least 20 per cent of young people on their decision making bodies in line with IPPF's Governing Council structure.'¹ Since then, gradual progress has been made at the international, regional and Member Association levels in meeting this demand.

IPPF, as do WHO and other international agencies, defines 'young people' as people between the ages of 10 and 24. Many regional youth working groups have succeeded in passing resolutions at their regional councils for the participation of young people in decision making. Today, young people sit on all regional councils of the Federation. A survey of Member Associations (2003) showed that 69 per cent involve young people in policy making (boards and committees) and 64 per cent have developed a specific youth policy for young people. They are not only working *for* young people but also *with* young people.

IPPF views participation as a dynamic process. Setting standards and developing a self-assessment tool for Member Associations and the Federation as a whole is a huge step towards looking critically at our achievements in youth participation and mapping out ways to move forward.

What is youth participation in decision making?

Youth participation in decision making means participation in which both young people and adults need to embrace change and be ready to stand by and support each other for organizational and mutual benefits. It must be underpinned by democratic values and principles of non-discrimination and equity.

According to IPPF policy 4.7, young people should be part of governance and other decision making bodies. This form of participation should be institutionalized in the policies and structures across IPPF and should also include provisions for support networks for the young people involved.

Two reasons to participate²

There are different interpretations of the aims of participation. One of the most commonly made distinctions is participation as a means and as an end.

Participation as a means is used to achieve effective project implementation, the idea being that participation is a good way to get things done. For example, a youth participation project might be set up to involve young people in designing the local youth centre because they are more likely to know

1 IPPF policy 4.7 (9). See page 29.

2 Adapted from Faulkner, 2003, pages 17–18.



what the target population would find attractive, and therefore ensure a popular and successful youth centre.

Participation as an end sees involving young people in decision making as a goal in itself, regardless of whether it actually results in better decisions.

Apart from this distinction between participation as an end (*moral approach*) versus participation as a means (*pragmatic approach*) there are other issues to consider.

Legal obligation

- As signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child we are obliged to observe Article 12 (children’s views must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting them, subject to the children’s age and maturity).

Moral obligation

- Children and young people have a right to take part in matters which concern them.

For the social and political good

- To help build young people’s confidence and ability to express themselves.
- To help young people develop a commitment to their own decisions.
- To help young people grow up to be active citizens.
- To enhance our understanding of issues which affect young people.

Keeping it going: the continuum of youth participation

This section shows how to make participation a more dynamic process, using the current position of the organization as a starting point and using self-assessment questions to reach your targets.



Any combination of these elements can be used depending on what type of decision is being made and how innovative you are.

Aspects of the continuum: advantages, disadvantages and some programmatic examples

Based on work by the Foundation for Young Australians on Youth Partnership and Participation

	What is it?	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
Ad hoc input	Participation is very impromptu here. All decisions are made by adults and young people are only called on for specific roles when needed.	A larger group of young people can be called on and have input, which enables input from young children and marginalized groups.	Input is indirect and must be interpreted by adults. Young people develop very limited sense of ownership.	Suggestion boxes, essays, newsletters, periodic youth days or youth weeks, regular staff meetings to share and interpret young people's input and awareness creation sessions to inform them and enable response.
Structured consultation	Involves deliberately developing a strategy to seek young people's opinions about what they need, what problems they face or what strategies might be able to respond. Consultation implies a two-way flow of information and ideas.	Enables direct input by young people and exploration of issues in depth. Consultations are less time consuming than full participation.	The outcomes may not reflect what young people really want. It may not be based on the actual needs of young people but on adults' interpretation of the needs, and young people may not recognize the outcomes as theirs.	General forums, workshops and discussion groups involving a wide group of young people – regular opportunities where young people can come together to identify, discuss and resolve issues. Issue specific forums to address certain components of the project's work. Focus groups (in-depth discussions with a smaller, but representative group of young people).
Influence	Involves some formal, structured input in order to ensure at least a minimal level of influence on the organization.	Young people have considerable independence to speak their minds. They have a direct link with decision making.	The actual impact can be limited to a few young people. May require young people to fit into adult structures and environment.	Advisory groups, youth committees and councils. Meetings (regular or ad hoc) between advisory youth committees and adults. Representatives may be ad hoc where young people do not attend all meetings or it may involve formal elections where representatives are accountable to a particular group who elected them.
Delegation	Young people are provided with real responsibility for undertaking particular tasks of an organization. Clear guidelines must be provided	Young people have clear and real responsibility. It can be tailored to young people's interests and needs.	May still exclude young people in decision making processes. Confusion over expectations and limitations can cause conflicts.	Youth spokesperson (a young person could be your organization's representative to external bodies, especially to the media). Youth researching youth, peer education and in some cases employment of young people. Including young

	What is it?	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
	and there must be a mutual understanding of the extent of power that young people have.			people centrally in developing new programmes. This can lead to negotiation or control roles in the new programme. You can also include young people in sub-committees and working groups.
Negotiation	Young people and the rest of the organization each contribute their ideas and perspectives and decisions are reached by consensus and compromise. This implies that young people have some bargaining power and that decisions are acceptable to all parties.	Able to create a genuine partnership. Provides significant developmental benefits for the young people involved. Young people are actively involved in developing solutions.	Can be subtly destroyed by the unequal levels of power between young people and adults. May require young people to fit into adult structures.	Allocation of a percentage of positions to young people in the organization. An adult committee member can assist with information, guidance, and easing bureaucratic meeting procedures. Youth advocates can be appointed to negotiate specifically between the views of young people and adults. It requires documented agreements, a policy or memorandum of understanding to protect the rights of young people involved. It may also require adapting meeting procedures and structures to make them more youth friendly.
Youth-run	This implies that young people make all or many of the crucial decisions within the organization, from policy and programming to financial management, and hiring and firing of staff. This is rare, except in organizations which are only open to young people or which are youth initiated, developed and managed.	Young people are actively involved in identifying issues and developing solutions. They have ownership of the processes and solutions. Skills are acquired by young people and solutions are relevant to young people. It ensures total involvement in all stages of planning, programming and monitoring the processes.	Adults often find it difficult to step back and hand over power. Relinquishing control involves taking risks/ trusting young people to succeed, fail, learn and grow. A range of support from adults may be required.	An existing organization can open up a youth branch that is completely run by young people where adults serve as advisors and mentors. In such a situation, mechanisms that link the youth arm and the main organization need to be in place, for example youth representatives to sit on the main organization's staff teams or governance. It will require constitutional provisions on membership, voting rights, staffing and recruitment. Establish a group of young people with responsibility for the strategic directions of a particular project or initiative.

Advantages of youth participation³

Young people's participation should not be seen as different from their personal development. Participation is beneficial to both young people and adults and plays an important role in young people's sense of self-worth. Participation has an impact beyond personal and professional development: it can also affect your organization's outlook and culture.

At a **personal** level, participation can increase young people's knowledge and practical skills that come from real life problem solving. It can also strengthen their social interest and nurture long-term commitment to self-fulfilment. It enables young people to think critically and actively challenge circumstances.

Youth participation in decision making enables the **organization** to make informed decisions about the needs of young people. It contributes to building the overall capacity of the organization, strengthens political commitment and presents a positive image.

Youth participation in decision making can turn around the **culture** of a community and organization. It can increase youth friendliness and result in structures, policies and procedures that are demand driven to address the needs and rights of young people.



IPPF-WHR/Gabriel Amadeus Cooney, Brazil

Barriers to youth participation

Let's look at the personal, organizational and cultural barriers to youth participation.

Personal barriers

Personal biases, attitudes and characteristics of individual adults towards young people can be a big obstacle. Several projects report that some adults believed young people could not – and should not – be involved in decision making and were openly hostile to the opportunities being given to them.

Young people may not wish to get involved in organizational structures. They may lack the confidence or feel cynical about the difference their involvement will make.

Young people's lives are dynamic and constantly changing – a long-term commitment may not always be possible. There is often therefore an issue of sustainability and turnover of the young people involved in organizations.

Structural (institutional) barriers

Organizational structures and procedures can be very unfriendly to young people. Formality, jargon and lengthy meeting procedures, for example, can all deter young people from feeling part of the process.

Young people may be selected by adults, rather than by election or by their peers. This can raise problems of whether the young people are meant to be representative of a wider body of young people and, if so, how they report back to them. Young people who willingly give up their time may not represent the diversity of the youth community; there is a risk that participation may only advance the interests of articulate and confident young people.

The nature of the political processes may be such that real decision making takes place behind the scenes and young people are frustrated to find they have very little influence over complex power structures.

Young people's influence may be restricted to marginal issues, such as decorating the venue or appearing in the pictures in a brochure, but they may not be allowed to contribute to more important issues, such as choosing the content of a sexuality education programme.

Cultural/social barriers

In many societies, being young also means being quiet and obedient. Participation by young women in particular can bring them face to face with gender barriers and other socio-cultural hindrances which require specific support.

Adults often expect young people to adopt their language and behaviour to fit into adult working

³ Based on Faulkner, 2003, pages 13–15.

practices rather than looking at ways they could adapt to working with young people. Bear in mind that involving young people in decision making may take longer and need more support.

Avoid fuzzy participation⁴

“[Participation] in which young people don’t quite know why they are there, what the goals are, how it will work and what will come afterwards – is a recipe for disaster ... In any participation process, the purpose, assumptions, limits and ground rules need to be clear to all. Pretending all participants have equal say when they don’t, creating expectations that cannot be fulfilled and raising false hopes can deeply undermine participation.”

Fifteen tips for best practice

Here are 15 tips for good participation practice:⁵

- Provide training and support for young people: for example, assertiveness training, negotiation and communication.
- Provide training and support for adult decision makers to help them engage with young people and listen to their views.
- Provide young people with jargon free information that is accessible to them.
- Ensure hard to reach groups of young people are aware of and encouraged to be part of projects. Consider their specific access needs.
- Ensure meetings are accessible – at times and locations young people can manage comfortably.
- Offer a variety of options so young people have a choice in the ways they wish to engage.
- Make participation voluntary and don’t expect long-term commitment.
- Allow adequate time for projects: results will not be achieved immediately.
- Value the input of young people – take their views seriously and give clear feedback on the impact of their contribution.
- Ensure there is clear and transparent communication about the limits to their involvement.
- Make sure there is the necessary financial commitment to the project.
- Set up systems for reviewing and continuously improving the process of involving young people.
- Have fun in the project; build in opportunities for socialization.
- Recognize young people’s contribution and input: for example, provide a certificate of achievement.
- Provide support to project staff to develop their skills in working with young people.

Principles of youth participation in decision making

- Mutual trust and respect.
- Safe, supportive and comfortable environment.
- Appreciation of young people’s knowledge and skills.
- A shared vision of youth participation and what it means.
- A work ethic which addresses non-discrimination and equity.
- Authentic organizational behaviour – practice what you preach.
- Transparent and clear organizational structures.
- A high regard for gender sensitivity.
- Informed consent.
- Protect young people.
- Enjoyment, not frustration and misuse.
- Education and development for their professional life.
- Build positive relationships both inside and outside the organization.
- Shared understanding that adults are not the enemy and that young people are assets.
- Diversity – ensure the participation of young people from a wide range of social, economic and political backgrounds.

4 UNICEF, 2001, pages 20–21.

5 Faulkner 2003, page 67.

Where to start and how to keep going

Getting young people involved and keeping them interested

This is one of the most frequently asked questions by organizations who want to promote youth participation at the policy and decision making levels.

Keeping young people interested may be more important than the ability to get new young people involved. A lot of work often goes into 'recruiting young people'. The value of keeping young people on board over a longer period of time is that this will increase their sense of belonging and ownership. What's more, it eliminates the cost of recruiting!



PPPT/Sarah Shaw, Tanzania

Some tips for getting young people on board

- First of all, have interesting programmes – word of mouth is the best advertising.
- Run a fun/test session and invite young people to come and get a taste of the programme and the participation activities.
- Have a transparent system for selection.

Some tips for keeping them involved

- Build teams and develop leadership skills – young people who are trained (and more involved) will stay involved longer.
- Decide together what issues you want to discuss.
- Have get-together events frequently.
- Promote recognition, not just at the end of a session, but as young people join. Don't forget to say thank you!
- Support young people in balancing work, school and family commitments.

Getting young people involved and keeping them there depends on the quality of the youth participation activities.

This quality is delivered by adults who are:

- committed to the mission statement
- comfortable with the different age levels
- content to work for the success of the young people involved
- ready to have fun and have some personal growth and fulfilment
- focused on youth
- free from prejudices and politics
- ready to work as team players

It is useful to monitor and evaluate the recruitment and retention of young people on a regular basis.

Some questions you may need to ask yourself include:

- How many young people were recruited directly into the programme or project?
- How many young people moved up from other parts of the programme (for example, peer education)?
- How many young people did not return?
- Why?
- Was there any follow-up to contact members who did not return?



Four cross cutting themes of youth participation

Power sharing

Real participation means sharing power: this is not an easy issue for either adults or young people. Who gives power to whom? What does it mean for an adult to share power with a young person? Will he/she feel disempowered? What does it mean for a young person to become a member of a powerful body? How will that affect him or her? Can a young person remain him/herself by becoming part of a governing board and the organizational system, and becoming responsible and accountable for the system?

Motivation and commitment

Motivation and commitment for youth participation at all levels is crucial for the sustainability of participation. As such, the environment and the culture in the organization should motivate both adults and young people to promote and sustain youth participation throughout the Federation. A sense of ownership, genuine commitment and enthusiasm from both sides will enhance participation in the long term.

Team work

Working together in teams is an important part of participation. Whether in meetings, presentations or discussions, participation should bring young people and adults together. Often, these activities bring adults and young people together for the first time and every effort needs to be made to create a team spirit, which in turn can help to change people's behaviour towards one another and, in some cases, challenge traditional hierarchical divisions between young people and adults.

Communication

Transparency and clarity are key words in communication. In communication between adults and young people, the use of language, content and the method by which they communicate – verbal, non-verbal or in written form – can enhance or jeopardize real participation.

2 Explore

Self-assessment ... translating the rhetoric of youth participation into practice

Introducing self-assessment

The self-assessment method allows you to improve the quality and impact of youth participation. Importantly, it recognizes the expertise of all involved and fosters team work by encouraging adults and young people to collaborate in identifying obstacles to youth-adult partnerships and, together, finding ways to overcome them.

Assessment can help change people's behaviour towards one another and, in some cases, challenge traditional hierarchical divisions between adults and young people. A common goal and a collaborative team approach are crucial for success.

Why set standards?

Much needs to be done to translate the rhetoric of youth participation into practice.

The standards are intended to help you establish practical mechanisms for participation. They are based on a self-assessment model and can be used:

- to encourage Member Associations, Regional Offices and Central Office to look seriously at how they currently involve young people at governance and policy making levels
- to improve systems and processes for youth participation
- to make participation sustainable
- to promote democracy throughout the Federation
- to encourage continuous improvement of activities (to make them both relevant and rights-based)

A standard is:

- a qualitative statement to describe acceptable and adequate participation
- a statement of intent
- process oriented and dynamic
- a statement of what is expected to happen or to be provided

Getting started on self-assessment⁶

Before undertaking a self-assessment exercise, the Member Association should carry out a number of preparatory activities.

Cultivate the interest and commitment of management and service delivery staff

As part of the planning process, Member Associations should inform all staff and volunteers (adults and young people) about the initiative, specifically on:

- what it is about
- what the aims are
- what the process entails
- who will be involved

It is important to ensure that stakeholders at branch level also take part in the process.

⁶ Based on IPPF *Quality of Care: Improvement Process Manual for Service Providers and Managers, Self Assessment Manual*, 2005, pages 5–9.

The aim of this exercise is to create a supportive environment for the assessment process with the commitment of staff, key managers at all levels, senior volunteers and young people. You need to allocate resources to make the self-assessment process work, and be prepared to implement changes proposed by the team.

Select a lead person to coordinate the self-assessment

Any staff member or volunteer who makes a contribution to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people as a manager, volunteer or service provider can participate in the self-assessment process. However, it is necessary that senior management selects the most suitable person to coordinate and lead the overall process. The selection of the coordinator should be based on the following qualifications and skills:

- a manager at headquarter level
- previous involvement in youth participation initiatives or activities
- experience as a trainer (although they do not have to be a professional trainer)
- good leadership and facilitation skills
- respected by colleagues

Develop a schedule for conducting self-assessment

The facilitators need to discuss and develop a schedule for conducting the self-assessments. It may be convenient to divide the participants into smaller groups, each to look at an aspect of the self-assessment questions and then report back to the bigger group.

We strongly recommend that some time is allocated to:

- give an overview of the status of youth participation in the organization
- explain the self-assessment, action planning and monitoring process
- explain what the position of the organization is in relation to the process
- explain how this fits within the Member Association's and IPPF's efforts to fulfil the participation rights of young people

Logistics

Before the meeting, you should:

- Make sufficient copies of the self-assessment questions for all participants. Where possible, they should have a copy of the whole self-assessment guide.
- Ensure that adequate space will be provided for group discussions and activities. Use one of your youth project sites, such as a youth centre. For practical purposes and to minimize costs, it is also sensible to hold the self-assessment exercise in a place that most participants can reach easily.
- Make travel arrangements for participants who may require it (this includes travel costs and per diems, if necessary).
- Make arrangements for lunch/coffee/tea/snacks as required by Member Association internal procedures (these often play an important part in making participants feel comfortable).
- Prepare materials for the working sessions (flip chart paper, pens, transparencies and projector, as required).
- Provide participants with the relevant documents in advance so that they become familiar with the material before the self-assessment exercise. You may also wish to include details of your youth programmes and participation initiatives.

Use a participatory approach to the exercise to encourage group work and action plan development. Don't forget to arrange the room so that it encourages everyone to participate in the process.

For more information: See Appendix 1 for an example of a workshop used in IPPF European Network to introduce and work with the self-assessment guide. Experience of working with different Member Associations in the Europe Region suggests that young people may get bored if they are all expected

to work on all the questions and standards. A better use of time is for everyone to work through one section together, to get the hang of it, and then to break into smaller groups and divide the sections among them.

Tips for facilitators

- Using humour can be a good tactic to put participants at ease while, at the same time, making them aware of the seriousness of the matter.
- Be familiar enough with the subject matter to discuss relevant issues that arise while applying the questionnaire.
- Recall the principle of self-assessment exercise as a group effort. In other words, as a group activity, the process is as important as the outcome. Explain that using the self-assessment guide is also a way to educate the organization about participation.
- If you feel that some questions are repetitive, you can skip them.
- Help all participants to interpret the questions appropriately and, when necessary, react suitably and neutrally to responses and comments. Gestures and other non-verbal forms of communication (such as a nod or shake of the head) should not be used to suggest agreement or disagreement of participants' comments. But remember that you are a member of staff as well, so you are entitled to express your opinion.
- Listen carefully in order to move the discussion logically from point to point and to relate participants' comments to the next question.
- Create a participatory group discussion in which all participants feel confident and safe to express their opinions.
- Be flexible and open to suggestions, changes, interruptions and lack of participation – be aware that participants may feel inhibited as they will be in their work environment.
- Control the time allotted to each question and to the meeting in general without appearing to be watching the clock or rushing participants.
- At the end of each activity, session or day, encourage participants to describe what happened, how they felt or reacted to the activity and how the exercise related to their work.

Note: Since some standards require that several criteria must be met before the standard is achieved, it is important that participants discuss all the questions openly to come to a consensus. Where questions seem repetitive, these can be skipped if necessary.

More top tips

- The self-assessment process can take the form of an informal workshop or meeting of all relevant stakeholders including young people. The duration, format and frequency of these meetings will depend on the organization.
- Get a group together: staff members, volunteers, young staff members, youth volunteers and young representatives from the community. Ensure you have a friendly and enabling environment to work in.
- Decide who will facilitate, and who will take notes. It is efficient to work with a flip chart and make notes on all the outcomes.
- Go through the questions and discuss them. (Not all questions can be tackled in one session. You may need more meetings or need to divide into smaller groups to look at the different sections.) Get a consensus on what the answer is: for example 'Yes, sufficient', 'Yes, but not sufficient' or 'Not addressed'.
- Note the questions the group feels positive about. At a later stage the group can decide whether they need to undertake any action to sustain this situation.
- The questions the group members feel they cannot answer positively to, or are inadequately addressed, indicate the areas needing improvement. Those issues need further discussion and practical activities need to be developed to improve this situation.⁷

⁷ For details, see page 20.

Remember ... to include all relevant stakeholders in the self-assessment exercise: young people, youth programme staff, managers, partners and community members. Don't forget your board or council members.

Standards (self-assessment questions)

A. Shared values

Youth participation should be based on genuine sharing of fundamental values on young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as on democratic principles. Therefore, there must be agreement on the key principles of sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people and on good practices of youth participation. Effective representation of young people's views is central to our work. The value of including all young people, especially from marginalized or minority groups, should be a fundamental element of youth participation at all levels, not only about 'youth' issues. We aim to support systems and processes that secure young people's participation internationally, regionally and locally.

Yes, but not sufficient
Yes, sufficient
Not addressed

1. All staff/volunteers work towards the common goal of sexual and reproductive health and well-being for all young people.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a common understanding of the sexual and reproductive rights and needs of young people by adult staff and volunteers? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a common understanding of the core values ⁸ on youth participation? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a common understanding of the sexual and reproductive rights and needs of young people from vulnerable, marginalized and socially excluded groups? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Do young people, staff and volunteers receive clear information on the organization's mission and objectives with regard to young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are all staff convinced about promoting young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a commitment to gender equity? |

2. There is a common understanding and vision about youth participation.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Have all staff and volunteers committed themselves to achieving and supporting youth participation at governance and decision making levels? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Have there been opportunities for adult staff and volunteers to learn about sharing power with young people? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Have there been opportunities for both adult and young staff and volunteers to address negative assumptions and stereotypes about young people and/or adults? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are young people's contributions valued at every level of participation and taken into consideration by adults? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Have adults adjusted their professional 'adult' language to one that is better understood by young people? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Have young people who participate recognized their own value in having their voice heard? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Do young people take leadership roles whenever possible? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Do young people push for policies that promote power sharing? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are young people and adults provided with opportunities (meetings, evaluation procedures, forums) to exchange feedback? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are both young people and adults involved in setting the agenda for young people's involvement? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are processes or proceedings explained to young people in a meaningful manner and are they given the opportunity to give feedback on their understanding of such proceedings? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are young people free to decide how much time they will devote to their participation, without any obligations imposed on them? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Are young people willing to get involved in the Member Association's work? |

8 For details, see the principles and values on page 5.

B. Organizational capacity

Youth participation demands that we all look critically at the way we work. A safe, supportive and enabling environment within your organization is crucial for the success of youth participation. You can help by choosing youth friendly language and venues, and by communicating decisions and sharing information.

Yes, but not sufficient
Not addressed
Yes, sufficient

1. Youth specific policies – mission statements, constitutions, by-laws, strategies, operational guidelines – are in place.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have policies and guidelines that allow young people to be a permanent part of governing your organization?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are the policies and guidelines available to young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a transparent and democratic system of selecting youth representatives to decision making bodies?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the policy and process provide for young people to be selected by young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a specific quota assigned to young people in decision making bodies of the organization?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there mechanisms in place to coach and mentor young people?

2. Young people are represented in decision making and policy making bodies.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have 20 per cent of young people under 25 on its decision making bodies?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do the young people in decision and policy making bodies have voting rights?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are young people's terms of office and voting rights similar to those of adults?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a replacement system if young people's terms end early (for example, due to life changes or relocation)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there special measures to ensure full representation of young people at all times (for example, alternative youth representatives)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are measures in place to ensure gender balance in the representation of young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there mechanisms and resources to enable youth representatives to feed back to their peer groups?

3. Resources are allocated to facilitate and support youth participation.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Has your organization allocated a budget and staff to ensure the participation of young people, to work on youth programmes and to oversee, develop and sustain youth participation at different levels?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are meetings held at convenient times and places to enable young people to participate?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people have access to resources needed for them to participate (for example, documents, Internet)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Have you ensured that the budgeting and financial management systems support participation? (For example, is there a budget for youth volunteers separate from youth programme budgets?)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people have access to administrative support and/or equipment needed to participate (for example, email and so on)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are expenses paid in advance as opposed to reimbursed?

4. There is a system in place for young volunteers to advance within the organization.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are young people recruited as staff?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there guidelines on how young people who have actively participated in decision making or have contributed in any other way to the organization could take up positions on the highest decision making bodies (for example, Regional Council, Governing Council)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Has the organization developed a system of keeping records of youth volunteers?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system in place for officially recognizing young people who participate?

Yes, but not sufficient
Yes, sufficient
Not addressed

5. Systems are in place for cooperating with other youth organizations (as well as for cooperating within the organization).

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have a system and allocated resources for cooperating with community youth networks?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people have access to a diverse range of ways to participate or convey their ideas (for example, orally, in writing)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you involving young people in schools, disability groups, young people living with HIV, street children and other groups within communities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people who are participating keep in touch with their peers about their participation and activities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there specific opportunities and allocated resources for young people and adults in the organization to work with other youth leaders (both within and outside the organization)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there opportunities for young people and adults to network with other adults doing similar work (both within and outside the organization)?

C. Selection and recruitment, and sustaining youth participation

This section deals with the key questions: where and how to find young people who want to be involved, and how to keep them involved and interested.

1. There is a system in place for recruiting new volunteers (both adults and young people) that promotes youth participation in governance and decision making.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ When recruiting new youth members, do you aim to attract a diverse group of young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do your recruitment criteria for adults address the need for them to value youth participation?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you orient adults and young people on the benefits of working in partnership?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are the selection criteria for new volunteers youth friendly? (For example, have you made sure that they are not discriminatory, that they do not exclude anyone and that there is no emphasis on long work experience?)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are young people on the selection board and/or involved in the election process?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization provide a letter of agreement that describes the responsibilities of members of governing or programme bodies and the role(s) the organization is asking young people to take?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ If so, was this agreement developed jointly by adults and young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a clearly stated strategy for ensuring gender balance?

2. There is a system in place for recruiting staff (both adults and young people) that promotes youth participation.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are the selection criteria favouring the recruitment of young people (for example, without excessive emphasis on long work experience, with upper age limit etc)?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are young people on the selection board and/or involved in the selection process?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a clear salary scale – which is based on scope of work rather than experience and academic qualifications?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are the job descriptions flexible and clear?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there measures in place to ensure equity in the recruitment of young women and young men?

3. There is a system in place to sustain youth participation.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system of incentives/reward to motivate young people to participate?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system to support young people during and after their participation?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are young people shown appreciation for work well done?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people and adults have regular opportunities to reflect on their work?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system of follow-up after young people have left the organization?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have a system/scheme to encourage their participation even after the age of 25?

Yes, but not sufficient
Yes, sufficient
Not addressed

4. There is a system in place for training and orienting young people on the organization's goals and vision.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system for youth members to train/mentor new youth members?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there systematic opportunities for young people to be trained to train others?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there capacity building (such as training) schemes in place for adults and young people to be able to work at the same level?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are there venues/opportunities for adults and young people to engage in dialogue?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people who participate have access to all relevant information to enable informed decision making?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does your organization have a system for personal development of young volunteers – training, attending meetings, mentoring?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are youth issues, youth participation and youth friendliness mainstreamed into the orientation programme for all staff and volunteers?

5. A system is in place to monitor the participation activities.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you document the participation activities and processes?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you have a system for regular assessment and evaluation of participation (both for young people and adults), involving young people?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have a system to attend to issues brought up by young people?

D. Responsibilities and roles of all involved

All members of staff and volunteers, young and adult, need to be able to help young people participate. The leadership of senior staff is critical to sending the right message to everyone involved. Clarity in roles and responsibilities will enhance this message. Endorsement of youth participation in job descriptions of staff, and descriptions of roles and responsibilities of volunteers, will add to IPPF's commitment to youth participation.

1. The roles and responsibilities of young people who participate in governance and decision making are clearly stated and understood.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does your organization refer to the importance of acknowledging and valuing youth participation in the terms of reference of all relevant staff and volunteers?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people who participate in governance have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are the roles and responsibilities of young people who participate in governance respected by adults?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are adult volunteers aware of their duties and responsibilities with regard to youth participation?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Is there a system in place to protect young people from any form of harm?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does the organization have terms of reference for young volunteers which were developed jointly by adults and young people?

2. There is a transparent organizational structure (governance and administration) for monitoring the roles and responsibilities of young people in participation.

- ☐ ☐ ☐ Does your organization have a system and clear guidelines to monitor staff and volunteers to fulfil their responsibilities related to youth participation?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people have the opportunity/means to assess whether their roles within the organization, including governance, are respected?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do young people have the opportunity/means to assess whether their peers who participate in governance and policy making fulfil their responsibilities and give voice to their needs?

③ Exercises

Where do we go from here ... planning for participation

The 'how to' of action planning

Remember, the idea of the self-assessment is to challenge organizations to be as innovative as possible in moving forward. Where there is a lack of financial resources, always consider how you can address the gaps by integrating your plan into ongoing activities of the organization.

Completing the work plan

After identifying which standards and questions the organization was not addressing adequately, use the log frames on pages 21 and 22 to map out the following:

- which standards are not well addressed
- how you are going to address them better
- when you are going to do them
- who is going to be responsible for what
- what resources are needed

Areas or issues that require improvement will be those that have been answered with a tick under the columns. A useful technique to use during this exercise is to keep asking participants **at least three times**: 'Why does this problem exist?' The facilitator should generate a discussion on possible solutions. The group should discuss and agree on the interventions. The use of flip charts for documenting problems, the proposed causes and solutions generally facilitates discussion and helps maintain participants' attention. A member of the group will record the agreed causes for each problem in the second column of the action plan and the proposed solution(s) in the third column of the action plan.

The group should discuss and agree on the interventions. Effective interventions require:

- simple solutions that are feasible (small steps)
- interventions that are sustainable
- awareness of the human resources and financial costs

Once an action is agreed on, identify a responsible person to put it into practice and to set realistic deadlines. This information should be recorded in the columns, as provided in the log frames. The facilitators should encourage and guide participants to assign tasks. Some questions will require the same action, so similar actions should be merged in the action plans.

Remember to record whether financial, technical or other assistance is needed and what the source of that assistance will be. This should be recorded in the 'Resources' column of the log frame. The European Network developed an interesting tool to explore the extent of youth participation in assessing and implementing activities (see Appendix 2).

Work plan implementation

Once the work plan is completed, remember to network with others to prevent duplication of efforts and resources.

It may be helpful to identify a time frame to review progress (follow-up after six months or one year) of the self-assessment. You may choose to set up a multi-disciplinary team of three or four people, including young staff/volunteers, to drive and guide the participation monitoring process. Their role is to:

- make the action plan accessible to all staff
- monitor the implementation of the action plan
- support staff responsible for implementing solutions

Sample log frames

Shared values – where do we want to go?

Which standards are we not addressing well?	How are we going to address these?	When?	Who?	Resources?

Organizational capacity – where do we want to go?

Which standards are we not addressing well?	How are we going to address these?	When?	Who?	Resources?

Selection, recruitment and sustaining – where do we want to go?

Which standards are we not addressing well?	How are we going to address these?	When?	Who?	Resources?

Roles and responsibilities – where do we want to go?

Which standards are we not addressing well?	How are we going to address these?	When?	Who?	Resources?

Experience

Lessons learned from the self-assessment exercise ... participation pilot



IPPF/Peter Caton, Nepal

"It gave us a chance to assess the degree of youth participation we have achieved."

The self-assessment tool was piloted in all IPPF Regions. Participants in Trinidad and Tobago had these comments:

"We had the opportunity to formalize structures in terms of how we deal with youth participation. We were doing a lot of work before [in this area] but did not know how to formalize it."

"The sessions helped to put everything into focus. We did not even recognize how much we were doing it [youth participation]."

"It was good for young people to have an opportunity to make a real impact on the assessment of the IPPF tool. It showed us the importance of having a voice at the top level of the Federation."

"It helps the organization to really assess the strength of its youth component. It is a good tool to pinpoint your weaknesses and strengths and can guide planning. The self-assessment process allows for the opportunity to determine the specific resources needed. This tool will give organizations that don't have youth participation a guide as to how to develop this. Young people by their very participation in the self-assessment can be more motivated and appreciative of the scope of the role they can play. They can now be more 'in our faces' to ensure they reach the top level of youth participation."

In Ghana, participants gave the following feedback:

"The self-assessment process was challenging because it was difficult for participants to separate themselves from their roles and be completely objective without feeling 'judged'."

"There seems to be general communications and information flow challenges among staff members, volunteers and governance. The session acknowledged these challenges and the fact that the organization has only recently put in place mechanisms to address them. In the context of the self-assessment it is critical that the agreed actions are completed urgently, otherwise this will have a negative effect on both the gains the organization has made."

Examples

Regional and national approaches ... youth participation case studies

Youth Action Movement ... new strategy for IPPF Africa Region

The idea of the Youth Action Movement in Africa emerged from the recognition of young people as resources, that their participation is a right, and can lead to more realistic and meaningful policies and programmes. If they are supported they will acquire knowledge and marketable skills.

The Youth Action Movement concept aims to give decision making powers to young people, provides a model and structure that enables youth participation in programmes, and helps young people be recognized as advocates.

Their approach is to encourage all IPPF Member Associations in the Region to establish national Youth Action Movements and ensure that representatives of these national movements sit on executive committees or boards.

National Youth Action Movements will also form a sub-regional youth working group, a representative of which will sit on the Africa Regional Youth Working Group. This Regional Youth Working Group will identify the regional youth representative to sit on the IPPF Regional Council for Africa.

The proposed youth structure is to be incorporated into IPPF's decision making and governance structure. Member Associations are expected to provide support for Youth Action Movements and ensure their constitutions/policies provide for the participation of a number of Youth Action Movement members on national boards or executive committees.

The Regional Office will provide support for Member Associations to revise their constitutions/policies and ensure the incorporation of the Regional Youth Working Group structure into regional governance with voting rights. A number of Member Associations have already established Youth Action Movements.

Young and Wise ... Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

"You just don't believe these young people can do it, but then they surprise you."

Adult member of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana

The commitment of the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) to young people's development dates back to 1969 and the emerging concern for young people's sexual and reproductive health. By 1991, many young people were involved in programme planning and implementation. Today, members of the Youth Action Movement are involved in policy and decision making in many ways.

The Young and Wise Youth Centre Project – a youth-dedicated facility providing sexual and reproductive health information and services – is designed and implemented by young people.

Before planning for the centre began, a meeting was held with young people from existing PPAG youth networks and other youth organizations in Accra, Ghana. The young people elected a Youth Advisory Board which advised PPAG on all aspects of the project.

PPAG and the Youth Advisory Board then began to create other structures for more meaningful youth involvement. Four youth committees were formed to oversee different aspects of the project – from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. The Youth Advisory Board and these committees worked to recruit part-time youth staff and facilitators, trained and involved peer educators, and developed a membership scheme to ensure that more young people use the centres and participate in planning activities and service delivery.

The majority of staff are young people but the rest of the Youth Advisory Board, youth sub-committees and facilitators are all youth volunteers. This demonstrates that young people can be responsible for the entire decision making process and day-to-day running of a youth centre.

Its success is based on a well-designed structure for youth involvement that creates many ways for young people to get involved, with varying levels of commitment. It means that young people choose how much time they want to give. Each position requires particular skills and attributes of youth volunteers, a job description and specific incentives such as payment of travel costs, bicycles for easy mobility, and free computing and life skills training.

The success of Young and Wise has led PPAG to develop policies that allow young people to be involved in all project planning teams in the organization.

Young people making policies in the Philippines

The Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP) has provided family planning and maternal and child health services for the past three decades through its chapters and community health care centres in more than 40 provinces across the country. Currently, one of its three core programmes is the Development and Family Life Education for Youth project which operates in three provinces.

Recently, FPOP engaged young people in updating its youth policies. They worked with young people already involved in the Development and Family Life Education for Youth project. Training in communication skills helped build young people's self-esteem and confidence to be able to share their views with adults. The main challenges were logistical – finding ways of working together despite differences in schedules between adults and young people as well as the problems caused by the distances between project sites.

Together, they identified how best to put policies in place that will ensure the involvement of young people in decision making processes. They succeeded in passing a recommendation that youth representation be increased in all 26 FPOP chapter councils.

The work of the young people set new policy directions for FPOP and created new opportunities for young people's participation. Today, the FPOP National Youth Coordinator is a member of the Technical Committee for the State of the Philippines Population Report which will highlight initiatives and data on adolescent reproductive health in the Philippines. There are youth representatives in both the chapter and national councils with voting rights. The first National Youth Leaders' Assembly where young people will elect their representatives to the National Council of the FPOP is being planned.

'Fast tracking' in IPPF South Asia Region (SAR)

In 1996, IPPF/SAR became the first Region to include young people in its Regional Council. Since then youth volunteers have made a significant contribution to the work of the Regional Office and Member Associations.

At national levels, youth members are either elected or selected to sit on the National Executive Committees. If elected from the branch they are full members and are entitled to vote. However, they lose this voting right if selected. This is mainly to encourage youth representatives elected by young people themselves.

Today, one youth member from each of the seven Member Associations sits on the Regional Council with equal voting rights as adult members. Six of the seven Member Associations now have young people on their national executive boards, and four of the seven youth members are elected.

At national levels, selection processes have sometimes helped to 'fast track' young people onto boards to ensure participation at all levels, avoiding the long bureaucratic procedures that discourage young people. This has been used to address the problem of young people having to serve on local boards for a long time before being elected to the national level.

An ideal system would be for young people to serve as members of youth groups from where they can be elected onto Branch Youth Committees, then National Councils and National Executive Committees. This will serve as a clear route for the election of young people onto the Regional Council.





It will also provide support networks for young people and build a pool of young advocates and decision makers at all levels.

The Region is currently working on the possibilities for Regional Council youth representatives to select and elect their representative to the Governing Council of IPPF.

New by-laws to support participation ... IPPF Western Hemisphere Region (WHR)

Young people participate in the programmes and activities of IPPF/WHR and its Member Associations in different ways. In recent years, various resolutions have been put in place to encourage young people's participation in IPPF/WHR's decision making bodies and to encourage the Member Associations to incorporate young people in their Board of Directors.

In 1998, IPPF/WHR adopted new by-laws to regulate the governing structure and the role of volunteers. The new structure requires that at least one young person – less than 25 years old – be one of the nine members of the Board of Directors. Today, the Board of Directors has two youth members; one young woman from Colombia and a young man from Chile.

In 2002, the Regional Council of the Western Hemisphere Region of IPPF approved a resolution which supported Member Associations having 20 per cent of young people on their Board of Directors and to integrate young people as associates. To date, 13 of the 35 Member Associations have young people on their Board of Directors and others have plans for incorporating young people in the near future. Seven Member Associations have young adults aged 25–33 years in decision making bodies. This is very important for the continuous participation of young people as they move out of their 'young' age bracket.

Additionally, to support all these actions, the Strategic Plan for the Regional Office, approved in September 2003, contains a clear objective related to youth participation. This reads: 'To increase youth participation at the Regional Office and Member Associations, at the decision making level as well as in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs'.

Determination and communication produces results in Kyrgyzstan ... Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan

This IPPF Vision 2000 Fund project aims to develop the Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan (RHAK). Its stakeholders are volunteers, board members, staff at both central and branch levels, and young people.

Young people are actively involved in activities, planning and management. They make up 41 per cent of the total RHAK membership. RHAK organized a National Youth Forum which was attended by representatives from all the branch Youth Committees to develop and approve the terms and conditions of the Youth Committee and its main strategic activities. In this meeting the branches presented their strategies, challenges and successes.

From the branch presentations, it appeared clear that the members of the Youth Committees played an important role in project planning and implementation, and contributed much to its progress. They organized local fundraising activities to run seven workshops for young people across the country. In addition, training was organized to inform young people of RHAK's mission, goals and objectives, while encouraging them to participate in activities as peer educators and promoters.

The chair of every branch Youth Committee sits on the national Youth Committee to ensure representation and a clear flow of information and decision making processes. To link the youth structure to the broader decision making structure of RHAK, the Chair of the Youth Committee was elected to RHAK's National Board. The young people created a youth policy and developed project proposals, two of which are currently being implemented.

The success of RHAK's approach is based on two key factors: young people's determination and the creation of effective communication channels.

Targeting young decision makers in Sweden

“Young politicians who are interested in sexuality issues will always fight for young people’s rights.”

A project, initiated by the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU), targets young decision makers in youth non-governmental organizations and youth leagues of political parties in the Swedish parliament.

The aim is to enlist support and commitment among young parliamentarians and high level policy makers to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. RFSU works with these young decision makers to advocate and lobby their parties and organizations to put sexual and reproductive health and rights issues on their national agenda. To help them, they are provided with an overview of both national and global sexual and reproductive health and rights information.

Networking strategies between RFSU and all stakeholders, and the energy and political will of the young people, all contributed to the project’s success. Regular informal contact yielded the best results. A contact person is identified for every targeted organization. They are supported to identify their needs, ranging from technical information on sexual and reproductive health and rights to building networks.

There is an unavoidable problem of high turnover; they grow up and/or leave their organizations so it is important to have contact not only with one person from each organization but two or three. Young people are often involved in many different issues and balancing their work with their studies. Making the project well known in the organization is also a key to keeping interest alive. For example, five young people who went on a study visit to meet with Zambian youth organizations wrote a joint article in the largest Swedish newspaper on the right to safe abortion.

Motivating these young decision makers to put sexual and reproductive health and rights issues on their political agendas is a challenge. Early indications show that young politicians who are interested in sexuality issues will always fight for young people’s rights. So far the outcomes from the project are very positive. One organization has included HIV/AIDS and the right to safe abortion as high profile issues in their national human rights campaign. Other organizations have integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights in their official agendas and have published on these topics.



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Equality

IPPF policy 4.7 ... sexual and reproductive health and rights

Right to participate

9. IPPF encourages Member Associations to support young people and ensure they receive practical skills and knowledge so they can participate to the best of their ability in society. IPPF and Member Associations are urged to take the following into account in their work with young people:
- i. When Member Association programmes and services are being designed, implemented and evaluated, every effort should be made to involve young people and ensure they have real decision making power.
 - ii. Member Associations and Regions are strongly urged to attain at least 20 per cent young people on their decision making bodies in line with IPPF's Governing Council structure.
 - iii. The participation of young people should be built around the equal partnership of young people and adults.
 - iv. Young people need to be supported to participate in all of the above through the provision of resources (material and financial), information and training.
 - v. Member Associations shall not discriminate on grounds of age, especially in approving applications for membership of the Member Association, providing information or services, in recruiting staff or in any other aspect of the Association's work, subject to local law. Indeed, Member Associations should make efforts to actively recruit young people as members of Member Associations.

As adopted by Central Council, November 1990.

Last amended by Governing Council, May 2001.

Appendix 1⁹

Workshops to introduce the self-assessment tool ... pathway to participation

Day 1

Issue	Aim	Details	Time and materials
Introductions	To start things off and introduce people.	Introduce facilitator. Ask participants to introduce themselves, telling a story about their name and also what they hope to get out of the workshop.	30 minutes
Objectives	To get a general picture of what the aim of the technical assistance is and how new objectives can be incorporated into it.	Participants write down one worry they have for the workshop. Go through the objectives and how they relate to the aims for the workshop. Go through any additional objectives people have. Go through the agenda and how it relates to the objectives. Explain the role of the facilitator at the workshop as a critical questioner. Go through the worries people have and discuss how to make ground rules for the meeting from them. Decide on energizer.	30 minutes
Values clarification	To explore values about youth participation and see different viewpoints.	Read out the following value statements. Ask each participant to think about each one and decide in which position along the line between agree and disagree she/he wants to stand. It is OK to stay in-between two signs rather than choosing one of the three options. Statements: 1. Young people should always be respectful of their elders. 2. A 15-year-old could serve on a board of directors. 3. A youth group within the Member Association should manage its own programmes and budget. Questions to discuss at the end: 1. What did you notice happening during the exercise? 2. How did it feel to do the exercise? 3. What influenced your decisions?	45 minutes

⁹ Developed by Kathryn Faulkner for workshops to introduce the self-assessment tool in Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia and Poland for the IPPF European Network.

		<p>4. Why did we do this exercise?</p> <p>5. Why are values important in youth-adult partnerships?</p> <p>6. How do you think this exercise will help you in promoting and working on youth-adult partnerships and in conducting the self-assessment?</p>	
Youth-adult partnerships	To start discussing issues about youth participation in the Member Association.	<p>Split into groups and discuss:</p> <p>1. What is working at the moment with youth participation in the Member Association?</p> <p>2. Where are there problems?</p>	30 minutes
Lessons from research on best practices in youth participation	To share lessons and tools from other projects.	<p>Presentation on lessons from the literature on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the benefits of youth participation • ways to make it work better • participation tools • different ways to participate – consultation, representation, partnership, self-management 	<p>45 minutes</p> <p>List of websites on youth participation</p> <p>Models of participation hand-out</p> <p>Lessons presentation</p> <p>Ways that young people can participate</p>
Why young people get involved	To try to strengthen recruitment and motivation of youth volunteers.	<p>Discuss what young people get out of being involved with the Member Association at the moment.</p> <p>Go through the motivation questionnaire and discuss any points that participants think should be improved.</p>	<p>1 hour</p> <p>Motivation questionnaire</p>
Governance	To analyze youth participation on the Member Association board or in any other form of decision making processes.	<p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the youth or youth members' responsibilities? • Are they the same as an adult? • How are the young people supported to carry out any responsibilities? • How have meetings been changed to make them more youth friendly? (Provide a common list of changes boards sometimes make.) • How is information shared? • Was there an election or selection process and how did the process work? • What could be done in the future? Look at training programme. 	<p>1 hour</p> <p>List of changes boards can make to be youth friendly</p> <p>Mentoring sheet</p>
	Evaluate first day.	Ask each person to say what they liked and what could be better for tomorrow.	

Day 2

Issue	Aim	Details	Time and materials
Last year's experiences¹⁰	To analyze and learn from what has happened in the last year on youth participation.	Go through the IPPF self-assessment guide. Section B – do together. Section C – divide into groups. Section A – all groups do both questions. Section D – do together.	4 hours
Objectives	To introduce development of action plans.	Discuss key points about objectives. Put together all the activities: put them on a table and then group them together into similar themes. Give different groups bundles to formulate the objectives.	1 hour

Day 3

Issue	Aim	Details	Time and materials
Prioritizing activities	To decide which are the most important.	Ask everyone to vote for the first, second and third most important activity within each of the objectives.	45 minutes
Project planning	To develop a proposal on youth participation.	Discuss the function of indicators and the difference between process and results indicators. Break into groups, each with an objective and activities. Ask each group to develop process and results indicators.	1 hour
Individual action plans	To think about what each person can do individually.	Ask each to list at least three things they will do, or do differently after the technical assistance.	45 minutes
Charter on youth participation	To come to common understandings for the Member Association on youth participation.	Ask everyone to write on a post-it note what for them is the most important message to give someone about youth participation. Discuss the results as a group and, from that, formulate three key messages together.	1 hour
Planning implementation	To assign timing and responsibility for activities.	Work with Member Association staff on who, when and how each of the activities will be carried out.	3 hours

¹⁰ This part can be adapted to assess the current situation in the organization.

Appendix 2¹¹

[illegible]

11 This tool was developed by Kathryn Faulkner.

Background materials for workshop

What do young people get out of being involved?

Consider what young people will want to get out of their involvement and, in reality, what they are likely to get.

	Young people will want	Young people are likely to get
Increased confidence		
Increased skills		
Payment		
Rewards in kind (for example, record or book tokens)		
Something to do		
To feel part of something		
Increased knowledge		
To be listened to		
An opportunity to influence decisions		
An opportunity to influence service provision		
An opportunity to do something useful		
An opportunity to help others		
A stepping stone to possible future interest		
A stepping stone to a future career		
Somewhere to go		
To make new friends		
To meet people from different backgrounds		
To feel valued		
Excitement		
Accreditation/qualification		
Support with their own problems		
Better access to services		
Anything else?		

Score:

Definitely (✓)

Possibly (?)

No way (✗)

What is youth participation?... lessons from the literature presentation

IPPF Youth Working Group, June 2000

Participation is:

- Being part of the decision making.
- Not being spoken about but speaking with.
- Having a sense of ownership.
- Being treated as equal partners.
- Being really listened to.

Consultative Meeting on Youth Participation, August 2003

- Youth participation – active involvement.
- Adult-youth partnership:
 - youth and adults as *equals*
 - young people need to be involved in ALL issues at ALL levels.
- Young people are allowed to set their own agenda and are part of evaluations and management.
- Young people in governance:
 - being part of decision making at all levels
 - working in partnership
 - being accountable to those served and represented.

European Network Youth Participation and Governance Workshop, April 2004

Participation is:

- Equal rights.
- Team work.
- Cooperation.
- Having an open mind.
- Young people and adults working together actively.

Other definitions

Participation is a process of dialogue through which joint decisions are made by adults and young people working together – and change occurs as a result.

Shenton, F. (2004) *Everyday Participation*. London: UK Youth

Important elements

- Means actual change as a result.
- Is about working *together* in partnership – young people and adults.
- Involves feedback.
- Many different ways of participating.

Benefits of youth participation

Personal development of young people

- Gain experience, skills and confidence.
- Autonomy and decision making.

Builds better programmes

- Avoids wasting time and money on services young people don't want to use.
- Gives young people greater ownership and commitment to a service.

Rights

- Young people's right.
- Involves young people in democratic processes.

Information is key

- Provide young people with jargon free information.
- Let them know who to go to for what kinds of information.

Turnover is inevitable

- Offer a variety of ways to get involved.
- Make participation voluntary and don't expect long-term commitment.
- Always be recruiting, never stop.

Incentives

- Not always about work: have trips, outings etc.
- Make being involved enjoyable.
- Provide food at times.
- Incentives in kind, for example bicycles.
- Recognize young people's contribution and input, for example certificate of achievement.

Participation takes time

- Expect things to take longer.
- Allow adequate time for projects; results will not be achieved immediately.
- Participation is a process.

Power and decision making

- Be clear and honest about:
 - the limits to young people's involvement
 - who else will be involved in making decisions
 - who makes the final decision.
- **Always** make sure there is feedback.

Take stock and improve

- No participation structure is perfect.
- Participation is a process.
- Set up systems for reviewing and continuously improving the process.

Mentoring youth for success on boards and commissions

Article taken from the Youth Leadership Institute's Young Active Citizens Curriculum, 2002, www.yli.org

One key element in fostering successful youth-adult partnerships on boards, commissions, or other governing bodies is to create an environment in which more experienced members take personal responsibility to orient and support newer members. Through this process, the more experienced "mentors" will also learn from the newer "mentees'" experiences and perspectives. While this dynamic can develop informally in your group, it's a good idea to create a formal mentorship infrastructure to orient young people and facilitate adult board members' individual learning from youth colleagues. Although this section applies more directly to organizations that plan to add youth seats to an existing adult governing body, organizations with youth advisory boards can pair mentors from their adult boards of directors with youth advisory board members. After the first group of youth is integrated, you might also wish to experiment with youth-to-youth peer mentorship structures. After youth participants in our Young Active Citizens' pilot project had been on their respective governing bodies for several months, we hosted an informal workshop for them to share successes and challenges. Although the youth were overwhelmingly positive about their organizations, some who did not participate in a formal mentorship process reported the following:

"I was given a written orientation packet, which helped. What's more difficult was the unwritten culture – the group dynamics and informal culture."

"I was taken on a tour of the center, its staff and its programs. The other board members were nice and mellow, but I wasn't sure what I brought to the board and what others expected of me."

"It took a while to figure out dynamics and roles – who's doing what and why."

"When I first joined, I wanted someone to explain Robert's Rules of procedures and general board processes. I was frightened and felt awkward."

"It was great to get informal mentoring from the board president and my adult subcommittee members. I was often invited to lunch to talk about current projects, board dynamics, and other things not necessarily available in written form."

By creating a formal mentorship program in which adult members take responsibility to get to know and work with the new youth members, your group will help orient the youth members to your group's informal processes, dynamics, and overall culture. And remember, the benefits will flow in *both* directions! The adults will inevitably learn a lot from their youth mentees as well.

The next few pages will set forth some basic suggestions on how to create a mentor-mentee program, including:

- How to formalize a mentorship structure
- Suggested mentor responsibilities
- Guidelines for how mentors can provide support regarding group meetings

How to Formalize a Mentorship Structure

1. Obtain organizational and personal commitments:

In order for it to succeed, your mentorship structure will need the following components: An adult individual (or group committee) to oversee the mentorship program. This could be your board development or governing body recruitment committee, if such committees exist, or a wholly new mentorship committee. Make sure you have adults to match with all your youth members.

2. Clarify oversight roles, such as:

- Supporting the mentors in fulfilling their duties.
- Clarifying mentors' duties.
- Providing training and necessary background information to mentors.
- Ensuring a certain level of consistency across the mentorship program.

3. Determine who will be the mentors

If youth will serve on particular committees or subgroups, mentors from those committees or subgroups are ideal. Try to recruit mentors who will be open to learning and growing from their relationship with the mentee.

4. Create a letter of agreement for mentor and mentee pairings:

Both mentor and mentee should sign the letter, and copies should be saved in the mentor's and mentee's files. The letter should cover:

- Roles and responsibilities (as shared below).
- Standing meeting times.
- Length of mentor term.
- You should also create a blank to insert each mentee's individual needs – the same roles and responsibilities may not apply to each pair.

5. Structure: How often should mentors and mentees meet separately from meetings?

They should have designated meetings *before and after each group meeting*.

Ideally, meetings (especially the pre-group meeting) should be in person but a phone-check would suffice if either party is on a tight schedule. These meetings could be immediately before and after group meetings, or scheduled on other occasions like over lunch. They should, however, take place within a few days of group meetings.

6. Mentor ratio and terms

There should be one mentor for each youth mentee. Depending on how often your board meets and what works for your group structure, mentor terms can last for 6 months or 1 year.

7. Evaluation

Set aside time for a check-in with all mentors and mentees in your group halfway through the term. Your group president and/or executive director should be present at this meeting. This meeting can provide invaluable feedback and allow you to do course correction if things are not working out. At the last board meeting of the term, recognize the contribution of youth members and their mentors. Invite both to share their experiences as mentor/mentee and help inspire other adult members to become mentors. Make sure you also check in periodically with mentors to see how they are learning and growing from their relationship with the mentees.

Mentor Responsibilities

You can probably think of many things that would have helped you when you first joined the board or leadership group of your organization. Here are some responsibilities we suggest when outlining the roles of a mentor:

Before the mentee's board or leadership group service begins:

- Make sure youth members are prepared and given a thorough orientation of the who, what, history, mission, structure of the board or group leadership, and of the organization as a whole. It may be helpful if the board provides bios of each group member.
- Spend informal time together getting to know each other before the mentee's first group meeting. Help the mentee think about which committee(s) s/he would like to serve on.
- Get to know and learn from the mentee's experiences and perspectives.

For the mentee's first group meeting:

- The mentor and mentee should try to arrive a few minutes early.
- The mentor should introduce the mentee to other group members as they arrive.
- Once the formal meeting begins, the mentor should introduce the mentee to the convened group. The other members should introduce themselves and give information such as their positions (president, secretary, etc.), what committees they're on, their occupations, why they chose to join this group, etc.
- All members should wear nametags.

Before, during, and after group meetings:

- Make sure the mentee knows about and attends each meeting (via reminder calls, emails, etc.)
Check-in with the mentee about safe transportation to and from meetings and events.
- Whenever possible, meet with the mentee before each meeting to prepare. If a meeting isn't feasible, check in via telephone. Let the mentee know it's okay to ask questions!
- Support and encourage the mentee to verbally participate during meetings.
- For the first few meetings, try to schedule a quick check-in during a break at the group meeting to gauge how things are going. However, as time goes on this may be unnecessary.
- Debrief with the mentee after meetings, either by checking in informally immediately after the

meeting or through a follow up phone call or lunch. Assist the mentee in choosing and shaping projects (for example, development, program, etc.). Continue examining what you're learning from your relationship with the mentee, and incorporate that knowledge into the work you do for the organization.

Relationship-building

- Check-in with the mentee's family to make sure they are clear and reasonably supportive about board commitment, activities, etc.
- Communicate with the designated mentor coordinator or coordinating committee on a regular basis about your mentor/mentee relationship.
- Think about ways for the youth member to share his or her experiences with peers.
- Respect and advocate for his or her ideas and contributions in group meetings.
- Provide informal supports – for example, introduce and orient youth members if they attend adult receptions and events with you.
- Share personal information such as your motivations and life experiences – such exchanges will help the mentee feel more connected to the group.
- Trust your mentee as a full partner in your endeavors!

Detailed Meeting Check-in Guide

Pre Meeting

Mentor and mentee should meet before each meeting to:

- Preview the agenda, answer any questions.
- Discuss possible contributions and opinions about agenda items.
- If mentee is hesitant to participate, remind him or her that it is important to participate and support him or her to feel comfortable doing so.
- Discuss how to contribute to committee work.
- Set goals for meetings (for example, young person speaks up at least 3 times).
- Plan for a way to reach goals.
- Mentors should ask:
 - 1) Do you need any background on any of the listed agenda items?
 - 2) What else would be helpful for us to discuss before the meeting?

Post Meeting

Build in time for a mentor-mentee check in after meetings. Some issues to discuss are:

- What were some highlights of the meeting?
- What worked or didn't work for you at this meeting?
- What questions or observations do you have about how the meeting was run?
- What questions or observations do you have about how the group interacted?
- What did you like about how you participated? What would you like to do differently at future meetings?
- What information do you need to help you participate more?
- Do you feel comfortable about the location and time of the meeting?

Ways that young people can participate in Member Associations

- Carry out peer education
- Research
- Develop projects
- Carry out projects
- Evaluations
- Fundraising
- Debates
- Part of public meetings
- Public relations
- Youth-for-youth events
- Mentor new members
- Outreach to other young people
- Work with other organizations
- Demonstrating
- At youth festivals
- Education sessions at university/schools
- On radio/TV programmes
- Board member
- Produce information, make leaflets
- Staff member
- Trainer
- Fill in questionnaires/be consulted
- Finding donors
- Distributing materials
- Recruiting new youth volunteers
- Street activities
- Writing newsletters
- Working on the Internet page

Key points on ways to involve young people

- Not everyone wants to do the same thing. If there is only one way to participate then people who don't like that method won't be involved.
- There need to be options with high levels of involvement and with low levels.
- Many different ways to be involved need to be offered.

From IPPF European Network Workshop on Participation, March 2005.

Ways to make boards more youth friendly

Representation

- Always have more than one young person.
- Be clear whether they are being asked to represent themselves or other young people.

Insight from a young person's viewpoint – young person as expert.

Can change views on young people in general.

OR

To present other young people's views – much more pressure and need to ensure you have support for them to meet with other young people, to take views from them and report back. Can't do this without support.

Pre-meeting support

- With staff or board member to go through the papers – discuss, clarify, find out other young people's views, decide what issues to raise.
- Ensure the representative has access to computers, printing etc.
- Make sure meetings are planned in advance and not changed.

Support during the meeting

- Equal voting rights.
- Keep papers for the meeting brief or have a summary attached to them.
- Try to create a relaxed atmosphere.
- Provide slots on the agenda for young people to raise issues.
- Send out minutes with decisions on them as soon as possible after the meeting.

Changes from adult board members

- No jargon.
- Planning some social activities between board members and young people.

Training and information

- Induction before:
 - how the meeting runs
 - representation
 - history of issues raised and current work.
- Training sessions.
- Handover between previous and new representatives.
- Regular evaluation of how things are going and what could be improved for the youth board member.

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Developed by Doortje Braeken, Upeka De Silva and Ebrima Saidy.



Participate: The voice of young people in programmes and policies

IPPF is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

Participation is an essential component of our work in young people's sexual and reproductive health, rights and development – this guide will help you to make young people's involvement a reality.

This guide has been developed to motivate Member Associations to make self-assessment an ongoing activity and encourage sustainable dialogue, mutual respect and understanding among young people and adults.

The guide introduces youth participation in decision making and brings out some of the recent definitions and debates on participation. It notes that youth participation should be seen as a continuous process which provides for flexibility and innovation.

It covers four major areas of working with young people: shared values; organizational capacity; selection and recruitment, and sustaining youth participation; and responsibilities and roles of all involved.

Log frames are provided to use as guides to plan ahead – these will help users to focus on creativity, innovation and cost-effectiveness.

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