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**YOUTH MAINSTREAMING AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME

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YOUTH AFFAIRS DIVISION/COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME (CYP)

MAINSTREAMING YOUTH ISSUES A DISCUSSION NOTE

STAKEHOLDER MEETING, 3 APRIL 2008
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT, MARLBOROUGH HOUSE



Mainstreaming is not just about recruiting young people as volunteers, interns and junior staff members. It is about a deeper transformation that makes them central in the work of the organization. An organization that has engaged in the process of mainstreaming of youth will recognize that young people are not just an add-on to programmes and social interventions. **Y**oung people stop being just a target group or beneficiaries, they become integral to the process of finding solutions and become part of implementation solutions. By accepting this formulation, we must also accept that our organizations cannot stay the same. This requires us to develop creative strategies and be open to learning new ways of doing things. This may be particularly difficult because many organizations have established histories, cultures and leadership styles.

Steve Mokwena, writing in a 2006 CYP publication, *Putting Youth Engagement into Practice*.

This paper is not for circulation.

INTRODUCTION

If it were “year zero” and the Commonwealth Secretariat had no mandate in youth affairs, where would you start? Would you:

a) design a stand-alone youth programme and separate, voluntary fund to support it?

Or

b) also make work with young people an aspect of everything the Commonwealth does, through all its various Divisions, ministerial meetings, and interventions?

The current reality is that we have option a), and this has been so for nearly 35 years. To aim to supplement this with option b) is to aim for what we call “youth mainstreaming”. There has been some movement in this direction with the reform of CYP’s governance structure. From 2008, Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting is set to convene every four years, in alignment with the Secretariat’s project cycle. Youth mainstreaming is built into the Secretariat’s Strategic Plan, as well as the new Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015. As early as November last year, the upcoming Secretary-General stated his intention to pay “particular attention” to women and young people: “To mainstream youth, through education, knowledge and awareness is a huge global challenge.”

Some high-profile work now involves young people as a matter of course, such as Political Affairs Division’s election observer missions. In Gulu, northern Uganda, the CYP is demonstrating that post-conflict work must have breadth, ranging from peacebuilding to livelihoods to HIV/AIDS. At the Uganda CHOGM young people had an unprecedented profile, being involved in a dialogue with Heads of Government in addition to meeting as Commonwealth Youth Forum.

However, it is one thing to have meetings, models and policy decisions, it is another thing to put them into practice on a systematic basis. For many of us, “mainstreaming” means a holistic approach to programming, infused with human rights and results-based management principles. It is also about ear-marking resources. At a time when more than ever is expected of CYP, its pledge collection rate has been in serious decline and this suggests we need to look at alternative funding models.

Above all, youth mainstreaming is not something that any one agency can do on its own. Member governments, their national budgets and their civil society partners, including young people, are the key factors. We offer this discussion paper as a starting point for debate, and look forward to hearing what “youth mainstreaming” means to you.

Dr Fatiha Serour
Director, Youth Affairs Division/CYP

MANDATE

1. Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM)

Meeting in the Bahamas in May 2006, Commonwealth Youth Ministers recognized that “some Youth Ministries are under resourced and not optimally placed in government. We therefore call on Heads of Governments to, where appropriate, increase resource allocations for youth development to enable the ministries to more effectively lead the multi-sectoral youth mainstreaming approach to youth development and empowerment”.

2. Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE)

Commonwealth Youth Ministers also endorsed the new Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015 (PAYE) later endorsed by the 2007 Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) which states:

“A rights-based approach to youth development involves the following elements:

- Express linkage to rights
- Accountability to stakeholders
- Empowerment
- Participation and
- Non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups.

All Commonwealth Governments have committed themselves to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, and the work of the Commonwealth is geared to assist them in doing so. By extending the PAYE to 2015, there is commitment by governments and the Commonwealth Secretariat to mainstream youth development as a crucial part of this effort.”

DEFINITION

The Youth Affairs Division/Commonwealth Youth Programme uses a definition that has been tried and tested for mainstreaming of various social concerns over the past decade or so. ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 define mainstreaming as:

“The process of assessing the implications (for youth) of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making (youth) concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and social spheres so that (youth) benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”.

Youth mainstreaming is a two-fold strategy. It involves ensuring:

- a. Youth perspectives integrated in policy and project stages in various sectors;
- b. There are specific policies, projects and/or actions aimed at narrowing the gap in specific areas of youth empowerment.

By “reflecting”/addressing/”being sensitive”/”being responsive to” youth issues, we mean:

- a. Involving/engaging young women and men – ensuring their participation in decision-making over policies/projects that affect them.
- b. Assessing the impact of a policy/project/programme targeting young women and men.

RATIONALE

Employing the youth mainstreaming strategies of youth integration and youth empowerment, will significantly contribute to overall improvements in democracy and development. Youth mainstreaming will result in:

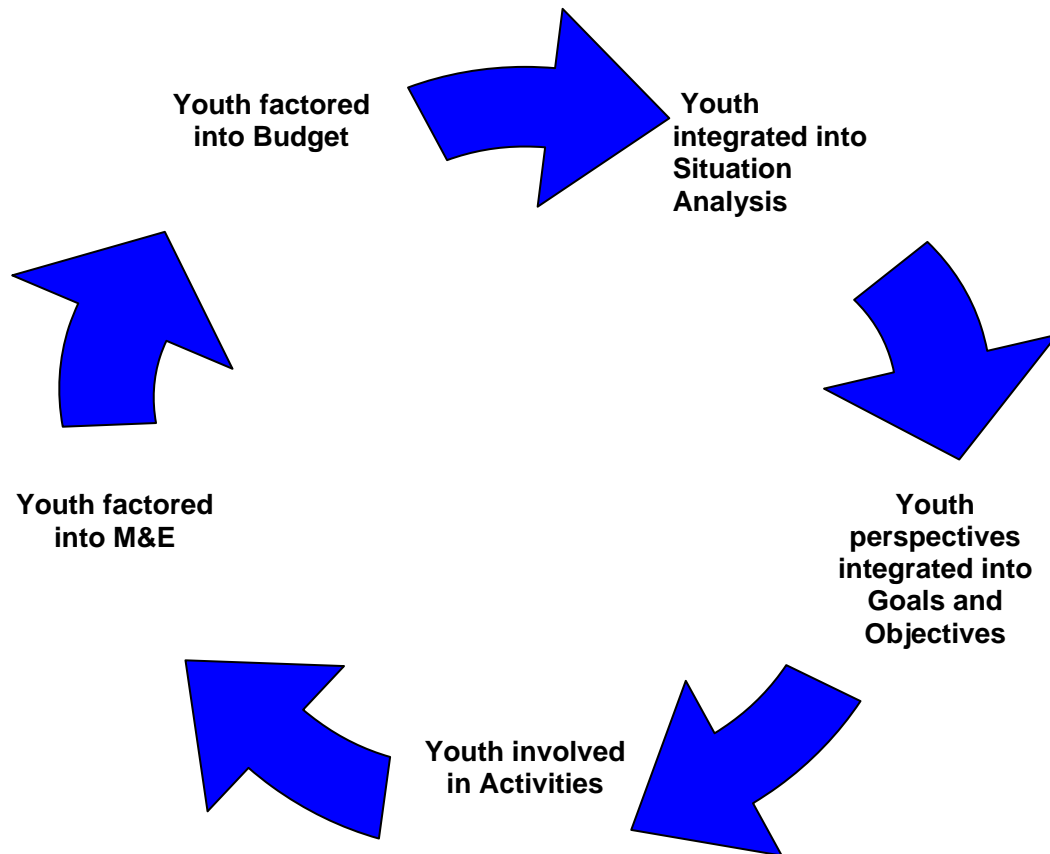
- An integrated approach towards youth issues
- Increased understanding about young people’s issues
- Better utilisation of human resources for the growth and development of a nation
- Renewed respect for the rights of young people to participate in decision-making
- Better prepared young people who will take active roles and assume responsibilities for good governance
- An enabling environment that engages young people in conflict transformation initiatives
- Renewed respect and understanding for government policies/programmes
- The facilitation of inter-generational transfer of knowledge and positive cultural values;
- More Investments in young people and realise the benefits of engaging them as a human resource

It is therefore no surprise that mainstreaming is recommended in PAYE action points:

One: “Develop and implement measures to promote the economic enfranchisement of young people” (All sectors/ministries to allocate at least 25% of their total annual budget in support of youth development mainstreaming);

Three: “Strengthen Ministries, Departments and legal frameworks for youth Affairs”.

BASIC STEPS OF YOUTH MAINSTREAMING



The diagram above represents a quick listing of the essential steps of mainstreaming to ensure interconnectedness between the ‘horizontal” and “vertical” line of operations to integrate a youth perspective in the:

- a. Situation analysis: here young women and men’s condition and position need to be researched. Young people become peer researchers, conduct participatory research, support national assessments, and become key informants in the process. Illustration of this type of research could indicate that (i) some 209 million young people are living on less than US\$ 1/day; (ii) 40 million adolescents are out of secondary education; (iii) 130 million Commonwealth youth are illiterate; (iv) 90 million young people are unemployed. Such data already points to the line ministries/institutions to mainstream a youth perspective, namely education and labour ministries.
- b. Goals & Objectives: taking into account the above examples, this section should aim to address young people’s poverty level, limited education/literacy as well as unemployment.
- c. Policies/programmes: here, once again, actions/activities should seek to achieve the goals/objectives set out above, namely poverty alleviation programmes

(SMEs, etc); literacy and employment creation policies/programmes. Young people should participate in the design and implementation of these programmes to ensure relevance of programmes for effective youth engagement and maximum benefit.

- d. Monitoring & Evaluation: indicators should combine qualitative with quantitative aspects to optimize opportunities for assessing impact of youth related activities in relation, for instance, to education, poverty alleviation and employment creation. Assessment of youth views on progress, outcomes and impact should form an integral part of the M & E plan.
- e. Resources: here specific budget lines as well as staff time should be clearly earmarked to ensure that the above 4 steps (a to d) are implemented.

WHERE ARE WE NOW? A SNAPSHOT OF CYP'S MAINSTREAMING WORK

Commonwealth Youth Ministers recommended that “The Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment will be implemented primarily at national level, relying heavily on mainstreaming of youth issues into national development agendas. This will maximize the use of scarce human and financial to ensure that the cross-cutting nature of the PAYE is realized. Youth ministries and departments must be strengthened as part of this process, to ensure that they can act as lead agencies in research, planning, target-setting, monitoring and evaluation on youth issues”. The Commonwealth Secretariat is, in turn, called upon to:

- Provide technical assistance on mainstreaming youth issues in national development; and
- Mainstream youth affairs within the Secretariat, impacting on a range of CFTC funded projects.

Accordingly the Commonwealth Youth Programme has attempted a few pilot initiatives aimed at integrating a youth perspective within other frameworks, processes and institutions/structures, as illustrated below.

The Commonwealth and UNICEF

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and UNICEF are working together to mainstream youth participation in various development projects worldwide.

UNICEF/CYP training materials have been designed with the aim of involving adolescents and young people in

- Situation analysis
- Project planning
- Project implementation
- Project monitoring and evaluation



Mainstreaming youth in Political Affairs Division

Together with the Political Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat, CYP placed the following young people as members of Commonwealth election observation missions:

Ms Barbara Soetan (UK)	Kenya, December 2007
Mr Ahmed Mahloof (Maldives)	Sierra Leone, July/August 2007
Ms Kareem Payne (Antigua/Barbuda)	Nigeria April 2007
Ms Phyllis Andoh (Ghana)	Zambia, September 2006
Mr John Bennett (Australia),	Zambia, September 2006
Ms Hajra Mungulla (Tanzania)	The Gambia, September 2006
Mr Alberto Vellos (Belize)	Guyana, August 2006
Ms Elaine Howard (Tonga)	Solomon Islands, April 2006
Ms Mulako Mwanamwalye (Zambia)	Uganda, February 2006
Ms Fipe Tuitubou (Fiji)	Mozambique, December 2004
Mr Dev Sindhu (India)	Cameroon, October 2004
Ms Nicolette Balcombe (St Vincent & The Grenadines)	Malawi, May 2004
Dr Ashique Selim (Bangladesh)	Sri Lanka, April 2004
Ms Emmaline Pierre (Grenada)	Nigeria, April 2003
Mr Norman Sigalla (Tanzania)	Nigeria, April 2003
Ms Segametsi Moatlhaping (Botswana)	Kenya, December 2002
Mr Joe Billy Oge (Solomon Islands)	Pakistan, October 2002
Ms Mulako Mwanamwalye (Zambia)	Zimbabwe, Feb/March 2002
Mr Asram Soleyn (St Vincent & Grenadines)	Zimbabwe, Feb/March 2002

Mainstreaming Youth in Gender, Law and Human Rights

CYP has co-organised consultations on Commonwealth Values with Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division/Human Rights Unit. CYP has also produced partnership publications such as

- “An Introduction to Law and Human Rights for Young People in the Commonwealth”
- “Introduction to Citizenship for Young People in the Commonwealth”
- “Global Commitments to Youth Rights”
- “Gender and Relationships: A Practical Action Kit for Young People”
- “C21 Citizens: Young People in a Changing Commonwealth”
- Human rights components of the Diploma in Youth Development Work

In turn, the CYP has made a great deal of progress in mainstreaming gender and human rights into Youth Affairs. Human Rights Unit have been involved in tutor training for the Diploma in Youth Development Work and drafting of Youth Ministers Meeting Communiqués. Rights issues are strongly reflected in its Strategic Plan 2006-2008: “The Rights-Based Approach is necessary to ensure that CYP’s work is participatory, empowering, accountable, and rights-respecting in terms of its priorities and builds on very opportunity to strengthen the culture of human rights as fundamental Commonwealth values.” (CYP SP, p25)

Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihood (YESL): Progress towards poverty alleviation and economic enfranchisement of young people was made through CYP’s

strategic implementation of a number of YESL programmes addressing issues of youth unemployment, poverty and youth participation, including the underlying gender dimension of all these issues. The enabling environment includes the necessary legal infrastructure, as well as the necessary political will and political stability.

The greatest issue is non discrimination in the HIV/AIDS area and our work with the YAPL. Many effective programmes can be linked to in partnership with STPD, UNAIDS and HIV/AIDS Alliance where non discrimination issues and rights are well developed.

Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN): The rights-base approach is already advocated in this area and approved by governments at CYMM 2003 and CYMM 2006. Therefore advocacy is well advanced, particularly through capacity building of the Regional Youth caucus (RYC).

Youth Work Education and Training (YWET): The Diploma programme remains the cornerstone of the CYP programme and already has gender and rights embedded in all its 13 modules of the CYP Diploma in Youth Work, and in particular contains a module on *Gender and Development* and a chapter on Human Rights in the module *Promoting Commonwealth Values*.

Investing in Youth Conference

On 10 September 2007, the Commonwealth Secretariat was host to 170 young entrepreneurs, business leaders, lawyers and policy makers. The Conference: "Investing in Youth" was not only a unique opportunity for delegates and speakers to address poverty and social exclusion issues, using business development as a strategy but also one that re-asserted the need for a multi-sectoral approach to youth empowerment and development. The Secretary General's decision to launch the Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) at this occasion reinforced the need for an integrated approach to youth development as the PAYE represents a multi-sectoral framework for addressing youth concerns. Mr McKinnon stated: "We take an asset-based approach to youth issues. Because young people are assets not liabilities, and because in the years leading up to 2015 they constitute a new generation of unprecedented size. Our prosperity, and the stability of our societies, depends on the life chances of these young people".

In their closing declaration, participants called for investments in enterprise skills in addition to formal education, with a view to prepare students for the world of work. They highlighted a need for investment in healthcare, alongside greater access to credit and agreement on fair trade and debt relief to enable serious inroads into unemployment in the developing world. By calling for investment in education, health care, credit mechanisms coupled with debt relief and fairer trade agreements, young people and other stakeholders re-asserted the need for youth mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming at the Highest Level: The CHOGM Youth Dialogue

On 23 November 2007, an unprecedented dialogue took place between Heads of States and young people at Munyonyo, Kampala. Held before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) retreat, the dialogue involved nine Heads of

Government, eight Commonwealth Youth delegates representing all four regions, the Commonwealth Secretary-general and Deputy Secretary-General, the Minister for Youth & Gender (Uganda), the Director and Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, London and Caribbean offices respectively.

The one-hour session was chaired by President Museveni (Uganda) and included leaders of Dominica, Guyana, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Zambia. The young people warmed to the Heads, especially Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica at just 35 and Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana not much older at 43. Among the issues put forward for discussion were mainstreaming and the need to strengthen youth ministries and agencies such as CYP to fulfill their mandate as stated in the PAYE. Youth participants therefore stressed the (i) centrality of youth participation in national development; (ii) importance of technologies and developmental processes geared towards fighting poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation; (iii) need for investing in young people in line with the PAYE.

The nine Heads of Government conveyed the Dialogue's conclusions in the ensuing CHOGM retreat thus having an impact on the CHOGM communiqué. This affirmed commitment to all issues put forward by young people in addition to noting "the importance of developing national youth policies and also of including young people in all possible aspects of national planning and budgeting".

Mainstreaming Youth in Peace Building: NUYDC

For two decades, violent conflict plagued most parts of the Acholi and Lango sub region in Northern Uganda. These conflicts occurred with various degrees of severity, have had different duration, different root causes and involve different ethnic groups. The most visible negative effect of this conflict was the abduction of children and young people to turn them into foot soldiers, often subjecting them to abuse before forcing them to abuse others. The Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre – Project Hope as it is now referred to by youth in Gulu - was designed to attract this sacrificed generation to a centre of care and learning and help them rebuild their lives and Northern Uganda.

NUYDC is now a Government of Uganda project located in Gulu district, currently supported with 500,000 GBP of start-up funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The project aims to contribute to peace-building in partnership with youth through decent employment, education, skills building and positive living. The activities currently in place include vocational training, agricultural skill development, HIV/AIDS prevention as well as peace building dialogue. The centre has adopted a multi-sectoral approach and, as such, has had to advocate youth mainstreaming with UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO), bilateral agencies (USAID, JICA), civil society (World Vision, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme) as well government structures (Rehabilitation, Reconstruction programme funded by the European Union).



How the completed Centre will look



First harvest of the NUYDC fish ponds, March 2008

WHERE DO WE WANT TO MOVE FORWARD TO? MAINSTREAMING TO BECOME AN “AUTOMATIC” STEP FOR OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Mainstreaming is a strategy that ultimately seeks to ensure that one ‘automatically’ integrates a youth/gender/human rights perspective in one’s programme. To achieve this, one needs to understand, accept, internalise, and endorse/support these respective agendas to effectively operationalise them.

Achieving this ‘automatic’ action would entail (amongst others):

1. Capacity building/training

- a) General sensitisation of leaders and high level managers on the broad concept, rationale and benefits of mainstreaming for a consistent policy and programme framework.
- b) Skills transfer not only on the concept (see para. a) but also the tools for effective results based mainstreaming. This should target programme teams including potential focal points in programme as well as support functions such as finance, HR and IT.

This component of a system-wide approach to mainstreaming could be jointly undertaken by the three programmes (Gender, Human Rights and Youth). Some adjustments in the training programmes would be needed to provide context examples to emphasize specificities.

2. On the job coaching/support

Evidence from the gender mainstreaming efforts over the past decade or so indicates that extensive capacity building (regardless of form and results) has rarely succeeded in an ‘automatic’ mainstreaming process. What such evidence shows, however, is the value of an interpersonal working relationship to work ‘hand-in-hand’ with the Division/officer responsible (or wanting to) for mainstreaming gender/youth/human rights. On the job-coaching is where:

- one can make a difference in advancing mainstreaming; and
- ‘mother’ divisions play a crucial part in ensuring their respective specificity (gender, youth human rights), using their substantive knowledge, experience, style of ‘coaching’, etc.

Effective and results-based coaching will necessitate:

a) Management ‘buy-in’: mother division/section/unit (YAD/gender/HR) needs to engage the director of the sister division (PAD, GIDD...) in the mainstreaming process to ensure her/his support.

b) Human resources: one focal point each from the mother and sister divisions dedicated to working together to ensure that youth/gender/human rights are mainstreamed in the

sister division's programmes. Management 'buy-in' will be reflected here through the designation of a focal point whose JD/work plan dedicates a proportion of such plan to mainstreaming and, as such, should be appraised on results.

c) Time: focal points need to be allowed time to undertake this function. Management buy-in is therefore very important.

d) Regular communication on new initiatives for the focal points to ensure that a youth/gender/human rights perspective is integrated (where applicable).

3. Monitoring

In general, mainstreaming has faced many challenges because of the failure to:

Understand that it is not the specific action/programme (youth, gender, human rights programmes) or the other strategy (mainstreaming a youth/gender/human rights perspective in other policies and programmes) that can achieve the ultimate goal of such perspectives being automatically integrated from the beginning. To achieve this would require a combination of the specific (targeted policies/programmes to narrow a gap in gender equality, youth participation/development and human rights) with systematic mainstreaming efforts to craft this 'automatic' approach. An achievement of the latter will gradually make the specific approach obsolete.

Monitor the extent to which sister divisions include a youth/gender/human rights perspective in their situation analysis, goals/objectives, activities, and monitoring plan. Here, YAD is working with pilot divisions where it plans on systematic interpersonal working relationship and coaching to advance mainstreaming of a youth perspective and review progress on a regular basis. YAD intends to also document the lessons to support similar efforts in other divisions.

4. Clear budget allocations at:

Source (mother division): One of the elements that discourage mainstreaming efforts is source and level of funds as there is a tendency to believe that (substantial) new funds have to be earmarked for this process. In fact, what is needed is a prioritising of programme areas and, if a mother division determines mainstreaming as a significant part of its programme, it should be able to allocate some funds for this process be it for coaching, brainstorming sessions and/or production of materials. This thinking process will clearly demonstrate that what is needed most is staff time to work with others and support them in their mainstreaming efforts.

Sister division: Similarly, what the sister division really needs is (i) staff time; (ii) a small proportion of their total budget to support the mainstreaming effort if they have identified this as part of their goals/objectives.

ADDITIONAL “TIPS” FOR SPEARHADING AND/OR REINFORCING MAINSTREAMING

“Everybody said that something should be done. Everybody pointed to someone else who should do it. In the end nobody did anything because everybody expected that someone else should be doing it.” How to avoid the “everywhere and nowhere” syndrome, and pin down responsibility? A meeting of CYP Africa in 2007 decided on a number of strategic principles for achieving youth mainstreaming:

1. Enlist political champions: Head of State, Minister, Parliamentary Committee on Youth, All parliamentary portfolio committees, Inter ministerial committees, local government.
2. Enlist Civil Society champions: Youth Councils, Youth Serving Agencies, Technical working group on youth.
3. Have a stand alone policy positioned where it is most likely to have impact, and make sure that this is harmonised with every other relevant policy. The engagement of young people must begin at the stage of formulation stage of this policy.
4. Make sure the policy covers internal workplace practices as well as service delivery: the organisation concerned must be able to lead by example.
5. Mainstreaming must inform priorities and choice of programmes. It should generate a plan of action rather than a wish-list.
6. Impacting on the budget means conducting a youth audit of the budget and budget consultations.
7. The management system must have structures: an apex structure located where it can play a coordinating role; focal points that fan throughout. Focal points should have clout and a mandate. They need to be working at policy, management and local implementation levels.
8. Mainstreaming requires targets, indicators and time-frames. They should be established by stakeholders rather than left to consultants, and they should be harmonised with national development plans.
9. Mainstreaming should be built into job descriptions, performance evaluation, HR reward systems. It should avoid reliance on the passion and unwaged work of youth champions.
10. There should be sharing of experiences on policies across different countries, especially neighbouring countries.

MAINSTREAMING CHECKLISTS

Mainstreaming at project design stage – a check-list

1. Are young women and men part of the target population?
2. Will the situation analysis disaggregate data by age-group as well as gender, socio-economic, ethnic group etc?
3. Have existing youth structures (e.g. National Youth Councils, youth NGOs and youth clubs, secondary schools, colleges) been consulted as part of background research?
4. Will young people be empowered to conduct and support the Situation Analysis?
5. Will young people's views be canvassed and integrated when setting goals and objectives?
6. Do young people fall under the general goals and objectives?
7. Are there youth-specific goals and objectives?
8. What are the youth-specific line items in the budget? Will control over any of the budget be shared with/delegated to young people?
9. What are the youth-specific activities likely to be?
10. How is flexibility built into the project design, so that young people's decision-making will be given expression?
11. What are the youth-specific performance indicators?
12. How will young people be involved in monitoring and evaluation?

Youth participation in the project - a check-list

(From CYP/UNICEF Participation Toolkit)

1. Is it voluntary? Real participation is voluntary, not forced.
2. Is it accessible? Too often only urban or better-off young people are involved. Too often only the boys get to speak.
3. Is it respectful? Real participation takes place in a climate of respect, where no one is laughed at or ignored.
4. What's the point of it? Unless all participants have tackled this question themselves, they will see the exercise as confusing or a waste of time.

5. Who wants it? Real participation is based around issues that young people themselves care about and need to give their attention.
6. Does it make a difference? Real participation is where young people contribute and have real influence on the outcomes.
7. Is the language right? Real participation requires young people to feel competent in the language and vocabulary spoken.
8. Are the participants prepared? If older adults have all the information whereas the young people are pulled in at short notice results will be poor. Young people need to build their skills and confidence to participate effectively.
9. Is it open-ended? Real participation allows young people to follow ideas through – it isn't all decided in advance by the older adults.
10. Is it honest? Is everyone being honest with each other, as partners? Are they being honest with themselves?
11. Is it safe? Real participation takes every effort to ensure participants are not endangered by what they do or say.
12. What happens afterwards? Real participation means people are clear about who is responsible for follow-up actions.