

Build your team

You will need a strong team in place to successfully run your intervention with adolescents. This means preparing your own organisation - or partner organisation - to introduce the approaches in the Adolescent Kit, and selecting and training facilitators to work directly with adolescent girls and boys through the Adolescent Circles approach.

1. Prepare the implementing organisation

You may be working with your own organisation or with a partner organisation (such as a local or international NGO) to introduce the activities and approaches in the Adolescent Kit. Either way, you need to make sure that the organisation is strong enough to effectively use the guidance, tools and supplies in the Adolescent Kit with and for adolescents. A capable organization has both male and female staff with experience working with adolescents who can adapt the tools and activities in the Adolescent Kit to the needs and priorities of adolescents in your programming context.

Refer to the **Checklist for a strong implementing organisation** tool to review the capacity of your organisation/ partner organisation to implement interventions with the Adolescent Kit.

Take time to prepare and train staff in your organisation/partner organisation so that they fully understand the approaches in the Adolescent Kit. This includes everything from understanding and using the Ten Key Competencies and Ten Key Approaches, to planning activity phases and sessions with and for adolescents, to setting up safe spaces and managing supplies. Work closely with facilitators and your entire team as you set up and run your intervention, and be ready to step in if anyone needs help or encounters challenges.

2. Identify facilitators

Your facilitators are the key members of your team. They are the volunteers or staff who will work directly with adolescents, and use the guidance, tools and supplies in the Adolescent Kit to plan activity phases and sessions that address adolescents' needs and interests.

If you are starting a new programme or intervention, you may be training facilitators to

What does a facilitator do?

Facilitators are responsible for planning and running structured but flexible sessions with adolescents to support their psychosocial wellbeing, learning, and positive and active engagement with the world around them.

The Foundation Guidance, Facilitators' Guidance and Activity Box are resources that facilitators can use as they support adolescents in forming circles, and plan and carry out positive activities based on adolescents' interests and goals.

Programme Coordinators using the Adolescent Kit can support facilitators in using the guidance, resources and activities offered in the Kit by:

- ▶ Reading and understanding the Foundation Guidance, Facilitators Guidance, and the materials in the Activity Box;
- ▶ Working with facilitators to identify which resources from the Kit they may use, along with any additional materials;
- ▶ Preparing facilitators to use those resources effectively in leading positive activities for adolescents; and
- ▶ Providing ongoing training and support to facilitators.

use the resources in the Adolescent Kit as they begin. If you are introducing the Adolescent Kit into an ongoing programme, you may be training existing staff or volunteers in your organisation/ partner organisation to use the guidance, tools, activities and/or supplies in the Adolescent Kit. For example, you may be working with teachers who will be using the Adolescent Kit in the classroom, or with child-friendly space staff who want to use the tools and activities to focus more on adolescents in their work.

In any case, take time to identify people who are interested and available to facilitate activities with adolescents. Try to find trusted, respected people who will be able to interact with your targeted adolescents in a participatory way, and who have the required skills, values and experience to take on the role. Staff or volunteers who are already trained and experienced

with adolescents or younger children may be available and ready to learn and use the new approaches offered in the Adolescent Kit. You may also consider other people in the community with relevant experience who can be prepared as facilitators through a basic training course in which they are also oriented to the approaches supported by the Adolescent Kit. (Adolescents themselves may wish to be involved in selecting suitable facilitators who they feel comfortable with).

As you identify potential facilitators to work with adolescents, consider the following questions:

- ▶ Are there staff or volunteers within the implementing organisation or entry point programme who work with children, adolescents or youth?
- ▶ Are there other adults, youth or adolescents in the community with qualifications, training or experience who could facilitate activities with adolescents? These could include youth volunteers, community mobilizers, teachers, teachers' assistants, coaches, artists, art teachers, musicians or storytellers.
- ▶ What training have they already had? What additional training do they need to work effectively with adolescents?

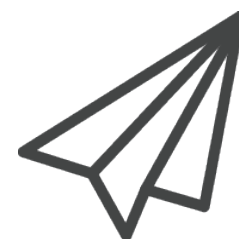
Try to select a team of facilitators that includes a mix of men, women and age groups, who represent the different cultural or ethnic backgrounds of the community – and are as proportionally diverse as your targeted adolescents. In particular, make sure that there are both male and female facilitators available to run separate girls and boys groups (where appropriate).¹

3. Train facilitators

All facilitators, even those with qualifications and experience, should receive training on the specific methods in the Adolescent Kit. Before interventions begin, organize a Training of Trainers (ToT) to introduce the Adolescent Circles approach and to make sure that facilitators understand their roles and responsibilities.

Adapt the training resources in the Adolescent Kit and refer to the **Facilitators' Guidance** to design your ToT training. Make sure that you include guidance on:

- ▶ Setting up and maintaining **safe, welcoming spaces** for adolescents, and creating a positive atmosphere for adolescents to express themselves creatively, have fun, experiment, learn new skills and make friends;
- ▶ Supporting adolescents to develop **competencies** – knowledge, attitudes and skills -- that can help them to cope with stressful circumstances, build healthy relationships, learn new skills and engage positively with their communities;
- ▶ Forming Adolescent Circles and planning and running structured sessions with adolescents using the activities, tools and supplies in the Adolescent Kit;²
- ▶ **Organising adolescents in a way that makes them feel comfortable and safe**, for example,



What is a facilitator's role?

Facilitators plan, lead and support activity sessions with and for adolescents. Facilitators create a structured but flexible environment in which all adolescents actively, voluntarily participate in activities. To be effective in their roles facilitators should:

- ▶ Plan activities that support adolescents in developing and using **competencies** and adapt plans based on adolescents' interests and priorities;
- ▶ Demonstrate good listening skills, empathy and encouragement;
- ▶ Model positive behaviour and serve as role models for adolescents;
- ▶ Respect and include all adolescents, and support them equally;
- ▶ Work with adolescents to have fun, learn and cope with challenges;
- ▶ Connect adolescents to any additional support that they need beyond what is offered in your programme.

¹ In some cultures it may be inappropriate for male facilitators to run activities with adolescent girls (or young female facilitators to do so with boys), and may create a barrier to adolescents' participation.

² This is described in detail in the Facilitators' Guidance.

What is not part of the facilitators' role?

In the Adolescent Kit guidance materials, the term "facilitators" refers to staff or volunteers who plan and lead activity sessions with adolescents.

Facilitators are not counsellors or case workers. Unless they have specific training and any certification required in your programming context, they should not attempt to hold individual or group counselling sessions, or open-ended discussions about sensitive topics. They should not diagnose or draw conclusions about adolescents' conditions or situations or intervene directly in their family or personal lives without support from a trained expert.

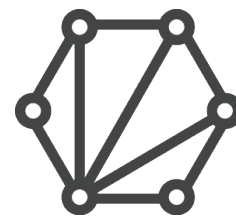
Programme coordinators should support facilitators in recognizing the positive role they can play by planning and leading safe, enjoyable, challenging, adolescent-centred activities. They should also ensure that facilitators can and do recognize when adolescents need additional support, and connect them with the appropriate available resources and services.

grouping them by gender or by age, and making sure there is a ratio of at least one facilitator to 25 adolescents;

- ▶ Working with adolescents in a participatory way that allows them to explore activities and topics that interest them, to **learn through doing** and to take the lead - rather than preaching or lecturing;
- ▶ Finding ways to **allow all adolescents to participate equally in activities**, including the most vulnerable adolescent girls and boys (e.g. those with disabilities or from marginalized ethnic or religious backgrounds) Refer to the **Creating positive and inclusive ways of working** tool.
- ▶ Following reporting and referral procedures when adolescents' health, safety, protection or wellbeing is at risk, and



connecting them to the appropriate support or services.



You should also provide facilitators with guidance in the technical areas that form the foundation for the Adolescent Kit – such as psychosocial support, child protection, life skills and peacebuilding. Most importantly, take time to go through the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Facilitators' Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct, and to discuss practical details around work schedules and salary (if any).

Refer to the **Sample Code of Conduct for facilitators** tool.

Your ToT on the Adolescent Kit does not replace other essential training for facilitators! Make sure that facilitators are trained in other key standards and principles will help them to interact with adolescents in a way that protects the adolescents' rights. Refer to **Key standards and guidelines** tool

4. Supervise and support facilitators

Once interventions start, supervise and support facilitators. Make sure that they apply their training, Code of Conduct and the approaches in the Adolescent Kit with adolescents. Meet with them regularly to discuss their work.

Provide facilitators with tools to evaluate their own performance, to identify areas that need strengthening and to ask for any additional support they may need. Encourage them to ask adolescents for feedback, and to work together with adolescent girls and boys to improve interventions with the Adolescent Kit.

Refer to the: **Checklist facilitator self-evaluation** tool, **Running an adolescent feedback session** tool, **Great Facilitator checklist** tool

Encourage regular one-to-one supervisory meetings so that facilitators have a private and confidential space to discuss any challenges or difficult situations they face. Make sure facilitators know when to ask for help, and that they feel comfortable raising urgent concerns – for example, if an adolescent reports abuse or voices suicidal thoughts.

Refer to the: **Responding to child protection concerns** tool and the **Supporting adolescents in distress** tool.

Bear in mind that facilitators themselves may have been through difficult and challenging circumstances that could impact their wellbeing and their work with adolescents. Pay attention if they demonstrate signs of stress, and help them to find ways to manage their own wellbeing by:

- ▶ Training them to identify signs of their own stress;
- ▶ Providing them with practical strategies for coping with their stress;
- ▶ Fostering a sense of **team** and mutual support by holding regular meetings where facilitators can share information, challenges and concerns;
- ▶ Encouraging facilitators to support each other, either informally or by setting up a peer-support system.

Monitor and adapt

As you move forward with your intervention, be prepared to adapt your team. For example, you may need to replace, add or remove facilitators or to work with a different partner if your intervention expands or gets smaller, or staff and volunteers leave. You may need to update your training as new issues arise for adolescents, or the humanitarian situation changes. Try to be as responsive as possible to the needs of adolescents and to build a team that is equally flexible.