

TOOL: Supporting adults to work with adolescents¹

Use the tool below to support adults on your steering committee to work constructively with adolescents. Refer to **Involving adolescents in management and oversight** tool.

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Remember	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Adolescents' participation in decision-making should be meaningful, and their views should be taken seriously. (Too often adolescent girls and boys are only consulted in a token manner).▶ Adults may need to give up some of their power and adapt the way they work in order to collaborate with adolescents. For example, they may need to change the kind of language they use, and the way that they run meetings.
Before meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Invest time in preparing adults to work with adolescents▶ Involve adults in deciding the most appropriate way to include adolescents in meetings, decision making and planning. Decide how exactly girls and boys will feed into key decisions.▶ Make sure that adults understand what is expected of them, and what adolescents' roles will be.▶ Allow adults to voice any concerns, doubts or questions they may have about working with adolescents.▶ Emphasize the benefits of involving adolescents in their work and remind them that it is adolescent girls' and boys' right to take part in decision-making about matters that affect them.²▶ Remind adults that adolescent boys and girls can gain valuable skills, experience and confidence from participating in decision-making and governance.▶ Manage expectations about what adolescents can and cannot do.▶ Encourage adults to provide adolescents with clear information about actions and decisions that need to be taken in advance of meetings.
During meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Encourage adults to:▶ Explain clearly to adolescents how and when they should give their views, and how they will be taken into account in the decision-making process▶ Listen to adolescents, encourage them to share their views, and answer their questions openly and honestly▶ Include adolescents in discussions about issues that are relevant and of interest to them – and that they can contribute to▶ Try to make meetings more fun and engaging▶ Thank adolescents for sharing their views and explain to them what they can expect in terms of feedback▶ Celebrate their achievements (when appropriate)

¹ This tool was adapted from content in Lyford Jones, Hannah, *Putting Children at the Centre: A practical guide to children's participation*, Save the Children UK, London, 2010.

² Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that it is every child's right to take part in decision-making about matters that affect him or her and to have their views taken into account.

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Don't

- ▶ Don't let adults:
- ▶ Reject the validity of adolescents views, or refuse to take them seriously
- ▶ Fail to give adolescents adequate time and information to prepare for meetings and to consult with their peers on key decisions
- ▶ Fail to give adolescents enough time and space to provide their recommendations and views at meetings
- ▶ Ask adolescents questions on issues that are irrelevant to them or are too difficult for them to respond to
- ▶ Neglect to give adolescents regular feedback and updates about how their views have been taken into account, or to explain which of their recommendations have been acted on and which have not (and why).