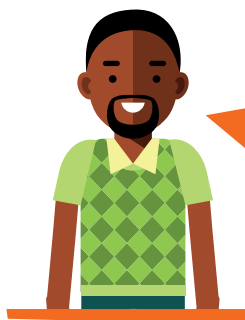


TIP SHEET FOR ADULTS ON ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH* PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACY EVENTS

*Note: Tips below refer to adolescents but are intended to cover both adolescent and youth participation.



Introduction: This tip sheet provides suggestions for adults to support safe and meaningful participation of adolescents and youth in advocacy events, focusing on what staff should do before, during and after the main advocacy event. A complementary tip sheet for adolescents and youth participating in advocacy events is available.

These tip sheets are part of a series designed in collaboration with adolescents and youth to support their meaningful participation in specific activities. The tip sheets build upon UNICEF's 'Engaged and Heard!' guidelines for adolescent participation and

civic engagement to ensure adolescents have space (opportunity and information) to freely voice their opinions to relevant adults (audience) who seriously consider and act upon their views (influence) [Lundy's model].

Suggestions are guided by nine basic requirements developed by the [Committee on the Rights of the Child \(2009\)](#) to ensure ethical and effective participation of adolescents that is: i) transparent and informative, ii) voluntary, iii) respectful, iv) relevant, v) adolescent-friendly, vi) inclusive, vii) supported by training, viii) safe and sensitive to risk, and ix) accountable.

BEFORE advocacy events

✓ Identify safe ways to engage adolescents as partners from the start!

- Include adolescents in agenda-setting and design of the advocacy event to be more relevant, maximizing opportunities to enhance the active roles, contributions and influence of adolescents.

✓ Assign a liaison to connect with adolescent participants and provide regular communication and coordination.

✓ Ensure inclusive, equitable selection processes that enable voluntary participation of adolescents who are most affected by the issue(s) being addressed.

- Support representation and participation of adolescents of different genders, ages, abilities, ethnicities and backgrounds, with proactive efforts to include adolescents from marginalized groups.
- Encourage adolescents to nominate and elect representatives from their networks, if appropriate.

✓ Adequately budget for adolescent participation and representation, including but not limited to costs of preparatory and follow-up meetings, information-sharing, translation costs, in-person transport or chaperone-related costs, accommodation, and support costs (e.g., for additional needs of adolescents, such as those with disabilities and/or children, and costs of mobile airtime and internet data for adolescents). Ensure provisions for expenses/funds to be paid upfront to adolescents.

✓ Include adolescent representatives in mainstream events to converse with influential decision makers, rather than organizing parallel or side events for adolescents. For example, support inclusion of adolescent representatives in the preparatory committee and country delegations and as panellists or speakers in high-level events.

✓ Plan sufficient time for quality preparations with adolescent representatives, especially for international advocacy events. This may require planning six months in advance to ensure transparent election of adolescents, consultation and preparations with the constituency they represent, and sufficient time to secure passports, visas, flights, etc.

✓ Develop and share information in a transparent manner with adolescents about the background of the advocacy event, its purpose and timing, the intended role of adolescent representatives, intended audience, and potential benefits for adolescents, as well as how information will be used and how relevant costs will be covered (e.g., transport, food, refreshment, phone and internet access costs, and compensation).

✓ Share information in clear, accessible formats and local languages that participating adolescents and their parents/guardians can understand.

✓ Avoid having English language as a criterion for nomination of adolescent representatives, as this is a barrier to inclusive participation. Encourage everyone to use clear and easy-to-understand language, and support translation and interpretation (including sign language), if required.

✓ Respect adolescents' own time commitments to study, work, leisure, etc., and plan preparatory meetings and advocacy activities at times that suit them. Ensure clear communication about timelines of agreed-upon tasks.

✓ Offer training for adolescents on [advocacy](#) and ensure that adolescent representatives have time to prepare and practise their key advocacy messages before the event. Give adolescents space and time to develop and adapt their advocacy messages to their specific audience(s) and to practise effective ways to share their stories and messages (*see tip sheet for adolescents on adolescent participation in advocacy events*).

- ✓ **Help participants feel more comfortable.** Wherever possible, help adolescent advocates visit and get familiar with the venue or online platform for key advocacy events (*see tip sheet on online engagement*).
- ✓ **Prepare adults** (organizers, key duty bearers) to respect adolescents, ensuring attitudes and language (verbal and body language) that demonstrate readiness to listen to adolescents and to take their views seriously.
- ✓ **Ensure participation is safe and sensitive to risk.** In collaboration with adolescents and the advocacy event organizers, assess and minimize risks and ensure child safeguarding policies and procedures are systematically applied. Especially for events in venues far from home, this includes:
 - Ensuring voluntary participation, with informed assent from adolescents and informed consent from parents/guardians, and ensuring individuals are aware that they can opt out if they change their mind.
 - Collecting necessary medical information about adolescents (e.g., about asthma, EpiPen needs, or COVID needs/expectations) and ensuring protection of personal information.
 - Ensuring realistic expectations of adolescents about the advocacy opportunities.
 - Allocating a child safeguarding focal point and preparing adult chaperones to consider adolescents' physical and emotional needs. Chaperones and facilitators must sign a written statement of expected responsibilities prior to the event/trip.
 - Providing logistics and reimbursement for safe travel and accessible safe accommodation arrangements¹.
 - Providing health and travel insurance.
 - Offering clear guidance for safe travel.
 - Planning for emergencies: lost person, health emergency, natural disaster, etc.
 - Identifying venues that are accessible to adolescents with disabilities (e.g., ramps, handrails, accessible toilets) and that provide sufficient space for the planned advocacy activities.
 - Ensuring adolescents know their rights and know who to report to if they feel uncomfortable, unsafe or unwell. Provide them with a short list of key contact numbers in case of emergency.

DURING advocacy events

- ✓ **Ensure sufficient logistic and administrative support** for safe accommodation, travel, access to facilities during advocacy events, and leisure/free time after sessions. Ensure adolescents know who their liaison is for any queries during the event and make sure adolescents reach home safely.
- ✓ **Create and support opportunities for adolescent representatives to meet and converse with influential adults** during the advocacy event.
- ✓ **Support adolescents in expressing their views, stories and priority messages** as speakers, panellists, young journalists, members of 'declaration/final document drafting committee,' etc.
- ✓ **Consider using creative arts, drama and other interactive methods** determined by adolescents' expressed preferences to present their key advocacy messages.
- ✓ **Ensure respect for the diversity of adolescents' experiences and perspectives** that may differ based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual identity or other factors.
- ✓ **Ensure accountable participation:**
 - Create space and modalities for adults to respond to adolescents' messages and requests.
 - Make sure all parties agree on next steps and have mutual expectations.
- ✓ **Leverage the media** to amplify adolescent perspectives and messages. Support voluntary and safe participation of adolescents in press conferences, interviews, and use of social media and messaging apps (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or U-Report). Develop hashtags for social media and encourage their consistent use.
- ✓ **Prioritize safeguarding and decision-making** that are informed by the views and best interests of adolescents (*see previous considerations to ensure participation is safe and sensitive to risk*).

AFTER advocacy events to enhance accountable participation

- ✓ **Reflect and learn with adolescents** about their participation in the advocacy event and its impact. What was successful? What was unsuccessful or challenging? What could be done differently next time? Why?
- ✓ **Ensure dissemination of advocacy event report(s) to adolescents** in accessible formats and languages. Wherever possible, ensure that adolescent representatives can contribute to and/or review the report(s) to ensure their perspectives receive due attention.
- ✓ **Encourage adolescent representatives to share feedback with peers** in their constituency and other allies about the advocacy event, its results and next steps.
- ✓ **Ensure policymakers/practitioners share feedback with adolescents** about the extent to which they have acted upon their messages. This may require follow-up calls, meetings or emails.
- ✓ **Support follow-up action.** Wherever possible, explore opportunities for longer-term follow-up and investment in collaborative and adolescent-led advocacy.

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1. For international events, this may require timely applications to secure passports/identity papers, visas, flights, etc.