

# TIP SHEET FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH\* ON PARTICIPATION IN CAMPAIGNS

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



**Introduction:** This tip sheet provides suggestions for adolescents and youth to support meaningful participation in campaigns. A campaign is when people work in an organized and active way towards a particular goal, usually a social or political goal. A campaign is often run over a period of time and may use different activities to try to influence change.

This tip sheet is one 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 iv) accountable.

## BEFORE a campaign is launched

- ✓ **Identify issues that are most relevant and important to you.** Think about what you most want to change and improve in your school/community/society.
  - Share new and innovative ideas to mobilize and engage your peers, exploring potential options to use cultural art forms or digital media to express views, ideas and priority messages.
- ✓ **Ask questions to find out more.**
  - Identify different ways that adolescents can be part of the campaign, with some that require minimal time contributions and others that offer longer-term engagement for those who have more time and interest.
- If you are invited to be part of a campaign, ask questions to determine if it is relevant to you and your interests. Consider the question, how will I benefit from taking part?
- Make sure you have clear information about the potential roles of adolescents before and during the campaign to inform your voluntary participation.
- Remember to ask about logistics and expenses. (For example, how will travel costs or internet costs be covered?)
- ✓ **Identify ways to support inclusive participation, involving marginalized adolescents who are most affected** by the campaign topic and reaching adolescents of different genders, ages, abilities, and backgrounds. You may want to consider:
  - Encouraging the organizers to invite representatives from other marginalized groups and adolescent-led organizations (especially those who represent different gender, ability, race, ethnic, sexual identity and age groups).
  - Suggesting alternative ways to create inclusion (e.g., via video messaging or online participation).
  - Consulting with your wider network and/or other adolescents from different backgrounds to help bring different perspectives.
- ✓ **Share your ideas and suggestions to help design the campaign** in ways that respond to your interests and needs. For example:
  - ✓ **Use opportunities to gather views from your peers to be a better representative.** If you are a representative who will speak on behalf of your peers, ask adults to help you schedule meetings with your peers (especially those most affected by the campaign issue).
  - ✓ **Research and plan the campaign.** Work collaboratively with adolescents and adults to:
    - Analyse causes of the prioritized problem. For example, use a problem tree to explore the underlying and root causes and to identify how the problem affects children, adolescents, families and society.
    - Propose solutions and identify allies. Identify practical actions people can take to address the problem and reach out to supporters who are likely to join your campaign.
    - Identify which stakeholders you most want to influence through your campaign. Think about ways to tailor your campaign message(s) to your specific audience(s).
    - Make realistic campaign goals and plan activities. Create a campaign logo and slogan. Identify 'quick wins'—actions that those with decision-making power can quite easily take to improve the situation and that can be built upon by asking for bigger actions.

- ✓ **Seek support and/or training for campaign roles and activities** (if needed). For example, you may request training on public speaking (see tip sheet on public speaking) or online safety (see tip sheet on online engagement).
- ✓ **In collaboration with campaign organizers, assess potential risks and discuss and prioritize ways to remain safe.** Make sure that you:
  - Receive updated information about the campaign and that it is regularly shared with your parents/guardians, if appropriate. If you are under 18 years old, you will need informed consent from your parents/guardians to participate.
  - Assess risks associated with potential campaign activities (e.g., rally, petition, boycott, theatre, or radio programme) and plan ways to reduce risks. If a campaign activity is considered

harmful for adolescents, identify ways to minimise harm or consider an alternative safer activity.

- Have realistic expectations and are prepared for some disappointment if the planned changes are not gained within expected time frames.
- Know your rights and who to report to if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or unwell.
- Have safe ways to travel to and from campaign activities.
- Have considered privacy and safety for offline and online engagement (see tip sheet on online engagement).
- Carry contact details of the project liaison and emergency services if you are away from home.

## DURING the campaign

- ✓ **Mobilize your peers.** There is power in numbers. Work with your peers and allies to support your cause. Connect with different local groups to become part of a wider campaign (see tip sheet on networking).
- ✓ **Share and use creative approaches**, such as cultural art forms and/or digital media to mobilize supporters and share your stories and priority messages.
- ✓ **Identify opportunities to meet and converse with influential people** during the campaign.
- ✓ Ask adults to respond to adolescents' messages and requests and to share action commitments.

- ✓ **If safe and relevant, use the media to spread your campaign messages.** If it is safe enough, get involved in press conferences and interviews with journalists. Use social media (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube) and social media influencers to share your key messages, stories and slogans. Use consistent hashtags when applicable.
- ✓ **Prioritize efforts to stay safe and well.** Inform a trusted adult if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or unwell. Request the support you need from accompanying adult(s). (For online safety, see tip sheet on online engagement.)

## AFTER the campaign to enhance accountable participation

- ✓ **Follow up and ask relevant, influential adults for feedback** regarding how they have responded to your campaign messages.
- ✓ **Contribute to any reports.** If a campaign report is being developed, identify ways you can contribute to ensure the final report includes adolescents' perspectives.
- ✓ **Share feedback with peers and allies** who joined the campaign. Develop and share clear and accessible campaign reports.

- ✓ **Reflect and learn** from your participation in the campaign. What was successful? What was unsuccessful? What could be done differently next time? Why? How can you use this experience to positively influence issues that are important to you and your peers?
- ✓ **Discuss and seek support for follow-up campaigns.** Discuss ideas with your peers and share concrete follow-up campaign ideas with adults to see if they can support your initiatives.

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