

# TIP SHEET FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH\* ON PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND INTERVIEWS

\*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 public speaking and interviews. Public speaking is when someone performs a speech to a group of listeners, usually to a live audience. An interview is a structured conversation during which one person (the interviewer) asks another person (the interviewee) questions, and the person being interviewed shares their responses.

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 public speaking or interviews

### ✓ Ask questions to find out more.

- If you are invited to be a public speaker or to give an interview, ask questions to determine if the opportunity 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 as public speakers or interviewees 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 interview or public speech topic and reaching out to adolescents of different genders, ages, abilities, and backgrounds. You may want to consider:

- Encouraging organizers to invite representatives from other marginalized groups.
- Suggesting alternative ways to create inclusion (for example, via video messaging or online participation of adolescents).
- Consulting with your wider network and/or other adolescents from different backgrounds to help bring different perspectives.
- Giving other adolescent representatives a chance to represent their peers if you have already been a public speaker/interviewee.

- Promoting election of representatives from adolescent-led groups, with opportunities for diverse representation (considering gender, age, race, ethnicity, abilities, etc.).

### ✓ 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 issues being discussed.

- Discuss and prioritize your most important issues/problems/solutions.
- Explore and analyse the causes of the prioritized problem and potential solutions.
- Identify which stakeholders you most want to influence through your speech/interview.
- Think about how you can tailor your main messages to your specific audience. (Aim for between one and four key messages).
- Identify real stories that illustrate your priority and message(s), as people connect and are often more ready to act when they hear persuasive and emotive stories.

### ✓ Seek support and/or training to prepare as a public speaker or interviewee.

- Practise your speech until you feel comfortable. Use role play, record yourself with your phone, or use other methods to practise in your role as a speaker. Seek feedback.

- If relevant, watch online videos about public speaking skills to help you feel more comfortable to speak publicly.
- Talk to the person who will interview you and discuss the questions that you will be asked, or at least agree on the first question.
- If you cannot connect with the interviewer beforehand, prepare answers to challenging questions that might come up in the interview.
- Be sure to conclude your interview or public speech with the main key message you have for the audience.
- ✓ **In collaboration with organizers, assess potential risks and discuss and prioritize ways to keep safe** during the public speech or interview. Make sure that you:
  - Receive information about the conference and that it is 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.
  - Know your rights and know who to report to if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or unwell.
  - Consider your privacy and safety for offline and online engagement (see *tip sheet on online engagement*).
- ✓ Have clear information about any travel or accommodation arrangements.
- ✓ Carry contact details of the project liaison and emergency services if you are away from home.

## DURING the public speaking or interview

- ✓ **Be comfortable.** Wear comfortable clothes. Consider dressing in layers to prepare for fluctuating temperatures. Avoid wearing sunglasses during a media interview, even if it takes place outdoors. If possible, visit the venue before your public speech to familiarize yourself with the set-up.
- ✓ **Try to remain calm.** Believe in yourself, and tell yourself you can do this. If you feel worried, find a friendly face in the audience. Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself before you start. Think of why you are there and focus on the message you want to put across.
- ✓ **Be present and focused.** Use your time wisely to share your story, focusing on the main problem, key solution(s) and key asks.
- ✓ **Ask for what you need.** For example, you can ask for more time to think or ask to come back to a question at the end.
- ✓ **Start strong.** Consider beginning with a relevant brief story or famous quote to grab attention.
- ✓ **Be yourself and share your passion.** Listeners will be more receptive when you are true to yourself and when your personality and passion for what you believe shines through.
- ✓ **Avoid reading** from a script if possible, but consider using main points to remind you of what you want to say. Avoid using a lot of PowerPoint slides or other detailed presentations.
- ✓ **Maintain eye contact** with your audience if you can. Be aware of your body language and try to use your usual day-to-day expressions.
- ✓ **Ensure a strong closing** to a public speech. Think about what you want your audience to feel or do, and use this to prepare strong closing words for a call to action.
- ✓ **If safe and relevant, use the media** to spread your messages. Make sure you understand the social media guidelines set by the conference organizers. If is safe enough, consider engaging in press conferences or interviews or using social media and messaging apps (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, U-Report, etc.). Use consistent hashtags when applicable.
- ✓ **Prioritize efforts to stay safe and well.** Inform a trusted adult if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or unwell. (*For online safety, see tip sheet on online engagement*).

## AFTER the public speaking or interviews to enhance accountable participation

- ✓ **Request, review and validate.** Request a copy of the interview/speech recording if one was made. Review and validate what you said. If there is anything that you do not want to be included in the recording, ask organizers to edit out this part, if possible.
- ✓ **Follow up and ask concerned, influential adults for feedback** regarding how they have responded to and/or used your speech/interview.
- ✓ **Share feedback and follow-up ideas with peers**, especially those who helped you prepare.
- ✓ **Reflect and learn** from your participation and its impact. What was successful? What was unsuccessful? What could be done differently next time? Why?
- ✓ **Discuss and seek support for follow-up action initiatives.** Discuss ideas with your peers and share concrete follow-up action ideas with adults to see if they can support your initiatives.

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