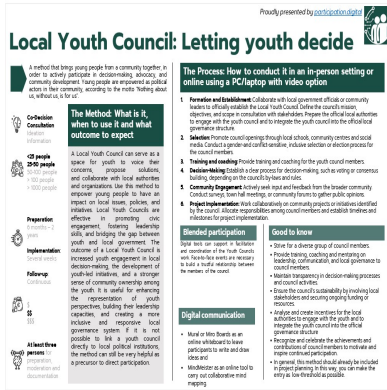




Local Youth Council: Letting youth decide

Description

Local Youth Council: Letting youth decide

A method that brings young people from a community together, in order to actively participate in decision-making, advocacy, and community development. Young people are empowered as political actors in their community, according to the motto “Nothing about us, without us, is for us”.

Level of participation

Co-Decision
Consultation

Duration of participation process

Preparation: 6 months – 2 years
Implementation: Several weeks
Follow-up: Continuous

Target group size

< 25 people
25-50 people

Costs

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Human resources needed

At least three persons for preparation, moderation and documentation

The method: what is it, when to use it and what outcome to expect

A Local Youth Council can serve as a space for youth to voice their concerns, propose solutions, and collaborate with local authorities and organizations. Use this method to empower young people to have an impact on local issues, policies, and initiatives.

Local Youth Councils are effective in promoting civic engagement, fostering leadership skills, and bridging the gap between youth and local government. The outcome of a Local Youth Council is increased youth engagement in local decision-making, the development of youth-led initiatives, and a stronger sense of community ownership among the youth.

It is useful for enhancing the representation of youth perspectives, building their leadership capacities, and creating a more inclusive and responsive local governance system. If it is not possible to link a youth council directly to local political institutions, the method can still be very helpful as a precursor to direct participation.

The process: how to conduct it in an in-person setting or online using a PC/laptop with video option

1. Formation and Establishment: Collaborate with local government officials or community leaders to officially establish the Local Youth Council. Define the council's mission, objectives, and scope in consultation with stakeholders. Prepare the official local authorities to engage with the youth council and to integrate the youth council into the official local governance structure.

2. Selection: Promote council openings through local schools, community centres and social media. Conduct a gender-and conflict-sensitive, inclusive selection or election process for the council members.

3. Training and coaching: Provide training and coaching for the youth council members.

4. Decision-Making: Establish a clear process for decision-making, such as voting or consensus building, depending on the council's by-laws and rules.

5. Community Engagement: Actively seek input and feedback from the broader community. Conduct surveys, town hall meetings, or community forums to gather public opinions.

6. Project Implementation: Work collaboratively on community projects or initiatives identified by the council. Allocate responsibilities among council members and establish timelines and milestones for project implementation.

Blended participation

Digital tools can support in facilitation and coordination of the Youth Councils work. Face-to-face events are necessary to build a trustful relationship between the members of the council.

Digital communication

Mural or Miro Boards as an online whiteboard to leave participants to write and draw ideas and MindMeister as an online tool to carry out collaborative mind mapping.

Good to know

- Strive for a diverse group of council members.
- Provide training, coaching and mentoring on leadership, communication, and local governance to council members.
- Maintain transparency in decision-making processes and council activities.
- Ensure the council's sustainability by involving local stakeholders and securing ongoing funding or resources.
- Analyse and create incentives for the local authorities to engage with the youth and to integrate the youth council into the official governance structure.
- Recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of council members to motivate and inspire continued participation.
- In general, this method should already be included in project planning. In this way, you can make the entry as low-threshold as possible.

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