

YOUNG PEOPLE ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: TOWARD A NEW NORMAL

Discussion Guide

A critical shift from working *for* young people—to working *with* young people.

This discussion guide is for those interested in working in partnership with adolescents and youth as a key strategy for improving youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It draws on findings from the Youth Investment, Engagement, and Leadership Development (YIELD) Project report, *Young People Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health: Toward a New Normal*, which synthesizes global evidence on how to foster authentic youth participation and leadership in SRHR.

The purpose of this guide is to kick-start conversations around good practice themes that emerged in YIELD research. The guide is not comprehensive of YIELD learning—it is a starting point. Visit yieldproject.org to download the report and related materials.



TIPS FOR FACILITATION

- Form a group of 4-6 people working on youth SRHR efforts in your organization. Ideally the group will have a balanced number of young people (under age 24) and adults.
- Acknowledge group power differentials based on age, gender, professional experience, organizational hierarchy, etc., and strive to create a safe and welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable and all voices have equal value. Establishing ground rules—such as no hierarchy, respect and honor confidentiality, and agree to disagree—will be helpful.
- Consider identifying a note-taker or another mechanism to ensure that discussion points are captured to inform your future thinking and planning around youth participation and leadership.

FOR DISCUSSION

- Identify one or two thematic areas that are of greatest priority or interest. The full breadth of questions are not intended to be addressed in a single discussion, so you may want to think about using the guide in a series of conversations.
- For each theme, consider reflecting on the following:
 - » In what ways do we ensure equitable and safe experiences for young females and males?
 - » What is working well?
 - » What could be improved or changed?
 - » What can be done to amplify success and/or address challenges in the next 3/6/12 months?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CONTEXT

- What are the critical SRHR issues facing young people where we work? Which youth are most impacted? What do we know about their demographics and situations?
- What are the current organizational opportunities and barriers to addressing these issues?
- How are we currently engaging young people in our programming efforts as participants vs. beneficiaries? Which young people are we engaging, and what are their specific roles and responsibilities?

FIND

- What barriers do we currently experience in terms of recruiting and retaining a diversity of young people as participants and leaders in our programming?
- How are we engaging parents, siblings, spouses, additional family members, and other gatekeepers to support youth participation and leadership in our programming and in their communities?
- How are we working with actors beyond the SRHR sector to activate a broad range of youth leaders to address SRHR issues?

EQUIP

- How are young people engaged in the design, implementation, and evaluation of our training efforts? How do we keep training content fresh, flexible, and responsive to young people's needs and interests?
- How do our training efforts help build the personal, technical, and functional capabilities of young people over time?
- How do we share and access training content and methodologies that have been proven to be effective?

ENABLE

- How is youth participation and leadership reflected in our institutional vision and strategy?
- What words describe our organizational culture around power sharing with young people? How are staff trained and supported to work in genuine youth-adult partnership?
- How do we foster ongoing mentoring and support of young people in our organization and programming?
- How do we acknowledge and compensate young people for their time and contributions to our work?

CONNECT

- How do we help young people establish relationships with and stay connected to peer and professional networks during and after their programming experience?
- How are we able to support interested young people to create pathways among SRHR training and leadership opportunities?
- What are/can we do to connect cohorts of young people to foster local, sub-national, national, and international solidarity and collective action?

TRACK

- How do we see the benefits of participating in youth SRHR communities of practice that could allow stakeholders to agree upon and work toward common purposes and measure impact in a more coordinated manner? If such platforms do not currently exist, what would it take to create such an entity in our context?
- How might we benefit from access to external evaluation and research support to build institutional capacity and generate more robust results? If such access does not exist, how could it be established?
- How are we currently engaging young people in our monitoring and evaluation efforts?