



YIELD Hub

# COMPENSATING YOUTH WORK

**5 Practical Tools**

[www.yieldhub.global](http://www.yieldhub.global)

## About this Toolkit

This toolkit was created to provide **practical, ready-to-use tools** for organisations committed to fairly recognising the time, skills, and leadership of youth in their work. It draws directly from the reflections, journeys, and recommendations of organisations who participated in YIELD Hub's Action Learning Cycle 7: Compensating Youth Work. Their insights inspired the tools in this package, designed to help others start where they are and keep improving their youth engagement practices.



"Certain organisations believe that the experiences of young people are less valuable than those of individuals with decades of experience. This perspective shows ageism as it discriminates based on age. Even though we are invited as experts, we are compensated differently."

- ALC 7 Member -

## Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to cycle 7 members, namely: **Cape Town University's Adolescent Accelerators Research Hub, Albanian Center for Population and Development, The Summit Foundation, The Torchlight Collective, YoSHAN, and Independent Researchers - Kuhika Seth & Shailza**. Over seven months, these youth-focused organisations shared their experiences, challenges, and solutions on how to compensate youth contributions meaningfully — both monetarily and non-monetarily — even amidst funding, ethical, and institutional barriers.

Through their collective experience and learning, they identified significant areas for reflection, commitment, and recommendations. These have also been compiled into a valuable resource that is accessible on the [YIELD Hub website](#). We hope this resource will empower your organisation to take control of its financial future and build resilience for long-term impact.

## Glossary

**Compensation** – Recognising and rewarding contributions through financial or non-financial means.

**Stipend** – A fixed regular payment for youth participation (often monthly or per project).

**Non-Monetary Compensation** – Recognition beyond money — such as certificates, career support, or training opportunities.

**Flexible Funding** – Donor funding that allows organisations to adapt budgets based on emerging needs, including youth compensation.

**Honorarium** – A one-time payment for specific tasks or events.

**Participatory Research** – Research that actively involves youth or community members in design, data collection, and analysis.

# What's Inside

## TOOL 1

**Compensation Options Guide** – Explore flexible ways to value youth contributions.

## TOOL 2

**Internal Compensation Policy** – Create a basic internal commitment to fair compensation.

## TOOL 3

**Funders Engagement Guide** – Build stronger conversations with funders about supporting youth compensation.

## TOOL 4

**Youth Preferences Survey** – Gather direct feedback from youth to shape better practices.

## TOOL 5

**Compensation Tracker** – Track, reflect, and strengthen how compensation is handled over time.

## How to use this toolkit



### Pick a tool

Select a tool from the five to begin



### Adapt freely

Modify templates to fit contexts



### Stay grounded

Use survey to guide youth-focused approaches



### Share back

Document success stories to inspire



TOOL 1

# COMPENSATION OPTIONS GUIDE

# Monetary & Non-Monetary Compensation Options

Compensating youth fairly doesn't only mean direct payments. There are many ways to recognise young people's time, skills, and contributions meaningfully — even when budgets are tight. This guide gives you practical options to design compensation approaches that fit your resources and honour youth contributions. When funding allows, financial compensation is a direct and powerful way to recognise youth work.

## Monetary Compensation Options

Option	Example
Stipend	Regular monthly or quarterly payment for participation in projects, committees, or roles.
Honorarium	One-time payment for specific tasks (e.g., speaking at an event, co-facilitating a workshop).
Transport/Communication Allowance	Reimbursement or flat-rate support for travel, internet costs, or mobile data.
Project Grants or Fellowships	Small grants for youth-led initiatives, which may include a portion for youth remuneration.
Performance Bonuses	Financial rewards tied to milestones achieved during a project or programme cycle.



"It's important to clarify what we mean by compensation. Often, we immediately think of monetary compensation, which we sometimes provide to youth, although many places don't. It's also important to give youth a seat at the table. This is tied to respect, but if we don't truly value their opinions or their expertise, we're not showing them the respect they deserve. These are examples of discrimination."

- ALC 7 Member -



## Non-Monetary Compensation Options

When direct payment isn't possible, you can still offer valuable, meaningful compensation.

Option	Example
Skill Development Opportunities	Access to accredited training, leadership development courses, webinars, or certifications.
Career Support	Providing strong reference letters, LinkedIn endorsements, CV development sessions, or mentoring.
Recognition and Visibility	Public acknowledgment in reports, blogs, or social media profiles; awards or certificates of achievement.
Networking and Exposure	Invitations to events, conferences, panels, and connections to broader professional networks.
Pathways to Paid Roles	Prioritised recruitment for consultancy, facilitation, or project roles within the organisation or partners.

## Key Principles When Choosing Compensation Approaches

### Ask Youth Directly:

What forms of compensation matter most to them? (Use Tool 4: Preferences Survey)

### Be Transparent:

Explain clearly what compensation is being offered, in what form, and why.

### Acknowledge Emotional and Intellectual Labour:

Youth bring not just time, but creativity, lived experiences, and energy.

### Balance Aspirations and Resources:

Offer the best you can now — and keep improving as funding and capacity grow.

## Your Quick Action



**Select 2–3 compensation options from this guide that you can realistically start offering this year.**



TOOL 2

# INTERNAL COMPENSATION POLICY

# Internal Compensation Policy

A clear internal policy signals that fair youth compensation is a priority — not an afterthought. Even a basic policy strengthens your practice, helps align your team, and builds credibility with donors and youth partners. You don't need a long manual. A simple 1–2 page starter policy is enough to set a strong foundation.

## *Simple Compensation Policy Template*

### Youth Contribution, Recognition and Compensation Policy

#### 1. Purpose

We are committed to recognising the value of youth contributions in all our programmes, initiatives, and activities. This policy ensures that youth involvement is compensated fairly, whether through financial or non-financial means, in a way that reflects respect, dignity, and equity.

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all youth involved in [Organisation Name] projects, including but not limited to:

- Youth volunteers
- Youth researchers
- Youth advisory or steering groups
- Youth facilitators, trainers, or speakers
- Youth champions in campaigns or advocacy work

#### 3. Types of Compensation

Compensation may take the form of one or a combination of the following, depending on project resources and youth preference:

Monetary Forms:

- Stipends
- Honorariums
- Transport or communication allowances
- Project-based grants or fellowships

Non-Monetary Forms:

- Accredited training and skill development opportunities
- Professional references and career mentorship
- Public recognition (certificates, social media spotlights, event acknowledgments)
- Access to professional networks and future paid opportunities





#### 4. **Decision-Making and Application**

The type and level of compensation will be determined in consultation with youth participants and project teams, based on:

- Available funding
- Level of commitment expected
- Skills, roles, and responsibilities involved
- Organisational capacity and ethical considerations

We will review compensation plans for each project as part of project design and budgeting stages. Compensation offers will be communicated clearly to youth at the beginning of their engagement.

#### 5. **Review and Adaptation**

This policy will be reviewed annually, with direct input from youth participants, to ensure it remains responsive and fair.

Updates will be documented and communicated across the organisation.

## Key Principles Behind This Policy

### **FAIRNESS:**

All youth contributions should be valued equally, regardless of financial constraints.

### **TRANSPARENCY:**

Youth are informed about compensation terms upfront, without ambiguity.

### **YOUTH VOICE:**

Young people are involved in shaping compensation practices that affect them.

## Your Quick Action



### **Draft and approve a basic policy this quarter.**

Start by adapting this template and reviewing it with a few youth representatives before finalising. Your first version can be just one page — you can always expand later as your practices evolve.



TOOL 3

# FUNDERS ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

[www.yieldhub.global](http://www.yieldhub.global)



# Advocating for Flexible Youth Compensation Support

Youth compensation often depends on project funding. Building it into proposals and funder conversations from the start ensures it's seen as essential, not optional. This cheat sheet equips you with practical ways to advocate for flexible, fair compensation support when engaging donors and partners.

## Core Messages to Communicate to Funders



### **Compensation = Quality and Commitment**

"Youth who are recognised and compensated for their work stay engaged longer, bring more energy, and deliver high quality outcomes."



### **Compensation Supports Equity and Inclusion**

"Without fair compensation, only privileged youth can afford to participate. True inclusivity requires removing financial barriers."



### **Flexible Support Leads to Sustainable Youth Leadership**

"When youth are fairly compensated, it strengthens their leadership capacity, ownership, and long-term commitment to the sector."

## Sample Phrases You Can Use or Adapt



### **Compensation = Quality and Commitment**

"Youth who are recognised and compensated for their work stay engaged longer, bring more energy, and deliver high quality outcomes."



### **Compensation Supports Equity and Inclusion**

"Without fair compensation, only privileged youth can afford to participate. True inclusivity requires removing financial barriers."



### **Flexible Support Leads to Sustainable Youth Leadership**

"When youth are fairly compensated, it strengthens their leadership capacity, ownership, and long-term commitment to the sector."



## Key Talking Points When Negotiating

POINT	HOW TO SAY IT
<b>Raise it Early</b>	"As part of our project design, we plan to ensure youth contributions are fairly recognised and compensated. We'd like to include this in the budget conversation."
<b>Frame it as Investment Not Expense</b>	"This is an investment in youth leadership, project ownership, and more meaningful engagement — not just a line item."
<b>Offer Options</b>	"We are flexible: compensation can include stipends, allowances, skill-building, or leadership development based on the funding structure."
<b>Link to Outcomes</b>	"Fair compensation will directly impact our ability to recruit, retain, and support youth contributors, improving overall project success."
<b>Propose Collaboration</b>	"We'd love to co-create a compensation approach that fits both our project goals and your funding priorities."

## Key Principles to Keep in Mind

### Be Confident:

Fair youth compensation is a global best practice, not a "nice to have."

### Be Collaborative:

Most funders appreciate organisations that offer practical solutions, not just demands.

### Be Strategic:

Highlight how compensation enhances project outcomes — it's a win-win.

## Your Quick Action



### At your next funding discussion..

raise youth compensation as a natural part of project design. Use this cheat sheet to guide how you frame the conversation. Outline what you'd ideally like to offer (even if modest) before engaging funders — it shows initiative and clarity.

TOOL 4

# YOUTH PREFERENCES SURVEY



# Understanding What Matters Most to Youth Contributors

Compensation isn't one-size-fits-all. Youth value different forms of recognition, from financial support to skill-building or career opportunities. Asking them directly ensures that your compensation strategies are meaningful, not just tokenistic. This short survey helps organisations capture youth preferences easily and build compensation models with them, not for them.

## Youth Compensation Preferences Survey

### 1. What types of compensation would feel most valuable to you for your time and contributions? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Financial stipend (small payment for time and contributions)
- ☐ Honorarium (one-off payment for a specific activity)
- ☐ Transport or data/internet allowance
- ☐ Access to accredited training and workshops
- ☐ Leadership or skill-building opportunities
- ☐ Letters of recommendation or LinkedIn endorsements
- ☐ Invitations to conferences or professional events
- ☐ Public recognition (e.g., certificates, online spotlight features)
- ☐ Opportunities for future paid roles or consultancies
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. If financial support isn't possible, which alternative forms of compensation would you most appreciate? (select 2 that apply)

- ☐ Accredited skill-building opportunities
- ☐ Mentorship and career coaching
- ☐ Public recognition (certificates, awards, social media shout-outs)
- ☐ Access to networking events or professional communities
- ☐ Personal development support (e.g., scholarships, internships)

### 3. In your opinion, what is the most important principle in how youth should be compensated? (select one)

- ☐ Fairness (equal recognition for equal contribution)
- ☐ Transparency (clear explanation upfront about compensation)
- ☐ Flexibility (compensation adapted to needs and context)
- ☐ Consistency (applied equally across all youth roles)

### 4. Any other ideas or suggestions you would like to share about youth compensation? (Open text box)





## Key Principles for Using the Survey

### Keep it Short:

Youth should be able to complete it in 5 minutes or less.

### Use It Early:

Run the survey during recruitment, onboarding, or project design stages.

### Act on It:

Use their feedback to shape compensation offers and communicate clearly what was implemented.

## Your Quick Action



### Launch a short survey with your current or upcoming youth participants.

Use the results to strengthen your compensation planning and show you're serious about youth-centred approaches.



"Certain organisations believe that the experiences of young people are less valuable than those of individuals with decades of experience. This perspective shows ageism as it discriminates based on age. Even though we are invited as experts, we are compensated differently. They often assume that young people do not need as much money. However, our scenarios are different. For instance, I am the primary earner in my family, supporting mine and my sister's education."

- ALC 7 Member -

TOOL 5

# COMPENSATION TRACKER

# Improving How You Recognise Youth Contributions

You can't improve what you don't track. A simple documentation tracker helps you map out how youth are currently being compensated across projects — and spot gaps, successes, and opportunities for advocacy. Plus, it makes reporting to donors or leadership teams much easier when you can show clear, tangible actions.

YOUTH NAME	PROJECT NAME	ROLE / ACTIVITY	Compensation Type	Amount / Value (if monetary)
Amina, K	Youth Advisory Board	Advisor	Stipend	\$100 per meeting
Casey, B	SRHR Research Project	Data Collector	Transport Allowance	\$10 per day
Thabo, S	Youth Leadership Summit	Event Facilitator	None (budget constraints)	N/A

YOUTH NAME	Non-Monetary Benefits Offered	Notes/Reflections
Amina, K	Skill-building workshops, Public recognition on social media	Very engaged; requested leadership role next cycle
Casey, B	Certificate of Participation	Wants more training opportunities next cycle
Thabo, S	Featured speaker at national conference, Letter of recommendation	Appreciated public recognition, but requested stipend option in future

## How to Use It

1. **Fill in for each youth engagement across projects (even small ones).**
2. **Track both monetary and non-monetary contributions** — don't just focus on payments.
3. **Use Notes/Reflections** to capture feedback or suggestions made by youth during or after their participation.



## Key Principles for Good Tracking

### CONSISTENCY:

Keep the tracker updated regularly, not just at reporting time.

### TRANSPARENCY:

If youth ask, be ready to share a summary of how compensation was handled.

### ACTION:

Use tracker insights to improve future compensation plans and to advocate for better support from funders or leadership.

## Practical Tip: Review Your Tracker Quarterly



### Hold a short team meeting every 3–4 months to review:

- Who's being compensated and how?
- Are there inconsistencies or missed opportunities?
- What could be improved for the next project or funding cycle?

## Your Quick Action



### Set up a simple Compensation Tracker spreadsheet this week.

Assign a focal point to update it after every youth engagement activity!

## Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the end of this resource!

Fairly compensating youth contributions is an ongoing journey of growth, reflection, negotiation, and collaboration. We encourage you to treat this toolkit as a starting point: a place to spark conversations, experiment with solutions, and strengthen your internal practices step-by-step. Meaningful youth engagement requires continuous attention — and every small improvement makes a difference.



### Taking action

Still wondering where your organisation stands? Take the **Compensating Youth Work Quiz** featured in the Cycle 5 resource — it provides a comprehensive framework to assess your current level of youth compensation practice and identify next steps.

**Start Quiz**



### Connect & Share

- Are you improving how you compensate youth? Are you piloting new approaches? We would love to hear how this toolkit is helping you take action. **Tag us on social media, and include #LearningActivation to join the conversation.**
- Need a Little Extra Support? If you are making significant progress but would like tailored guidance on embedding compensation frameworks into your work, we're here to help. **Send us an email, [info@yieldhub.global](mailto:info@yieldhub.global)**

We deeply acknowledge the work, leadership, and ideas shared by all Cycle 7 members. This toolkit is a tribute to their collective efforts to strengthen youth participation through fairer, more respectful practices. We are grateful for the openness, innovation, and commitment they brought to this journey.

# Contact Us

---

Want to learn more about this resource?



Contact us: **info@yieldhub.global** OR check out our website: **www.yieldhub.global/resources** for other useful resources.



**@yieldhub.bsky.social**



**@yield\_hub**



**@hubyield**