

MEANINGFUL
YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT
IN ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK



POTENTIAL INDICATORS FOR ASSESSING MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

These Check Lists provide guidance on the most important components of each meaningful youth engagement theme when reviewing how much an Activity/Intervention/Project/Program meets the requirements of meaningful youth engagement.

The following sections provide more practical guidance on how to conduct such an assessment. As all material related to the Policy Guide, it is for guidance and inspiration to be adapted by the anti-corruption authority to its specific requirements, objectives, and context. The information could be developed into a short Toolkit or perhaps a FAQ.



Theme 1: Diversity and Inclusion

What this theme looks like in practice:

- ❑ The roles and opportunities for young people in anti-corruption authorities' programs, policies, and processes are equitably distributed across engaged youth (for example, considering gender balance, the inclusion of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, geographic representation, and socio-economic backgrounds)
- ❑ Young people in the program, policy or process come from:
 - ❑ Different demographic profiles (e.g. gender, age, dis/ability, ethnicity)
 - ❑ Different socio-economic backgrounds or life circumstances (e.g., educational attainment, employment status, income level, location, citizenship)
- ❑ Resources and additional support are provided to young people in the program who come from marginalized backgrounds so that they can participate as much as peers from more advantaged situations (e.g., buddy system, coaching, stipend to cover costs to attend activities)

What this theme is NOT about:

- ❑ Recruiting young people from marginalized backgrounds for the sake of having a "representative". This can easily be misconstrued as tokenism if young people do not have clear roles or contributions to the initiative.
- ❑ Canceling youth engagement initiatives if diversity and inclusion cannot be guaranteed immediately. It is a process, and the anti-corruption authority's ability to bring in different groups of young people will evolve, especially once they increasingly engage in the initiatives.

Theme 2: Engagement-Enabling Environment

What this theme looks like in practice:

- ❑ The anti-corruption authority's policy articulates the organization's commitment to keeping young people safe and promoting their best interests. (In some organizations, youth safeguarding principles and policies are established to guide and support the actions of their staff along these lines. Good practice would include having routine contacts or a dedicated partnership with youth focused civil society organizations with youth safeguarding experience)
- ❑ Working methods, processes, resources, and tools are youth-friendly (for example, some resources use less jargon and use simple language)
- ❑ Anti-corruption authority staff are trained to hear youth inputs without judgment and encouraged to involve young people in their work
- ❑ Senior officers and managers openly promote their support for meaningful youth engagement in the work of the anti-corruption authority, both internally and externally
- ❑ Young people – whether participants, volunteers, interns, consultants, or partners -- feel comfortable sharing their opinion with anti-corruption authority staff
- ❑ Meaningful youth engagement activities, including staff training and development of youth-friendly and meaningful youth engagement guidance and materials, are resourced
- ❑ Anti-corruption authority has a youth-friendly communication strategy to engage young people and promote their meaningful youth engagement strategies and activities to internal and external audiences
- ❑ Institutional procurement and partnering mechanisms are simple, transparent, and youth-friendly
- ❑ Volunteers and internship programs should be adequately resourced, long-term, and institutionalized, following clear meaningful youth engagement guidelines and principles as laid out in chapter 3
- ❑ Adequate resources and appropriate youth-friendly accounting systems are established to encourage meaningful youth engagement
- ❑ Youth initiatives need to be designed with clear, monitorable feedback loops
- ❑ Plans are made to develop or embed meaningful youth engagement into the organization's strategy

What this theme is NOT about:

Having safeguarding guidelines and not strictly enforcing them nor reporting on their results

- ❑ Working alone. meaningful youth engagement promotion encourages anti-corruption authorities to work with partners and external stakeholders who may have the expertise, resources, and tools to strengthen the work anti-corruption authorities do with young people
- ❑ Having staff training on meaningful youth engagement as the only activity. While making sure everyone knows what meaningful youth engagement is and how it can be applied in their work, allowing them to apply these concepts is of greater importance
- ❑ Making the availability of funding a pre-requisite for meaningful youth engagement to take place. As previously discussed, promoting meaningful youth engagement is a balancing act focusing on what the anti-corruption authority can do now with what resources are available and what needs to be planned and initiated in the long-term
- ❑ Never disagreeing with young people. anti-corruption authorities can inform young people when their inputs, while valued, may not necessarily apply to certain initiatives; the emphasis is whether or not there are harmful consequences when they share their opinion

Theme 3: Intergenerational Collaboration (or Partnerships)

What this theme looks like in practice:

- Young people are viewed by staff and other adult stakeholders as having something valuable to contribute to the work of the organization
- Both young people and adults respect each other – including differences in opinion, approaches, work styles, and others
- Both young people and adults can constructively discuss issues together without fear that disagreements will result in reprisal
- Respect that within an intergenerational collaboration, youth may need to work independently with their peers without the presence of adults (and vice versa)
- Acknowledging, showcasing, and promoting the good work of both young and adult parties in the intergenerational collaboration
- Both young people and adults can hold each other accountable, including distributing tasks fairly
- Responsibilities assigned to young people are commensurate to what they can realistically handle and deliver on

What this theme is NOT about:

- Assigning most of the work to just one side of the partnership
- Blindly sticking to country and community customs as a status quo where these fail to accommodate key meaningful youth engagement principles
- Having formal agreements with young people – while this will help, especially for administrative processes, ‘partnerships’ in this context intend to emphasize a two-way interaction where both youth and adults are equal parties in such relationship
- Giving young people only the small tasks – respecting young people as equals includes understanding that they can do more than administrative tasks

Theme 4: Quality Youth Participation

What this theme looks like in practice:

Young people are mobilized as volunteers, interns, partners, leaders in AC work with designated roles in the planning/design/implementation – rather than just as participants to activities

- ❑ Openly sharing information and being proactive in including young people in key discussions
- ❑ Opportunities are provided for young people to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, including what they can do to support AC efforts in their country
- ❑ Informing young people who are engaged why they are being engaged and how their inputs will be or have been used in anti-corruption authorities' work
- ❑ Providing young people the opportunity to input to the design, planning, and even monitoring and/or evaluation of existing AC initiatives
- ❑ Making sure there are structures in place within the anti-corruption authority where young people are regularly convened or continuously engaged (for example, having a youth consultative/advisory group)

What this theme is NOT about:

Mobilizing a youth advisory group outside of existing governance structures

- ❑ Involving young people as an afterthought

Theme 5: Youth Empowerment

What this theme looks like in practice:

- ❑ Providing opportunities for young people to build their capacity while performing tasks supporting AC activities
- ❑ Creating mentorship opportunities for young interns and volunteers that match them with anti-corruption authority staff to learn from and access professional networks
- ❑ As a result of their personal development from participating in anti-corruption authorities' activities, young people lead or support activities that promote AC in their communities
- ❑ Young people can have constructive dialogue with stakeholders in the anti-corruption authority and other decision-makers about their concerns related to corruption
- ❑ Chances of increasing their engagement, commensurate tasks, etc.
- ❑ Actively supporting their empowerment – public recognition, officially instating them, on the website, joint publications, etc: in order to help them being recognized as real partner

What this theme is NOT about:

- ❑ Building the capacity of young people without opportunities to apply acquired skills and knowledge
- ❑ Inviting young people to decision-making spaces without briefing them and adult stakeholders about how to constructively engage with each other