

BEYOND TOKENISM:

A TOOLKIT FOR GENUINE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC SPACES

developed by the Canadian Coalition for
Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This toolkit provides a comprehensive approach to overcoming tokenism in youth engagement within the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) framework. Tokenism, where youth are included superficially without real influence, undermines their potential contributions to peacebuilding and security efforts. Despite the recognition of youth's vital role through United Nations Security Council Resolutions [2250](#), [2419](#), and [2535](#), tokenism persists, impeding genuine progress and fostering disillusionment among young people.

The toolkit is designed to offer practical guidance for organizations seeking to move beyond tokenistic practices and ensure that youth are meaningfully involved in decision-making processes. It emphasizes principles such as inclusive participation, which involves engaging diverse youth voices; supporting youth-led initiatives, where young people take leadership roles; and ensuring transparency and accountability, which maintain open and responsive processes.

Key tools and strategies included are the Self-Assessment Framework for evaluating and addressing tokenism, capacity-building for developing youth leadership and skills, and fostering effective youth-adult partnerships to balance power dynamics. The toolkit also highlights the importance of robust feedback mechanisms to continuously gather and act on youth input.

The action plan outlined in the toolkit begins with an initial assessment of current practices, setting clear objectives for de-tokenization, and involving youth in the planning process. It includes steps for implementing youth-led initiatives, promoting collaborative partnerships, and maintaining transparent communication. Regular monitoring and a final evaluation will assess progress and inform future improvements.

By adopting the toolkit's strategies and principles, stakeholders can ensure that youth engagement is substantive and impactful, transforming symbolic participation into meaningful contributions that enhance peace and security efforts.

This toolkit is a resource designed to help organizations address and eliminate tokenism in youth engagement. While it provides valuable strategies and tools for fostering meaningful participation, it is important to note that it is not a miracle solution. Engaging young people in a truly impactful way is a complex and ongoing process that requires genuine reciprocity. Effective youth involvement demands more than just applying best practices; it necessitates a sustained commitment to listening, valuing, and integrating youth perspectives in all aspects of decision-making. As you implement these strategies, remember that meaningful engagement is a continuous journey, not a one-time fix.

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit has been developed to address a pressing issue in the realm of Youth, Peace and Security (YPS): the persistent challenge of tokenism. As the global community increasingly acknowledges the critical role that young people play in peacebuilding and security efforts, there remains a significant gap between rhetoric and reality. Too often, youth participation is reduced to a symbolic gesture—where young people are included in discussions and initiatives without being granted real power or influence. This phenomenon, known as tokenism, undermines the credibility of youth engagement and stifles the potential of young peacebuilders to contribute meaningfully to the decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The importance of youth in peace and security was formally recognized by the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 2250, adopted in 2015. This landmark resolution, alongside subsequent resolutions 2419 and 2535, underscores the essential role that young people play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.¹ The YPS agenda is structured around five key pillars: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, and Disengagement & Reintegration.

Among these pillars, the **Participation** pillar is particularly significant. It emphasizes not just the need for young people to be present but to be actively involved in decision-making processes at all levels—local, national, regional, and international. Genuine participation means that youth voices are heard, respected, and translated into actionable outcomes. Young people are not merely beneficiaries of peace and security efforts but are crucial actors who bring unique perspectives, energy, and innovative solutions to the table.

¹ Note: There is no universal definition of young people. The CCYPS considers “youth” as individuals aged 18 to 30.

Despite this growing recognition, tokenism remains a pervasive issue in YPS contexts. Tokenism manifests in various forms, from superficial inclusion in policy consultations to selective involvement of youth who conform to established norms. Such practices fail to harness the full potential of youth and often exclude those most affected by conflict and insecurity. This not only leads to frustration and disillusionment among young people but also perpetuates existing power structures, reinforcing their marginalization in civic and political arenas.

The Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security's More Than Tokens initiative has been a crucial effort in addressing these challenges. This initiative highlights the need for moving beyond tokenistic practices to achieve meaningful youth engagement. Research and findings from this initiative underscore that while many youth engagement strategies appear inclusive, they often fall short in terms of genuine impact.

The research findings reveal that:

1. **Superficial Engagement:** Many youth are included in discussions and decision-making processes in name only, without substantive input or influence on outcomes.
2. **Tokenistic Participation:** Youth involvement is frequently limited to pre-defined roles that do not challenge existing power structures or bring about significant change.
3. **Inadequate Support:** Youth participants often lack the necessary support, resources, and capacity-building opportunities to effectively contribute to decision-making.

The initiative's research emphasizes the need for structural changes to ensure that youth are not just present but are actively shaping decisions and policies. It advocates for a shift from tokenistic practices towards genuine partnerships where youth are empowered to lead and make impactful contributions.

In this context, this toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource for organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders. It provides practical guidance, strategies, and resources to dismantle tokenistic practices and create environments where youth are genuinely valued as equal partners. By offering tools to address tokenism, the toolkit supports the transition from superficial inclusion to substantive, impactful participation.

As we strive to build a more inclusive and peaceful world, it is essential to address the barriers that prevent young people from fully participating in civic spaces. This toolkit is a step towards that goal, aiming to ensure that youth engagement is not only heard but is integral to shaping the decisions and policies that impact their futures. By moving beyond tokenism, we can unlock the full potential of young people as key contributors to peace and security.



UNDERSTANDING TOKENISM

Tokenism is a pervasive YPS issue, where young people are often included in decision-making processes more for appearances than for meaningful engagement. While the presence of youth at the table may suggest inclusivity, tokenism undermines the very essence of genuine participation, reducing young people to symbolic figures rather than active contributors. This section delves into the common forms of tokenism in YPS contexts and the far-reaching impacts of such practices.



Common Forms of Tokenism

- 1. Symbolic Participation Without Real Influence:** One of the most common manifestations of tokenism is the inclusion of young people in discussions or decision-making bodies without granting them real influence. This occurs when youth are invited to meetings, panels, or consultations, but their input is neither valued nor acted upon. In such cases, the presence of youth is used to give the appearance of diversity and inclusion, while the power to make decisions remains firmly in the hands of older adults or established authorities. This form of tokenism is particularly insidious because it can create the illusion of youth engagement while perpetuating the status quo.
- 2. Selective Inclusion:** Selective inclusion refers to the practice of inviting only certain young people—often those who conform to established norms or who are perceived as less challenging—to participate in YPS initiatives. This form of tokenism excludes the voices of those who may be most affected by conflict and insecurity, such as marginalized youth, those from conflict zones, or those with dissenting opinions. By selectively including only a narrow subset of youth, organizations fail to capture the diversity of perspectives and experiences necessary for effective peacebuilding and security efforts.
- 3. Superficial Engagement:** Superficial engagement occurs when young people are involved in YPS activities in a manner that is more about optics than substance. This can include inviting youth to participate in high-profile events, using their images in promotional materials, or asking them to share personal stories without any follow-up or tangible outcomes. In these situations, the engagement is shallow and does not provide young people with the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the discussions or decisions at hand. Such practices can lead to frustration and a sense of being used, rather than genuinely valued.

Impact of Tokenism

The consequences of tokenism are far-reaching and detrimental not only to the young people involved but also to the broader goals of peace and security. Below are some of the key impacts of tokenism in YPS contexts:

- 1. Disillusionment Among Youth:** When young people realize that their participation is merely symbolic, it can lead to deep disillusionment. This disillusionment is often accompanied by feelings of frustration and cynicism, as youth become aware that their voices are not being taken seriously. Over time, this can result in disengagement, where young people withdraw from participation altogether, believing that their efforts to contribute to peace and security are futile. Such disengagement weakens the overall effectiveness of YPS initiatives, as the energy and innovation that youth bring to these efforts are lost.
- 2. Mistrust Between Youth and Institutions:** Tokenistic practices can erode trust between young people and the institutions that claim to represent or support them. When youth recognize that their involvement is superficial, they may come to view these institutions as disingenuous or self-serving. This mistrust can be particularly damaging in contexts where the success of peace and security initiatives relies on strong collaboration between youth and other stakeholders. Without trust, these collaborations are unlikely to be effective, and the legitimacy of the institutions involved may be called into question.
- 3. Reinforcement of Existing Power Structures:** Tokenism ultimately reinforces existing power structures by maintaining the status quo. When young people are included in name only, without real influence, the power to make decisions remains concentrated in the hands of older adults or established authorities. This not only marginalizes youth but also perpetuates the very dynamics that contribute to conflict and insecurity in the first place. By failing to challenge and change these power structures, tokenism prevents the kind of transformative change that is necessary for sustainable peace and security.

The "More than Tokens" Initiative

Recognizing the harmful impacts of tokenism, the Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS) launched the **"More than Tokens"** initiative to promote genuine youth engagement in peace and security efforts. This initiative seeks to move beyond symbolic gestures and ensure that young people are meaningfully involved in decision-making processes. Through a series of recommendations, resources, and advocacy efforts, "More than Tokens" challenges organizations and institutions to critically evaluate their youth engagement practices and take actionable steps to empower young people as equal partners. By addressing the root causes of tokenism and advocating for structural changes, this initiative contributes to creating an environment where youth voices are not only heard but are integral to shaping the policies and actions that impact their lives.

PRINCIPLES OF MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Adhering to principles that ensure young people are valued as equal partners in peace and security efforts is essential to moving beyond tokenism and fostering genuine youth engagement. The following principles outline the key elements necessary for meaningful youth participation in the YPS agenda.

Inclusive Participation

Inclusive Participation is the foundation of meaningful youth engagement. It involves ensuring that youth from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are genuinely included in all aspects of decision-making processes. This means not only inviting a wide range of young people to participate but also creating an environment where their contributions are valued and respected.

Inclusive participation requires actively reaching out to marginalized youth, including those from conflict-affected areas, Indigenous and racialized communities, LGBTQI+ youth, and young people living with disabilities. It also involves addressing barriers that may prevent certain groups from participating, such as language differences, lack of access to resources, or socio-economic challenges. By embracing the diversity of youth voices, organizations can benefit from a broader range of insights and solutions, leading to more effective and equitable peacebuilding efforts.

Youth-Led Initiatives

Youth-Led Initiatives are essential for empowering young people and ensuring that their participation goes beyond symbolic gestures. In youth-led initiatives, young people are not just participants but the leaders and decision-makers who drive the agenda. These initiatives allow youth to take ownership of projects, develop their leadership skills, and directly influence the outcomes.

Supporting youth-led initiatives means providing young people with the resources, mentorship, and platforms they need to succeed. It also requires a shift in power dynamics, where older adults and established institutions recognize and respect the autonomy of youth. When young people lead, they bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and energy to peace and security efforts, making these initiatives more relevant and impactful.

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and Accountability are critical components of any meaningful youth engagement process. These principles ensure that the processes involving youth participation are clear, open, and subject to scrutiny. Transparency involves providing young people with accurate information about the goals, expectations, and outcomes of their involvement, as well as the decision-making processes in which they are engaged.

Accountability, on the other hand, involves holding all stakeholders responsible for their actions and commitments. This includes creating mechanisms for young people to provide feedback, voice concerns, and hold organizations accountable for their promises. When transparency and accountability are prioritized, youth can trust that their participation is meaningful and that their contributions will be taken seriously. This builds confidence in the process and encourages sustained engagement from young people.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR DE-TOKENIZATION

Organizations must adopt practical tools and strategies that foster genuine engagement to effectively combat tokenism and promote meaningful youth participation. This section provides a roadmap for de-tokenization, offering actionable steps to create environments where young people are valued as equal partners in peace and security initiatives.



Self-Assessment Framework

The **Self-Assessment Framework** (see Annex 1) is a vital tool for organizations to evaluate their current practices and identify areas where tokenism may exist. This framework serves as a checklist, prompting organizations to reflect on how they engage with youth and assess the extent to which young people have real influence in decision-making processes.

Key components of the framework might include:

- **Inclusion:** Are youth from diverse backgrounds represented? Are their voices genuinely considered?
- **Decision-Making:** Do young people have a say in decisions that affect them? Are they involved in setting agendas and determining outcomes?
- **Support:** Are resources, training, and mentorship provided to enable meaningful participation?
- **Outcomes:** Is there evidence that youth contributions lead to tangible changes or influence decisions?

By regularly using this framework, organizations can identify gaps in their practices, recognize areas where tokenism may be occurring, and take corrective action to foster more meaningful youth engagement.

Capacity-Building

Capacity-Building is essential for empowering young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate meaningfully in YPS initiatives. This involves providing youth with training, mentorship, and resources to develop their leadership, communication, and advocacy skills.



Key strategies for capacity-building include:

- **Training Programs:** Offer workshops and training sessions focused on leadership development, public speaking, negotiation, and conflict resolution.
- **Mentorship Opportunities:** Connect young people with experienced mentors who can guide them through the complexities of peace and security work.
- **Resource Access:** Ensure that youth have access to the tools, information, and platforms they need to contribute effectively.

By investing in capacity-building, organizations can equip young people to take on leadership roles, confidently express their opinions, and actively shape the outcomes of peace and security efforts.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

Youth-Adult Partnerships (see Annex 5) are crucial for creating collaborative environments where young people and older adults share power and responsibilities equally. These partnerships challenge traditional power dynamics and promote a culture of mutual respect and co-leadership.

Strategies to foster effective youth-adult partnerships include:

- **Shared Decision-Making:** Involve youth and older adults in all stages of decision-making processes, from planning to implementation and evaluation.
- **Co-Leadership Models:** Establish co-leadership structures where young people and older adults share roles and responsibilities, ensuring that youth voices carry equal weight.
- **Intergenerational Dialogue:** Facilitate open and ongoing communication between youth and older adults to build trust, understanding, and collaborative problem-solving.

By promoting youth-adult partnerships, organizations can create spaces where young people are seen as equal contributors, with their insights and perspectives fully integrated into decision-making processes.



Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback Mechanisms (see Annex 3) are essential for ensuring that youth voices are continuously heard and acted upon. These mechanisms provide young people with the opportunity to share their experiences, offer suggestions, and raise concerns in real time, thereby fostering a culture of responsiveness and continuous improvement.

Key components of effective feedback mechanisms include:

- **Regular Surveys and Focus Groups:** Conduct surveys and focus group discussions to gather feedback from young participants on their experiences and the effectiveness of engagement processes.
- **Open Communication Channels:** Establish accessible and user-friendly channels (e.g., suggestion boxes, online platforms) where youth can provide feedback anonymously if they choose.
- **Responsive Action:** Ensure that feedback is not only collected but also acted upon, with clear communication back to youth on how their input has influenced decisions or led to changes.

By establishing robust feedback mechanisms, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to valuing youth input and making necessary adjustments to create more meaningful and effective participation opportunities.

YAYS AND NAYS

Yays: Good Practices for Enabling Youth Engagement

- ✔ Inclusive Participation
 - ✔ Involve youth from diverse backgrounds, including marginalized groups.
 - ✔ Ensure youth voices have a real influence on outcomes.
- ✔ Youth-Led Initiatives
 - ✔ Support projects where young people have leadership roles and decision-making authority.
 - ✔ Provide resources, mentorship, and platforms for youth-led initiatives.
- ✔ Capacity-building
 - ✔ Offer training and development opportunities for young people.
 - ✔ Create mentorship programs to guide youth in civic participation.
- ✔ Collaborative Partnerships
 - ✔ Promote equal partnerships between youth and older adults with shared power.
 - ✔ Encourage intergenerational dialogue and joint decision-making.
- ✔ Transparent Processes
 - ✔ Maintain clear communication with youth about goals, processes, and outcomes.
 - ✔ Ensure accountability by providing feedback on how youth input is used.
- ✔ Feedback Mechanisms
 - ✔ Establish continuous feedback loops for youth to share experiences and suggestions.
 - ✔ Regularly assess and adjust engagement strategies based on youth feedback.
- ✔ Recognition and Value
 - ✔ Acknowledge youth contributions as equal stakeholders.
 - ✔ Provide platforms for youth to showcase their work and influence public opinion.

YAYS AND NAYS

Nays: What to Avoid in Youth Engagement

- ⊗ Symbolic Participation
 - ⊗ Avoid inviting youth without giving them real decision-making power.
 - ⊗ Do not use youth as "window dressing" without valuing their contributions.
- ⊗ Selective Inclusion
 - ⊗ Avoid engaging only with youth who align with pre-existing views.
 - ⊗ Do not exclude the voices of marginalized youth or those who challenge the status quo.
- ⊗ Superficial Engagement
 - ⊗ Avoid organizing one-off events without follow-up.
 - ⊗ Do not prioritize the quantity of youth engagement over quality.
- ⊗ Lack of Support
 - ⊗ Avoid failing to provide necessary resources, training, or mentorship.
 - ⊗ Do not expect youth to participate without compensating them for their time.
- ⊗ Adult-Centric Power Dynamics
 - ⊗ Avoid making decisions on behalf of youth without their input.
 - ⊗ Do not undermine youth leadership or treat young people as secondary players.
- ⊗ Opaque Processes
 - ⊗ Avoid lack of transparency in decision-making and use of youth contributions.
 - ⊗ Do not withhold clear information about participation objectives and outcomes.
- ⊗ Token Recognition
 - ⊗ Avoid offering recognition without real opportunities for youth to influence change.
 - ⊗ Do not publicly praise youth involvement while maintaining traditional power structures.

ACTION PLAN

This section outlines a practical action plan to ensure the effective implementation of de-tokenization strategies in youth engagement. The plan provides a step-by-step guide for organizations to follow and methods for monitoring and evaluating the success of these efforts over time.

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Initial Assessment

- **Conduct a Self-Assessment:** Begin by using the Self-Assessment Framework outlined in the toolkit to evaluate your current youth engagement practices. Identify areas where tokenism may exist and where improvements are needed.
- **Set Clear Objectives:** Define clear, measurable objectives for your de-tokenization efforts. What specific changes do you want to see in your organization's approach to youth engagement?

2. Engagement Planning

- **Involve Youth in Planning:** Ensure that young people are involved in planning the de-tokenization process. This includes setting goals, defining roles, and developing timelines. Their input is crucial for creating a plan that resonates with youth.
- **Develop a Capacity-Building Program:** Create a training and mentorship program to equip youth with the skills they need to participate meaningfully. This should include leadership development, communication skills, and knowledge about civic processes.

3. Implementation

- **Launch Youth-Led Initiatives:** Encourage and support projects where young people have decision-making authority. Provide the necessary resources and mentorship to help these initiatives succeed.

- **Foster Youth-Adult Partnerships:** Establish structures where youth and older adults share power equally. This can include co-leadership models, joint committees, or intergenerational dialogues.

4. Transparent Communication

- **Maintain Open Channels:** Keep communication transparent throughout the process. Regularly update all participants on progress, decisions, and outcomes. Make sure that youth understand how their contributions are being used.
- **Facilitate Feedback:** Establish continuous feedback mechanisms to gather input from youth participants. This could be through surveys, focus groups, or informal discussions.

5. Execution and Adaptation

- **Monitor Progress:** As you implement your plan, regularly monitor progress against the objectives set during the initial assessment. Are the youth involved feeling more empowered? Is there a noticeable shift away from tokenism?
- **Adapt Strategies:** Based on feedback and monitoring data, be prepared to adapt your strategies. De-tokenization is an ongoing process that requires flexibility and responsiveness.

6. Final Evaluation

- **Conduct a Post-Implementation Review:** Once the de-tokenization strategies have been in place for a significant period, conduct a thorough review. Compare outcomes with the initial objectives and assess whether the goals have been met.
- **Document Lessons Learned:** Gather insights from the entire process and document what worked, what didn't, and why. This documentation can serve as a valuable resource for future initiatives and other organizations working on de-tokenization.

Monitoring and Evaluation (See Annex 4)

1. Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Identify specific, measurable indicators that will help you assess the effectiveness of your de-tokenization efforts. These might include:
 - The number of youth-led initiatives launched.
 - The diversity of youth participants involved.
 - The level of youth satisfaction with their participation.
 - The impact of youth input on decision-making processes.

2. Regular Monitoring

- Implement a regular schedule for monitoring these KPIs. This could be quarterly or bi-annually, depending on the scope of your de-tokenization initiatives.
- Collect data from youth participants and other stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Track both quantitative and qualitative data.

3. Feedback Loops

- Establish feedback loops where monitoring findings are shared with all stakeholders, including youth participants. Use this feedback to make ongoing adjustments to your strategies.
- Encourage youth to actively contribute to the evaluation process, ensuring that their voices are integral to assessing the initiatives' impact.

4. Comprehensive Evaluation

- After a defined period (eg., one year), conduct a comprehensive evaluation of your de-tokenization efforts. This should include an analysis of the KPIs, stakeholder feedback, and a review of the overall impact on youth engagement.
- Publish a report summarizing the evaluation findings. Share this report with all stakeholders and use it as a basis for future planning and improvement.

5. Continuous Improvement

- Treat de-tokenization as an ongoing commitment rather than a one-time project. Use the insights gained from monitoring and evaluation to refine your approach continually.
- Establish a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that your organization remains responsive to young people's needs and contributions.



RESOURCES

This section provides a collection of practical tools and further reading to support organizations in their efforts to de-tokenize youth engagement. These resources are designed to help you implement the strategies outlined in this toolkit effectively.

Templates and Tools

1. Self-Assessment Template (Annex 1)

- **Purpose:** A template to help organizations evaluate their current practices and identify areas where tokenism may exist.
- **Features:** Includes sections on organizational culture, youth engagement practices, decision-making processes, and diversity and inclusion.
- **Usage:** Can be used at the beginning of your de-tokenization journey to establish a baseline and periodically to track progress.

2. Youth Engagement Planning Tool (Annex 2)

- **Purpose:** A tool for planning youth-led initiatives and ensuring meaningful participation.
- **Features:** Covers goal setting, role allocation, timelines, resources needed, and expected outcomes.
- **Usage:** Ideal for use in the initial stages of project planning to ensure youth have a central role in the process.

3. Feedback Form Template (Annex 3)

- **Purpose:** A standardized form for gathering feedback from young participants about their experience and the effectiveness of the engagement strategies.
- **Features:** Includes questions on satisfaction, inclusivity, impact, and suggestions for improvement.
- **Usage:** Distribute regularly throughout the engagement process to capture ongoing feedback and after the completion of specific initiatives.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Checklist (Annex 4)

- **Purpose:** A checklist to assist organizations in monitoring and evaluating their de-tokenization efforts.
- **Features:** Includes key performance indicators (KPIs), methods for data collection, and a timeline for evaluations.
- **Usage:** Use this checklist to systematically track the effectiveness of your de-tokenization strategies over time.

5. Youth-Adult Partnership Guide (Annex 5)

- **Purpose:** A guide for fostering equal partnerships between youth and older adults in decision-making.
- **Features:** Offers tips on building trust, sharing power, and creating a collaborative environment.
- **Usage:** Utilize this guide during the implementation phase to strengthen youth-adult relationships.

Further Reading

For those interested in deepening their understanding of de-tokenization and youth engagement, the following resources provide valuable insights and research:

“More Than Just a Seat at the Table: Moving Beyond Tokenism in Youth Engagement”

- **Author:** Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS)
- **Summary:** A detailed report on the CCYPS “More Than Tokens” initiative, offering insights into effective strategies for avoiding tokenism in youth engagement.
- **URL:** canadayps.org/more-than-tokens

“Guide on Inclusive Consultations”

- **Author:** UNOY Peacebuilders
- **Summary:** This guide provides detailed steps on how to conduct inclusive consultations that ensure meaningful participation from youth, especially in peacebuilding contexts.
- **URL:** unoy.org/downloads/guide-on-inclusive-consultations/

“Meaningful Youth Engagement Checklist”

- **Author:** UNOY Peacebuilders
- **Summary:** A practical checklist designed to help organizations assess and improve their youth engagement practices, moving towards more meaningful and impactful involvement of young people.
- **URL:** unoy.org/downloads/mye-checklist/

“Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Guide for Public Officials”

- **Author:** Office of the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth
- **Summary:** A comprehensive guide for public officials on integrating youth into peace and security efforts. It offers practical steps, case studies, and examples of successful youth engagement.
- **URL:** un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/YPS-Guide-for-Public-Officials.pdf

Resource Mapping: Meaningful Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

- **Platform:** Padlet by KOFF Swiss Platform for Peacebuilding
- **Summary:** An interactive resource map providing access to a variety of tools, articles, and best practices on meaningful youth participation in peacebuilding.
- **URL:** padlet.com/KOFF_SwissPlatformforPeacebuilding/resource-mapping-meaningful-youth-participation-in-peacebuilding-r6mtwokp245ohcw



CONCLUSION

The journey toward de-tokenization in youth engagement within the YPS agenda is not merely a challenge but an essential transformation required to build a more equitable and inclusive world. This toolkit has provided insights, principles, tools, and strategies to support organizations in moving beyond tokenistic practices to embrace genuine, meaningful participation of young people.

Call to Action

The time for action is now. We call upon all stakeholders—governments, civil society organizations, international institutions, and youth-led groups—to commit to the authentic and impactful engagement of young people in all aspects of the YPS agenda. It is not enough to invite youth to the table; we must ensure that their voices are heard, valued, and acted upon. By doing so, we acknowledge that young people are not only the leaders of tomorrow but also powerful agents of change today.

Sustainability

Sustaining de-tokenization efforts is crucial for achieving long-term impact. It requires continuous reflection, adaptation, and commitment. Organizations must embed the principles of meaningful youth participation into their policies, structures, and cultures. This is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process that demands vigilance, persistence, and a willingness to evolve.

We must recognize that true de-tokenization is a journey that involves everyone. Only through sustained effort can we foster an environment where young people are empowered to contribute fully and authentically to peacebuilding and security initiatives. Let us work together to create a future where youth participation is not the exception but the norm, leading to a more just and peaceful world for all.

ANNEX 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE: EVALUATING TOKENISM IN ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Purpose: This template is designed to help organizations evaluate their current practices and identify areas where tokenism may exist. It serves as a baseline assessment tool at the beginning of your de-tokenization journey and can be used periodically to track progress.

Section 1: Organizational Culture

1.1. Values and Mission

- **Does your organization have a stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)?**
 - *Yes / No / Partially*
- **How frequently are DEI values communicated and reinforced across the organization?**
 - *Regularly / Occasionally / Rarely / Never*

1.2. Leadership and Accountability

- **Are there designated leaders or committees responsible for DEI initiatives?**
 - *Yes / No / In Progress*
- **How is accountability for DEI goals measured and reported within the organization?**
 - *Regular Reporting / Annual Reviews / No Formal Mechanism*

1.3. Training and Development

- **Does the organization offer training on DEI topics to all team members?**
 - *Yes / No / In Progress*
- **Is there an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of this training?**
 - *Regular Evaluation / Occasional Evaluation / No Evaluation*

Section 2: Youth Engagement Practices

2.1. Inclusion of Youth Voices

- **Are youth involved in decision-making processes within your organization?**
 - *Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Never*
- **How are youth voices integrated into project development and implementation?**
 - *Direct Involvement / Advisory Roles / Limited Consultation / Not Involved*

2.2. Support and Empowerment

- **Does your organization provide mentorship and support specifically targeted at youth participants?**
 - *Yes / No / Partially*
- **How are the contributions of youth recognized and valued?**
 - *Public Acknowledgment / Private Recognition / Limited Recognition / Not Recognized*

Section 3: Decision-Making Processes

3.1. Inclusivity of Decision-Making

- **Are diverse perspectives actively sought in decision-making processes?**
 - *Always / Sometimes / Rarely / Never*
- **How are decisions communicated to those affected by them?**
 - *Transparent Communication / Limited Communication / No Communication*

3.2. Feedback and Revisions

- **Is there a structured process for collecting and responding to feedback on decisions?**
 - Yes / No / In Progress
- **How often are decisions reviewed and adjusted based on feedback?**
 - Regularly / Occasionally / Rarely / Never

Section 4: Diversity and Inclusion

4.1. Representation

- **Does your organization actively seek to recruit and retain a diverse workforce?**
 - Yes / No / Partially
- **How diverse is your organizational leadership compared to the general workforce?**
 - Highly Diverse / Moderately Diverse / Slightly Diverse / Not Diverse

4.2. Inclusive Practices

- **Are there policies and practices in place to support an inclusive work environment?**
 - Comprehensive Policies / Partial Policies / Minimal Policies / No Policies
- **How are inclusivity efforts evaluated and improved?**
 - Regular Audits / Periodic Reviews / Informal Assessments / No Evaluations

Instructions for Use:

- **Complete the Template:** Review each question and select the response that best reflects your organization's current practices.
- **Identify Areas for Improvement:** Analyze your responses to pinpoint areas where tokenism may be present and where improvements are needed.
- **Develop Action Plans:** Use the identified areas for improvement to create actionable steps towards enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within your organization.
- **Track Progress:** Periodically re-assess using this template to monitor progress and adjust strategies as necessary.

Note: This template should be used as a starting point for discussions and actions towards reducing tokenism. Consider complementing it with other tools and resources tailored to your organization's specific needs.

ANNEX 2: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TOOL

Purpose: This tool is designed to assist in planning youth-led initiatives and ensuring meaningful participation. It helps organize key aspects of the project, from goal setting to resource allocation, with a focus on empowering youth to take a central role in the process.

1. Goal Setting

1.1. Define the Project Goals

- **What are the primary goals of the youth-led initiative?**
 - *[Describe the specific objectives of the project.]*
- **How do these goals align with the needs and interests of the youth involved?**
 - *[Explain how the goals reflect the priorities of the youth participants.]*

1.2. Set SMART Goals

- **Specific:** *[What exactly do you want to achieve?]*
- **Measurable:** *[How will you measure progress and success?]*
- **Achievable:** *[Are the goals realistic and attainable?]*
- **Relevant:** *[How do the goals connect to the broader mission or vision?]*
- **Time-bound:** *[What is the deadline for achieving these goals?]*

2. Role Allocation

2.1. Identify Key Roles

- **What roles are needed for the successful execution of the initiative?**
 - *[List roles such as project leader, coordinator, communicator, etc.]*
- **How will roles be allocated to youth participants?**
 - *[Describe the process for assigning roles, including any criteria or considerations.]*

2.2. Define Responsibilities

- **What are the specific responsibilities associated with each role?**
 - *[Detail the tasks and expectations for each role.]*
- **How will responsibilities be shared or rotated among youth participants?**
 - *[Explain any plans for sharing or rotating tasks.]*

3. Timelines

3.1. Develop a Project Timeline

- **What are the major milestones of the project?**
 - *[List key milestones and deliverables.]*
- **What are the deadlines for each milestone?**
 - *[Specify dates or timeframes for each milestone.]*

3.2. Create a Detailed Schedule

- **What is the overall timeline for the project?**
 - *[Provide a general timeline from start to finish.]*
- **What are the key activities and their deadlines?**
 - *[Outline activities and their respective deadlines.]*

4. Resources Needed

4.1. Identify Required Resources

- **What resources are necessary for the project (e.g., funding, materials, expertise)?**
 - *[List all required resources.]*
- **How will these resources be obtained?**
 - *[Describe how you plan to acquire or allocate resources.]*

4.2. Budget Planning

- **What is the budget for the project?**
 - *[Provide a detailed budget breakdown.]*
- **How will the budget be managed and monitored?**
 - *[Explain the process for managing and tracking expenses.]*

5. Expected Outcomes

5.1. Define Expected Outcomes

- **What are the anticipated results of the project?**
 - *[Describe the expected impacts and results.]*
- **How will these outcomes benefit the youth involved and the broader community?**
 - *[Explain the benefits and significance of the outcomes.]*

5.2. Evaluation and Feedback

- **How will the success of the project be evaluated?**
 - *[Outline methods for evaluating the project's success.]*
- **How will feedback be collected from youth participants and other stakeholders?**
 - *[Describe the process for gathering and using feedback.]*

Instructions for Use:

- **Complete Each Section:** Use the tool to detail each aspect of the project planning process, ensuring all critical elements are addressed.
- **Engage Youth:** Involve youth participants in filling out this tool to ensure their perspectives and needs are incorporated.
- **Review and Finalize:** Regularly review the completed tool with your team and make adjustments as needed to ensure the initiative is on track.
- **Monitor Progress:** Use the tool throughout the project to monitor progress and make any necessary changes to stay aligned with goals.

Note: This planning tool is intended to help you create a robust framework for youth-led initiatives. Adapt it as needed to fit your project's specific context and needs.

ANNEX 3: FEEDBACK FORM TEMPLATE

Purpose: This standardized feedback form is designed to gather insights from young participants about their experiences and the effectiveness of engagement strategies. It helps assess satisfaction, inclusivity, and impact and collect suggestions for improvement.

1. Participant Information

- **Name (Optional):** *[Text Field]*
- **Age:** *[Text Field]*
- **Role in the Initiative:** *[Text Field]*

2. Satisfaction

2.1. Overall Satisfaction

- **How satisfied are you with your overall experience in this initiative?**
 - *Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied*

2.2. Specific Aspects

- **How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the initiative?**
 - **Communication:** *Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied*
 - **Support and Resources:** *Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied*
 - **Opportunities for Contribution:** *Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied*
 - **Feedback Mechanisms:** *Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very Dissatisfied*

3. Inclusivity

3.1. Feeling Included

- **Did you feel that your ideas and opinions were valued and considered?**
 - *Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never*

3.2. Diverse Perspectives

- **How well do you think the initiative represented diverse perspectives and backgrounds?**
 - *Very Well / Well / Neutral / Poorly / Very Poorly*

3.3. Accessibility

- **Were there any barriers that affected your ability to participate fully?**
 - *Yes / No*
 - *If yes, please describe:* *[Text Field]*

4. Impact

4.1. Personal Impact

- **How has participating in this initiative impacted your personal growth or skills?**
 - *Significantly / Moderately / Slightly / Not At All*

4.2. Community Impact

- **How do you think the initiative has impacted the community or target audience?**
 - *Significantly / Moderately / Slightly / Not At All*

5. Suggestions for Improvement

5.1. General Suggestions

- **What aspects of the initiative do you think could be improved?**
- *[Text Field]*

5.2. Specific Recommendations

- **Do you have specific suggestions for improving communication, support, or engagement strategies?**
- *[Text Field]*

5.3. Additional Comments

- **Please provide any additional comments or feedback that you think would be helpful.**
- *[Text Field]*

Instructions for Use:

- **Distribute Regularly:** Share this feedback form at key stages of the engagement process to capture ongoing feedback.
- **Collect and Analyze:** Gather responses and analyze the data to assess participant satisfaction, inclusivity, and impact.
- **Implement Changes:** Use the feedback to make informed adjustments and improvements to the engagement strategies.
- **Follow Up:** Consider following up with participants to discuss their feedback and any actions taken based on their input.

Note: This feedback form is intended to support continuous improvement in youth engagement initiatives. Adapt the questions as needed to align with your project's specific context and goals.

ANNEX 4: MONITORING AND EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Purpose: This checklist is designed to assist organizations in monitoring and evaluating their de-tokenization efforts. It includes key performance indicators (KPIs), methods for data collection, and a timeline for evaluations to systematically track the effectiveness of de-tokenization strategies over time.

1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1.1. Organizational Culture

- **KPI 1: Integration of DEI Values**

- Measure the extent to which diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) values are embedded in organizational policies and practices.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "DEI values included in 100% of organizational policies."]

- **KPI 2: Leadership Commitment**

- Assess the presence and activity of leadership roles or committees dedicated to DEI.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "At least one dedicated DEI leader or committee with regular meetings."]

1.2. Youth Engagement

- **KPI 3: Youth Involvement in Decision-Making**

- Track the percentage of decisions made with active youth involvement.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "Youth involved in 50% of decision-making processes."]

- **KPI 4: Youth Satisfaction**

- Measure the satisfaction levels of youth participants with their roles and contributions.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "80% or higher satisfaction rate from feedback surveys."]

1.3. Decision-Making Processes

- **KPI 5: Inclusivity in Decision-Making**

- Evaluate how diverse perspectives are included in decision-making.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "At least three diverse perspectives considered in each major decision."]

- **KPI 6: Feedback Integration**

- Measure the extent to which feedback is collected and integrated into decisions.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "Feedback integrated into 75% of decision-making processes."]

1.4. Diversity and Inclusion

- **KPI 7: Diversity of Workforce**

- Track the diversity of the workforce, especially in leadership positions.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "Leadership team is at least 30% diverse."]

- **KPI 8: Inclusion Practices**

- Assess the implementation of inclusive practices and policies.
- Target: [Describe the target level, e.g., "All employees receive DEI training and inclusive policies are in place."]

2. Methods for Data Collection

2.1. Surveys and Feedback Forms

- **Method:** Distribute surveys and feedback forms to staff and youth participants regularly.
 - *Frequency: Quarterly / Bi-Annually*

2.2. Interviews and Focus Groups

- **Method:** Conduct interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders to gain deeper insights.
 - *Frequency: Annually / Semi-Annually*

2.3. Document Review

- **Method:** Review organizational policies, meeting minutes, and other relevant documents to assess integration of DEI values.
 - *Frequency: Bi-Annually / Annually*

2.4. Observations

- **Method:** Observe meetings and decision-making processes to evaluate inclusivity and participation.
 - *Frequency: Monthly / Quarterly*

2.5. Data Analysis

- **Method:** Analyze collected data to assess progress against KPIs and identify trends or areas for improvement.
 - *Frequency: Quarterly / Annually*

3. Timeline for Evaluations

3.1. Initial Assessment

- **Action:** Conduct a baseline assessment to establish initial conditions and set benchmarks.
 - *Timeline: At the start of the de-tokenization efforts*

3.2. Ongoing Monitoring

- **Action:** Perform regular monitoring according to the frequency outlined for each data collection method.
 - *Timeline: Quarterly / Bi-Annually*

3.3. Mid-Term Review

- **Action:** Conduct a mid-term review to evaluate progress towards KPIs and make necessary adjustments.
 - *Timeline: Midway through the de-tokenization period*

3.4. Final Evaluation

- **Action:** Complete a final evaluation to assess overall effectiveness and impact of the de-tokenization efforts.
 - *Timeline: At the end of the de-tokenization period*

3.5. Continuous Improvement

- **Action:** Use insights from evaluations to inform ongoing improvements and future strategies.
 - *Timeline: Ongoing, as needed*

Instructions for Use:

- **Complete the Checklist:** Regularly review and update each section of the checklist to ensure all KPIs are being tracked effectively.
- **Gather Data:** Use the specified methods for data collection to gather relevant information.
- **Analyze and Review:** Analyze the collected data to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Adjust Strategies:** Based on the findings, make necessary adjustments to your de-tokenization strategies to enhance effectiveness.

Note: This checklist serves as a guide for monitoring and evaluating de-tokenization efforts. Adapt the KPIs, methods, and timelines as needed to fit your organization's specific context and goals.

ANNEX 5: YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

Purpose: This guide is designed to foster equal partnerships between youth and older adults in decision-making processes. It provides practical tips on building trust, sharing power, and creating a collaborative environment to ensure that both youth and older adults work effectively together.

1. Building Trust

1.1. Open Communication

- **Tip:** Foster an environment where both youth and older adults feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas openly.
- **Action:** Schedule regular check-ins and create safe spaces for honest dialogue.

1.2. Respect and Validation

- **Tip:** Show respect for each other's perspectives and validate contributions from all members.
- **Action:** Actively listen and acknowledge the value of each participant's input.

1.3. Consistent Engagement

- **Tip:** Maintain consistent and reliable engagement to build long-term trust.
- **Action:** Follow through on commitments and provide regular updates on progress and changes.

1.4. Empathy and Understanding

- **Tip:** Cultivate empathy by understanding the experiences and viewpoints of others.
- **Action:** Encourage sharing personal experiences and practicing active listening.

2. Sharing Power

2.1. Equal Decision-Making

- **Tip:** Ensure that both youth and older adults have an equal voice in decision-making processes.
- **Action:** Use structured methods such as voting or consensus-building to make decisions together.

2.2. Transparent Processes

- **Tip:** Keep decision-making processes transparent to build trust and accountability.
- **Action:** Clearly communicate how decisions are made and how input is incorporated.

2.3. Delegating Responsibilities

- **Tip:** Share responsibilities and roles to ensure that both youth and older adults contribute meaningfully.
- **Action:** Assign tasks based on strengths and interests, and rotate responsibilities when appropriate.

2.4. Providing Support

- **Tip:** Support youth in taking on leadership roles and responsibilities.
- **Action:** Offer mentorship, training, and resources to help youth develop the skills needed for effective participation.

3. Creating a Collaborative Environment

3.1. Setting Shared Goals

- **Tip:** Establish common goals that both youth and older adults are committed to achieving.
- **Action:** Collaboratively define objectives and align efforts towards these goals.

3.2. Building Team Dynamics

- **Tip:** Develop strong team dynamics by encouraging collaboration and teamwork.
- **Action:** Facilitate team-building activities and promote a culture of mutual support and encouragement.

3.3. Encouraging Innovation

- **Tip:** Create an environment that encourages creativity and innovative thinking from both youth and older adults.
- **Action:** Support and explore new ideas and approaches, and provide opportunities for experimentation.

3.4. Addressing Conflicts Constructively

- **Tip:** Address conflicts openly and constructively to maintain a positive working relationship.
- **Action:** Use conflict resolution strategies and mediation to address issues and find mutually agreeable solutions.

3.5. Evaluating and Reflecting

- **Tip:** Regularly evaluate the partnership and reflect on its effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- **Action:** Conduct periodic reviews and feedback sessions to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.

Instructions for Use:

- **Implement the Guide:** Use this guide during the implementation phase of your projects to strengthen youth-adult partnerships.
- **Engage Regularly:** Apply these tips consistently to build and maintain effective collaborations between youth and older adults.
- **Review and Adapt:** Regularly review the partnership dynamics and adapt strategies as needed to improve collaboration and effectiveness.

Note: This guide serves as a framework for fostering meaningful and equitable partnerships. Adapt the tips and strategies as needed to fit the specific context and needs of your organization and partnership.



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