

Youth Stakeholder Mapping

Before starting any OGP co-creation process, use this tool to identify:

- Which young people and youth organisations exist in your context
- Which groups are already represented and which are missing
- What barriers prevent some young people from participating
- How to design a process that includes diverse youth voices

Remember, a good stakeholder map does not only ask: “Who can we invite?”

It also asks: “Who is missing, why are they missing, and what do we need to change so they can participate?”

Note for restricted and high-risk environments

Before you start mapping actors, ask:

Could being named in this database put any individual or organisation at risk?

If the answer is yes, do the following to map safely:

- Use descriptive categories instead of names, e.g. "informal youth network working on bodily autonomy, operates with limited public profile" rather than the organization's name.
- Store the completed database securely. Do not share it in open group chats, public drives, or with anyone who does not need access.
- Maintain two versions if necessary: a detailed, encrypted internal map for operational planning, and an anonymized, categorical version for external collaboration and reporting.

HOW TO USE IT

STEP 1

Identify Youth Actors in Your Context

Start by listing all youth actors you know or can identify—not only registered organisations, but also informal groups, community networks, online communities, and individual youth leaders. Record them using Table 1.

Keep two things in mind as you map. First, being a youth organisation does not automatically mean representing all young people—consider who each actor is connected to, their legitimacy among young people, and whose voices may still be missing.

Second, whether a group is formal or informal matters. Grassroots collectives are often the most deeply connected to marginalised communities, yet the least likely to be invited into formal spaces. Mapping this is your first indicator of where power is unevenly distributed.

Make sure you include at least one of each of the following categories:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Registered youth organizations | ☐ Youth with disabilities organizations |
| ☐ Informal youth groups | ☐ LGBTQIA+ youth groups or networks |
| ☐ Student associations and unions | ☐ Faith-based youth groups |
| ☐ Community-based groups | ☐ Youth-led media platforms |
| ☐ Young women's groups | ☐ Digital communities |
| ☐ Rural youth networks | ☐ Youth activists and community leaders |

Table 1. Initial Youth Stakeholder Mapping

NUMBER:

ACTOR/GROUP:

WHAT DO THEY DO? (Main focus)

--

GEOGRAPHIC REACH (Local, regional, national, or international)

--

TYPE OF ACTOR/GROUP (Registered, informal, or network)

--

WHICH MARGINALIZED GROUPS DO THEY REPRESENT?

--

ANY PREVIOUS OGP OR ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE?

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HOW COULD THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS?

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STEP 2

Identify Who is Missing

A common mistake is assuming that the people who show up to meetings represent all young people. A good map is honest about gaps—if a whole community has no representative(s), that empty space is one of your most important findings.

Ask: who is not represented, and why?

Record your answers in Table 2. Knowing who is missing is as useful as knowing who is there.

Table 2. Missing Groups

NUMBER:

MISSING GROUP/COMMUNITY

--

WHY MIGHT THEY BE ABSENT?

--

WHAT WOULD HELP THEM PARTICIPATE?

--

LEVEL OF URGENCY TO ENGAGE

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STEP 3

Understand Participation Barriers

Being invited does not always mean being able to participate. Use the checklist in Table 3 to identify what stops or can stop certain actors or organizations from taking part in participatory processes.

Some barriers to consider are transport costs, internet access, language, disability accessibility, fear of discrimination, safety concerns, lack of information, meetings at unsuitable times, or simply a lack of trust in institutions. Adjust these barriers as needed according to your context.

Table 3. Understand Participation Barriers

BARRIER: Financial barriers

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BARRIER: Digital barriers

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BARRIER: Geographic barriers

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BARRIER: Language barriers

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BARRIER: Accessibility barriers

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

BARRIER: Safety concerns

DOES THIS AFFECT YOUTH PARTICIPATION? Yes / No

WHICH SPECIFIC ACTOR/ORGANIZATION IS AFFECTED BY THIS BARRIER?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

STEP 4

Power and Influence Audit

Not all actors have the same ability to influence decisions. This step helps you see who holds power—and who is shut out. Use Table 4 to map the actors from Step 1 through three power lenses: visible power, invisible power, and hidden power.

A stakeholder map that only lists who is physically present will always miss the true picture. The most consequential actors are often those you cannot see in the room. Work through the following questions with your team. For each, identify which actors belong to which power column:

- Who chairs the meetings, and who sets the agenda before anyone walks in? (Visible power / Hidden power)
- Who gets consulted quietly before a decision is announced publicly? (Hidden power)
- Which groups are always mentioned, and which are never even named? (Named = Visible power; Never named = Invisible power)
- When a group applies to join a space and gets no reply at all—not a yes, not a no, just silence—who does that happen to here? (Invisible power)
- If a young person stays quiet in a room, is it because they have nothing to say or because they have learned that people like them are not listened to? (Invisible power)

Your answers will shape how you engage. With visible actors, you work through formal channels. With hidden power, you build relationships. With invisible power, you actively create new spaces.

Table 4. Who Really Holds Power? (Power Audit)

Visible power (the power you can see)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THIS SPACE?

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WHO HOLDS IT HERE? (List actors/organizations)

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WHO MAY BE EXCLUDED OR UNDERREPRESENTED BECAUSE OF IT?

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Hidden power (the power behind the scenes)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THIS SPACE?

WHO HOLDS IT HERE? (List actors/organizations)

WHO MAY BE EXCLUDED OR UNDERREPRESENTED BECAUSE OF IT?

Invisible power (the power that prevents voices from being heard)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THIS SPACE?

WHO HOLDS IT HERE? (List actors/organizations)

WHO MAY BE EXCLUDED OR UNDERREPRESENTED BECAUSE OF IT?

STEP 5

Build Your Youth Engagement Plan

The mapping is not complete until it leads to action. Use Table 5 to turn your findings from Steps 1–4 into concrete actions.

Based on Tables 1 and 2, identify who you will prioritize engaging in the co-creation process and what role they will play. Identify youth actors who should not only attend but co-organize the co-creation process itself. Involving them as co-organizers shifts power dynamics from the start.

For each priority actor or organization identified, define how you will engage them.

Possible approaches are:

- Partner with trusted community organizations
- Use youth media, content creators, and trusted digital voices
- Conduct smaller, separate community consultations
- Provide anonymous feedback options
- Use online and offline participation methods

Based on your findings in Tables 3 and 4, identify the power dynamics and barriers that could limit participation of those actors and organizations.

Determine what you will do about them before the co-creation process begins to include them meaningfully and safely.

Table 5. Engagement Plan

NUMBER:

ACTOR/GROUP:

PRIORITY ROLE IN CO-CREATION (e.g. participant, co-organizer, or advisor)

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HOW WILL THEY BE ENGAGED?

--

BARRIER OR POWER DYNAMIC IDENTIFIED FOR PARTICIPATION

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SPECIFIC ACTION TO OVERCOME IT

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