

Tool 12

Youth Involvement Assessment Framework

Use this framework to qualitatively assess whether young people were meaningfully involved at each stage of the OGP journey, or whether their participation was primarily symbolic. Counting participation alone does not demonstrate meaningful involvement. Influence, safety, and feedback mechanisms provide a clearer picture of whether engagement was meaningful and equitable.

Review this framework with your team and civil society partners at three key stages: after co-creation, during implementation, and at the impact assessment stage.

For each stage, review the indicators, answer the key questions, and assign a rating: Genuine, Symbolic, or Absent. Every rating should be supported by concrete evidence (e.g., meeting minutes, participation records, published documents, correspondence where appropriate, or direct observations) to ensure your judgment rests on facts, not impressions.

A note on silence

The hardest exclusion to measure is the one that leaves no trace. When a young person or group applies to take part and receives no response, neither acceptance nor rejection, that silence is itself a result worth recording.

When a group that used to show up goes quiet, do not assume they were satisfied. Ask. The groups missing from your records are often the ones whose barriers to participation were not identified or addressed. A framework that only counts who remained engaged will never identify these forms of exclusion.

THE THREE RATING LEVELS

Genuine

Young people shaped the agenda and outcomes. Their input meaningfully influenced decisions and outcomes, they were able to participate safely and meaningfully, with appropriate support, and they received a clear, transparent account of how their contributions were used.

Symbolic

Young people were included in name only, attendance records, or consultation activities, but their influence on decisions was limited, participation barriers remained, or feedback was not provided.

Absent

Young people were not meaningfully involved at this stage.

STAGE 1: CO-CREATION REVIEW

PRESENCE INDICATORS

Were the most affected groups in the room, or only the easiest to reach?

Were diverse youth groups meaningfully involved from the start, or only informed after decisions were made?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INFLUENCE INDICATORS

What decisions, priorities, or commitments changed because of young people's input?

Did you communicate the reasons why some decisions, priorities, or commitments raised by young people were not incorporated into the action plan?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INCLUSION AND POWER CHECK

Did young people help set the agenda, or only respond to one already decided?

Were young people provided with sufficient time, information, and support to participate meaningfully?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

SAFETY INDICATORS

Did young people have a safe and enabling environment to express their views openly?

Could they raise sensitive issues without fear of negative consequences, retaliation, or unwanted public identification?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

STAGE 2: IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

PRESENCE INDICATORS

Was youth engagement maintained after the commitment was signed, or did it stop at co-creation?

Were youth co-leads given real responsibility and real resources, or just a title?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INFLUENCE INDICATORS

Were youth provided with the information, resources, capacity support, or access needed to perform their role effectively?

Were their recommendations and input reflected in implementation choices, timelines, priorities, or resource allocation?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INCLUSION AND POWER CHECK

Were youth perspectives given meaningful consideration in decision-making?

When disagreements arose, how were different perspectives considered and resolved?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

SAFETY INDICATORS

Did youth involvement expose anyone to risk or retaliation as the work became public?

Were there ways to raise concerns safely?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

STAGE 3: MONITORING & IMPACT REVIEW

PRESENCE INDICATORS

Was youth co-lead engagement maintained to the end of milestones?

Which groups stopped participating, became less engaged, or were never heard from again, and was any effort made to understand why? Silence is not agreement; a group that goes quiet may have been shut out, not satisfied.

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INFLUENCE INDICATORS

Did youth input actually change the outcome, and can you point to how?

What changes, if any, occurred for young people as a result of the commitment?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps

INCLUSION AND POWER CHECK

Were young people informed about how their input was considered, what contributions were incorporated, what was not incorporated, and the reasons why? Or did they contribute their time and ideas without receiving any response or explanation?

Were mid-term reviews conducted with youth, not just about them?

Rating

☐ Genuine ☐ Symbolic ☐ Absent

Key findings

Evidence

Improvements and next steps