GOYN YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



1. GOYN
YOUTH PARTNERSHIP
DESIGN PHASE REVIEW



STANDARD DESIGN PHASE PROCESS

The GOYN Design Phase is made up of **eight activity groups**. Each group includes a set of activities and expected outputs. While these activities are presented in a linear fashion in the GOYN Toolkit, in practice and as illustrated below, **Anchor Partners should undertake some of these activities concurrently**, as they will feed into one another.

The role of Anchor Partners in the Design Phase is to **organize and coordinate the community**, **not** **carry out work in isolation**. Local stakeholders and opportunity youth should be involved throughout this phase of work.



1. YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

OBJECTIVES & RATIONALE

	WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?	WHY DO WE DO THIS?
1	**Understand** the GOYN Youth Voice agenda	To **align with the GOYN youth engagement agenda** from the start
2	**Develop** a youth engagement strategy	To **broaden and deepen** the reach of the GOYN Youth Voice agenda
3	**Set up and train** a high-quality youth advisory group (YAG)	To **enable Opportunity Youth** to contribute meaningfully to GOYN decision-making
4	**Plan** a youth-led session as part of the GOYN Launch	To **put opportunity youth front and center** as GOYN launches in the community

1. YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

PROCESS OVERVIEW

	1. Review GOYN Youth Voice agenda	2. Develop youth engagement strategy ☑	3. Set up & train YAG ☑	4. Plan youth-led session
Time	*1 month*	*1-2 months*	*2-3 months*	*1-2 months*
Activities	i. Review onboarding materials & Toolkit resources ii. Learn from other GOYN communities iii. Onboard Youth Engagement Manager	i. Connect with local youth orgs ii. Review current youth engagement strategies iii. Convene consultative OY group iv. Develop youth engagement strategy v. Craft youth statement vi. Draft YAG terms of reference	i. Recruit YAG members ii. Convene YAG iii. Develop YAG training curriculum	i. Co-design youth-led session as part of GOYN Launch
Outputs	• *N/A*	• Youth engagement strategy • Youth statement • YAG terms of reference	• List of YAG members • YAG training curriculum (incl. training partners)	• Youth-led session (part of GOYN Launch)
Engagement with GOYN	• Onboarding session on Youth Voice & Inclusion • Facilitated session with other Youth Engagement managers	• Biweekly calls • Validate youth engagement strategy	• Biweekly calls • Share YAG ToR & list of YAG members	• Ad-hoc calls • Invite GOYN Global Team to attend youth-led session

☑ *Formal GOYN validation point*

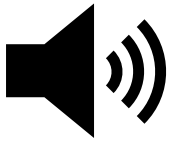
Please note: this section complements Section 2.2. "Collaborative-building" (YAG setup is part of collaborative-building).

EXPECTED OUTPUTS & SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Output	Format	Description	Quality standards	Resources
Youth engagement strategy	Presentation or written document	Details how the GOYN core team will engage opportunity youth in GOYN activities during the design & implementation of GOYN.	❑ Developed in partnership with OY ❑ Includes specific activities & processes to engage OY, including harder-to-reach youth	Positive Youth Development Framework Measuring & understanding youth engagement Youth engagement strategy template
YAG terms of reference (ToR)	Written document	Details the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the YAG.	❑ Covers group composition, role, terms of engagement and meeting frequency	YAG ToR template GOYN Mombasa – YAG ToR GOYN eThekwini – YAG ToR
List of YAG members	Written document	Lists the names of the members of the YAG.	❑ 10-15 YAG members ❑ Members show a diversity of profiles and backgrounds	YAG Tip Sheet Mombasa YAG selection process YAG meeting resources
Youth statement	Written document and/or video	Statement crafted by OY highlighting how they feel they are looked at by society, the skills and abilities that make them assets to their community, and their vision for a thriving future.	❑ Crafted by OY ❑ Short & powerful - no more than 1 page long	Mexico Youth Manifesto *(English & Spanish)*
YAG training curriculum	Written document	Training plan for the first 6-12 months of the YAG, developed in consultation with YAG members.	❑ Includes both personal & professional development themes ❑ Identifies GOYN partners in the community that will deliver the training	YAG training resources
Youth-led session	Event	Event planned with OY, by OY and with support from GOYN core team. Part of GOYN Launch in the community.	❑ Puts OY front and center of the GOYN Launch ❑ Planned by OY, with some logistical support from GOYN core team	*N/A*

1. YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

BEST PRACTICES



Listen up!

Young people have ideas, aspirations, solutions. Genuinely listen and treat their contributions as seriously as those of senior stakeholders.



Build a diverse YAG

Make sure the YAG represents the diversity of your community (gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education levels…). Adults should be aware and sensitive to the needs of the different groups.



Create safe spaces

Work with partners to ensure young people can voice their opinions in any GOYN setting without fear of being ignored, criticized or ridiculed.



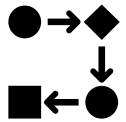
Beware of power imbalances

Be mindful of the inherent power imbalance between OY and adult professionals. Young people should be viewed and respected as experts on their own needs.



Ensure meaningful engagement

Give young people the tools they need to participate meaningfully in GOYN discussions. This could mean training, support with preparation, or dedicated time for youth contributions.



Don’t “check the box”

Having a young person in the room when decisions are made is not enough. OY should be active participants in all GOYN activities.



Train the adults

Engaging youth as partners requires skills and training that many adults lack. Take the time to prepare adults before bringing youth to the table.



Support, don’t control

GOYN aims to support youth in making their voices heard and having their needs met. Ask young people what they want – and work with them to help them achieve it.

KEY RISKS & MITIGATIONS

WHAT COULD GO WRONG?	HOW CAN THIS BE AVOIDED?
Youth voice goes unheard Youth participation in stakeholder meetings is minimal and has no impact on decision-making	• Intentionally create spaces for youth to share their views and ideas • Provide youth with tools and support to express themselves publicly • Emphasize importance of youth voice to other ecosystem partners
Unrepresentative YAG Lack of diverse youth voices, some key youth segments not represented	• Plan which groups need to be represented before starting to recruit YAG members • Develop strategies for including harder-to-reach groups
Unprepared adults Young people don't feel respected, supported or heard	• Train staff and partners on how to create a culture of inclusion and respect, and on how to work with OY as true partners

1. YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

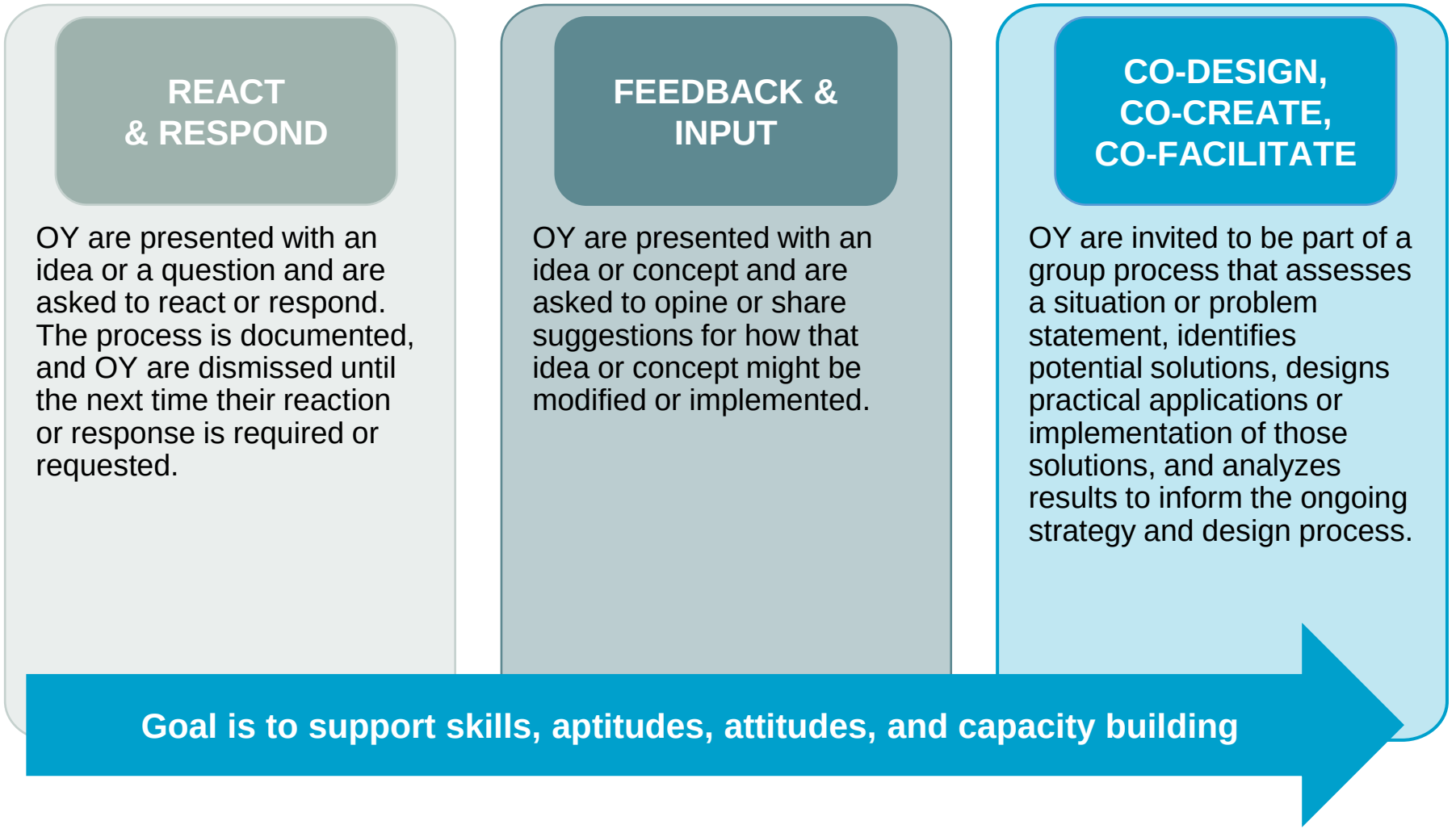
COMPLETION CHECKLIST



You have completed this step when you have:

- Developed and validated **a thorough youth engagement strategy** with the GOYN Global Team
- **Recruited and convened** a diverse set of members for the YAG
- Supported OY in crafting a **powerful youth statement**
- Started **training workshops** with YAG members
- Started planning a **youth-led event** with the YAG as part of the GOYN Launch

THE GOYN YOUTH VOICE AGENDA: MOVING TOWARDS ENGAGING YOUTH AS PARTNERS



2. YOUTH CONVENING PLANNING TIPS AND TOOLS:

1. Intro and Context for Toolkit
2. Understanding Civic Engagement
3. Barriers to Youth Civic Engagement
4. Benefits of Youth Civic Engagement
5. Tools, and Platforms Available for Youth Civic Engagement
6. Spotlight on Civic Engagement in Goyn Communities
7. Creating an Action Plan
8. Key Points Covered in the Toolkit
9. Glossary of Terms and Resources



2.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT FOR THIS TOOLKIT

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY YOUTH NETWORK
THE FUTURE IS YOUNG
aspen institute





Introduction to the Global Opportunity Youth Network:

The Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) is a collaborative initiative focused on creating opportunities for young people worldwide. GOYN supports youth-led projects and leadership development programs, engaging and partnering with young people to drive change in their communities.

Learn more at: www.goyn.org

Importance of Youth Civic Engagement in Addressing Global Challenges:

Youth civic engagement is critical for tackling global issues such as climate change, social inequality, and political instability. Engaged youth bring fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a strong commitment to creating a better future.

Overview of the Toolkit's Purpose and Objectives:

This toolkit aims to provide young people with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to engage effectively in civic activities. It outlines the importance of youth civic engagement in addressing global challenges and introduces tools and strategies for overcoming barriers to participation.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement involves individuals actively participating in their communities and democracies to improve the quality of life and promote the common good. This includes a range of activities such as voting, volunteering, participating in group activities, and understanding and addressing social issues. For youth, civic engagement means using their voices and actions to influence positive change, whether through community service, advocacy, or simply staying informed and involved. It's about making a difference in society and contributing to a vibrant, healthy community.

SOURCE: CIRCLE. "What Is Youth Civic Engagement?" Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University. https://circle.tufts.edu/understanding-youth-civic-engagement/what-it.

One of **GOYN's Core Youth Partnership Practices** is to support and mobilize OY as leaders in their communities.









YAG members and Youth Innovators across the GOYN mobilize to share their lived experiences, supported by research and data, to engage and advocate for systemic change.

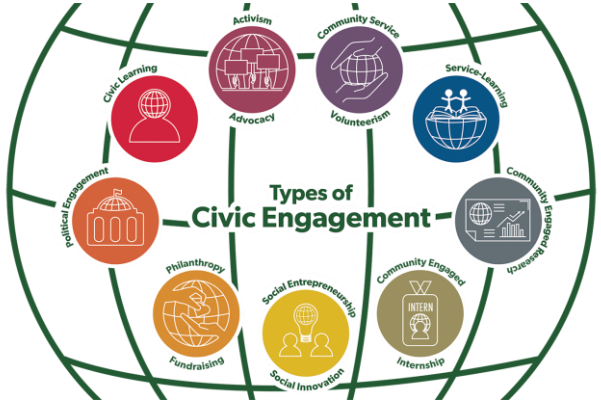
SOURCE: Global Opportunity Youth Network. (2023, February 14). GOYN Learning Brief #2: Youth Engagement. Retrieved from https://goyn.org/resource/goyn-learning-brief-2-youth-engagement/

2.2 UNDERSTANDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The most commonly known types of Civic Engagement are:

- **Voting:** Participating in elections to choose representatives and influence government policies.
- **Community Organizing:** Mobilizing community members to address local issues and drive collective action.
- **Advocacy:** Promoting and defending a cause or policy to influence public opinion and decision-making.

Buts it's so much more...

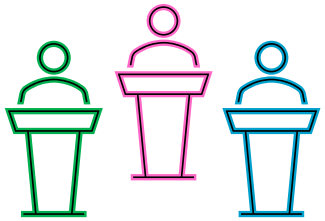


Learn more about diverse form of civic engagement at the Illinois State University Center for Civic Engagement. (n.d.). *Types of Civic Engagement*. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from https://civicengagement.illinoisstate.edu/faculty-staff/engagement-types/

- **Activism/Advocacy:** Organizing to bring about political or social change or to support a particular cause.
- **Civic Learning:** Gaining knowledge about community, government, social, or political issues.
- **Community Service/Volunteerism:** Participating in activities to benefit others or the community.
- **Service Learning:** Combining service activities with learning objectives to benefit both students and community organizations.
- **Community Engaged Internship**: Providing students with hands-on experiences relevant to social or political issues.
- **Philanthropy/Fundraising**: Collecting resources to benefit charitable organizations.
- **Political Engagement**: Developing and expressing political understandings and influencing policies.
- **Community Engaged Research**: Creating new knowledge in collaboration with community partners to address public concerns.
- **Social Entrepreneurship/Social Innovation**: Developing innovative business models, products, or services to address social and environmental challenges

2.2 UNDERSTANDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Youth Participation in Civic Activities is Essential for:



GOVERNANCE:

Youth civic engagement ensures healthy governance by fostering informed and active citizens who contribute to political processes.



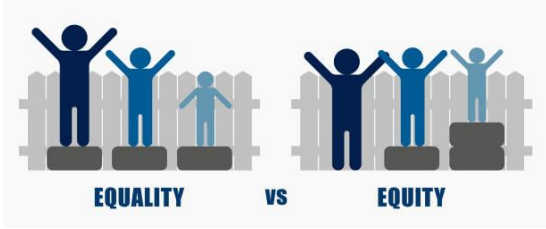
COMMUNITIES:

Engaged youth enhance community strength, social cohesion, and address local issues through collective action.



YOUTH:

Civic participation promotes personal development, leadership skills, empowerment, and economic mobility by building skills and networks.



EQUITY:

Diverse youth involvement in civic activities helps address inequities, ensuring all voices are represented in decision-making processes.

SOURCE: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. "Why Is Youth Civic Engagement Important?" CIRCLE, Tufts University, https://circle.tufts.edu/understanding-youth-civic-engagement/why-it-important.

2.3 ADDRESSING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Identifying Common Obstacles Faced by Young People:

- **Socioeconomic Barriers**: OY have limited access to education, financial resources, and information which can hinder participation in civic engagement efforts.
- **Cultural Barriers**: In some communities that OY come from, there may be norms, values, and beliefs that discourage youth involvement in civic matters.
- **Political Barriers**: OY and the communities they live in often lack representation and opportunities to participate in political processes.

Solutions and Strategies to Overcome These Barriers:

- **Education and Awareness:** GOYN offers capacity building, professional development, and access to a global network and platform that promotes an understanding of the importance of civic engagement and young peoples' role in society.
- **Mentorship and Support Networks:** GOYN connects youth with adult allies and mentors and supportive peers who guide and encourage their civic efforts, providing them with the necessary skills and confidence to engage effectively.
- **Policy Advocacy:** GOYN is actively working with Anchor Partners and OY to design and advocate for policies that remove existing barriers and promote active youth participation in civic and political processes, ensuring their voices are heard and valued.
- **The ELP and YIF are two global programs, with local contextualization, that support OY to develop the research, design, organizing, and mobilization skillsets to engage in civic action and advocate for equitable systems change.**

2.3 ADDDRESSING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOYN EQUITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The **GOYN Equity Leadership Program (ELP)** promotes youth-led civic engagement and action by equipping young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive equitable change in their communities. The program encourages youth to identify and analyze local community issues, strengthen their leadership skills, and create actionable solutions to address inequities. THE ELP fosters a sense of agency and ownership among participants, empowering them to lead discussions and initiatives that aim to make meaningful impact by promoting equity and justice in their communities.



The **GOYN Youth Innovation Fund (YIF)** promotes youth civic engagement by empowering young people to become active change-makers in their communities. Through a structured program that provides capacity building sessions, and project development and evaluation, YIF equips youth innovators with essential skills such as design thinking, leadership, and project management. Youth-led projects address local challenges related to equity, sustainability, and access to meaningful livelihoods. By involving young people in identifying and solving community issues, YIF fosters a sense of responsibility and agency, encouraging them to actively contribute to social change and improve the quality of life in their communities

2.3 ADDDRESSING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOYN YOUTH VOICE, LEADERSHIP, AND PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

- **Center the perspective of young people** in the creation of solutions
- **Partner with a global network of OY leaders,** to share learning, actions, and innovations
- **Link young people to resources,** support and allies to **build youth agency**

FOUR CORE PRACTICES (CP's)

#1. Value and amplify the voices of OY through meaningful youth engagement.



Local OY leaders are engaged in capacity building related to peer engagement, survey and focus group facilitation, and local OY persona (profile) creation.

#2. Engage OY as partners in the co-creation and design of solutions to youth unemployment.



YAG members are engaged in training on design-thinking, youth-led research, community and stakeholder engagement, policy analysis, and advocacy principles.

#3. Support and mobilize OY as leaders in their communities



YAGs and Youth Innovators trained in project design, implementation, and evaluation; contributing to youth led social innovation and entrepreneurship skillsets.

#4. Connect OY to a global platform to share and inspire others



OY leaders co-design and facilitate global exchanges with OY peers and institutional partners ; seeding the Global Equity Agenda and OY Leadership Network

EQUITY OF ACCESS & OPPORTUNITIES

All OY engaged are given equal access to information, data, skilling, employment, and leadership opportunities.

2.4 BENEFITS OF GOYN CORE PRACTICES ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOYN's Youth Partnership Approach supports the individual development of young people by enhancing their skills, building their confidence, and expanding their networks. Through training and capacity-building activities, youth develop skills in communication, leadership, and critical thinking. By taking on leadership roles and participating actively in community projects, young people gain confidence and a sense of agency. Furthermore, connecting youth to global platforms and facilitating exchanges with peers and institutional partners provide valuable networking opportunities, enabling them to build relationships with like-minded individuals and organizations.



On a **community and societal** level, the approach ensures inclusive decision-making, strengthens social cohesion, and fosters innovative solutions. By engaging youth in the decision-making process and involving them in stakeholder collaboration, diverse perspectives are considered, promoting inclusivity. The support and mobilization of youth leaders in community projects help to strengthen community bonds and promote unity. Additionally, training in social innovation and entrepreneurship empowers youth to bring fresh ideas and creative approaches to solving societal issues, contributing to the overall development and progress of their communities.

2.5 YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

YouthPower.org offers useful tools to help young people lead in their communities. They provide guides on how to get involved, learn about your rights, and make a difference. You can find resources on civic education, which teaches you about your role in advancing systemic change. Plus, there are tools to measure your impact and improve your leadership skills. Dive into these resources to boost your knowledge, take action, and drive change around you!

Check out their Youth Civic Engagement Resources and examples of youth civic engagement around the world to get inspired and get started!

The Children's Rights Innovation Fund (CRIF) is dedicated to transforming the global field of youth rights by empowering youth activists and their allies. CRIF focuses on addressing the root causes of vulnerability, such as racism, anti-Blackness, and colonialism. They achieve this through grantmaking, participatory funding, and fostering a learning community that centers on the experiences and leadership of children and youth. Their initiatives support youth workers and activists in West Africa and the Americas, promoting cross-community and transnational collaboration to combat systemic oppression and drive systemic change in children's rights and racial justice

2.5 YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

Social Media can be leveraged to help raise awareness and mobilize support.

Create **Visual Campaigns** to share infographics, stories, and reels that highlight important issues, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.

Establish **Influencer Partnerships** to collaborate with influencers who can spread the message to a wider audience.

Utilize **Interactive Features** like polls, Q&A sessions, and live videos to engage with followers and answer their questions about civic issues.

Create **Short, Engaging Videos** that explain civic topics or promote events.

Launch **Hashtag Campaigns** or join trending hashtag challenges to raise awareness about specific causes.

Collaborate/Partner with popular TikTok creators to reach a broader audience and add credibility to the message.

Post **Real-Time Updates** from events, town halls, and protests.

Use **Thread Discussions** to provide detailed information on civic issues and encourage discussions.

Use **Hashtag Activism** to create and join conversations around civic topics.

Create **Event Pages** to promote rallies, and meetings.

Form or join **Facebook Groups** dedicated to specific causes or communities to foster discussion and mobilize support.

Live Streaming events, discussions, and Q&A sessions to engage a larger audience.and join conversations around civic topics.

Source: Mombasa and Tanga YAG Conversations June 2024

2.6 SPOTLIGHT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN GOYN COMMUNITIES

GOYN MOMBASA

The team and young partners at SwahIli PotHub - GOYN Mombasa engaged, trained, and mobilized young people around civic engagement efforts by implementing a comprehensive strategy focused on data-building, policy development, and government engagement.

Initially launched in 2021, the emerging strategy aimed to influence budgeting and policies at the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). GOYN Mombasa provided training to both government officials and 40 youth policy champions, equipping them with the skills needed for effective civic engagement. These efforts led to significant outcomes, including increased budget allocations for youth empowerment and the establishment of youth-specific programs like the County Revolving Fund and ICT hubs. The initiative fostered improved relations between youth and policymakers, enhancing youth participation in public forums and influencing long-term policy and budget decisions.







2.6 SPOTLIGHT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN GOYN COMMUNITIES

GOYN MEXICO CITY

GOYN Mexico City – YouthBuild Mexico empowers young leaders to drive change through youth-led initiatives that aim to shape public policies and engage the private sector to create job opportunities. They are organizing dialogue roundtables, training materials for employers, and employment platforms. By advocating for non-discrimination and investing in training, young people actively contribute to economic growth and policy-making, ensuring their voices are heard and their talents are utilized.

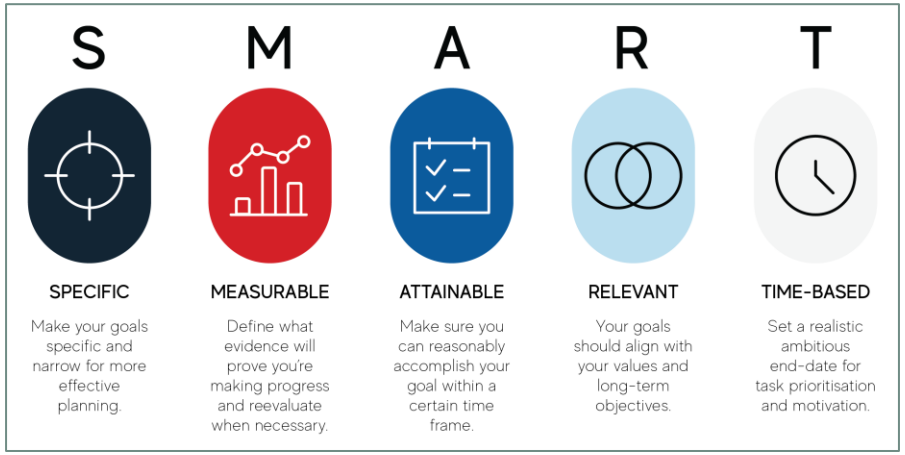
In 2023, GOYN Mexico City convened 91 institutions, including government bodies, private sector organizations, and civil society. Youth leaders promoted inclusive practices among employers, co-created public policy proposals, and launched campaigns to reshape narratives about opportunity youth. They participated in comprehensive training and entrepreneurship programs, becoming key agents of change in their communities. These efforts ensure that young people are central to decision-making processes and community development



2.7 CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

Steps to Develop a Personalized Civic Engagement Action Plan:

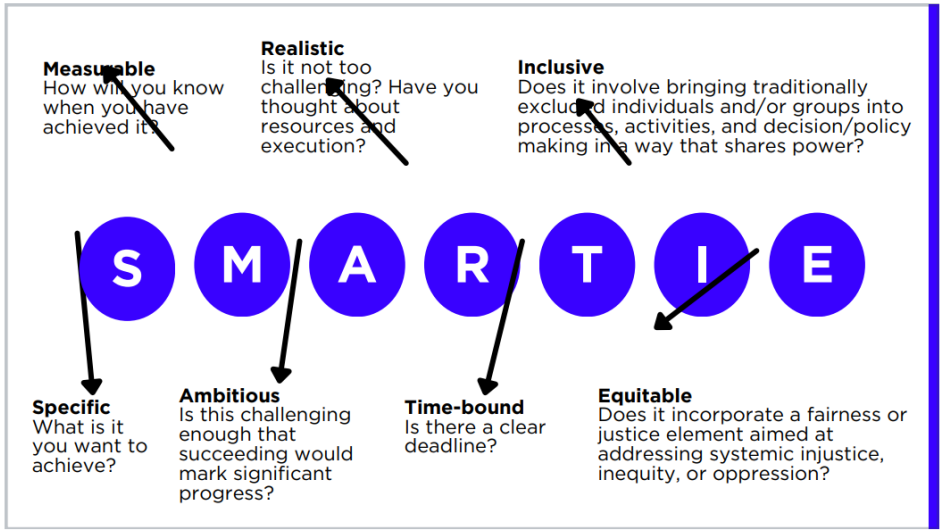
- **Setting Goals and Objectives:** Define clear and achievable goals.
- **Identifying Opportunities for Involvement:** Research and select areas of interest.
- **Developing a Plan of Action:** Outline steps to achieve goals, including timelines and resources needed.



SOURCE: SMART goals and effectiveness

S.M.A.R.T. Goals can help make sure you actions plan is detailed and achievable.

Setting S.M.A.R.T.I.E. Goals will ensure that your action plan is inclusive and equitable for all!



SOURCE: GOYN ELP Facilitator Guide

2.8 KEY POINTS ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1

Importance of Youth Civic Engagement:

Youth involvement is crucial for addressing global challenges like climate change and inequality. It brings new perspectives and solutions, promoting a fairer society.

2

Understanding Barriers and Strategies to Overcome Them:
Barriers like socioeconomic challenges, cultural norms, and political exclusion can hinder youth participation. Strategies such as education, mentorship, and policy advocacy help overcome these obstacles.

3

Benefits of Civic Engagement for Individuals and Communities:
Civic engagement develops personal skills, boosts confidence, and offers networking opportunities for youth. For communities, it ensures diverse voices in decision-making, fosters unity, and drives innovative solutions.

4

Essential Skills and Resources for Effective Engagement:
Key skills include communication, critical thinking, and leadership. Resources like training programs, online platforms, and community organizations support effective engagement. These tools empower youth to make a meaningful impact.

2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND RESOURCES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Civic Engagement**: involves individuals actively participating in their communities and democracies to improve the quality of life and promote the common good. This includes a range of activities such as voting, volunteering, participating in group activities, and understanding and addressing social issues.

- **Community Organizing**: Mobilizing community members to address local issues.
- **Equity**:All individuals, regardless of their identity or social group, have an equal opportunity to experience a meaningful livelihood. In our local contexts, this will involve reforming the hierarchies, structures, policies, systems and practices that perpetuate disparities for specific identities or social groups.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS CONTINUED

- **Advocacy**: the act of supporting or arguing in favor of a cause, policy, or idea. It involves activities aimed at influencing public opinion, government decisions, and policies to bring about positive social change. This can include actions like writing letters to officials, organizing campaigns, speaking at public meetings, or using social media to raise awareness and gather support
- **Systems Change**: Addressing the root causes, rather that the symptoms or proximate causes, of the issues that impede individuals from accessing and engaging with livelihood options

2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND RESOURCES

- **Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN)**: GOYN is a collaborative initiative focused on creating opportunities for young people worldwide. They support youth-led projects and leadership development programs.
- **CIRCLE at Tufts University**: Understanding Youth Civic Engagement

  CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) conducts research on youth civic engagement and provides resources and information to understand its importance.
- **CIRCLE at Tufts University**: Why Is Youth Civic Engagement Important?

  This section provides insights into the importance of youth civic engagement and its benefits for individuals and communities.
- **Illinois State University Center for Civic Engagement**: Types of Civic Engagement

  This resource provides information on various forms of civic engagement and how individuals can get involved.
- **YouthPower.org**:

  Youth Civic Engagement ResourcesYouthPower.org offers tools and resources to help young people lead in their communities, including guides on civic education and leadership skills.
- **Children's Rights Innovation Fund (CRIF)**:

  CRIF focuses on transforming the global field of youth rights by empowering youth activists and addressing systemic issues like racism and colonialism through grantmaking and participatory funding.

Thank you for reading this toolkit. If you have any questions about the GOYN or the contents of this toolkit, Please contact Joel Miranda, Senior Program Manager for Global Opportunity Youth Partnerships at joel.miranda@aspeninstitute.org