EVALUATION

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Guidance note

November 2026

Engaging Youth Stakeholders and Young Evaluators in UNICEF Evaluations

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Foreword

The world is home to more than 1.2 billion young people aged 15–24. Decisions about programmes, policies, and systems directly affect their lives, and their perspectives can help evaluations understand what works, who is being reached or left out, and what needs to change. For young people, meaningful engagement can build evaluation knowledge, analytical skills, confidence and agency to contribute to decisions that affect them. For institutions and wider society, it can strengthen accountability and help programmes and policies respond more effectively to diverse experiences and needs.

For UNICEF, engaging young people in evaluation respects their rights and produces more relevant, credible, and useful evidence. This guidance provides direction for engaging youth stakeholders aged 18–24 and young evaluators safely, ethically and meaningfully in UNICEF evaluations. It distinguishes between youth stakeholders engaged for their lived experience, perspectives and feedback and Young and Emerging Evaluators engaged in professional evaluation roles. It emphasizes careful planning, accessibility, safeguarding, adequate support, and clear responsibilities so engagement fits the evaluation's purpose and context and doesn't become tokenistic.

Developed with contributions from evaluation practitioners and members of the Evaluation Office's Youth Advisory Group, the guidance supports evaluation managers, evaluators and partners in creating genuine opportunities for youth participation. We hope it will help ensure that evaluation evidence reflects young people's diverse experiences, that their contributions receive due consideration, and that they are informed about how their input has shaped the evaluation and the use of its findings.



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01 Introduction

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance supports the purposeful, ethical and meaningful engagement of youth stakeholders and young evaluators in UNICEF evaluations. It sets out practical steps for evaluation managers, evaluation teams and partners on deciding whether engagement would add value, selecting an appropriate role and mechanism, and supporting participation throughout the evaluation process.

The guidance aims to:

- help UNICEF evaluations draw appropriately on the lived experience, perspectives and feedback of youth stakeholders;
- expand meaningful professional opportunities for young evaluators;
- clarify roles, responsibilities and accountability arrangements;
- support safe, inclusive and accessible engagement; and
- ensure that engagement has a clear purpose, adequate resources and genuine influence.

The guidance does not require the same form or level of youth engagement in every evaluation. It supports proportionate decisions based on the evaluation's subject, purpose, questions, intended use and context.

Why engage youth stakeholders and young evaluators in evaluation?

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS can provide evidence and perspectives that strengthen an evaluation's understanding of how interventions are experienced, who benefits or is excluded, and what may need to change. Their involvement can improve the relevance, credibility, and usefulness of evaluation findings and recommendations, particularly where young people are directly affected by an intervention or by the decisions the evaluation will inform.

YOUNG EVALUATORS bring professional knowledge, contextual understanding and different perspectives to evaluation teams. Giving them substantive roles, appropriate supervision, and opportunities for professional development can strengthen individual evaluations while contributing to a more inclusive and diverse evaluation profession.

Engagement does not produce these benefits automatically. Poorly defined or inadequately supported participation can become symbolic, burdensome or unsafe. Meaningful engagement therefore requires clear roles, realistic expectations, adequate resources and transparency about how participants' contributions will be used.

Audience for this guidance

This guidance is intended primarily for UNICEF staff at country, multi-country, regional and global levels who commission, manage, lead or support evaluations. It is also relevant for:

- external evaluators and evaluation firms working for UNICEF;
- young evaluators;
- programme staff and partners supporting youth engagement;
- youth organizations and networks involved in UNICEF evaluations;
- members of evaluation reference groups and other advisory bodies; and
- managers responsible for evaluation recommendations and management responses.

Scope and key definitions

This guidance covers two distinct forms of engagement in UNICEF evaluations:

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

are people aged 18–24 who participate in, may be affected by, or otherwise have a legitimate interest in the intervention or subject being evaluated. They are engaged primarily as rights-holders and stakeholders who contribute lived experience, perspectives, and feedback.

YOUNG AND EMERGING EVALUATORS (YEEs)

are evaluation professionals aged 18-35 years, with fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience.[1] They are engaged for their evaluation knowledge and skills rather than primarily as representatives of a youth stakeholder group. For simplicity, this guidance generally refers to them as **young evaluators**.

The United Nations defines **youth** as persons aged 15–24, while recognizing that Member States and organizations may apply different definitions.[2] This guidance focuses on the adult portion of that age range – youth aged 18–24. The engagement of anyone under 18 entails additional ethical, safeguarding, consent and participation requirements and should follow the Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation and other applicable UNICEF requirements.

UNICEF defines **adolescents** as persons aged 10–19.[3] People aged 18–19 therefore fall within both the adolescent and youth age ranges. This guidance applies when they are engaged as youth stakeholders; the adolescent participation guidance may also be relevant, although provisions specifically concerning minors do not apply.

A person aged 18–24 may be both a youth stakeholder and a Young and Emerging Evaluator. The applicable requirements depend on the role in which the person is engaged. For example, someone contributing their experience of a UNICEF-supported intervention participates as a youth stakeholder. In contrast, someone recruited to undertake evaluation tasks because of their professional skills participates as a Young and Emerging Evaluator. When a person holds both roles, their responsibilities should be clearly distinguished.

Engagement of youth stakeholders in evaluation means their purposeful involvement in one or more phases of an evaluation, from defining its focus and questions through data collection, interpretation, reporting, dissemination and follow-up.

Engagement of young evaluators means their inclusion in evaluation teams or other defined professional roles in which they apply and further develop their evaluation knowledge and skills.

Meaningful engagement means that either group's involvement has a clear purpose, a well-defined role, appropriate support and resources, and a genuine opportunity to contribute. Engagement should be inclusive, accessible and ethically sound, and participants should understand how their contributions will be considered. It does not in itself confer formal decision-making authority; this depends on the role and accountability arrangements established for the evaluation.

Possible engagement roles

Drawing on the Youth in Evaluation Manifesto, this guidance identifies five possible roles for youth stakeholders and young evaluators. These roles are not progressive levels or a hierarchy. The appropriate role or combination of roles depends on the purpose of the engagement, the evaluation design, participants' interests and skills, and the support and resources available. Roles may be combined or change during an evaluation.

Key informants	Provide perspectives and evidence during data collection, with particular attention to the inclusion of underrepresented groups.
Co-evaluators	Conduct defined evaluation activities together with more experienced evaluation team members.
Advisers	Contribute insights to key evaluation processes and deliverables.
Decision-makers	Co-lead or co-guide specified aspects of the evaluation with its commissioners or managers, where this role has been explicitly established.
Advocates	Promote and support the use of the evaluation and its findings.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS will commonly participate as key informants, advisers or advocates. They may also act as co-evaluators or contribute to defined decisions where an explicit participatory approach has been adopted, and appropriate support is provided.

YOUNG EVALUATORS will most commonly participate as co-evaluators through membership of the evaluation team or another defined professional role. Depending on their responsibilities, they may also advise, advocate for evaluation use, or contribute to decisions within the evaluation team.

The roles do not prescribe a particular engagement mechanism. Youth stakeholders may participate through a dedicated youth advisory group, as members of a broader reference or advisory group, through specific consultations, or through a participatory evaluation approach. These arrangements may be used separately or combined.

Advisory roles do not confer formal decision-making authority. Advice should be duly considered, and participants should be informed transparently about how it was addressed. Where youth stakeholders or young evaluators act as co-evaluators or contribute to defined decisions, their role and degree of influence should be agreed and documented.

Formal accountability remains with the evaluation manager and evaluation team in accordance with their respective roles, including the evaluation team's responsibility for independent evaluative judgements.

Determining when and how to engage

Decisions about engagement should start with the intended purpose rather than a preferred mechanism. Whether and how to engage youth stakeholders and young evaluators should be assessed separately. An evaluation may engage either group, both groups or neither, depending on its purpose and context.

These decisions should take account of:

- the evaluation's subject, purpose, questions and intended use;
- the value that youth stakeholders' lived experience and perspectives could add;
- the availability of a substantive professional role for young evaluators;
- the proposed role and degree of influence of participants;

- inclusion, representation, accessibility, ethical and safeguarding considerations;
- the time, budget, support and supervision required; and
- the risks of engagement and non-engagement.

Because UNICEF's mandate means that young people may have some relevance to many evaluations, relevance alone does not mean that every evaluation requires extensive engagement of youth stakeholders. The appropriate form and level of engagement should be determined case by case. More substantial engagement should be considered particularly where:

- youth are a primary stakeholder group or central to the intervention being evaluated;
- the evaluation questions concern young people's experiences, needs or outcomes;
- young people hold knowledge or perspectives that cannot be obtained adequately through other sources; or
- the evaluation's findings or resulting decisions are expected to affect young people directly.

Where young people are central to the intervention or issues being evaluated but direct engagement of youth stakeholders is not planned, the reason should be briefly documented in the evaluation concept note, terms of reference or inception report, as appropriate.

The inclusion of young evaluators should be considered where the evaluation can offer a substantive and appropriately supported professional role. It is not a quota or a requirement for every evaluation team. The decision should reflect the evaluation's scope and complexity, the skills required, available resources, and the team's capacity to provide appropriate supervision and professional development. Young evaluators should have clearly defined responsibilities, be appropriately remunerated and recognized, and have genuine opportunities to contribute.

The agreed approach to engagement should be reflected in the relevant evaluation planning documents and revisited if the evaluation's context, design or feasibility changes.

How to use this guidance

The quick start guide following this introduction provides an initial decision process for determining:

- whether engagement would add value;
- which engagement track or tracks are relevant;
- what role and mechanism would be appropriate;
- whether the necessary safeguards, support and resources are available; and
- how the decision and resulting arrangements should be documented.

Subsequent chapters provide the institutional framework and cross-cutting considerations for engagement, followed by practical guidance across five phases of an evaluation: framing; planning; designing; conducting; and reporting, dissemination and use. The annexes contain adaptable tools and templates.

Throughout this guidance, **must** indicates a requirement arising from an applicable UNICEF policy, procedure or other binding standard; **should** indicates recommended practice that would normally be followed unless the context provides a valid reason for a different approach; and **may** indicates an optional approach to be selected according to the evaluation's purpose and context. For ease of use, action lists introduced by **should** use short, direct instructions; each action in the list carries the same meaning unless otherwise indicated.

This guidance should be used from the earliest stages of evaluation planning and revisited throughout the evaluation process. It should be read alongside the UNICEF Evaluation Policy, applicable evaluation procedures and ethical standards, and the Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation where adolescents are involved.

02 Quick Start: Deciding whether and how to engage

Use this quick start guide when framing an evaluation and revisit the decisions during planning and inception. Assess the engagement of youth stakeholders and young evaluators separately. Engaging one group does not require engaging the other, and neither form of engagement should be included without a clear purpose.

Decision	YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS	YOUNG EVALUATORS
1. Would engagement add value?	Consider whether youth are a primary stakeholder group or central to the intervention; the evaluation questions concern their experiences, needs, or outcomes; they hold knowledge that cannot be obtained adequately from other sources; or the findings and resulting decisions are expected to affect them directly.	Consider whether the evaluation offers a substantive professional role suited to an early-career evaluator and whether their skills, contextual knowledge, or perspectives could contribute to the evaluation.
	If one or more considerations are material, continue to Step 2. If not, direct engagement is not necessary.	**If a genuine professional role exists, continue to Step 2. If the role would not involve meaningful evaluation work, do not include it.**
2. What role would serve the purpose?	Select one or more roles: **key informant, co-evaluator, adviser, decision-maker, or advocate**. Define what participants will contribute, at what stages and with what degree of influence.	Young evaluators will usually act as **co-evaluators** within the evaluation team or another defined professional role. Depending on their responsibilities, they may also advise, contribute to defined decisions or advocate for evaluation use. Define their tasks, deliverables, and level of responsibility.
3. What mechanism fits the role?	For evidence contributions, use appropriate interviews, focus group discussions, surveys or other methods. For ongoing advice, consider a youth advisory group, youth membership in a broader reference or advisory group, or scheduled consultations. For co-evaluation or participation in defined decisions, establish a participatory approach with clearly assigned tasks. For advocacy, agree how youth will contribute to communication, use, and follow-up. These mechanisms may be used separately or combined.	Include young evaluators as evaluation team members or through another appropriate professional arrangement. Use the recruitment and contracting mechanism suited to the evaluation and applicable UNICEF procedures. Ensure that the role is reflected in the terms of reference, proposal or other relevant documentation and is not added only after the evaluation team has been selected.

Decision	YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS	YOUNG EVALUATORS
4. Is meaningful engagement feasible?	Confirm that the evaluation can provide inclusive and accessible recruitment and participation; appropriate ethical, safeguarding and data-protection measures; sufficient time and budget; any necessary compensation or reimbursement; orientation and support; safe channels for raising concerns; and feedback on how contributions were considered. If anyone under 18 will be involved, apply the separate adolescent participation guidance and all additional requirements.	Confirm that the role is appropriate to the evaluator's skills and experience and that the evaluation can provide professional remuneration, supervision, access to necessary information, opportunities to contribute substantively, appropriate recognition and support for professional development.
	If essential conditions cannot be met, adapt the proposed role or mechanism or do not proceed.	**If these conditions cannot be met, redesign the role or do not include it.**
5. What needs to be documented?	Record the purpose of engagement; the participant group and selection approach; the role, mechanism and expected degree of influence; timing; resources; ethical, safeguarding and accessibility arrangements; compensation or reimbursement; and how feedback will be provided. Where youth are central to the intervention or issues being evaluated but will not be engaged directly, briefly document the reason.	Record the purpose and scope of the role; required skills and eligibility; recruitment or contracting approach; tasks and deliverables; remuneration; supervision and professional-development arrangements; and how the contribution will be recognized.

Proceed only when the purpose, role, mechanism, feasibility and accountability arrangements are sufficiently clear. Reflect the agreed approach in the evaluation concept note, terms of reference and inception report, as relevant, and revisit it if the evaluation's design or context changes.

03 Institutional framework for youth engagement in evaluation

The engagement of young people is grounded in UNICEF's mandate and rights-based approach. It can help ensure that the experiences of those affected by UNICEF's work inform relevant evidence and decisions. Engaging young evaluators can also broaden the perspectives and capabilities represented in evaluation teams while creating opportunities for professional development.

The frameworks below do not all have the same status. UNICEF policies and procedures set applicable organizational requirements, while strategies, guidance, and professional standards provide direction and good practice. Where provisions differ, applicable UNICEF policies and procedures take precedence.

UNICEF's commitment to engaging young people

UNICEF recognizes young people as rights-holders and as partners and agents of change. This commitment is reflected in international rights frameworks, UNICEF strategies and guidance, and the wider United Nations system's approach to youth engagement.

Framework	Relevance to this guidance
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Establishes the right of children under 18 to express their views in matters affecting them and to have those views given due weight according to their age and maturity.
UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2026–2029, and Youth2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy	Provide the broader organizational and United Nations context for engaging young people as rights-holders, partners and agents of change.
Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation	Provides specific guidance for engaging adolescents in monitoring and evaluation. It should be followed when participants are under 18 and may also be relevant when engaging those aged 18–19.

These commitments support the inclusion of young people's perspectives where they are relevant to UNICEF's work. They do not, however, require the same form or level of engagement in every evaluation. The appropriate approach should be determined according to the evaluation's purpose, subject and context.

Youth engagement in UNICEF evaluations

Within evaluation, engagement must support the quality, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation while respecting ethical requirements, evaluation independence and established accountability arrangements. The two tracks covered by this guidance – engaging youth stakeholders and engaging young evaluators – serve different purposes and should be considered separately.

Framework	Relevance to this guidance
Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF (2023)	Provides the overarching framework for credible, independent and useful evaluation, including attention to human rights, equity and stakeholder engagement. Youth engagement should support these principles without compromising evaluation independence or accountability.
UNICEF Policy on Ethics in Evidence Activities Involving People as Participants or Subjects (2026)	Establishes requirements for protecting participants' dignity, rights, safety and well-being, including the assessment of risks, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and the reporting of concerns.
Eval4Action standards and the Youth in Evaluation Manifesto	Provide professional good practice for meaningful youth engagement in evaluation, including the possible roles young people may play. They inform this guidance but do not constitute binding UNICEF requirements.
UNEG work on Young and Emerging Evaluators	Identifies barriers, enabling conditions and practices for engaging young evaluators across United Nations evaluation functions. It informs the professional-engagement track of this guidance but does not establish a quota or requirement for every evaluation team.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006)	Establishes principles of non-discrimination, accessibility and full participation, including children with disabilities' right to express their views on matters affecting them and receive appropriate support. It informs this guidance's approach to removing participation barriers, providing accessible communication and reasonable accommodation, and ensuring that young people with disabilities' views receive due consideration in evaluation.

Taken together, these frameworks support engagement that is purposeful, proportionate, inclusive and appropriately resourced. The quick start guide and subsequent chapters translate them into practical considerations for deciding whether, why and how to engage youth stakeholders and young evaluators in a particular evaluation.

04 Key considerations for youth engagement in evaluation

Meaningful engagement depends less on the number of activities in which young people participate than on whether their involvement has a clear purpose, is appropriately supported and gives them a genuine opportunity to contribute. The following considerations apply to both youth stakeholders and young evaluators, with adaptations reflecting their different roles. UNICEF recognizes that young people's participation is grounded in a rights-based approach. Engagement in evaluation should therefore create meaningful, informed and inclusive opportunities for young people to contribute according to their role, experience and expertise.

Principles for meaningful engagement

Principle	What it means in practice
Purposeful	Engagement responds to a defined evaluation need and adds value for the evaluation, the participants or both. Activities should not be included merely to demonstrate that young people were consulted.
Respectful	Participants' knowledge, experience, time and contributions are valued. Communication and working arrangements should recognize their agency and avoid stereotypes or assumptions based on age.
Clear and transparent	Participants understand their role, responsibilities, expected time commitment and degree of influence, as well as how their contributions will be considered. The limits of their role and any matters that are not open to influence should be communicated from the outset.
Inclusive and accessible	Selection and engagement processes identify and address barriers to participation and enable people with different backgrounds, identities, abilities and circumstances to contribute.
Proportionate and adequately supported	The form and intensity of engagement are appropriate to its purpose and supported by sufficient time, budget, orientation, supervision and accessible communication. Participants should not be assigned responsibilities for which they have not been adequately prepared and should have access to opportunities that strengthen relevant knowledge, skills, and confidence appropriate to their role.
Fairly compensated and recognized	Participants should not bear costs arising from their engagement. Youth stakeholders should receive appropriate reimbursement and, where warranted by the nature and extent of their contribution, compensation or other agreed recognition. Young evaluators should receive appropriate remuneration and professional recognition for their work. Learning opportunities or certificates should not be used as substitutes for remuneration where professional work is performed.
Accountable and responsive	Participants have access to a named focal point and safe channels for raising questions or concerns. They should receive feedback on how their contributions were considered and, where relevant, be involved in dissemination and follow-up.

These principles do not imply that participants have equal authority over every evaluation decision. Their degree of influence depends on the role agreed for them. Advisory input should be duly considered and addressed transparently, while any defined decision-making responsibilities should be explicitly documented. Formal accountability remains with the evaluation manager and evaluation team, in line with their respective roles.

Inclusion, representation and accessibility

Young people are not a homogeneous group. Their experiences and opportunities may be shaped by intersecting factors including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, race, Indigenous identity, migration or displacement status, socioeconomic circumstances, sexual orientation, gender identity and geographic location. Engagement should therefore be designed around the groups and perspectives relevant to the evaluation rather than treating any individual participant as representative of young people generally.

When engaging youth stakeholders, evaluation managers and teams should consider:

- which groups are affected by the intervention or the decisions that the evaluation may inform;
- whose knowledge and perspectives are most relevant to the evaluation questions;
- which groups may be underrepresented, less visible or more difficult to reach;
- whether selection through existing organizations or networks could systematically exclude some groups; and
- whether the number and composition of participants are appropriate to the purpose of the engagement.

This does not require statistical representativeness in every engagement activity. It requires transparent and defensible choices about whose perspectives are sought, recognition of important gaps and care not to generalize beyond the evidence available.

Young evaluators are recruited for a professional role and should not be expected to represent youth as a demographic group. Recruitment should use transparent and equitable criteria, recognize relevant skills and potential, and avoid tokenistic roles with little substantive responsibility. Attention should also be given to barriers that may limit access to professional opportunities, particularly for young evaluators from underrepresented groups and contexts.

Accessibility needs should be identified with participants rather than assumed. Depending on the context, this may require reasonable accommodation, accessible venues and materials, interpretation or translation, suitable scheduling, support for connectivity or devices, and assistance with travel or other participation-related costs. Online engagement should not automatically be treated as more accessible or less resource-intensive than in-person participation.

Ethics, safeguarding and participant well-being

All engagement must comply with applicable UNICEF ethics, safeguarding, data-protection and conduct requirements. Ethical considerations should be addressed from the design phase and revisited if the role, context or level of risk changes.

Before engagement begins, the evaluation manager and evaluation team should:

- assess potential physical, psychological, social, professional, digital and reputational risks to participants and establish proportionate mitigation measures;
- determine whether ethical review or other clearances are required;
- explain the purpose of the engagement, how information will be used, any limits to confidentiality and the participant's right to decline or withdraw;
- protect personal data and agree whether contributions will be anonymous, confidential or attributed;
- establish procedures for responding to distress, disclosures of harm, safeguarding concerns or other adverse events;
- provide accessible and confidential channels through which participants can raise concerns or complaints without fear of retaliation;

- ensure that relevant personnel understand applicable safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse requirements; and
- consider the effects of timing, workload, travel, public visibility and exposure to sensitive subject matter on participants' safety and well-being.

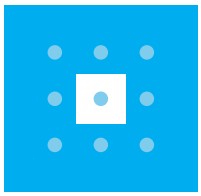
For youth stakeholders, participation must be voluntary and based on clear, accessible information. Declining or withdrawing from engagement should not affect their access to UNICEF-supported services, programmes or other opportunities.

Young evaluators should receive safe and fair working conditions, appropriate supervision and access to the same relevant safeguarding and reporting mechanisms as other evaluation personnel. They should not be assigned sensitive or high-risk responsibilities solely because they are closer in age to participants or perceived as more readily available. Where they collect or analyse data involving other participants, they must receive the training, supervision and support required for those responsibilities.

This guidance focuses on participants aged 18 and above. Where anyone under 18 is engaged, the UNICEF Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation and all additional applicable consent, ethics and safeguarding requirements must be followed.

05 Engaging youth throughout the evaluation process

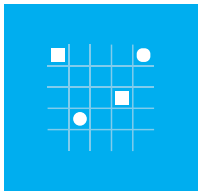
This chapter sets out the main actions for engaging youth stakeholders and young evaluators across five phases of an evaluation. The actions should be applied proportionately based on the evaluation's purpose, context and planned form of engagement. Not every action will be relevant to every evaluation, and the two engagement tracks should continue to be considered separately.



Phase 1
Framing the evaluation



Phase 2
Planning the engagement



Phase 3
Designing the evaluation



Phase 4
Conducting the evaluation



Phase 5
Reporting, dissemination and use

Phase 1: Framing the evaluation

Purpose of the phase

The framing phase establishes whether engagement would add value and what purpose it would serve. These questions should be considered before a particular engagement mechanism is selected or resources and timelines are fixed.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

To assess whether and how youth stakeholders should be engaged, the evaluation manager should:

- identify how young people are affected by the intervention, issue or decisions that the evaluation will inform;
- consider what their lived experience, knowledge or perspectives could add to the evaluation;
- identify the youth groups whose perspectives are particularly relevant, including groups that may be underrepresented or less readily reached; and
- define the provisional purpose, role and degree of influence of their engagement.

Relevant programme, youth-engagement, safeguarding or other colleagues may be consulted to help understand the context and potential opportunities or risks.

Where young people are central to the intervention or evaluation but direct engagement is not proposed, the reason should be briefly recorded.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

To assess whether a young evaluator should be engaged, the evaluation manager should:

- identify whether the evaluation offers a substantive professional role with defined responsibilities and deliverables;
- consider the skills required, those that could be developed through the assignment and the supervision needed;
- assess whether the timetable, budget and team arrangements can support meaningful participation and professional development; and
- consider how the role could be reflected in the team structure and recruitment or procurement process.

Young evaluators should be considered where an appropriate and adequately supported professional role can be offered. Their inclusion is not a quota or a requirement for every evaluation team.

Phase 2: Planning the engagement

Purpose of the phase

The planning phase translates the initial decision to engage youth stakeholders, young evaluators or both into workable arrangements. It should take place early enough for the necessary roles, resources and support to be reflected in the evaluation's terms of reference, budget, timetable and recruitment or procurement processes.

All arrangements must comply with applicable UNICEF ethics, safeguarding, data-protection, procurement and contractual requirements.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

When planning youth-stakeholder engagement, the evaluation manager should:

- select a mechanism suited to the intended purpose and role;
- establish transparent selection criteria that consider relevance, diversity, inclusion and accessibility;
- agree participants' responsibilities, expected time commitment and degree of influence;
- provide for appropriate compensation, reimbursement and recognition arrangements, as well as accessible communication, orientation and other support; and
- appoint a focal point and establish arrangements for feedback, raising concerns and responding to ethical or safeguarding issues.

Youth stakeholders may participate through consultations, a dedicated youth advisory group, a broader reference or advisory group, a participatory evaluation approach or a combination of mechanisms. The choice should reflect the evaluation's purpose and context and should not be prescribed in advance.

A **Youth Advisory Group** is a dedicated group of youth stakeholders established to provide input at agreed points during an evaluation. It may be particularly useful where regular engagement is planned across several phases, participants would benefit from a youth-only space, or the evaluation needs sustained input from a range of youth perspectives. A YAG may be used alongside or instead of youth participation in a broader reference or advisory group.

A YAG is not necessary for one-off consultation or data collection. Its role is advisory unless an explicitly participatory approach assigns members defined responsibilities as co-evaluators or participants in specified decisions. Its purpose, membership, responsibilities, time commitment, degree of influence, support and compensation arrangements should be set out in its terms of reference.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

When planning the engagement of a young evaluator, the evaluation manager should:

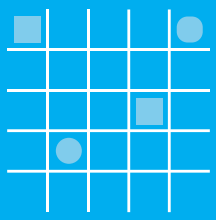
- define a substantive role with clear tasks, responsibilities, deliverables and reporting lines;
- use transparent and equitable selection criteria that are realistic for an early-career evaluator;
- ensure that the young evaluator is integrated into the team and has access to the information and discussions needed to perform the role;
- provide appropriate remuneration, supervision, feedback and opportunities for professional development; and
- budget for any training, travel, accessibility or other support required.

Where evaluation firms are asked to include young evaluators, the solicitation should specify the expected role and level of effort rather than seeking nominal inclusion in the proposed team. Professional-development opportunities should complement rather than replace appropriate remuneration.

Recording engagement decisions

Decisions about engagement should be recorded proportionately in existing evaluation documents, such as the concept note, terms of reference or inception report. Documentation should normally cover the purpose and role of engagement, the participants or selection approach, the degree of influence, key support and resource arrangements, and relevant ethical or safeguarding measures.

A separate engagement plan may be useful for substantial or continuing engagement but is not otherwise expected. Documentation should be sufficient to support clarity and accountability without creating a process disproportionate to the engagement envisaged.



Phase 3: Designing the evaluation

Purpose of the phase

The design phase translates the evaluation's purpose and questions into an appropriate methodology. Engagement at this stage can help ensure that the evaluation addresses issues relevant to young people, uses accessible and ethically sound methods and gives participants the influence agreed during planning.

The evaluation design must comply with applicable UNICEF ethics, safeguarding and data-protection requirements. Ethical review or other clearance must be obtained where required.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

Involving youth stakeholders in the design should reflect their agreed role and may include:

- drawing on their perspectives to examine the intervention's theory of change, assumptions and intended or unintended effects;
- involving them in refining evaluation questions or identifying issues that might otherwise be overlooked;
- seeking their input on the relevance, clarity and accessibility of proposed methods and data-collection tools; and
- considering their perspectives when developing the sampling approach and identifying groups that may be underrepresented or difficult to reach.

Participants should receive accessible information and appropriate support for the aspects of the design on which their input is sought. They should not be expected to review lengthy technical documents without a clear purpose or suitable preparation.

Participation as an adviser or co-evaluator is distinct from participation as a research respondent. Where the same person performs both roles, the evaluation team must clarify how information contributed in each capacity will be used and apply the relevant consent, confidentiality and data-protection arrangements.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

Where young evaluators are part of the evaluation team, the evaluation manager and team lead should:

- involve them in inception and design activities from the beginning of the assignment;
- assign responsibility for defined elements of the evaluation matrix, methodology, sampling approach, tools or analysis plan, according to their skills and role;
- provide appropriate technical guidance, supervision and opportunities to explain or present their contributions; and
- agree how their work will be acknowledged in evaluation outputs and professional records.

Young evaluators may lead defined components where they have the necessary skills and support. Supervision and quality assurance should strengthen their contribution without reducing their role to observation or routine support. Final responsibility for methodological quality and independent evaluative judgements remains with the evaluation team in accordance with the agreed team structure.

Phase 4: Conducting the evaluation

Purpose of the phase

During implementation, youth stakeholders may contribute evidence, undertake agreed evaluation activities or help interpret emerging findings. Young evaluators may carry out defined professional responsibilities across data collection and analysis. Their involvement should remain consistent with the roles, support and degree of influence agreed during planning and design.

Anyone collecting data or accessing identifiable information must have appropriate authorization, training and data-protection arrangements.

Data collection

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

When youth stakeholders contribute evidence as key informants or research participants, the evaluation team should:

- explain the purpose of their participation, how their information will be used, any limits to confidentiality and their right to decline or withdraw;
- use accessible, appropriate and safe methods, including reasonable accommodation where required;
- monitor whether relevant groups are being reached and whether barriers or risks are emerging; and
- adapt the approach where participation is unsafe, burdensome or systematically excluding relevant groups.

Youth stakeholders acting as advisers or co-evaluators may also pilot tools, support data collection or provide feedback on how the process is working. Any such responsibilities should be clearly agreed and supported by appropriate preparation, supervision and safeguarding measures. Young people should not be assumed to be suitable for interviewing peers or addressing sensitive topics solely because they are close in age.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

When young evaluators contribute to data collection, the evaluation manager and team lead should:

- assign substantive responsibilities suited to their role and skills;
- provide the training, tools, supervision and quality assurance required for those responsibilities;
- include them in fieldwork planning, team debriefs and decisions about emerging data-collection issues; and
- ensure that travel, workload, security and working arrangements do not expose them to disproportionate risks.

Young evaluators should not be confined to enumerator or administrative roles where the agreed position includes broader evaluation responsibilities.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

Data analysis and interpretation

Where interpretation forms part of their agreed role, youth stakeholders should:

- receive accessible summaries or presentations of the relevant emerging findings;
- have opportunities to explain how findings relate to their experiences and context, identify possible misinterpretations and highlight issues requiring further examination;
- be informed about how their input will be considered in the evaluation's analysis; and
- only receive access to data consistent with applicable consent, confidentiality and data-protection arrangements.

Their contributions can strengthen contextual understanding but should not be treated as representative of all young people or used as a substitute for systematic analysis and triangulation.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

Young evaluators should contribute to analysis and interpretation in line with their assigned responsibilities. This may include data management, coding, quantitative or qualitative analysis, triangulation, participation in sensemaking discussions and drafting analytical sections.

They should receive access to the data, tools, technical guidance and feedback needed to perform these tasks. More experienced team members should provide appropriate quality assurance while enabling young evaluators to explain, discuss and defend their analytical contributions.

Final responsibility for the evidence, analysis and evaluative judgements remains with the evaluation team in accordance with the agreed team structure.



Phase 5: Reporting, dissemination and use

Purpose of the phase

Engagement during reporting, dissemination and follow-up can improve the accuracy, accessibility and usefulness of evaluation outputs and help ensure that participants understand how their contributions were used. Roles at this stage should remain consistent with the evaluation's accountability arrangements and should not compromise the independence of its findings and evaluative judgements.

Reporting and recommendations

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

Where reviewing findings or recommendations forms part of their agreed role, youth stakeholders should:

- receive accessible summaries or relevant sections of draft outputs, with sufficient time and support to provide input;
- be invited to identify factual inaccuracies, gaps, unintended interpretations and implications for different groups of young people;
- contribute to the relevance, clarity and feasibility of recommendations where appropriate; and
- be informed transparently about how their feedback was considered and why significant suggestions were or were not incorporated.

Advisory input does not confer authority to approve the report or determine its findings and recommendations. Under an explicitly participatory approach, youth stakeholders may have greater influence over defined outputs or decisions, but the extent of that influence should have been agreed in advance. Final responsibility for independent evaluative judgements remains with the evaluation team.

Confidential or identifiable information must not be shared with participants unless this is authorized under the evaluation's consent, ethics and data-protection arrangements.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

Young evaluators should contribute to reporting in line with their professional responsibilities. This may include:

- drafting sections of the report or other outputs;
- developing findings, conclusions and recommendations with other team members;
- presenting analysis to the evaluation team, reference groups or other stakeholders; and
- responding to comments and supporting quality assurance.

Their contributions should be appropriately acknowledged, consistent with contractual arrangements and applicable UNICEF practices. Supervision and review should ensure quality without obscuring substantive authorship or reducing their role to administrative support.

YOUTH STAKEHOLDERS

Dissemination, use and follow-up

Where relevant to the evaluation's intended use, youth stakeholders may:

- advise on the audiences, messages, formats and channels most likely to reach different groups of young people;
- help develop or review accessible or youth-friendly communication products;
- participate in presentations, dialogues or other dissemination activities;
- advocate for consideration and use of the evaluation's findings;
- contribute perspectives on how accepted recommendations could be translated into practical actions; and
- participate in defined follow-up activities to assess or provide feedback on implementation.

The evaluation team should share the final results with participants in an accessible form and explain how their contributions influenced the evaluation. A separate youth-friendly product is not required for every evaluation; it should be developed where young people are an intended audience and the product has a clear purpose and likely use.

Youth input into the management response, action planning or follow-up does not transfer responsibility for accepting or implementing recommendations. These responsibilities remain with the designated UNICEF managers. Any continuing role for youth stakeholders should be agreed, appropriately supported and resourced rather than assumed as an open-ended extension of their original participation.

YOUNG EVALUATORS

Young evaluators may contribute to presentations, communication products, stakeholder dialogues and other activities supporting evaluation use. They should receive appropriate visibility for their contributions and an opportunity to reflect on feedback and professional learning from the assignment.

Any role extending beyond completion of the evaluation—such as supporting implementation follow-up or subsequent evidence collection—should be separately agreed and appropriately remunerated. It should not be treated as an informal continuation of the original assignment.

Evaluation managers should consider assessing the quality and effectiveness of youth engagement itself. This may include obtaining feedback through a post-engagement reflection or brief survey from participants on the clarity of roles, accessibility of the engagement process, adequacy of support provided, and the extent to which they felt their contributions were heard and meaningfully considered.

Annex 1
Engagement planning checklist

This checklist can be used when framing and planning an evaluation and revisited during inception. Complete only the parts relevant to the engagement being considered. The checklist is a planning aid; it does not require the creation of a separate document or approval process.

Youth-stakeholder engagement and the inclusion of young evaluators should be considered separately.

Core questions for either engagement track

- ☐ Is there a clear purpose for the engagement and a reasonable expectation that it will add value?
- ☐ Is the proposed role substantive and suited to that purpose?
- ☐ Are the phases of the evaluation in which participants will contribute clearly identified?
- ☐ Is the anticipated degree of influence clear, including any decisions or matters that are not open to participant influence?
- ☐ Are sufficient time, budget, staff capacity and other resources available to support the engagement?
- ☐ Have relevant ethical, safeguarding, accessibility, data-protection, security and well-being considerations been identified?
- ☐ Is responsibility for coordination, support and supervision clearly assigned?
- ☐ Is there a practical way to explain how participants' contributions were considered and used?

Additional questions for engaging youth stakeholders

Relevance and representation

- ☐ Which groups of young people are affected by the intervention, issue or decisions that the evaluation will inform?
- ☐ Whose experiences and perspectives are most relevant to the evaluation questions?
- ☐ Which groups may be underrepresented, less visible or more difficult to reach?
- ☐ Could reliance on existing organizations, networks or gatekeepers systematically exclude relevant groups?

Role and mechanism

- ☐ Will youth stakeholders participate as key informants, advisers, co-evaluators, participants in defined decisions, advocates for evaluation use or in a combination of roles?
- ☐ Is the proposed mechanism appropriate to the role—for example, consultation, membership of a broader reference group, a Youth Advisory Group or a participatory evaluation approach?
- ☐ Are participants' responsibilities, expected time commitment and duration of engagement realistic and clearly explained?
- ☐ If a Youth Advisory Group is planned, is sustained engagement across several phases of the evaluation genuinely needed?

Selection and participation

- ☐ Are selection criteria transparent and linked to the purpose of the engagement?
- ☐ Have diversity, inclusion and accessibility been considered without implying that a small group can represent all young people?
- ☐ Will prospective participants receive accessible information about the opportunity, expectations, available support and their right to decline?
- ☐ Are the proposed timing, location, format and communication methods accessible to the intended participants?

Support and protection

- ☐ Are appropriate compensation, reimbursement and recognition arrangements in place?
- ☐ Have orientation, accessible communication, reasonable accommodation, connectivity, travel or other support needs been considered?
- ☐ Are voluntary participation, consent, confidentiality and data-use arrangements clear?
- ☐ Are safe and accessible channels available for participants to raise questions, concerns or complaints?
- ☐ Are referral and response arrangements in place for safeguarding concerns, distress or disclosures of harm?
- ☐ If participants will collect data or undertake other evaluation tasks, do they have the necessary training, supervision and authorization?

Feedback and follow-up

- ☐ How and when will participants be told how their contributions were considered?
- ☐ Will they receive the evaluation's final results in an accessible form?
- ☐ Is any proposed role in dissemination, management-response discussions or follow-up clearly defined, supported and time-bound?

Additional questions for engaging young evaluators

Professional role

- ☐ Does the evaluation offer a substantive professional role with defined responsibilities, deliverables and level of effort?
- ☐ Are the skills required at recruitment distinguished from those that can reasonably be developed through the assignment?
- ☐ Are entry requirements realistic for an early-career evaluator?
- ☐ Is the role integrated across relevant evaluation activities rather than limited by default to administrative work or data collection?

Recruitment and working arrangements

- ☐ Is the recruitment or selection process transparent and equitable?
- ☐ Where an evaluation firm proposes a young evaluator, does the proposal specify their responsibilities, deliverables and level of effort?
- ☐ Are the contractual arrangement and remuneration commensurate with the work and responsibilities?
- ☐ Does the young evaluator have access to the documents, data, tools, meetings and technical discussions needed to perform the role?
- ☐ Are reporting lines and accountability arrangements clear?

Supervision and professional development

- ☐ Is an experienced team member responsible for supervision and regular feedback?
- ☐ Are any training, mentoring or professional-development opportunities relevant to the role and feasible within the assignment?
- ☐ Does quality assurance support meaningful contribution rather than reducing the role to observation or routine assistance?
- ☐ Will the young evaluator have opportunities to explain or present their technical contributions?
- ☐ Is appropriate acknowledgment or authorship of their work agreed?

Safety and completion

- ☐ Have workload, travel, security, sensitive subject matter and other professional or well-being risks been assessed?
- ☐ Are appropriate support and reporting mechanisms available?
- ☐ Will the assigned role be confirmed directly with the young evaluator during contracting or inception?
- ☐ Is any work extending beyond the original assignment separately agreed and appropriately remunerated?

Annex 2
Youth Advisory Group toolkit

The tools in this annex may be adapted where an evaluation establishes a Youth Advisory Group. A YAG is one possible mechanism for engaging youth stakeholders and is not required for every evaluation. The purpose, membership and activities of each group should reflect the evaluation's context and intended use.

Annex 2A: Template terms of reference for a Youth Advisory Group

Youth Advisory Group for [name of evaluation]

1. Background

[Provide a short, accessible description of the intervention or subject being evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation and how its findings are expected to be used.]

UNICEF is establishing a Youth Advisory Group to provide youth perspectives and advice at agreed stages of the evaluation. The group will complement other sources of evidence and existing evaluation-management or advisory arrangements.

2. Purpose of the Youth Advisory Group

The purpose of the YAG is to [describe the specific contribution expected from the group].

Depending on the evaluation, this may include:

- advising on issues and questions relevant to young people;
- reviewing the relevance and accessibility of proposed methods or tools;
- helping the evaluation team understand and interpret findings affecting young people;
- identifying gaps, unintended interpretations or implications for different groups;
- providing feedback on findings, conclusions or recommendations;
- advising on accessible communication and dissemination; and
- contributing perspectives on the use and follow-up of recommendations.

Select only activities that serve a clear purpose in the evaluation. Members should not be expected to review every evaluation product or participate in every stage.

3. Role and degree of influence

The YAG will act as an advisory body. Its input will be duly considered, and members will be informed about how significant suggestions were addressed.

The YAG does not approve evaluation deliverables or hold formal decision-making authority unless defined responsibilities have been explicitly established as part of a participatory evaluation approach. Final responsibility for evaluation management rests with the evaluation manager, and responsibility for independent evaluative judgements rests with the evaluation team.

Members contribute their knowledge, experiences and perspectives but are not expected to represent all young people or every group with which they may identify.

4. Membership

The YAG will consist of approximately [number or range] members aged 18–24.

Membership should reflect the purpose and context of the evaluation. Selection may consider:

- experience of or connection to the intervention or subject being evaluated;
- perspectives relevant to the evaluation questions;
- diversity in gender, disability, geography, socio-economic circumstances and other contextually relevant characteristics;
- inclusion of groups whose perspectives may otherwise be underrepresented;
- interest in contributing constructively to group discussions;

- availability for the anticipated period and level of effort; and
- accessibility or support requirements.

Prior evaluation experience should not normally be required because members are engaged as youth stakeholders rather than as professional evaluators.

Participation in or experience of the intervention being evaluated may be a reason to include someone rather than exclude them. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest should be identified and managed transparently.

5. Selection

Members will be identified through [an open call/existing youth organizations or networks/nominations/another transparent process/a combination of approaches].

Selection will be based on the criteria above and undertaken by [responsible person or panel]. The process should avoid relying only on the most visible or well-connected candidates and should consider barriers that may prevent some groups from applying or participating.

Applicants or nominees will receive accessible information about the role, expected time commitment, selection process, available support and compensation or reimbursement arrangements. Participation is voluntary, and individuals may decline without adverse consequences.

6. Duration and expected commitment

The YAG will operate from [date] to [date].

Members are expected to participate in approximately:

- [number] orientation or preparation session(s);
- [number] meetings or workshops of approximately [duration];
- [number or description] review or feedback activities; and
- [any dissemination or follow-up activities].

The expected total level of effort is approximately [hours or days]. Dates and materials should be shared with sufficient notice, and reasonable flexibility should be provided for education, employment, care and other commitments.

7. Ways of working

The YAG will meet [online/in person/in a hybrid format] and will be supported by [UNICEF focal point].

At the beginning of the engagement, UNICEF and YAG members will agree:

- how meetings will be facilitated;
- expectations for respectful and inclusive participation;
- how members can request clarification or support;
- how contributions and differing views will be recorded;
- confidentiality and appropriate use of information;
- how decisions affecting the group will be communicated; and
- how members can raise concerns or complaints.

Members may take on facilitation, presentation or other responsibilities where they are interested and appropriately supported. Such responsibilities should not be assumed or assigned without agreement.

8. Orientation and learning support

Youth Advisory Group members should receive orientation and learning support proportionate to their role. This may cover:

- the purpose, scope and phases of the evaluation;
- the Group's role, responsibilities and degree of influence;
- relevant evaluation concepts and methods;
- ethics, safeguarding, confidentiality and responsible information use;
- inclusive participation and collaborative ways of working; and
- communication of evaluation findings and recommendations.

Orientation should focus on what members need to participate effectively rather than attempting to provide comprehensive evaluation training. Where members undertake defined co-evaluator responsibilities, they should receive additional task-specific training, supervision and opportunities to practise the relevant skills.

Existing UNICEF and external learning resources may be used where relevant, but they should be selected and adapted to the evaluation, participants and context. Training and professional-development opportunities complement but do not replace compensation for participants' time and contributions.

9. Support, accessibility and compensation

UNICEF will provide the information, orientation and support needed for members to participate meaningfully. This may include:

- accessible and appropriately formatted materials;
- interpretation or translation;
- reasonable accommodation;
- connectivity, data or devices;
- travel and related expenses;
- orientation to evaluation concepts and the YAG's role; and
- a named focal point for questions and support.

Members will receive [describe compensation, reimbursement and recognition arrangements]. These arrangements should reflect the expected time and responsibilities and comply with applicable UNICEF procedures and local requirements.

Training, certificates or other recognition may complement but should not replace appropriate compensation where substantial work is expected.

10. Ethics, safeguarding and data protection

The YAG's activities must comply with applicable UNICEF ethics, safeguarding, conduct and data-protection requirements.

Members will be informed about:

- how their personal information and contributions will be used;
- whether contributions will be anonymous, confidential or attributed;
- any limits to confidentiality;
- their right to decline particular activities or withdraw from the group;
- available safeguarding and complaints mechanisms; and
- whom to contact if participation causes concern or distress.

YAG members will not receive access to confidential or identifiable evaluation data unless this is necessary for an agreed role and appropriate authorization, consent, training and protection measures are in place.

11. Feedback and use of contributions

UNICEF and the evaluation team will keep members informed about the progress of the evaluation and explain how their contributions were considered.

Where a suggestion is not incorporated, the reason should be communicated where practical, particularly when it concerns a significant issue raised by the group. Members will receive the evaluation's final results in an accessible form.

12. Acknowledgment and closure

Members' contributions will be acknowledged in [the evaluation report/other outputs/certificates or letters/another agreed form], subject to their consent and applicable confidentiality arrangements.

At the end of the engagement, UNICEF will:

- inform members that the YAG's formal role has concluded;
- provide an opportunity for members to reflect on the experience and offer feedback;
- complete any outstanding compensation or reimbursement;
- provide agreed recognition or documentation of participation; and
- explain whether any future engagement or follow-up is envisaged.

Any activity extending beyond the agreed duration should be discussed and separately agreed with members.

13. Contact

UNICEF focal point: [name, title and contact details]

Alternative contact for concerns or complaints: [name, function or reporting channel]

Annex 2B: Sample call for applications and selection criteria

This sample should be adapted to the evaluation's purpose, context and recruitment approach. It is written for an open call. Where members are identified through youth organizations, networks or nominations, the same information and selection principles should still be provided.

Join the Youth Advisory Group for [name of evaluation]

About the evaluation

UNICEF is conducting an evaluation of [briefly explain the intervention or subject and why it is being evaluated].

The evaluation will examine [summarize the main issues or questions in accessible language]. Its findings will be used to [explain the intended use and likely users].

Why UNICEF is establishing a Youth Advisory Group

UNICEF is establishing a Youth Advisory Group to help ensure that relevant youth perspectives inform the evaluation.

The group will provide advice and feedback at agreed phases of the evaluation. Members will contribute their own knowledge, experiences and perspectives; they will not be expected to represent all young people.

What members will do

YAG members are expected to contribute to some or all of the following activities:

- discuss issues and questions that the evaluation should consider;
- review the relevance and accessibility of proposed methods or tools;
- help the evaluation team understand and interpret emerging findings;
- identify gaps, possible misinterpretations or implications for different groups of young people;
- provide feedback on findings, conclusions or recommendations;
- advise on accessible communication and dissemination; and
- contribute perspectives on the use or follow-up of recommendations.

The final activities will be confirmed with selected members. Members will not be expected to review every evaluation document or participate at every stage.

The YAG is an advisory group. Its input will be duly considered, and members will be told how significant suggestions were addressed. The evaluation manager and evaluation team retain responsibility for evaluation decisions, deliverables and independent evaluative judgements.

Who can apply

You may apply if you:

- are aged 18–24 on [relevant date];
- have experience, knowledge or perspectives relevant to [the intervention, subject or population covered by the evaluation];
- are interested in contributing constructively to group discussions;
- can participate during the period from [date] to [date]; and
- can communicate in [language or languages], with interpretation or other language support available as specified below.

Previous experience in evaluation or research is not required. Applications are welcomed from young people with different educational backgrounds and forms of experience.

UNICEF particularly encourages applications from [identify groups relevant to the evaluation whose perspectives may otherwise be underrepresented]. Applicants may indicate any accessibility or participation support they would require.

Time commitment

The YAG will operate from [date] to [date]. Participation is expected to require approximately [number] hours or days in total, including:

- an orientation session of approximately [duration];
- [number] meetings or workshops of approximately [duration];
- review of [number or description] accessible materials; and
- [any planned dissemination or follow-up activity].

Meetings will take place [online/in person/in a hybrid format]. Dates and materials will be shared with reasonable notice.

Support and compensation

UNICEF will provide:

- accessible information and orientation about the evaluation and the YAG's role;
- a named focal point for questions and support;
- [interpretation, reasonable accommodation, connectivity, data, devices or travel support, as applicable];
- compensation of [amount or basis of calculation] for the agreed time and responsibilities;
- reimbursement of agreed participation-related expenses; and
- [certificate, acknowledgment, reference letter or other recognition, where applicable].

Participation is voluntary. Applicants may decline the opportunity or selected members may withdraw without adverse consequences.

How to apply

Please submit the following by [date and time, including time zone]:

1. Basic information: [name or preferred name, age, location and contact details].
2. A short response explaining:
   - why you are interested in joining the YAG;
   - what experience, knowledge or perspective you would bring; and
   - what you hope the evaluation will learn from young people.
3. Confirmation that you are available for the expected period and time commitment.
4. Any accessibility, language or other support you would need to participate.

Responses may be submitted as:

- a written response of up to [number] words;
- an audio or video response of up to [number] minutes; or
- [another accessible format].

A curriculum vitae should only be requested where it serves a clear purpose. Selection should not depend on professional application-writing skills.

Applications should be sent through [application form, email address or other channel]. For questions or assistance with applying, contact [name or contact details].

UNICEF will use the information submitted only for the selection and administration of the YAG, in accordance with applicable data-protection requirements. [Add information about retention, access and deletion where required.]

How members will be selected

Applications will first be reviewed against the eligibility requirements. Eligible applications will then be assessed using the criteria below.

Criterion	What the selection panel should consider	Suggested score
Relevance	Connection to or knowledge of the evaluation's subject, affected groups or context	0–2
Perspective	Potential to contribute experiences or viewpoints relevant to the evaluation	0–2
Motivation	Clear interest in the role and in contributing to the evaluation's purpose	0–2
Collaboration	Ability and willingness to listen, share ideas respectfully and work with others	0–2
Availability	Ability to meet the stated time commitment with any agreed support	yes/no

Scores should support rather than replace judgement. The final composition of the group should also consider diversity, inclusion and the range of perspectives needed across the YAG as a whole. Demographic characteristics should not be treated as indicators of merit or mechanically scored.

Applicants should not be assessed on the sophistication of their writing, professional networks or prior evaluation experience unless these are genuinely necessary for the agreed role.

Selection will be undertaken by [responsible person or panel]. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest should be identified and managed. All applicants should be informed of the outcome by [date], and selected applicants should receive the full terms of reference before confirming participation.

Annex 3
Template role description and procurement language for young evaluators

This annex provides adaptable language for engaging Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEEs) either as individual consultants or as members of evaluation teams recruited through institutional contracts. It should be tailored to the evaluation, the contractual modality and the applicable UNICEF procedures.

This guidance defines YEEs as evaluation professionals aged 18–35 years, with fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience. The age range should not be included as a mandatory eligibility criterion in a recruitment or procurement process unless its use is permissible under the applicable procedures. Where age cannot be used as a mandatory criterion, the opportunity may be promoted through young evaluator networks and framed around permissible early-career criteria, including fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience. In such cases, the role should be described as an **early-career evaluator role** unless the selected person otherwise meets the full YEE definition.

Annex 3A. Template role description for an individual young evaluator

Assignment title

Young and Emerging Evaluator – [title of evaluation]

Background

UNICEF is conducting an evaluation of [briefly describe the intervention, strategy, programme or subject]. The evaluation is intended to [state its purpose and intended use].

As part of the evaluation team, the young evaluator will undertake substantive evaluation responsibilities while receiving appropriate supervision and opportunities to strengthen their professional skills and experience.

Purpose of the role

The young evaluator will contribute to [identify the principal phases or components of the evaluation]. The role is a professional evaluation assignment and is not intended primarily as youth representation, consultation or an internship.

The specific responsibilities should reflect the person's existing skills and experience, the requirements of the evaluation and the support available within the team.

Responsibilities

Under the supervision of [evaluation team leader or other designated supervisor], the young evaluator will contribute to some or all of the following:

- reviewing relevant documents and evidence;
- contributing to the refinement of evaluation questions and the evaluation matrix;
- supporting the design and testing of data-collection instruments;
- collecting qualitative or quantitative data;
- organizing, cleaning, coding or analysing data;
- contributing to triangulation and interpretation of findings;
- participating in team meetings, workshops and consultations;
- drafting defined sections of evaluation deliverables;
- supporting the preparation and presentation of findings;
- contributing to accessible dissemination products and activities; and
- supporting other evaluation tasks agreed with the team leader.

The responsibilities assigned should be substantive and proportionate to the young evaluator's skills, experience and contracted level of effort. The role should not be limited to administrative or logistical support.

Deliverables and level of effort

The terms of reference should identify the expected outputs, level of effort and responsible supervisor.

Deliverable or activity	Expected contribution	Indicative timing	Estimated days
[Deliverable/activity]	[Specific responsibility]	[Date/period]	[Number]
[Deliverable/activity]	[Specific responsibility]	[Date/period]	[Number]
[Deliverable/activity]	[Specific responsibility]	[Date/period]	[Number]

Team integration and supervision

The young evaluator will be a member of the evaluation team and should:

- be included in relevant team meetings and exchanges;
- have access to the information, documentation and systems required for their work;
- receive a clear induction to the evaluation, its methods and applicable ethical and quality requirements;
- have a designated supervisor who provides regular guidance and constructive feedback;
- be given appropriate opportunities to contribute to technical discussions and deliverables; and
- be recognized for their contribution in evaluation products, in accordance with UNICEF practice and the nature of the assignment.

Supervision should support professional development without reducing the young evaluator's role to observation or training.

Qualifications and experience

The candidate should:

- have fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience;
- demonstrate foundational knowledge of evaluation concepts and methods;
- have relevant academic, professional, voluntary or community-based experience;
- meet the technical, contextual and language requirements of the assignment;
- demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively and meet agreed deadlines; and
- where the use of age as an eligibility criterion is permissible under the applicable procedures, be aged 18–35 at the application closing date.

Requirements should be proportionate to an early-career role. Prior experience should not be specified at a level that effectively excludes the group the assignment is intended to engage.

Selection

Candidates should be assessed against criteria directly relevant to the role, which may include:

- relevant evaluation knowledge and skills;
- relevant thematic or contextual knowledge;
- experience with the proposed evaluation methods;
- analytical and communication skills;
- motivation and potential to contribute to the assignment;
- language skills; and
- availability for the required period.

Applications may include a curriculum vitae, technical statement or other evidence of relevant knowledge and experience. Selection exercises should be proportionate to the scope and duration of the assignment.

Contractual and financial arrangements

The assignment will use [applicable contractual modality]. Candidates will be asked to submit a financial proposal in accordance with the applicable recruitment instructions, normally indicating [a proposed daily rate and total fee/a lump sum by deliverable/an all-inclusive fee].

The expected level of effort, deliverables and any anticipated travel or other costs should be stated clearly so that candidates can prepare an informed financial proposal. The contract value and payment schedule will be determined through the applicable UNICEF selection and contracting process.

The assignment should be treated as paid professional work. Training, mentoring, certificates and other professional-development opportunities may complement but should not replace remuneration.

UNICEF will provide or cover, as applicable:

- required software, information and data access;
- equipment necessary for the assignment;
- authorized travel and related expenses;
- reasonable accommodation and other accessibility support; and
- required safety, security, ethics or safeguarding training.

Completion and recognition

At the end of the assignment, the supervisor should:

- provide constructive feedback on the young evaluator's contribution and professional development;
- invite feedback on the support and supervision provided;
- confirm how the contribution will be acknowledged in evaluation products;
- provide appropriate confirmation of the work completed; and
- discuss whether the evaluator may cite the assignment or resulting public products in their professional portfolio.

3B. Procurement language for institutional evaluations

The following clauses may be adapted for inclusion in requests for proposals or institutional terms of reference.

Option 1: Where the full YEE definition may be used

The proposed evaluation team should include at least one Young and Emerging Evaluator aged 18–35 with fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience. The proposed individual should have a substantive professional role appropriate to their skills and experience and should not be included solely to meet a team-composition requirement.

The proposal should identify the individual, describe their responsibilities and estimated level of effort, and explain how they will be integrated into and supported by the evaluation team.

Option 2: Where age should not be used as a mandatory criterion

The proposed evaluation team should include an early-career evaluator with fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience in a substantive and appropriately supported role. Firms are encouraged to identify suitable candidates through young and emerging evaluator networks and other channels that reach diverse early-career evaluators.

The proposal should identify the individual, describe their responsibilities and estimated level of effort, and explain how they will be integrated into and supported by the evaluation team.

Information to be included in the proposal

The bidder should provide:

- the proposed evaluator's curriculum vitae;
- their proposed role and responsibilities;
- their estimated level of effort across the evaluation phases;
- the name and role of the person responsible for their supervision;
- the arrangements for induction, technical guidance and feedback; and
- any accessibility, travel or other support arrangements relevant to the role.

Assessment of proposals

Assessment should consider whether:

- the proposed individual meets the stated requirements;
- the role is substantive and appropriate to their qualifications and experience;
- sufficient time has been allocated for the assigned responsibilities;
- the proposed supervision and support arrangements are credible; and
- the individual will have a genuine opportunity to contribute to evaluation processes and products.

The presence of a young or early-career evaluator should not compensate for weaknesses in the overall qualifications or composition of the proposed team. Equally, the individual should not be assessed against the experience requirements applicable to senior team members.

Confirmation during contracting and inception

The selected firm should confirm the evaluator's responsibilities, level of effort, supervision and team-integration arrangements during contracting or inception. Any proposed replacement should meet the same requirements and be agreed with the evaluation manager.

The inception report should clearly reflect the evaluator's role in the workplan and division of responsibilities. Their contribution should subsequently be acknowledged in the evaluation report and other relevant products.

Annex 4
Accessible communication and closing-the-loop checklist

This checklist supports clear, accessible communication with youth stakeholders and young evaluators. It should be adapted to the participants, their roles and the form of engagement.

Before engagement

- ☐ Explain in clear language the evaluation's purpose, why participants are being engaged, what they are being asked to contribute and how their contributions will be considered.
- ☐ Clarify participants' roles, expected time commitment and degree of influence, including who retains responsibility for final decisions.
- ☐ Ask about preferred languages, communication channels, formats and any accessibility or reasonable accommodation requirements.
- ☐ Identify and address practical barriers to participation, including timing, connectivity, data, equipment, transport and competing work, study or care responsibilities.
- ☐ Explain the available support and the arrangements for compensation, reimbursement and recognition.
- ☐ Explain applicable consent, confidentiality, recording and data-use arrangements, including how participants may withdraw or raise a concern.

During engagement

- ☐ Use accessible language and provide different ways to contribute where feasible, including verbal, written, visual or digital options.
- ☐ Create space for different perspectives and prevent more confident or influential participants from dominating.
- ☐ Do not expect any individual to represent all young people, a particular group or all young evaluators.
- ☐ Monitor accessibility, safety and participant well-being, and adjust the arrangements or provide breaks where needed.

After engagement

- ☐ Provide agreed compensation or reimbursement promptly and follow up on any accessibility, ethical, safeguarding or well-being concerns.
- ☐ Tell participants when and how they will receive further information about the evaluation.
- ☐ Share an accessible account of the principal findings and recommendations, where possible, and explain how participants' contributions informed the evaluation.
- ☐ Where appropriate, explain why significant suggestions were not taken forward and allow participants to identify factual inaccuracies or serious misrepresentation of their contributions.
- ☐ Where useful and feasible, involve youth stakeholders in communicating findings, considering how recommendations affecting them could be addressed, or providing feedback on subsequent implementation.

Participation in follow-up does not transfer responsibility for evaluation decisions, management responses or implementation. These responsibilities remain with the designated evaluation decision makers, UNICEF offices and partners.

Young evaluators should also receive constructive feedback on their work, appropriate recognition of their contribution and confirmation of the assignment completed.

Annex 5
Selected resources

The following resources may support the application of this guidance. They should be selected according to participants' roles, learning needs and the evaluation context; they are not intended as a standard training package.

Youth engagement and participation

- UNICEF, Guidance Note on Adolescent Participation in UNICEF Monitoring and Evaluation. Practical guidance on deciding when and how to involve adolescents safely, ethically and meaningfully in monitoring and evaluation.
- UNICEF, Engaged and Heard! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement. Guidance on the principles, enabling conditions and organizational arrangements for meaningful and equitable participation.
- UNICEF, Engaged and Heard! Tip Sheets. Practical suggestions for adults, adolescents and youth on participation in different settings, including youth advisory groups and online engagement.

Youth engagement in evaluation

- UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office and EvalYouth Global Network, Leveraging the Power of Youth in Evaluation: A Practical Guide to Meaningfully Engaging Youth in Evaluation Processes. Practical guidance and examples covering different phases of the evaluation process.
- Eval4Action, Youth in Evaluation Manifesto and Youth in Evaluation Standards. Commitments and practical standards for meaningful engagement of youth stakeholders and young evaluators.
- UNEG Young and Emerging Evaluators Working Group, Mapping the Engagement of Young and Emerging Evaluators in UNEG Member Agencies. An overview of definitions, practices, opportunities and challenges across United Nations evaluation functions.

Learning and professional networks

- UNICEF Agora, Engaged and Heard! Training on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement. Self-paced learning based on UNICEF's adolescent participation guidance.
- UNICEF Agora, Ethical Principles and Standards for Evidence Activities Involving People – Basic Course. Introductory learning on ethical principles, risk, consent, safeguarding and responsible data use in evaluation and other evidence activities.
- EvalYouth Global Network. A global network supporting young and emerging evaluators through professional connections, peer engagement and development opportunities.

Additional thematic or methodological resources may be selected where required by the evaluation. Their use should be proportionate to participants' responsibilities and should not create unnecessary training requirements.

Endnotes

1 The UNEG Young and Emerging Evaluators Working Group defines YEEs as professionals who are under 35 years and/or have fewer than five years of professional work experience in evaluation, based on EvalYouth's definition. The UNFPA–EvalYouth practical guide uses an age range of 18–35. For the purposes of this guidance, UNICEF applies the age range of 18–35 and the requirement of fewer than five years of professional evaluation experience, reflecting the guidance's specific focus on younger evaluators at an early stage of their evaluation careers. See UNEG, 2025, Mapping the Engagement of Young and Emerging Evaluators in UNEG Member Agencies, p. 6; and UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office and EvalYouth Global Network, 2024, Leveraging the Power of Youth in Evaluation, p. 7.

2 United Nations, Youth, Global Issues.

3 Programme Guidance for the Second Decade: Programming with and for Adolescents (October 2018)

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