




Essential Actions

Top 20 Essential Actions for adults managing participation events that involve travel and overnight stay by young people

This list of Top 20 Essential Actions is aimed at adults managing participation events that involve travel and overnight stays by young people aged 10–24. It is accompanied by a list of Top 10 Essential Actions for young people. These documents encourage best practices, build upon UNICEF’s [Engaged and Heard! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement](#) and complement UNICEF’s [tip sheet series](#).

 **Remember!** Planning for young people to safely and meaningfully participate in events away from home requires budget, risk assessment and mitigation, attention to detail, and logistical support. It is essential to have at least one designated staff member manage the process in a respectful and timely manner.

- 1** **Share preliminary event details with young people.** Any invitation should include information about the event’s purpose, expectations of young people, and level of effort participants should expect to put forth. Make clear if there are any specific expectations for young people other than attending, such as pre-work, facilitation or participation on a panel. All information should be provided up front to help young people decide whether they are interested and available to attend. (including points covered below in #2 regarding logistics, coverage of relevant costs, and any compensation)
- 2** **Share information with young people about logistics, coverage of relevant costs, and any compensation.** Make clear how all logistics and costs will be handled, including those regarding transport, health or travel insurance, accommodations, food, and phone and internet access costs incurred before, during and after the event. Consider additional support needs, such as translation or sign language interpretation, as well as compensation for young people’s time and effort (see [Brief Guidance on Compensation for Young People’s Participation](#)). For international travel, make sure to discuss all costs, including for visas, passports, flights, taxis or other forms of safe local transport. Remember that you will also need to plan and budget for chaperones for invitees who are under 18.
- 3** **Share the anticipated timeline for necessary preparations, and give young people sufficient time for smooth planning without pressure.** Especially if the event involves travel outside of the country, be aware of the different political and social contexts for young people in terms of the process and time needed to secure passports, visas, and any other necessary paperwork. This is especially important for refugee youth, who often have additional requirements to obtain travel documents. It puts young people under pressure to have to rush for visas or passports, and it can be especially disappointing when these do not come through due to late submissions. Late planning often limits participation of people from certain countries, where visa requirements can be more stringent, and thus affects the diversity and equity of young peoples’ participation. Support young people in gathering documents for the passport or visa process, which can be complicated and time consuming, and ensure that organizers cover passport and visa-related costs up front.
- 4** **Undertake a risk assessment and develop and implement a safeguarding plan to mitigate risks.** A risk assessment includes any potential mental health risks and benefits, and the safeguarding plan should outline risks and risk mitigation during travel to and from the event, as well as during the event. This plan must also include designation of a safeguarding focal point for the event and/or trip.
- 5** **Undertake appropriate informed consent and assent processes for young people’s participation in the event, as well as for any potential interactions with media.** For those over 18, you must ensure voluntary participation with a signed informed consent form. For young people under 18, you must secure their informed assent, as well as informed consent from their parents/guardians. If you anticipate using photos or videos of young people at the event, be sure to have signed release forms from everyone in advance.

- 6** **For young people under 18, select an appropriate chaperone in collaboration with the young person.** An appropriate chaperone is someone the young person knows and trusts who is ready to fulfil their responsibilities to support and protect the young person's physical and mental health and well-being.
- 7** **Ensure all staff and chaperones have reviewed a Code of Conduct or similar summary of expectations.** A Code of Conduct should outline types of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. You should create one for adult staff and chaperones and another for youth participants.
- 8** **Arrange and pay for safe and efficient travel arrangements.** Organizations should cover all travel costs for young people and their chaperones, as well as necessary paperwork (e.g., passports, visas, and health and travel insurance). Ensure travel arrangements that allow sufficient time for flight, train or bus connections, and arrange local pickup to and from the airport, train or bus station.
- 9** **Provide up-front funding for expenses and emergency costs.** Organizations should give young people or their chaperones an appropriate amount of money up front to cover travel expenses and emergencies.
- 10** **Ask young people in advance about any health, food allergies, religious or social needs.** Include a reminder to young people that they can request special meals on airplanes. (Some may not know this is an option.) Ensure all provided meals can accommodate that person's needs (such as Halal, no nuts, vegan, etc.). In the event venue and/or hotel accommodation, ensure there is safe place to pray, when relevant.
- 11** **Provide advanced information about the event's location.** Be sure to give young people and chaperones details about the event venue, as well as the geographical location if travelling away from home, including information on necessary adapter plugs for electrical appliances.
- 12** **Encourage young people to wear clothes they feel comfortable in.** Share details on an area's climate and culture, so young people can carry and wear appropriate clothing that they feel comfortable in; young people should not feel obliged to dress in suits or formal clothing, unless they freely choose to do so. It may be appropriate to offer to have appropriate clothes on hand (i.e., warm clothes if someone is coming from a hot climate)
- 13** **Make sure young people know what to do if they feel unsafe.** Prior to the event, ensure all young people have the safeguarding focal point's name and contact information and introduce them face-to-face as soon as possible. Make sure participants know that they can contact the safeguarding focal point at any time if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or unwell. Also provide young people with an emergency contact card (including the safeguarding focal point's number, the hotel or accommodation address and phone number, and any relevant local helplines).
- 14** **Make sure all young people have an updated event agenda.** This should include information about when and where to meet, any transportation details, and other key information about the event logistics.
- 15** **Ask young people for their preferred names and pronouns.** Ensure all conference or event participants are aware of participants' preferences and respect this. In contexts where it is safe to do so, advocate for and support conference lanyards and badges using young people's preferred names and gender identities, even if these differ from their legal documents (e.g., someone's preferred name may not be the one shown on her/his passport or identity card).
- 16** **Recognize and celebrate diversity and different learning styles.** Consider ways to organize the event that are inclusive of young people of different races, ethnicities, ages, genders, abilities and learning styles. Emphasize that young people have been encouraged to be themselves, to express themselves freely and to wear clothes that they feel comfortable in. Discuss ways to respect diversity. If T-shirts are provided to participants, ensure they are available in a range of sizes, so individuals can choose a size that suits them.

- 17** **Ensure accessible venues, and arrange and pay for suitable, accessible accommodation in a safe location.** Choose hotels that offer with safe and appropriate room allocations for young people of different ages, genders, abilities and backgrounds. Ensure separate rooms for chaperones (unless agreed upon in writing in advance, when deemed in the best interests of the young person). Ensure that hotel rooms do not include alcohol in the room minibars. Venues should be vetted to enhance safeguarding and respect for diversity (e.g., understanding of diversity, clear regulations for fire escape, and availability of gender-neutral bathrooms).
- 18** **Ensure advanced payment arrangements with hotels.** Hotels often ask travellers to provide a credit card upon check-in to cover ancillary costs (such as room service or phone calls). Youth participants or their chaperones should not be asked to do this, however. Your organization will have to make prior arrangements with any hotel to ensure this does not happen. You should also anticipate and mitigate any likely challenges and let young people and their chaperones know who on your staff to call if a hotel asks them to provide a credit card or any type of payment.
- 19** **Collect and safely store necessary information about young people.** You will need identity and health-related information for all youth participants, including ID card or passport details; health needs, especially concerning asthma; EpiPen needs; COVID vaccines; health and travel insurance numbers; and food allergies or needs. You must also ensure data protection of personal information, by using password protected phones or computers.
- 20** **Learn from young people.** Actively seek out and listen to young people on a regular basis prior to, during, and following the event to help monitor and improve how events are organized and ensure they are as youth-friendly, inclusive and safe as possible to enhance young people's meaningful participation.



Share your feedback

What else should we include in this document? We welcome your feedback and ideas to help us improve this brief. Contact us via email at youthaction@unicef.org.



For more information:

- UNICEF (2020). 'Engaged and Heard!' Guidelines for Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement
- UNICEF (2021). 'Tip Sheets for Adults, Adolescents and Youth on Adolescent and Youth Participation in Different Settings'

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Sonita, 11, Narguez, 11, and Zakia, 12, who are all from Afghanistan, travel on a school bus to an education centre run by the national NGO Apostoli in Epirus Region.