

Chapter 14

Establishing Principles

This chapter looks at:

- the establishment of principles before embarking on youth mainstreaming processes based on the human rights foundations expressed in Part 1
- tools for monitoring and evaluating principles.

14.1 Principles set the foundation

Principles¹ are the bedrock of ethical and responsive youth mainstreaming, which respect ownership, participation, youth safeguarding and so on. They also shape the way we develop a shared vision for youth mainstreaming and help institutionalise quality standards to the process.

Box 14.1 sets down the principles that form the basis of discussions in this document. This can be adapted to suit your context. Again, it is important that young people are involved in the shaping of these principles.

Box 14.1 Example: rights-based principles for youth mainstreaming

Principle 1: Human rights foundations

*Youth mainstreaming must be explicitly linked to human rights aspirations and the principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter, including its commitment to promoting **development, democracy and diversity**.*

Youth mainstreaming spearheaded by the Commonwealth is driven by all aspirations set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and all other human rights frameworks articulating the economic, social and political rights of all citizens. These aspirations are strengthened by the *Commonwealth Charter*, the foundational document that underpins all work at the Commonwealth.² All policies and programmes need to reflect these aspirations.

Principle 2: Outcomes for youth

*Youth mainstreaming should leverage **sustainable, quality programmes** for young men and women with clear beneficial outcomes.*

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Systematic youth mainstreaming should be undertaken by participating agencies to ensure that youth mainstreaming brings added value to programmes. The fact that youth mainstreaming makes cross-sectoral programmes more viable and sustainable for young people needs to be demonstrable through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and impact assessment.

Principle 3: Youth participation

Youth participation should play an integral role in youth mainstreaming. YM processes should recognise young people as assets in the entire process and draw on their experiences and knowledge to formulate relevant, responsive programmes for them.

Young people are not merely beneficiaries of programmes and projects, but participants in the entire youth mainstreaming process and should be recognised for their capacity to contribute; they are active planners and decision-makers.

Principle 4: Recognising heterogeneity

*Youth mainstreaming should recognise the multiple dimensions of social exclusion and the **heterogeneity of young men and women** when planning projects and programmes.*

Young people are not homogeneous. All programmes and projects should embrace modes of analysis and delivery that account for the social, cultural, political, economic and geographical heterogeneity of young people. They should address context-specific concerns of young people and adapt programmes and projects to the diverse needs of all young people.

Principle 5: Policy harmonisation

*Youth mainstreaming should be integrated into, and support, **global, regional, national and local development priorities**.*

The most successful youth mainstreaming initiatives will be those that are linked to global, regional, national or local commitments to, and investments in, development strategies. This will help harmonise initiatives and bring young people into the mainstream of broader development agendas.

Principle 6: Youth safeguarding

*Youth mainstreaming should ensure that participants in programmes and projects are **safeguarded at all times**.*

While development programmes are meant to support positive outcomes for youth, such programmes may sometimes, unintentionally, expose young people to situations that compromise their safety and security. This is particularly likely in contexts of regions affected by conflict, violent neighbourhoods, countries in transition, and places where young people are exercising political voice and freedom of expression. All sectors must guarantee that engagement with, and initiatives for, young people always ensure safe spaces for them, and provide psychosocial support where necessary.

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Box 14.1 Example: rights-based principles for youth mainstreaming (cont.)

Principle 7: Decentralisation

*Youth mainstreaming should ensure **decentralisation of programmes and the participation** of young men and women and other key stakeholders in all stages of planning and assessment.*

Decentralisation is the cornerstone of true participation, and the greatest impact of participation occurs at the local government level. Decentralised, bottom-up programmes where young people are seen as the experts on their own lives most clearly help evolve into responsive programmes for young people. Programme decentralisation is further strengthened where there is a general culture of participation and ability to listen to stakeholders, especially youth, and where there is devolution of powers. This is key in the Commonwealth, which believes that, even though administrative efficiency may not happen as fast as we would wish, 'democratic values such as accountability, transparency, representation and diversity, among others, promoted through decentralisation are worth the cost'.³

Principle 8: An evidence base

*Youth mainstreaming initiatives should be founded on **evidence-based models** and should be followed up with systematic monitoring and evaluation based on jointly determined output, outcome and impact indicators.*

All YM decisions should be based on evidence, particularly evidence created by independent youth groups. Pre-planning participatory research and post-implementation participatory M&E and impact assessment should be in-built into the planning process to ensure programme learning and the continuing relevance of youth-mainstreamed programmes for young people.

As with any aspect of programming, it is important to ensure throughout the planning and implementation process that our work is upholding the principles we established at the outset. The above framework is preliminary and may be adapted to your needs. Table 14.1 helps identify measures for successful implementation of youth mainstreaming principles.

Table 14.1 Indicators of success for implementing youth mainstreaming principles

Principles	Indicators of success
Principle 1: Human rights foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Explicit commitments are articulated towards human rights principles 1.2 Policy frameworks exist for YM 1.3 Guidelines exist for value-based youth mainstreaming
Principle 2: Outcomes for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Resources are budgeted and allocated for YM 1.2 YM planning, risk management, and monitoring and evaluation systems are established 1.3 YM capacity-building offers exist 1.4 YM messaging for all sectors exists 1.5 YM networks, forums and symposiums exist
Principle 3: Youth participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Guidelines exist for principles and practices of youth participation 1.2 Young people are accepted as equal partners in development planning 1.3 Induction on guidelines is conducted 1.4 Guidelines are translated into practice and show outputs and outcomes for youth
Principle 4: Recognising heterogeneity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Heterogeneity of youth is explicitly recognised and mandates are articulated that provide targeted approaches for marginalised youth 4.2 Tools and methodologies are developed and used for understanding multiple marginality and developing responsive programmes
Principle 5: Policy harmonisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 YM strategies are linked to broader development strategies, particularly SDGs (see Table 3.1, the Equality Matrix for Youth) 5.2 Advocacy for YM takes place in international, regional, national and local development agendas 5.3 Resources are invested in YM in all sectors 5.4 All sectors are aligned to the values of asset-based youth development
Principle 6: Youth safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Youth safeguarding is written into broader legislation and policy and recognised in programme implementation 6.2 Guidelines are available for nodal and participating agencies for youth safeguarding during programmes 6.3 Designated youth safeguarding officers are available 6.4 Mechanisms are in place for monitoring and evaluating youth safeguarding guidelines
Principle 7: Decentralisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1 Decentralised co-ordination strategies and funding mechanisms exist for increasing youth mainstreaming potential 7.2 Opportunities exist for young people, youth networks and all stakeholders to develop co-ordinated YM strategies at all levels 7.3 Formal structures are in place for youth participation at the sectoral/institutional level 7.4 Platforms exist for vertical YM networking
Principle 8: An evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 High value is placed within organisations on learning and knowledge creation 8.2 YM research projects are initiated, with the backing of higher education and youth development think tanks 8.3 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to track progress and impact of YM

Notes

- 1 These principles have been adapted from *The Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* (Kay and Dudfield 2013).
- 2 Out of the total 16 values/principles of the Commonwealth Charter, the more relevant principles to youth mainstreaming are democracy, human rights, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, the importance of young people in the Commonwealth, and the role of civil society.
- 3 Kobia and Bagaka 2013, 17.

References

- Kay, T and O Dudfield (2013), *The Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.
- Kobia, M and O Bagaka (2013), 'Separation of Powers in Kenya's Devolved Administration System: Opportunities and Challenges', in *Commonwealth Governance Handbook: Democracy Development and Public Administration 2013/14*, Nexus Strategic Partnerships, Cambridge. 14–18.

