

## PRINCIPLE 4:

# ENSURE PARTICIPATION IS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE ORGANISATION



THIS RESOURCE  
WAS CO-PRODUCED  
ALONGSIDE OUR  
YOUNG ADVISOR,  
JADE

## DEFINING THIS PRINCIPLE

This principle can be broken down into two parts. Firstly, it means ensuring that young people are recognised and rewarded for their time and efforts while contributing to shaping organisational work.

Secondly, this principle encourages organisations to proactively design youth participation opportunities that enable young people to meaningfully shape and influence their work. Such planning will allow the organisation to benefit from the expertise of young people through more relevant and high-quality programmes and projects, as well as help the young people see that their contributions have had a positive outcome.

By embedding these two parts in all youth voice opportunities, this demonstrates that an organisation values young people's time, is committed to removing financial barriers to participation and reiterates the importance of investing in young people's development for the future. Together, these two parts ensure youth participation is both beneficial to young people and the organisation.

## WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

There are a variety of ways an organisation can incentivise young people. The method organisations choose may vary depending on the type of opportunity. The main examples include:

### **Financial compensation:**

This could be in the form of monthly 'thank you' payments for young people on a Youth Board or gifting a voucher to young people for participating in an activity which is predominantly for the benefit of the organisation.

**Please note,** covering travel, food and accommodation costs are not seen as compensation but a mandatory requirement from the organisation.

**Upskilling training:** Providing training or skills development sessions linked to specific participation opportunities helps young people build their knowledge and skills needed to engage effectively. This also has long-term benefits for young people by preparing them for the workplace and other future endeavours. Across our work, this has included career upskilling sessions, E.G introductions to Fundraising, Digital Marketing, Evaluation and Public Speaking.

**New opportunities:** Attending networking events, residentials, meeting external and internal stakeholders should all be part of the young participation experience. Such opportunities allow young people to enjoy time together and develop their knowledge and skills.

# TOP TIPS FOR ORGANISATIONS

## DESIGN

- **Audit opportunities:** Review the range of opportunities available for young people across your organisation. Assess the value of each opportunity – not just for the organisation, but for the personal and professional development of the young people involved.
- **Start early:** Carving out time for training to be a part of opportunities can mean your timelines will need to be extended, but accounting for this early on is vital.
- **Budget for participation:** Ensure youth participation is properly resourced and budgeted for. Embedding this into planning

signals to the organisation that youth participation is a priority and not an add-on.

- **Develop a compensation/incentivisation policy:** This promotes a culture of recognition and supports consistent practice across all initiatives.
- **Be proactive:** Encourage staff to reflect on the activities on offer and whether any upskilling is required to support young people's meaningful engagement.

## DELIVERY

- **Relevant focus:** Ask young people involved in your initiatives what they need in place to feel supported throughout participation.
- **Collaborate for specialist training:** Consider partnering with organisations that can offer tailored training for young people and staff to support youth participation. This will strengthen your initiatives and enhance the quality of young people's involvement.



## REVIEW

- **Review and reflect:** Ask young people and staff what they gained from the opportunity to identify areas for improvement. Creating a space where everyone can be honest about any changes needed for future participation builds a culture of improvement and ensures your work remains impactful.
- **Foster a participatory culture:** Celebrate and showcase the impact of youth participation. Sharing case studies, success stories and practical tools can inspire staff and help embed genuine, non-tokenistic engagement.



# PRINCIPLE IN ACTION:

## HOW DID WE WORK WITH YOUNG ADVISORS TO IMPROVE THIS WITHIN THE DIANA AWARD?

### CASE STUDY: PEER RESEARCHER PROJECT

Young Advisors identified a need for upskilling young people when participating in policy initiatives at The Diana Award, as well as youth voice to be more proactively built into every stage of a project cycle.

As part of our ***Youth Voice in Politics Insight Report***, we launched a Peer Researcher development opportunity, enabling our Young Advisors to build valuable peer research skills while being financially compensated for their time. This deeper level of youth involvement helped ensure our work remained genuinely youth-led.

**1**

#### Identify needs and capacity of Peer Researchers

To scale the involvement of Peer Researchers appropriately, we conducted an initial scoping conversation. This allowed us to tailor the opportunity to different young people depending on their existing knowledge and experience, and their capacity over the project timeline.

**2**

#### Research upskilling workshop

Peer Researchers participated in an upskilling research workshop, to help develop key skills ahead of delivering their own. Young people learnt about different research methods and fundamentals to support them to ensure they felt confident carrying out their own research.

**3**

#### Research planning

Peer researchers worked with The Diana Award research team to identify a research area that was important to them and develop a plan for their focus groups.

**4**

#### Conducting peer-led research

Peer Researchers conducted focus groups with young people from their communities E.G local youth groups, charity groups or schools, focusing on the barriers and enablers to young people engaging with politics.



**5**

#### Data analysis

Our Research team worked with Peer Researchers throughout the data analysis phase, supporting them to identify key findings from their own research and ensure these were embedded into the report.

**6**

#### Presenting their findings at the event

Peer Researchers co-presented the findings at the report launch event. This provided them with public speaking training and experience, while being beneficial to the organisation by showing authenticity in being youth-led.

## HOW HAS THIS COLLABORATION HELPED STAFF AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

"I finished this experience as a confident Peer Researcher who was able to sophisticatedly outline key findings at the Youth Voice in Politics Launch event."

### Research & Evaluation Manager:

"[Young Advisors] voices are so powerful when they are supported to speak boldly to decision-makers, and in presenting this research they were afforded the opportunity to just that. It was a pleasure to work alongside them, to be able to mentor them, and see their passion and knowledge grow."



"Ultimately, the opportunity to engage as a Peer Researcher was an unforgettable experience that has shaped my passion for research. This unique opportunity allowed for collaborative leadership between the young advisor team, and balanced with independence, we were able to direct our research in a way that best suited our interests."



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