



Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework

unicef  | for every child

SECTION ONE: Introduction

How wonderful it is that nobody needs to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
Anne Frank, German-born Jewish Holocaust Diarist

What this document is: It is an Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework (AYESF) that feeds into the forthcoming UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-21 and Adolescent Strategy, to guide all parts of UNICEF, from Field Offices to National Committees, and reflects inputs from a wide ranges internal stakeholder. It situates young people in current global discourses and makes the case for why UNICEF is a key player in this area. Lastly, it is a living document that offers ideas about how Adolescent and Youth Engagement (AYE) can be carried out and strengthened.

What this document is not: A fully prescriptive definition and guide of how AYE should be carried out by all parts of the organisation – this would contradict the spirit of engagement through ‘telling’ Offices and young people how and why they should engage. Instead, it outlines a Framework with examples and principles to guide all parts of the organisation.

Who are we talking about? There are three key UN definitions which are important to be clear on, especially as they overlap:

Adolescents: 10-19 years, Youth: 15-24 years, and Young People: 10-24 years, which is the term that covers all adolescents and youth.

UNICEF’s mandate for children covers adolescents up to the age of 18 and it is their rights we are primarily concerned with. However, youth over 18 years have proven to be key change makers and champions of children’s and adolescents’ rights and for this reason are included as a key stakeholder in this Strategic Framework.

What are we talking about?

Adolescent and Youth Engagement can be defined as:

“The rights-based inclusion of adolescents and youth in areas that affect their lives and their communities, including dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes – across all stages, from identification, analysis and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation.”

“Engagement” is closely linked to “Participation” though differs in being a broader articulation of the public-facing aspect of participation. Participation is a fundamental human right as noted in guiding Conventions on children, women and people with disabilities (CRC, CEDAW and CRDP), and serves to build citizenship, strengthen capacities and confidence, promote democratic engagement and the rule of law, and enhance policy making. Engagement includes both these deeper and more sustained activities as well as broader ones that will be outlined throughout this document.

What does this mean for us? The adoption of this AYESF for UNICEF, which builds on well-established lessons learned and shifts in communication, participation and social mobilization, is summarised in the following table:

From UNICEF at the centre of adolescent and youth engagement...	To adolescents and youth at the centre
From ad-hoc and tokenistic activities...	To systematic and structured advocacy and programming.
From developing policies and programmes for young people...	To developing policies and programmes with them.
From un-coordinated actions...	To joined up programmes and actions guided by strategy.
From representing young people with our 'expert opinion'...	To facilitating young people as experts on their lives to speak for themselves.
From telling their stories for them...	To young people telling their own stories.
From lack of documentation of process and impact...	To systematic monitoring and common sectoral indicators.
From treating young people as a homogenous group...	To listening and responding to the diversity of their issues.
From engaging a few privileged youth...	To engaging a broad spectrum of young people.

SECTION TWO: Adolescent and Youth Engagement Overview

Young people will be the torchbearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030. We must ensure that this transition, while protecting the planet, leaves no one behind.

Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General (2007-16)

2.1 Overview of the Global Context

Today there are 1.8 billion young people worldwide who make up a quarter of the world's population, and up to a third in many sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries. Young people are a massive cohort, which have an immense potential to benefit their societies socially, politically and economically. The responsibility of any duty-bearer is to recognise the rights of young people and work with them as partners and agents of change for today and tomorrow.

There is increasing awareness of the great potential and necessity of working with young people around the world. The SDGs pay clear attention to young people, and former Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon defined them as the "torchbearers of the SDGs" who, like generations before them (abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, decolonisation movements of the 1940s and 1950s, social movements of the 1960s, anti-Apartheid movement) can engage actively as "living architects of their own future", and help achieve the Goals by 2030 and, in effect, the full attainment of their rights¹. This statement was undoubtedly influenced by a great coming together of youth platforms and conferences leading up to

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/files/2015/01/SynthesisReportENG.pdf>, p.3

2015 which fed into the development of the SDGs. Many multi-lateral and bilateral agencies have strategies focused on young people and their rights, including the major UN agencies, the development banks, regional entities like the EU and African Union, and many bilateral agencies. For some this has been a focus for many years (UNFPA, USAID, UNICEF), while others are only beginning. Other trends in recent years are major global youth events and countries having and implementing youth policies by democratically elected youth councils². The global space for youth engagement has grown and is becoming a flourishing space, and it is this space that UNICEF aims to build on in championing the rights of children and adolescents through the mechanism of AYE. While there is cause for optimism, inclusive and meaningful youth engagement remains a challenge across the world due to a range of factors: gender, ethnicity, social norms, political regime, geo-political context, to name a few.

Similarly, there has been an increased recognition globally on the importance of investing in adolescents, and that the failure to do so runs the risk of undermining the progress made in the first decade of life. The adoption of the CRC General Comment on the Rights of Children during Adolescents in 2016 testifies to this increased recognition. However, in spite of these advances the space for adolescent engagement is much less flourishing than for youth, with adolescents falling somewhere in the middle, sometimes considered as children (and technically they are while under 18 years) and sometimes considered as youth (15-19 year olds). The distinct set of issues affecting adolescents has tended therefore to receive less attention, as can be seen in the minimal number of adolescent-specific policies or forums.

2.2 UNICEF & Adolescent and Youth Engagement

The fact that the children's and adolescents' rights are the heart of UNICEF's mandate, combined with this momentum around young people's issues, has led to adolescent and youth engagement being central to UNICEF's Strategic Plan from 2018-21. It recognises the whole spectrum of young people, including 'young adults'³ or youth over 18, who are beyond our primary focus, yet are our partners in development as powerful agents able to act in support of children's rights. While adolescent participation has been part of previous Strategic Plans, this plan has systematically included adolescent development and participation across every Goal of the plan. In addition, adolescent and youth engagement is more central to this Strategic Plan than any prior one and crucial to achieving the goals set out. The Plan identifies adolescent empowerment as a key result area under Goal 5 - "an equitable chance in life", and sets out relevant Change Strategies for how we will achieve our goals, a crucial one being "supporting young people and children as agents of change". It is this Change Strategy which is the focus of AYE, though AYE can usefully be applied to others too (see Annex 1). Ideally, young people are facilitated to engage in actions such as community mobilisation, social change, public advocacy, programming and digital engagement. At the local-level, this can help build community cohesion and a sense of belonging for adolescents, from seats in local government and student councils to one-off campaigns and sporting events. These can be significant and ground-breaking actions in especially constrained contexts that rarely make international headlines (though might make it onto our global intranet). It can also involve actions that have a reach beyond the local-level to reach wider audiences to shape decisions and opinions, such as through making music and films, writing blogs, collecting opinions of peers and presenting them in national and international forums.

² <http://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/youth-policy-reviews-evaluations/state-of-youth-policy-2014/>

³ Technically 20-24 years, though the upper age limit of many youth groups goes beyond this definition, and can go up to 35 years in some contexts.

2.3 Equity in Adolescent and Youth Engagement

The Goal in the Strategic Plan that Adolescent Empowerment falls under concerns equity. Vast inequities persist and the reality for the majority of young people is that they are not heard or included in the decisions that affect their lives and the life of their communities. Not all young people have access to skills, platforms or technologies, or are operating in environments conducive to AYE. When young people lack the right tools and skills to critically understand the world and navigate through the challenges of life, they might engage in negative behaviours and actions, or simply be overlooked and neglected. This can apply to girls, adolescents with disabilities, ethnic and religious groups, geographically-isolated, economically disadvantaged, LGBT adolescents, and many others. To ensure the Goal of equity is reached, UNICEF will have to reach and support the engagement of the most marginalised young people, paying specific attention to the diverse and complex needs of each so as to ensure the real causes of their discrimination are fully addressed.

Looking at emergency settings where young people's engagement is greatly neglected and therefore a high priority, specific groups of conflict-affected young people (e.g. adolescents with disabilities, children recruited by armed groups/forces, young carers, orphans) have varying needs in a multiplicity of contexts, which should be thoroughly considered. Initiatives that do not consider socio-contextual factors are likely to have negligible or harmful consequences, running the risk of frustrating and alienating young people if their expectations have been raised. It is through meaningful rather than tokenistic engagement that young people can adapt and navigate their way through their socio-cultural systems.

AYE is a method to achieve equity and requires critical reflection and appropriate action to ensure it lives up to the promise of safely and meaningfully including and impacting all of their lives. It is important to remember that it is not straight-forward panaceas that will solve all young people's problems, but one crucial dimension nonetheless. Even when issues of building capacity and platforms are inclusive of marginalised adolescents, the process of engagement may not necessarily be linear and can run a number of risks. Young people themselves may choose to use skills and platforms in ways unforeseen or unintended, such as for overtly political actions. They may also be co-opted by those with power for unconstructive 'engagement' such as through underage recruitment by armed forces, gangs, political parties and factions. Any engagement plan should fully consider such risks at design phase and closely monitor them throughout implementation.

2.4 Engagement in a context of rapidly evolving technologies

A further Change Strategy identified by the Strategic Plan is fostering innovation in processes and practices. In the last decade, the power of new technologies and modes of communication have been crucial dimensions in transforming young people's engagement and how their voices are much more easily expressed and amplified. This trend is set to continue. With nearly half of the world's population having access to the internet⁴, even in places with less connectivity and few amenities, new forms of engagement are possible and evolving rapidly. Annually 46 million people engage with UNICEF through our global networks, both online and offline, the majority of whom are naturally young people. Existing dynamic platforms can be built upon to further engage young people: social media channels, U-Report, Voices of Youth, Internet of Good Things, as well as youth and adolescent-led organizations and

⁴ <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>

networks. These give young people constructive ways to access and contribute to improving the quality of education, health care, protection services and essential information.

While not all young people currently have equal access to new technologies, emerging technologies such as advanced robotics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, biotechnology and genomics will further impact access and transform the way we live and work. Education plays a key role in inclusive economic growth, social cohesion, gender equity and rights promotion, and in helping children develop a wider range of the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Today, over 60 million lower secondary school-aged adolescents do not have access to education, with many older marginalized adolescents have never been in school or are not in employment, or training. An estimated 40 per cent of employers are finding it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need. In this context, UNICEF will focus on strengthening systems that develop skills throughout the education cycle for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability anchored in national education and training sector policies

SECTION THREE: Our Approach

One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen, can change the world.
Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani Activist and Noble Laureate

3.1 Rights-based and embedded

Engaging children, adolescents and youth has long been a part of UNICEF's mandate. We have developed cutting-edge initiatives to enhance their voices and engagement, and through these have helped achieve policy and programme goals with young people as our partners and collaborators. Aside from making good programmatic sense, participation is a right and one of the guiding pillars of the CRC, as stated in Articles 12-15, and General Comments 12, on the right to be heard, and 20, on the rights of adolescents. In these, it is the obligation of the state, in the form of adult duty-bearers, to create the conditions for meaningful participation for children. This is a central way they are able to develop, build their confidence in engaging with their peers and adults, and learn to speak for themselves in a range of situations. They can more clearly identify problems that they themselves experience and work with others towards solutions.

As noted, engagement of adolescents and youth is also an important strategy to deliver results across all areas of our work, including the SDGs, the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-21 and the forthcoming Adolescent Strategy. The Strategic Plan 2018-21 which highlights "adolescent empowerment" as a key Result Area, and "young people and children as change agents" as one of the Change Strategies. Some areas of the Strategic Plan are supported by the Cause Framework which brings together advocacy, communications, fundraising, and programming work from across the organisation to focus on organisation-wide priority issues. The AYESF will also feed into the Cause Framework with adolescent and youth engagement that amplifies their voice in support of campaign goals as a cross-cutting theme. The four current campaign streams are: Early Childhood Development, Children Uprooted, Ending Violence Against Children and Child Survival.

3.2 Institutional learning

It is also important to recognise the short-comings that limit our impact and are felt by a range of stakeholders, including the young people we seek to engage and who likewise seek to engage us. These include disjointed and siloed ways of working at times, and a lack of agility to the pace of change and in responding to opportunities for creativity and innovation. These challenges will be addressed by integrating our efforts through a clearer organisational vision, more effective use of resources and safeguarding policies and procedures, and putting 'glocal' into practice, that is, adapting global programming and advocacy efforts to best meet local needs. This Strategic Framework is ideally suited, then, to integrate with the Strategic Plan and the Cause Framework, drawing on the leadership and expertise from our regions, countries and National Committees to collectively work and reinforce existing good practice.

Throughout the process of implementation, a further shift in the engagement model will be required that brings young people themselves more fully into the process, listens to their points of view and actively responds to them. While we should identify and learn from good practices across the organization, UNICEF traditionally has engaged adolescents and youth towards a variety of objectives. For the most part, the majority of programmes and initiatives on adolescent and youth engagement have traditionally been focused on contribution towards planned outcomes and outputs entirely determined by UNICEF, together with relevant partners. However, in recent years, with increased focus on adolescent programming, communications and innovation, our work has been developed with and led by young people. In order to continue transforming our approach towards AYE we will open up these planning processes to adolescents and youth. This will mean actively seeking and including their perspectives in the design, implementation and evaluation programming and in humanitarian action it also supports crisis preparedness, response, and recovery processes including peacebuilding. This will require a coordinated efforts across divisions and technical teams.

SECTION FOUR: Who we will engage

Try and understand what part you have to play in the world in which you live. There's more to life than you know and it's all happening out there. Discover what part you can play and then go for it.
Sir Ian McKellan, British Actor

Bearing in mind this intention to work in a more coordinated, integrated and collaborative way with young people taking the lead as much as possible, the following stakeholders will be engaged:

ADOLESCENTS: Adolescents (defined as 10-19 year olds) are the key stakeholders and co-owners of this framework. They are the world's future decision-makers and current citizens. The period of adolescence can be divided where the needs of each period require distinct and complementary strategies:

- **Early Adolescence (10 – 14 years)** covers the key life transition of girls and boys through puberty and into early adulthood. It is biologically dominated by puberty and by brain development, and is a time of identity formation and development of new interests including emerging interest in sexual and romantic relationships. Psychologically it is also characterised by low resistance to peer influences, low levels of future orientation, and low risk perception, often leading to increases in

risk taking behaviour and poor self-regulation. Given this, safe and supportive school, family and community environments are critical social contexts during this period.⁵

- **Late Adolescence (15 – 19 years)** covers the period of transition into adulthood where the requisite skills, knowledge and networks will enable them to fully engage with wider society and the world of higher education and/or employment as young adults. It is characterised by pubertal maturation, and continued brain development of the executive and self-regulatory skills which leads to greater future orientation and an increased ability to weigh up the short-term and long-term implications of decisions. Family influences become distinctly different during this phase of life, as many adolescents enjoy greater autonomy. Likewise, education settings remain important for those able to remain in them.⁶

YOUTH: The UN definition of youth is 15-24 year olds which encompasses the period of Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood.

- **Young Adulthood (typically 20–24 years)** is accompanied by maturation of the prefrontal cortex and associated reasoning and self-regulatory functions, whereby the final phase of the organisation of the adult brain occurs. This often corresponds to the adoption of adult roles and responsibilities, including entering the workforce or tertiary education, marriage, childbearing, and economic independence.⁷

As noted, while Young Adults falls outside of UNICEF’s mandate, they have proven to be key partners and champions of children’s rights, be it through community development, structured advocacy, mentoring, philanthropy, or social and political engagement. They have repeatedly brought success in raising awareness of key issues affecting their peers and children, including adolescents, and brought greater legitimacy to decision making processes through the inclusion of their viewpoints and perspectives. They are therefore directly addressed in this strategy alongside adolescents. This group also includes young people from middle and high income countries who may be disadvantaged themselves and/or inclined to support child rights through advocacy and fundraising.

COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS: A focus on young people themselves will only go so far in advancing this agenda. Effort will also be required to influence the “enabling environment” in which young people live their daily lives through actions such as sensitization of parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, community and religious leaders, civil society organisations, the media, and local Government officials. The result will be increased support and long-term sustainability for young people’s engagement.

DECISION-MAKERS: Likewise, key decision-makers will also require sensitisation to enhance their receptivity to young people’s participation in decision making, and minimise perceived affronts to cultural and organisational hierarchies. This includes Members of Parliament, Ministers, Ministry Officials, Advisors, etc. Supporting the adoption of policies, representative structures and walking-the-talk through supporting young people to analyse and present their needs and interests, to be consistently part of debates and decision making, and to have access to mechanisms for engagement in decision-making.

⁵ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)00579-1/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)00579-1/fulltext)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS: UN agencies and bodies, multi- and bi-lateral donors, civil society organisations, the tech and innovation community, private sector, philanthropic organisations, research organisations, think tanks and more: these are the major human rights and development entities that are interested and active in the adolescent and youth engagement agenda.

SECTION FIVE: The Vision

Guard your light and protect it. Move it forward into the world and be fully confident that if we connect light to light to light, and join the lights together of the one billion young people in our world today, we will be enough to set our whole planet aglow.

Hafsat Abiola, Nigerian Human Rights Activist

Let the words of Hafsat Abiola speak for themselves: *“if we connect light to light to light, and join the lights together of the one billion young people in our world today, we will be enough to set our whole planet aglow.”*

Taking this poetic vision further, young people rarely have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, yet they have immense energy, talent and creativity that, if harnessed, can contribute to their societies’ advancement and better human rights and development outcomes for children. Our vision then is simply one where young people are engaged in areas that affect their live and their communities. To achieve this potential UNICEF will continue to work to put the engagement of adolescents at the heart of our agenda and work with them and their communities, across our organisation, and with partners in Government, civil society and the private sector, to support social, civic and economic engagement, and achieve the full realisation of their rights.

This AYESF will support the achievement of the Goals of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-21, and the Results of the UNICEF Adolescent Strategy in a coordinated and effective way, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised, and linking their voices and energy to global discussions, dialogue and actions. Broadly speaking, the AYE dimension to the Goals and Results are:

Strategic Plan: GOALS	<i>Adolescent Strategy: RESULTS</i>	Engagement Dimension of GOALS and RESULTS
1. EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES	<i>Improved country-level evidence and action for the health, nutrition and wellbeing of adolescent girls and boys</i>	This can be achieved through a virtuous circle of AYE leading to changes in adolescent knowledge and practices during a period of immense physical changes for them, leading to greater adolescent engagement, etc. Adolescent and youth engagement ranges from demand and use of quality, adolescent-friendly services including those linked to HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment adherence and support, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), nutrition and mental health, and to contributions to policies for improved health outcomes.

2. EVERY CHILD LEARNS	<i>Adolescents girls and boys learn through formal and non-formal education opportunities</i>	UNICEF will support marginalized adolescent girls and boys to attend formal and non-formal primary and lower secondary education, and to develop the knowledge skills necessary for full participation in society, including productive work. AYE can contribute to these results through systematically engaging adolescents in school governance (with parents and teachers), as well as the opportunity to lead and reflect upon their own learning, including through curricula (classroom based) and extra-curricular (club based) interventions.
3. EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION	<i>Adolescents girls and boys are safe and supported in their families, among their peers, and in their schools and social/virtual environments</i>	Adolescents are empowered to seek and shape protection services, with life skills in contexts of violence, and have access to a fair justice system. Their voices are amplified, making the violence they experience visible and show that they are not isolated cases but often part of a systemic problem that can be changed. This can lead to violence prevention and response leads to shifts in attitudes, behaviours, cultural norms, services and policy and legislative frameworks to protect children and adolescents.
4. EVERY CHILD LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT	<i>Adolescents have increased access to a clean and cohesive environment, safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and minimized risks of disasters, pollution and climate change</i>	Young people are current change agents and future custodians of the world’s environmental resources (natural and social). Their engagement is vital to managing the risks faced in physical environments, the sustainable management of environments and resources, and in establishing and maintaining peaceful and safe societies, including in urban settings, for themselves and future generations.
5. EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANGE IN LIFE	<i>Adolescent girls and boys participate in decisions affecting their lives and communities</i>	To ensure that every adolescent has the opportunities to achieve their full potential will naturally require an active role of adolescents themselves, who are empowered and fully supported by the enabling environment including the stakeholders (i.e. youth, parents, community, local and national decision makers) as well as the policy frameworks and systems. This will support the achievement of all the Goals, and address persistent inequities. Special efforts will be required to include especially vulnerable and marginalized adolescents, including those living with disabilities.

SECTION SIX: The Objectives

If you ever think you're too small to make a difference, try going to bed with a mosquito!
Dalai Lama XIV, Tibetan leader and Nobel Laureate

The achievement of these Goals and Results is broken down into three simple objectives that focus on young people's engagement in three areas: raising their voices, adopting positive practices and norms, and integrating with formal processes of decision-making.

1. Adolescents are engaged in platforms and mechanisms that elevate and amplify their voices, ideas and creativity

Adolescents will be further supported as change makers in their communities, and at times their nations, for sustained engagement in the children's and adolescents' rights agenda. Voices can be raised through various methods. Having the requisite skills and confidence to do so is key, including: leadership, critical thinking skills, creativity, knowledge of forms of engagement (traditional and digital), child rights education and knowledge of networks and how to bring about change.

Face-to-face interactions through effective and systematic participation platforms help peers, young adults, community members and authorities to connect directly with adolescents, develop relationships and networks, and build empathy for their situations. Digital platforms are also changing the ways that young people interact and are giving rise to the new and diverse audiences beyond their immediate physical communities. They open new avenues for engagement in the realms of communications and advocacy, and motivating our clients and audiences to act.

UNICEF will work with young people across multiple platforms, helping especially the most disadvantaged to generate evidence through participatory action research, tell their stories better, influence decisions and policies and more effectively build understanding. UNICEF already has strong platforms to do this, such as U-Report, Voices of Youth, social media followers, etc. as well as innovation networks and methodologies – Upshift, Human-Centred Design – which can be galvanised for deepening engagement. We will also support and strengthen the capacities of existing adolescent and youth organisations, network and initiatives, as appropriate. Young people will take the lead in telling their personal stories in every context, (building research skills to assess and understand key issues and the critical factors that need to be addressed to ensure change), not only in least developed countries and emergencies, but also in middle- and high-income countries where young people are eager to advocate for marginalised and vulnerable children and adolescents in all parts of the world, including their own countries.

2. Adolescents are engaged in positive, healthy practices and norms, and the design, promotion and monitoring of available services

Frequently being left out of decisions affecting their lives reinforces a sense of apathy and despondency among young people. By actively including them as empowered agents of change, aware of their rights, with opportunities for civic, social and economic engagement, their sense of community and belonging increases, as well as their capacities for positive future choices. The skills they build enable them to negotiate with adults for the realization of their rights and are crucial life skills they will carry into adulthood, the workplace, parenthood, etc.

To achieve this objective, support will be necessary to scale social and behaviour change communication and other development programmes that empower adolescent girls and boys as social change agents within their communities, including in schools, providing them with opportunities and platforms to influence and lead on solving problems in their communities as well as hold governments to account. This will also crucially apply to adolescents and youth in crisis preparedness, response, and recovery processes, by including and reflecting their perspectives in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian action.

3. Adolescents are systematically engaged in the decision-making bodies of UNICEF, their schools and communities, and influencing services, policy, legislation and financing at subnational, national, regional and global levels

UNICEF has an unequivocal mandate for children's rights, with coverage across over 190 countries. Our strengths and comparative advantage include our respected reputation among the general public, role of convenor and participant in partnerships, and base of donors, supporters, volunteers and citizens engaged through online and offline networks. This position affords us the opportunity to facilitate formal interactions with key stakeholders, in support of systematic participation of adolescent girls and boys, including the most vulnerable, in policy dialogue and service delivery where adolescents' voices are taken into serious consideration and acted upon where realistically possible by adults in schools, health services, protection-related services, communities and various levels of government. Platforms for such engagement may include student councils, clubs, sports, symposiums, local, national and international networks, as well as a range of digital initiatives. UNICEF ourselves will model this engagement through systematizing adolescent participation in our structure and programming with partners.

SECTION SEVEN: The “HOW” - The Objectives broken down

Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights. Get up, stand up, don't give up the fight.
Bob Marley, Jamaican singer-songwriter

How do the Objectives translate into practice? The table below sets out each Objective against three criteria:

- **Strategies:** the means to achieve the Objective
- **Outcomes:** the tangible result from the application of the Strategies that feed into the Objectives
- **Examples of Action** in relation to “**Change Strategies**”: The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-21 sets out a number of “Change Strategies” to achieve the overall Goals. For many of these Change Strategies there is an Adolescent and Youth Engagement dimension, with some having more relevance and likely to have impact than others, especially according to the context (see Annex 1 for examples).

The content of “HOW” these Strategies, Outcomes and Actions feed into the Objectives of this AYESF, and hence the Goals of the Strategic Plan are by no means exhaustive. Neither do they fit neatly or exclusively into one particular Objective. A UNICEF Office, whether a National Committee, Country Office, Regional Office, etc. looking to implement the AYESF can draw on a range of options and engage young people in a variety of ways that best support the context and priorities. This table is intended as an illustration and guide to implementation of this Framework.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	OUTCOMES	EXAMPLES OF ACTION in relation to “CHANGE STRATEGIES”
1. Adolescents and youth are engaged in platforms and mechanisms that elevate and amplify their voices, ideas and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescent multimedia engagement (blogging, music, photography, film making, social media, TV and radio, citizen journalism) - Adolescent capacities strengthened for leadership, advocacy, campaigning, organisation and entrepreneurship - Adolescents lead in data collection, analysis and advocacy to inform decision making with local level leaders, national policy makers, private sector, donors - Adolescent-led innovative human-centred design initiatives such as U-Report etc., to gather evidence for advocacy and information based decision making and Upshift, Innovation Labs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescent and youth engagement is safe and rights-respecting - Young people develop and lead campaigns and initiatives for change - Communication and advocacy actions are adolescent and youth relevant and responsive - Key decisions / forums are reflective of and responsive to adolescent concerns - Most vulnerable adolescents engage and influence policy 	<p><u>Advocacy, campaigning and communications force for children:</u> There are various ways that young people’s voices can be meaningfully brought to advocacy and communication. They can be facilitated to engage in high-level events to give presentations sharing young people’s views or to directly chair round-table discussions with decision makers. Various forms of media (blogs, videos, music) created with young people can be distributed through multiple communication channels (both print and social media). Facilitating adolescents’ engagement in preparing government or shadow CRC reports, that are in turn linked to programmes, is another key example. Another key area is engaging young people in acquiring critical thinking faculties to be able to assess the veracity and objectivity of information they receive through traditional and social media, and be able to amplify their voice by offering them the skills and the experiential learning opportunities with media outlets to produce media products of quality and objectivity</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most vulnerable adolescents targeted in capacity building, research, advocacy and communication initiatives 	and critical decisions impacting them and their communities	<p><u>Fostering innovation in processes and practices:</u> U-Report and Innovation Labs/Events bring young people’s voices and ideas into discussions on advocacy and programme priorities. U-Report polls are directly aimed at real-time information collection of young people’s opinions and can be carried out at strategic moments to inform decision-making (policy discussion, budget allocation, etc.), and promoted through media channels. Social Innovation activities bring young people’s creative ideas and perspectives into the design of solutions to issues relevant for them and deliver solutions to community problems while at the same time developing the professional transferrable skills for a better school to work transition</p>
<p>2. Adolescents are engaged in positive, healthy practices and norms, and the design, promotion and monitoring of available services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to information and peer counselling opportunities about rights and opportunities - Development of cognitive, emotional and social skills of adolescents - Adolescents supported to engage in social platforms (school clubs/peers networks, U-Report and other digital hubs) and cultural platforms (sports/arts clubs) - Outreach initiatives to reach out the most vulnerable and excluded youth and engaging representatives of at risk groups as peer educators, outreach workers. - Involvement in civil society organisations, social or cultural groups, community development; social movements, grassroots campaigns, informal networks, identity or interest groups- - Involvement of adolescents in monitoring the quality of services or programme delivery in development and humanitarian context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescents demand and use services that are responsive to their priorities and needs in the area of education, health and social protection - Adolescents adopt and promote healthy and protective behaviours and norms - Adolescents influence the services and norms at the local level - Adolescents influence the type and quality of services at local and national level - Key stakeholders promote and support positive norms, healthy practices, access to quality services responding to the needs of the most vulnerable adolescent girls and boys 	<p><u>Community dialogue and behaviour change:</u> Provided with the requisite skills, adolescents can effect positive behaviour and norms change in their communities and especially among their peers. Working through media and communication platforms and engagement of youth and adolescent partners and networks, young people can be galvanised to take action through skills/capacity building efforts, training of trainers, and various forms of communication for information dissemination, outreach and public dialogue. A further means to achieving community development and social movement is also the promotion of volunteer work, whereby adolescents get acquainted with the notion and benefits of volunteering, and local CSOs are given volunteer support.</p> <p><u>Leveraging resources for children:</u> For National Committees and PSFR countries, child rights education, advocacy and fundraising groups in schools and among young adults can be an important source of broader support and income. Provided with campaign focus, light technical inputs and resources, these groups can take the lead in championing of our work. At the country-level also, young people’ networks are likely to be at the forefront of responding to pressing concerns, including during humanitarian crises. They may mobilise for action and fundraising which could usefully be coordinated through partner networks.</p>
<p>3. Adolescents are engaged in the decision-making bodies of their schools and communities, and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescent capacities for leading, planning, advocating and effecting change at the local level are strengthened) – includes mentoring, skills development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies, legislation and financing are adolescent-responsive (reflecting positive adolescent development strategies) 	<p><u>Cross-sectoral programming + Humanitarian and development integration:</u> Involvement of young people using a holistic and multi-dimensional approach across all sectors and at all stages of the programme cycle: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Hold inception workshops with them, engage them in programme activities, execute adolescent-led projects, reviews/evaluations.</p>

<p>influencing services, policy, legislation and financing at subnational, national, regional and global levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening of capacities of caregivers, communities, service providers and authorities in positive adolescent development - Adolescent Leadership and involvement in local service or project delivery - Adolescents Systematically Participating in UNICEF: programming (development, implementation and monitoring) - - Institutionalizing mechanisms for adolescents' participation in decision making in local, national and global platforms/fora (children councils, parliaments, youth panels) - Involvement in formal consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination mechanisms in place to monitor operationalization of adolescent responsive policies - Services appropriately respond to needs and concerns of most vulnerable adolescent boys and girls - Decision-making structures are fully adolescent/youth inclusive and representative (ensuring participation of most vulnerable adolescents) - Mechanisms for systematic participation of adolescents within UNICEF, local and national level institutionalized 	<p><u><i>Young people and children as agents of change:</i></u> Supporting existing movements and initiatives that enhance the realization of children's and adolescents' rights can be a way of reaching and mobilising large numbers of young people. Provided with the requisite and systematic platforms, and if supported by their communities, young people can act as agents of change within their communities and influence policies, services and budgets. This support could be formalised through a defined partnership aimed explicitly at enhancing formal representation of young people, such as development of Student Councils, Youth Councils at different levels, Young People's National Parliament. It could also be a more ad-hoc and informal alliance that strengthens when respective interests coincide to achieve a particular goal (e.g. increased budget allocation, passing of child/youth-related law/policy, humanitarian response). UNICEF programme budgets must include and support these initiatives.</p>
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SECTION EIGHT: Next Steps

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come to because your liberation is bound up in mine, we can work together.

Lilla Watson, Indigenous Australian Artist, Activist and Academic

In the introduction it was stated that this is a living document to guide, coordinate and stimulate ideas on how AYE can be carried out and strengthened. Over the course of 2017, planned activities aim to embed the Framework in our work, in preparation for the new Strategic Plan 2018-21, and breathe more life into the excellent AYE work that UNICEF is already undertaking. The following ‘Next Steps’ table has been developed based on a few sources: the original vision developed by various Divisions for how the Framework would be implemented, consultations with various Divisions as to how the Framework can be integrated into our work, and consultations with all Regional Offices and select Country Offices.

AYESF Outputs and Activities	Indicators	Partners
<p>1. Development of a global implementation plan for the Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework (AYESF) in consultation with wider UNICEF Divisions, Country Offices and young people, including an M&E approach and framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out in-depth consultations with UNICEF Divisions and Offices and with adolescents - Articulate targets, results and indicators - Carry out DOC consultations to adapt and adopt the Framework for each Unit - Develop links between AYESF Objectives and the five Strategic Plan Goals - For each of the Cause Framework campaigns develop an adolescent and youth engagement approach, with a focus on the areas of public opinion, advocacy and fundraising - Focus specifically on testing the Framework on the issue of Menstrual Hygiene and flagship Children’s Day events. - Establish HQ and Regional coordination mechanisms for alignment and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global implementation plan that includes targets, results, indicators, M&E framework - Theory of Change developed for each of the five Strategic Plan Goals, the four Cause Framework campaigns - Reports and analytics from Menstrual Hygiene and Children’s Day - Meeting minutes from HQ/Regional coordination meetings 	<p>DOC: Public Advocacy, Social and digital media, Brand;</p> <p>PD: ADAP, HIV, C4D, WASH;</p> <p>Innovation; PFP; Regional Offices; Country Offices; National Committees</p>

<p>2. Technical support to Country Offices to localise the Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of practical implementation tools based on good practices in different contexts, guidance on how to engage through digital media assess engagement, training/capacity building for Country Offices - Development of Sharepoint of common resources, contacts directory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation tools and guidance, including good practice case studies, M&E tools - Trainings carried out with 10 Country Offices - Adolescent and Youth Engagement Sharepoint set up 	<p>DOC: Public Advocacy, Social and digital media;</p> <p>PD: ADAP, HIV, C4D, WASH;</p> <p>Innovation; PFP; Regional Offices; Country Offices; National Committees</p>
<p>3. Strong partnerships build with relevant counterparts in UN agencies and other organisations, with a focus on engaging young people in the SDGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map existing and potential organisations, partners and issue-based networks - Develop a partnership framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping document - Partnership framework 	<p>UN agencies</p> <p>NGO partners</p> <p>Issue-based networks</p>

ANNEX 1: The “HOW” extended – Adolescent/Youth Engagement dimensions to the Change Strategies

Further to the example above on how the some Change Strategies can be applied to the different contexts, the following table sets out how Adolescent and Youth Engagement can be applied to all of the Change Strategies through an example of the Best Practice for each one:

“HOW” – CHANGE STRATEGIES	Illustrative ADOLESCENT/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT DIMENSION	EXAMPLE
(a) PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE		
Cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral programming	Adolescents and youth priorities and engagement are addressed in a holistic and multi-dimensional approach	In Gaza, a programme focused developing a culture of non-violence is helping young people to become more engaged in matters and decisions related to them. Skills development and access to information is supporting proposal development and funding for local-level civic engagement, and planning and implementation of a nationwide non-violence civic engagement campaign.
Systems strengthening and improved delivery of essential services	Adolescents and youth are involved in defining, assessing and evaluating the adolescent responsive services	In Nepal, UNICEF and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development established the ‘National Guidelines for Ensuring Meaningful & Ethical Participation of Children/Adolescents’, a systematic way of adolescent engagement in local planning processes. The guideline outlines how meaningful and ethical participation can be ensured in different settings such as families, schools, local bodies, clubs and by marginalized children/adolescents such as those with disabilities and from historically excluded groups.
At-scale capacity for humanitarian action	Capacities of adolescents, networks and youth organizations are strengthened to support preparedness, response and recovery	During the Ebola crisis in West Africa youth networks and organizations mobilized and became key partners in the response, including promotion of protective practices, community-based surveillance, and early warnings and alerts. The capacity of these youth networks will remain a key pillar to strengthen preparedness and resilience efforts to prevent and respond more effectively to future outbreaks.
Gender-informed programming	Adolescent girls and boys are key stakeholders in identifying gender-issues, -roles, and remedies in programming	In Chad, where adolescents have limited access to platforms to express themselves, UNICEF trained adolescents to undertake do a digital mapping of issues that are important to them, including child marriage and education of the girls. Adolescents identified these issues and approached media and key influencers to propose solutions. The digital mappers went on to train their peers, share knowledge and increase the number engaged. They also established a structured communication channel with members of the National Assembly to raise their issues and participate the decision making process.
Promoting demand for services and social norms	Adolescents as vocal and active in promoting service demand/behaviour change / social norms	The Philippines Office undertook a Citizen Journalism programme between August 2015 and January 2016 with over 300 young people to help them understand the roles and responsibilities of a citizen journalist, the issues affecting children and youth and the role of duty bearers in addressing these issues, and demonstrate how to take good photos and

		videos using mobile phones and how to submit reports online.
South-south and horizontal cooperation	Adolescents engaged in lesson learning across countries and regions	In Azerbaijan, on the occasion of the Baku 2015 European Games, UNICEF facilitated the exchange of experience on sports mega events and the social legacy of mega-events by engaging adolescents from South Africa and Brazil to be facilitators and trainers of the Adolescent National Consultation on Safe and Inclusive Sports in Azerbaijan. The rich exchange of experiences and sharing of good practices from those countries contributed to the development of the “Baku 2105 Adolescent Declaration for Safe and Inclusive Sport”. Results to date include establishment of Children’s Paralympic Committee and two National Games conducted in 2015 and 2016; a detailed assessment of disability accessibility of 28 Olympic Centres and 141 schools sport facilities, Framework for the Strategic Plan on Mass Sports participation and Health Enhancing Physical Activity for children and young people developed with Ministry of Education.
(b) WINNING SUPPORT FOR THE CAUSE OF CHILDREN FROM DECISION MAKERS AND THE WIDER PUBLIC		
Young people and children as change agents	<i>Covers a range of engagement initiatives. Refer to strategies and outcomes table.</i>	Acknowledging the sensitivity of child marriage, UNICEF Indonesia decided to “lead from behind,” in fostering of a social movement involving lawyers, activists, psychologists, and a youth alliance. Their collective efforts created a major public platform for child marriage to be more readily and openly discussed, and led to regional governments amending their regulations and the formation of various student initiatives.
Stronger advocacy, campaigning and communications force for children	Adolescents and youth an advocacy force for the realisation of child rights	In Argentina, technical assistance was provided to help facilitate the involvement of 34,000 adolescents in participatory budget process, including budget monitoring and analysis. This has led to substantial increases in budgets for children.
Building alliances and movements for change	Adolescents from various movements and alliances collaborating	The India Office has developed the Spheres of Influence for Equity (siEQ) framework which has these components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on five high impact priorities; • A conceptual framework for influence and engagement to harness social movements; and • Youth engagement and civil accountability. It maps the levels of influence and leverage that different partnerships and stakeholders have, and identifies where alliances can be strengthened to accelerate results for children. As a result UNICEF India has positioned itself strategically with many new and emerging partners and platforms, ranging from (inter)-faith alliances, to online youth and opinion platforms, citizen’s movements, philanthropies, legislators, corporates, digital social media and development partners.
(c) LEVERAGING RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN		
Influencing the domestic planning, financing and delivery	Adolescents and young people are key influencers in local and national level decision making	In Jordan, UNICEF has set up a network called Jeel 962, to strengthen young people’s civic engagement and issue-based advocacy, and link them with decision makers at local and national levels. It combines offline strategies with online through digital engagement platforms, including the

of services for children		website, interactive mapping and a mobile application. With over 20,000 members and a focus on marginalised youth, Jeel 962 partners with the private sector, NGOs, academia, government and civil society in facilitating dialogue and identifying pressing challenges facing young people.
Mobilising resources for UNICEF from Governments and the private sector	Adolescents engaged in budgeting processes at the local and national level	UNICEF Next Generation is a global network of young leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators who commit their time and energies to fundraising, skills sharing and advocacy, with support of National Committees. They mobilise their networks and inspire their generations to take action. 'NextGen' in the U.S. has raised over \$7 million for UNICEF programmes. There are also NextGen groups in the U.K., Sweden, France and Vietnam.
(d) HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND MARKETS FOR CHILDREN		
Leveraging the power of business to improve the lives of children	<p>The private and corporate sectors prioritize adolescents and youth issues in their engagement and development work</p> <p>The private and corporate sectors embrace the realization of adolescents' rights in their marketing and business processes</p>	In response to skills shortages in South Africa and low levels of women in the tech field, the Techno Girl initiative encouraged high performing adolescent girls to undertake work in engineering, science and tech industries. Through partnerships with private sector, girls undertook structured internships to build their practical skills and understanding of the industry. It led to increased motivation, higher study, employment and 'alumni' mentoring the next female generation.
Developing products, technologies and global and local markets for children	Adolescents and youth involved in product and technology development for children	The UNICEF France Coding Challenge is a competition to engage children and young adolescents in migration issues through computer/digital programming, coding and animation design. The aim is for them to develop an animated film that proposes solutions for child survivors of the Syrian conflict in Syria, based on three personas in contrasting situations. Through the Coding Challenge competition children are learning about the stories of these personas, learning how to code using 'Scratch' software, and are supported over a six-month period to develop sustainable solutions.
(e) WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH OTHER UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES TO STRENGTHEN SYSTEM COHERENCE		
UN working together	Young people engaged in cross-agency assessments, initiatives and collaboration at national and/or global level	UNICEF Kosovo in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, and UNV have jointly developed a programme on adolescent and youth engagement whereby the rights of children and adolescents are fulfilled through initiatives in school to work transition, participatory education, and adolescent and youth empowerment. The vision is that UN agencies joining forces on the work towards the betterment of adolescent wellbeing will have a much greater impact. A key component of the programme involves adolescents and youth as partners in monitoring, and evaluating the activity-level and systems-level changes that the programme is set on doing.
(f) FOSTERING INNOVATIONS IN PROCESSES AND PRACTICES		
Innovation in processes and practices	Adolescent/youth as key stakeholders in creating and fostering innovations in technology and processes	In Myanmar, an innovative, human-centred design process for social work case management was developed through a multi-stakeholder partnership led by UNICEF and PointB, a leading design-thinking organisation, the Department of Social Welfare and the Mon State Youth Group. Case

	Using innovation to capture data and information on the most disadvantaged adolescents	Managers and youth delegates together identified protection-related challenges and designed appropriate and relevant systems to improve Case Managers' effectiveness in responding to protection violations, with community/youth involvement and support.
(g) FOCUS ON EVIDENCE		
Generating, synthesising and promoting the use of evaluations, research and data	Adolescents/youth involved in data collection, analysis and dissemination Age disaggregated data is available especially for the age 10-14 years	The Moldova Office supported adolescents in developing the Children's Report for the UN Committee on the CRC. The adolescents led the process of designing and undertaking research on child rights, collecting the inputs of over 900 children, and synthesising and summarising the information. The Report's findings have been used as topics on digital platforms for promotion of adolescent rights, social inclusion and participation. The method of engagement has been proposed for national scale up across student councils and municipal youth councils.

ANNEX 2: Principles of Engagement

In order for AYE to be effective, ethical, systematic and sustainable, there are a number of basic requirements that need to be met. These are set out by the CRC - General Comment No.12 on children's participation and elaborated in the ADAP Conceptual Framework on Adolescent Participation. They should be reflected in all activities and initiatives working directly with adolescents and implementing this Framework:

- **Transparent and informative:** Adolescents must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact
- **Voluntary:** Adolescents should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.
- **Respectful:** Adolescents' views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities.
- **Relevant:** Opportunities must be available for adolescents to express their views on issues of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities.
- **Adolescent-friendly environments and working methods:** Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that adolescents are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. The approaches to working with adolescents should reflect their differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities.
- **Inclusive:** Engagement and participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, be culturally sensitive to adolescents from all communities, and encourage opportunities for marginalized adolescents, including both girls and boys, to be involved.
- **Supported by training:** Adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate adolescents' engagement effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with adolescents and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities.
- **Safe and sensitive to risk:** Expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the adolescents with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimize the risk to adolescents of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation. Working with families and communities can contribute to building understanding of the value of engagement, and minimize risks to which adolescents may otherwise be exposed.
- **Accountable:** A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. Adolescents are entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, they should be given the opportunity to participate in follow up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of adolescents' participation needs to be undertaken, wherever possible with adolescents themselves.