

Guidance Note

The Effective Participation of Young Leaders at the European Development Days

Effective and meaningful youth participation is key:

- Young people are one of the priorities of the European Commission. They are our future, but also our present.
- More than half the world is under 25 years old (3.5 billion), who also account for a growing majority of the population in developing countries. Young people have a unique view and are most affected by urgent global development challenges and decisions.
- The EDD Young Leaders Programme is an important initiative of the European Commission to promote and encourage the inclusion of youth in debates and policy-making process shaping our future.
- The meaningful participation of children and youth is mandated by global and European policy commitments, including the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, for their opinion to be heard and taken seriously, and a role in decision-makingⁱ.
- Youth inclusion leads to an innovative and more inclusive development. The empowerment of young people contributes to build responsible citizenship, which helps shaping democratic societies and good governance, which are high priorities for the EU. Motivating young people will ensure a long-term commitment to development, which can help increase ownership, accountability and innovation in their countries.

Equal and active participation of Young Leaders in your EDD 2017 session

- EDD 2017 selects youth who are already leaders now: they are experts in their field and topic, and already play a significant role as active agents of change in their communities and countries.
- The Young Leaders are 'representatives' of a community, constituency, group of peers or project, and do not speak in their own name only. They were selected in a fair, transparent process, based on criteria of expertise and experience.
- The Young Leaders will add value to your session. The prerequisites and checklist actions below are good practices for inclusive and effective debates, which will benefit all participants in your EDD session.

Prerequisites (mandated core values) for effective youth participation

1. Meaningful equal participation:

Youth must have a meaningful and equal role, be taken into account, have an impact on outcomes or decisions, be fully informed and understand the purpose of their contributions. We will avoid tokenistic participation. Young Leaders must be treated as equal actors, who can participate in planning and give feedback about your session. Youth must be given equal time to speak and answer questions or debate.

2. A safe and a respectful, valuing, positive environment

All actors collaborating with youth must ensure their safety and protection. Be attentive to potential vulnerabilities, and remove any risk of manipulation, harassment, or personal discomfort in relations (as a youth or as a girl/woman). They must be informed how their quotes/images will be used, and give consent. Young Leaders must be able to report concerns and have them taken into account. For an open and sensitive atmosphere, you must provide as much information and support as possible. You must respect their differences, their gender, religion, and opinions and levels of ability or communication styles, making room for their strengths.

Check-list of steps for effective youth participation in EDD 2017 sessions

BEFORE EDD

- ✓ Recognise their role and expertise, listen to their suggestions, inform yourself about their talents.
- ✓ Provide ample information about your session **before May 22nd** via email and organise either a Skype conversation before their arrival or a meeting in the week before the EDDs (Young Leaders will be in Brussels from the 31st of May).
- ✓ Make an effort to use clear and non-jargon language, and to explain key terms and acronyms used.
- ✓ Allow Young Leaders to collaborate and/or give feedback in the planning of the session and make space for their creativity, communication styles and unique skills (ex. youth can suggest ways to use the app or social media; they usually prefer a short speech, which they can prepare).
- ✓ Give time for the youth to prepare and practise their interventions.
- ✓ When possible, send draft contributions of other speakers, or documents/links to know them in advance.
- ✓ Clearly state the roles, responsibilities, and room for initiative the youth will have, including their time allocation and how their contributions will relate and be integrated with the others.
- ✓ In the week before the EDD, we will put you in contact with your Young Leader to arrange a meeting. We encourage meetings on *Monday 5th* of June, as well as on rehearsal day on *Tuesday 6th* of June at Tour & Taxis. Give clear and useful feedback about their ideas, draft presentation and performance; provide suggestions for improvements.
- ✓ The EDD Youth Team will be preparing the Young Leaders, giving personalised support, and will be on hand for any particular need or concern. Feel free to contact us for suggestions or support.

DURING EDD

- ✓ Obtain consent for the publication or distribution of any personal or confidential information.
- ✓ Allow for equal time for participation in the session.
- ✓ Stick to the promised allotted time, do not treat them in a different way (e.g. rush them when they are speaking).
- ✓ Let them focus on what is most relevant to them and their experience, and be as flexible as possible.
- ✓ Be aware of the reactions of other debate members and audience, to minimise any disrespect and overcome any cultural barrier or prejudice regarding the Young Leaders' participation.
- ✓ Be culture/gender sensitive; ensure there is no sign or perception of harassment or uncomfortable situations. Report any sign of inappropriate behaviour or concern of harassment to the EDD Team.

The EDD Youth Team contact information:

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Useful resources regarding Youth participation:

Council of Europe Manual on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Youth_Participation_Charter_en.asp

The EU structured dialog with youth, as an example of the roles they can take, in brief step by step <https://vimeo.com/69176445> and in detail http://europa.eu/youth/eu/article/115/13991_en

¹ Lisbon Treaty, the UN Convention on the Right of the Child, the recent Council Conclusions on the Right of the Child <http://db.eurocrim.org/db/en/doc/2272.pdf>, The EU Child Rights policy: http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/child/index_en.htm and the recent Council Conclusions for the SDG.