

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN CONFLICT: CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Promising Practices in the Middle East in North Africa

Project Design and Implementation

- ☐ A conflict analysis has been conducted with young people to better understand conflict stakeholders, their interests in and positions toward the conflict, and potential leverage points to address entrenched power dynamics.
- ☐ Based on the conflict analysis, a tailored outreach and engagement strategy is developed for partners across conflict divides, including youth-led formal and informal groups, and for subgroups that are traditionally marginalized or hard to reach by civil society or society more broadly. The recruitment, engagement, and selection process for participants and partners is transparent to avoid perceptions of inequality.
- ☐ Internal reflection is held among the project team to examine biases and capabilities and establish norms and standards for a PYD ethos among staff, and staff reflect youth diversity, speak local languages, and model respect for all youth. Appropriate staff members are trained in impartial and inclusive facilitation.
- ☐ A youth-led design methodology, such as human-centered design or youth-led community mapping, is adopted and integrated as part of the core program methodology.
- ☐ Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm are applied throughout the program cycle, ensuring that youth are safe and protected during their involvement with the program. As part of these processes, a risk analysis has been conducted with young people to identify physical, psychosocial, and digital risks and develop safeguarding measures to prevent and mitigate these risks and provide a clear response when harm occurs, with young people as key actors in their own protection.
- ☐ Where applicable, MHPSS elements are designed by or in collaboration with experienced psychosocial actors and mental health professionals, are evidence-based, and are coordinated with other efforts in the field to ensure non-duplication and Do No Harm.
- ☐ Program design identifies and includes skills that are appropriate for the program's context and goals—that is, critical thinking and social and emotional learning for programs that help youth access basic services, such as education or employment; non-adversarial advocacy, civic engagement, or dialogue facilitation skills for programs that help youth constructively engage in conflict dynamics; and agency-focused skills for youth in active conflict to rebuild a sense of control over their environment.

Project Design and Implementation

- ☐ Program design identifies concrete, manageable opportunities for youth contribution that enable youth to experience quick, tangible rewards of their actions, avoid disillusionment, and contribute to greater trust of their institutional environment.
- ☐ A safe space appropriate for the conflict context has been identified, preferably by youth themselves, that considers gender sensitivity, youth with particular needs (such as youth with disabilities), and those who are more at risk of violence in conflict (such as SGMs and/or specific religious or ethnic minorities).
- ☐ A youth-led stakeholder analysis is conducted to identify and reach out to influential community members whose project buy-in might contribute to a gradual shift in social norms around youth agency and contribution. For PYD programs specifically engaging women, this might entail engaging male allies to support female agency and contribution.

Activity Design and Implementation

- ☐ Youths' parents are consulted and engaged throughout the activities to ensure their buy-in for youth participation, and specific staff or facilitators are designated to continue parental engagement throughout project activities.
- ☐ Youth have opportunities to reflect on inclusion and exclusion dynamics within their context, safely examine their own beliefs and identities, and develop understanding and dialogue across conflict divides, based on the conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity, and Do No Harm principles, as well as age-appropriate and gender-sensitive considerations.
- ☐ Activities include mechanisms to foster relationships between youth and their adult counterparts, such as local dialogues and jointly led community initiatives.
- ☐ Activities engage community leaders and powerholders in constructive youth engagement workshops to equip them with the assets to work effectively with youth.
- ☐ MHPSS activities are culturally appropriate, ensure youth agency, give youth opportunities to address collective as well as individual trauma, and address youths' family and community systems
- ☐ Youths' expectations are managed to avoid disappointment or spoilers, particularly in high-risk or conflict-affected settings where concrete results may take time to see.
- ☐ Media tools, such as radio, television, and social media, are used to amplify positive narratives of youth as constructive leaders in their communities to shift negative stereotypes and biases held by communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- ☐ Youth are involved in developing indicators and measurements reflective of the conflict context, as well as in collecting and analyzing data.
- ☐ Programs develop and use youth-led accountability mechanisms, such as community scorecards, that have buy-in from community members and powerholders.
- ☐ Indicators are disaggregated by age (at least five-year brackets) and gender and measure and evaluate inclusion and conflict-related factors where appropriate (such as participants' attitudes and biases toward different subgroups or identities), while balancing the potential risks/benefits of data collection for staff and participants, particularly those from identities or groups facing elevated risks.

Strategic Planning

- ☐ System mapping is conducted to understand the complex systems affecting youth within the conflict context, such as the Whole System in the Room methodology.
- ☐ Program staff are trained in PYD and execute PYD values in interactions with institutional, local, and youth-led partners.
- ☐ Institutional partners' interests in and positions toward PYD are mapped to identify leverage points for the institutionalization of PYD approaches.
- ☐ Youth-led community mapping identifies youth leadership as well as groups and segmentations of youth that may be difficult to reach or have less visibility in conflict contexts

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting

- ☐ Ongoing mechanisms are established for youth leadership within adaptive design and implementation processes and the program remains flexible to ongoing iteration

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