



**OPERASJON
DAGSVERK**

Operation Day's Work (ODW) Guideline on youth participation

Operation Day's Work is a solidarity campaign by, with and for youth. The campaign is organised by the "School Student Union of Norway".

1. By youth ODW mean:

People from 13 to 19 years of age (flexible only upwards under exceptional circumstances, to be agreed upon prior to signing of the ODW contract).

2. Youth is ODWs target group because;

- ODW volunteers, participants and audience in the Norwegian solidarity campaign are youth from 13 to 19 years of age (recognition/solidarity).
- ODW also see the youth as an important target group in a development context, as this particular age group is often overlooked and neglected.
- Strengthening youth is essential in order to create future opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.
- Young people are key resources in planning for better and more relevant development assistance. Young people are also vital in terms of challenging the *status quo* and introducing new ideas.

3. The role of youth during the programme:

Youth participation is a learning process, the first step is to understand and accept the concept. This should be followed by a process of involving young people and gradually increase the quantity and quality of youth participation. ODW want to avoid the view of youth solely as beneficiaries. However, an absolute definition of youth participation might undermine local needs and preconditions. Youth participation should be both goal and strategy.

Youths' role:

- Youth should be active participants involved in all phases of the project cycle; including planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Youth should be involved in the decision-making process.
- Youth participation should always be the result of individual teen choices, including what form of involvement young people want.
- Involvement opportunities should to be fun and interesting, so that young people can develop by attending.
- Various forms of youth participation depend on whether it is formal education initiatives, support to youth organisations or other informal training.

Reasons for including youth in the decision-making:

- Youth have the right to participate in the shaping of the society/measures that affect them.
- ODW wish to see commitment and ownership to the project as a whole. The goal should be that youth are empowered to run the activities.
- If the youth have been involved from the start the assumption is that the activity will be more relevant and subsequently lead to a more sustainable development.
- Personal development of young people who actively participate.
- Influencing the future.
- Young people bring new ideas / different perspective than adults.
- Sets the foundation for Democracy (training in leadership, etc.).
- See young people as part of the solution rather than problem (focus on young people's positive contribution).

ODW and the partner organisation(s) must have a common platform regarding youth participation at the beginning of the cooperation. This means that the partner organisation already at the application stage must explain its strategy with regard to youth participation and how they are working on this subject with their partners.

The role of the partner organisation:

- Identify and address cultural barriers related to real youth participation.
- Employ relevant UN declarations, laws and guidelines to advocate for youth participation.
- Ensure that all relevant information reaches all youth involved.
- Developed internal guidelines on youth involvement which are implemented in all involved organisations.
- Meet youth with respect and listen to them.
- Have/develop skills on communicating with youth.
- Provide easy access to decision-making for young people throughout the project cycle, including
 - easy access to relevant training, support, information and resources so that young people have the opportunity to become fully involved;
 - clear and central roles and responsibilities for youth in relevant structures within the various organisations, in order to ensure the best possible insight and understanding of the project; and
 - accountable and clear framework for the degree of participation and involvement.
- Avoid creating unrealistic expectations and therefore disappoint youth participants.

ODW's role:

- Advocate for a strong youth perspective in the programme activities.
- Offer advice on youth participation.
- Facilitate information-exchange between partner organisations.
- Use the ODW's own experience as a youth driven organisation and the "School Students' Union's" efforts to strengthen democracy and student participation in school policy.