



Toolkit on

Meaningful Engagement

To foster a more inclusive and sustainable world



Funded by
the European Union

About

This toolkit has been developed and edited by CISU – Civil Society in Development and published as part of the project Connect for Global Change. The content is grounded in the extensive experience in awareness-raising and engagement work of all project partners, with each partner contributing valuable insights and expertise to its development.

List of project partners:

- ▶ [4de pijler - 11.11.11](#)
- ▶ [CISU - Civil Society in Development](#)
- ▶ [COP – Consorzio ONG Piemontesi](#)
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Introduction

Engagement is vital for successful development cooperation and global solidarity, forming the core of civil society organisations' work. Connect for Global Change is an EU-supported initiative aimed at engaging citizens in meaningful ways across eleven European countries to foster a more inclusive and sustainable world.



What will we do?

Between 2024 and 2027, Connect for Global Change supports small actions that inform and engage EU citizens. The project focuses on youth and those less familiar with global challenges.

Small and medium-sized NGOs can apply for funding to realize creative, impactful and innovative actions. Actions shall be about subjects within the Sustainable Development Goal-agenda or any global challenge. It could be topics such as the climate crisis, gender inequality, poverty, exclusion, misinformation and disinformation.

We also wish to create networks between civil society organisations in Europe, so we can collaborate across borders. The name “Connect for Global Change” reflects this ambition. We hope that many will join to work together to promote global solidarity across Europe.

Who is this tool for and what is it about?

The toolkit provides ideas and cases on how to create meaningful engagement. Meaningful engagement which involves deep understanding and active participation in issues. It emphasizes moving beyond mere involvement to empower individuals to reflect critically, analyze various perspectives, and contribute with informed opinions.

To foster this, the toolkit emphasizes the importance of knowing your target group, as different methods work for different audiences. It provides ideas for engaging specific groups, such as youth, and offers practical tips for motivating less engaged individuals by aligning actions with their values and interests.

The toolkit is particularly useful for those applying for Connect for Global Change funding, but can also benefit others involved in global sustainable development.

How to use it

When you read the toolkit, you can use the described approaches and insights as they are. Even better, you can use them as inspiration to develop your own approaches or adjust the approaches and insights to your already established way of working.

Engagements and awareness raising work comes in many forms and colors and the tools and approaches should not be understood as complete recipes to create meaningful engagement (or eligible actions), but as potential sources of inspiration.

We hope it sparks your creativity and inspires new ideas. Enjoy reading!

What is Meaningful Engagement?

DEFINITION

Meaningful engagement should be understood as active engagement by people who are critically aware.

Meaningful engagement is when people are actively involved while truly understanding the importance of the issues they are involved in. It goes beyond mere involvement—it's about empowering people to reflect deeply, analyze different perspectives, and express their own informed opinions.

When we support meaningful engagement, we encourage understanding of how efforts fit into the broader picture. People are encouraged to think critically, explore different viewpoints, and express their own informed opinions. Only when people critically understand the issues, can they take strong, defensible positions, and contribute meaningfully to actions.



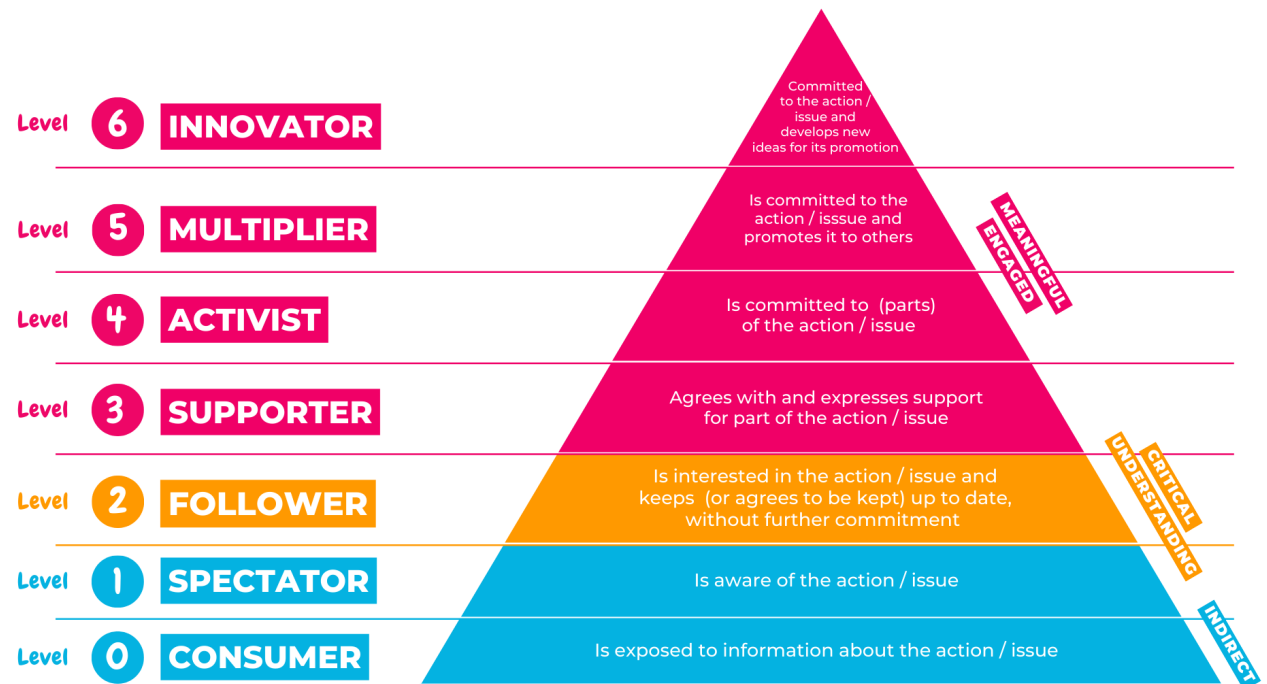
Photo: Jacob Crawford

The Engagement Pyramid

Designing an engagement project that inspires lasting change is a journey full of possibilities and there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. In the next sections we will present the Engagement Pyramid. We find this model useful when trying to analyze ideas and finding out how to create engagement at various levels for various people.

Consider the Engagement Pyramid as a guiding framework for shaping your choice of activities, formulation of results and setting objectives. The pyramid illustrates that engagement can vary widely in depth and intensity, from basic observation to active leadership, and acknowledges that there will typically be more participants at the lower levels and fewer at the top.

Our suggestions offer a starting point. You may use the pyramid in another way, or your approach can evolve as you discover what resonates best with your participants and your way of working.



The levels in the engagement pyramid

INNOVATORS

These are the trailblazers who drive transformative change. Foster their creativity by collaborating on groundbreaking actions or launching new initiatives together. Encourage them to think outside the box and explore novel solutions to complex challenges.

MULTIPLIERS

Multipliers are the champions who spread your message far and wide. Empower them to amplify your cause by giving them tools and resources to reach a broader audience. For instance, support them in writing blog posts, speaking at events, or creating engaging multimedia content.

ACTIVISTS

These are your committed participants who actively advocate for your cause. Provide them with opportunities to lead initiatives, such as organizing local campaigns or hosting discussions. Encourage their passion by offering platforms where they can share their experiences and ideas.

FOLLOWERS AND SUPPORTERS

These participants are already interested and willing to show support. Invite them to take the next step by subscribing to your newsletter or joining a community group. Simple actions like signing a petition or attending a workshop can help them feel more connected.

CONSUMERS AND SPECTATORS

These are individuals who encounter your cause casually. To engage them, consider creating eye-catching content or organizing events that pique their interest. For example, a visually appealing social media campaign or a pop-up exhibit can spark initial curiosity.

Meaningful Engagement, Critical Understanding and Indirect reach

Meaningful engagement is about turning awareness into action but also, converting uninformed actions into knowledge-driven efforts. It's not just about increasing activity; it's about engaging deeply with the purpose and issue of the action.

In Connect for Global Change we consider "meaningful engagement" to start at level 3 and above.

Critical Understanding refers to the ability of individuals to reflect on an issue. It means the ability to evaluate and analyze the information provided, and form different ideas, perspectives, and positions. It involves not simply accepting information at face value, but rather to think independently, form defensible opinions, and make informed decisions.

In Connect for Global Change we consider "critical understanding" to begin at level 2 in the Engagement Pyramid, while "meaningful engagement" starts at level 3 and above.

Indirect reach means encountering information about an issue by chance, rather than seeking it out.

In Connect for Global Change we consider an 'indirect reach' to start at level 0 and above.

The engagement pyramid can help you

► **Identify Current Engagement Level:** Categorize at what pyramid level(s) the target group is currently positioned. Reflect on where your audience stands on the pyramid. If they are mainly spectators, create interactive experiences to draw them in.

► **Set Goals for Future Engagement Level:** Determine the level you would like to reach with your target group, through the action. This means, clarify whether the objective is to maintain the target group at a specific level (which they might leave without the project) or to elevate them to a higher level.

► **Design Activities:** Plan activities that offer deeper involvement. Plan initiatives that encourage progression through the pyramid, such as leadership opportunities or advanced training sessions.

► **Monitor Progress:** Track how participants are moving through the pyramid. Are they advancing to higher levels, or are there barriers preventing progression? Use insights to refine your activities. If certain activities are not effective, consider modifying your approach or introducing new methods.



Example 1: Fiona from Belgium

Meet Fiona from Belgium, she is 18 years old. She reads a lot about climate issues, and understands the complexity of the topic, although she feels a bit overwhelmed by all the information that is available. But, she is potentially interested to join further action on this issue.

Fiona is now at level 2: she is a follower interested in the topic. If you would invite her to join your climate youth project, you could invite her to motivate her to become a supporter, join your activities and spread the word.



Example 2: Pablo from Spain

Meet Pablo from Spain. He is working for a big international company that imports and exports products outside of Europe. Therefore, he gets in touch with people from all over the world. Some of his friends moved to Morocco to find work there, and he often hears stories about other countries and cultures.

Pablo is now at level 0: he is a consumer and exposed to information. If you would invite him for a documentary screening, or for example a project focusing on Morocco, he could be moved to another level.



Example 3: Halina from Poland

Meet Halina from Poland. Halina is working for an NGO focusing on gender, and she is a very active lobbyist for mainstreaming the gender topic in policy making processes. She also gives advice on this topic.

Halina is now at the level of multiplier, committed to the topic and promoting it to others. She still has the dream to, one day, start an action herself where she would start an action together in a European network on the topic. How could you work together with her to move a level up?

! Consider the Relation Between Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour

Engagement is linked to knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. *Knowledge* may open people's eyes to issues such as poverty, inequality and climate change. *Attitudes* are our beliefs and feelings towards those issues, which may guide our *behaviour*. Thus, engagement is not necessarily rational, informed actions. We act (also) based on deeper values, identity, feelings and passion.

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Behaviour is key

Although engagement has different components, the key to engaging people is influencing their behaviour. After all, knowledge and attitudes are of little use if they do not translate into actions to change the world.

For a long time, social scientists used to think that there was a linear relation between knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The assumption was that if you informed people, for example, about climate change (knowledge), they would subsequently feel more concerned (attitude) and make choices such as installing solar panels on their roof (behaviour).

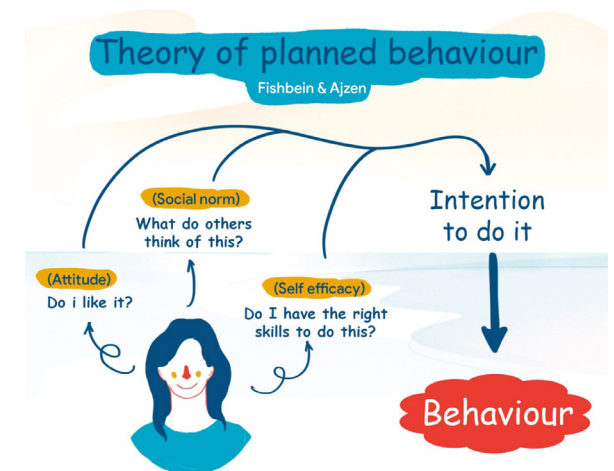
No linear relation

However, we now know that the relation between the three is far from linear: increasing people's knowledge will often not be sufficient to change their attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, the relationship can go in reversed directions. For example, a person may start to donate to a citizen initiative of her friend (behaviour), and subsequently becomes interested to learn more about development cooperation (knowledge).

Short and Sweet: Theory of Planned Behavior

A short way to envision some of all the factors that creates engagement regardless of the target group or behavioural engagement is people's personal values (Is it important to me?), people's social environment (what will my friends say?) and people's sense of self-efficacy (will I be able to do it?) .

You can use this theory of planned behaviour as a reference when you think about influencing the involvement and engagement of others.*



*This short way of saying it is based on the 'theory of planned behaviour'. A well-tested theory by Fishbein and Ajzen.

Knowing Your Target Group

When you start planning your action, you probably already have a more or less clear idea of who your target group is. But it would probably strengthen your action to be even more concrete. Different methods work for different audiences. Understanding who you want to engage is crucial. This understanding allows you to tailor your methods effectively and ensure your action resonates with the intended audience.

When we talk about a method, we're not just referring to the type of communication product. We're considering the entire spectrum of approaches for the action, including the physical platforms you plan to use and the channels through which you wish to communicate.

Test your assumptions

To gain the insights you need, you can draw on previous experiences, consult reports, or seek advice from experts familiar with the group. Or better yet, you can directly engage with representatives of the target group—interview them, ask about their motivations, present your action idea, and invite their feedback. Also, find out which media and channels your target group uses (social media, festivals, social dining events, or other online and offline platforms).

? Questions to ask your target group before assuming that you know them (well):

We recommend you to engage directly with your target group before finalizing your action plans. Here are some questions you could ask them:

- ▶ What issues are most important to you right now?
- ▶ We are planning an action about [topic], what do you know about this topic?
- ▶ Where do you seek knowledge on topics that interests you?
- ▶ What would motivate you to share knowledge about this topic e.g. On social media platforms?
- ▶ What kinds of events do you find most engaging or inspiring?
- ▶ What challenges or barriers might prevent you from getting involved?
- ▶ Can you describe a recent experience where you felt motivated to take action on an issue? What drove your motivation?
- ▶ Do you think you can play a role in contributing to the solution on [problem]? If yes, which? And if no, why not?
- ▶ Are there any organisations or movements you follow that inspire you? If so, which ones and why?

Different Target Groups – Different Approaches

How to break down who my target group is?

We recommend starting by breaking down your audience into smaller, more specific groups. You could begin by focusing on demographics and geography: identifying your audience based on factors like age, gender, income, education, occupation, and marital status. Additionally, you might consider dividing your audience by location, such as region or city, especially if geography plays a key role in defining your target group.

However, we will encourage exploring two other ways for refining your audience. The first way is particularly useful when planning activities for those at the top of the engagement pyramid—the individuals you hope will inspire and that can mobilize others. This approach focuses on understanding the values, lifestyle, and personality of your audience, helping you determine what motivates them to engage. This can be referred to as segmentation based on psychological factors.

The second way involves analyzing the behavior of your audience, looking at their lifestyle, attitudes, and loyalty. This approach is valuable for understanding how different groups react to and interact with your message. This can be referred to as segmentation based on behavioral factors.



Photo: Jacob Crawford

Motivate the ones who shall take the lead

Different individuals are motivated to take action by different factors. What drives someone most - whether it's a sense of community, a desire for independence, or something else - depends on the individual and what matters most to them. By considering different psychological aspects, you can identify what resonates with yourself, your organisation, and the part of the target group you wish would take the lead. This allows you to create an action that is both motivating and engaging, leading to deeper involvement and sustained enthusiasm*.

Here are some psychological factors that can motivate individuals depending on their personalities, needs, and values:

- ▶ For some, being involved in decisions that shape the direction of an action is crucial. When people have a voice in determining how they participate, they often feel more invested and motivated.
- ▶ Others may be driven by a sense of accomplishment. The opportunity to see their contributions recognized and celebrated can provide a powerful motivation, as it reinforces their feeling of creating impact and their importance in the process.

** This chapter draws inspiration from the work of Simon Elsborg Nygaard, Ph.D. in sustainable psychology and well-being, and from workshops he has conducted for CISU on engaging more citizens in efforts to create a sustainable world.*

- ▶ 'A strong sense of community' can also be a significant motivator. People tend to be more engaged when they feel connected to others and part of a supportive environment. The feeling of belonging and being valued within a group can enhance their commitment and enthusiasm.

- ▶ The alignment of an action's goals with personal values and interests can also be a motivational factor. When the objectives resonate with what they care about, their involvement becomes more meaningful and impactful, maybe leading to sustained motivation over time.

- ▶ Finally, for some the most important issue is to have the necessary support and a feeling of having the personal resources to succeed. Feeling confident and capable in their roles is essential for them to stay engaged and committed to the **action**.



CASE

Photo: Permaculture across borders

PERMACULTURE ACROSS BORDERS – THE CENTRAL AMERICA COMMITTEE

Knowledge Exchange between Danish Garden Enthusiasts and the Maya People in Guatemala

The project facilitates knowledge exchange between Danish garden enthusiasts and the Maya people in Guatemala, engaging participants through hands-on experiences in Denmark. Garden and permaculture enthusiasts will deepen their understanding of development issues while literally getting their hands in the soil. The Central America Committee will send a group of ten participants to Guatemala, where they will learn from the Maya people—experts in sustainable practices—who will prepare them to conduct outreach and establish a permaculture garden with a Guatemalan theme in Denmark.

The action aims to enhance participants' engagement in sustainable development by fostering connections between Danish enthusiasts and the Maya people.

Target group: Garden and permaculture enthusiasts, who are interested in sustainable practices and eager to engage through practical, hands-on experiences.

Country: Guatemala

! Checklist to Assess if Your Action Will Motivate a Target Group to Take Lead

Here is a checklist you can use, to assess whether you have considered relevant psychological aspects and remembered some of the most important factors in your action design to motivate people.

The checklist can help you to check blind spots in your action and guide a conversation about how to adjust to enhance motivation.

- ☑ **Self-determination:** Have participants been given a role in deciding how they want to be involved? Are there opportunities for them to shape their own participation?
- ☑ **Competence:** Are participants provided with the necessary support and resources to feel capable in their roles? Have you offered training or guidance to build their confidence?
- ☑ **Community:** Is there a strong sense of community among participants? Do they feel connected, supported, and valued as part of a team? Do participants feel secure in their roles and that their contributions are appreciated? Is the environment supportive and inclusive?
- ☑ **Variety:** Is the action experience enjoyable and diverse? Have you included different activities to maintain interest and enthusiasm?
- ☑ **Importance:** Do participants find the action important and relevant? Have you connected their involvement to their personal values and interests, showing how their work aligns with broader goals? Do participants understand how their involvement contributes to a larger cause?
- ☑ **Task-Goal Alignment:** Is there a clear connection between participants' tasks and the overall goals of the action? Have you demonstrated how their roles support the action's success? Is it clear to each individual what is expected of them?
- ☑ **Recognition:** Are participants regularly recognized and appreciated for their efforts? Can they see and feel the impact of their contributions? Are there opportunities to celebrate their achievements and demonstrate how their efforts contribute to progress?
- ☑ **Value Matching:** Does the action align with participants' personal values and ethical standards? Have you ensured that their involvement reflects what they consider important and the right course of action?
- ☑ **Personal Benefits:** Does the action offer enjoyable experiences and tangible personal benefits? Have you highlighted what participants stand to gain and the pleasurable aspects of their involvement?

DEFINITION

When we talk about the less sensitive or less involved in Connect for Global Change we are referring to individuals who are less aware of and who are not taking an active position on global development issues. However, they can be involved or deeply engaged in other topics in society.

The less involved in global issues have not formed strong opinions or gained significant knowledge about global sustainable development issues. This group can include people of various ages, educational backgrounds, economic situations, work areas, internet usage habits, political orientations and so on. The less involved can be an entire target group or a segment of a more or less homogenous target group. E.g. in a high school class there will be some who are very much involved and others who are not.

Motivate the ones who should get involved

The chapter provides some practical approaches which can help organisations inspire and motivate their target group by connecting global issues to their core values and everyday life. This approach is helpful when you want to involve people who are less involved or not involved in global issues at all.

The model we present divides individuals based on their fundamental values, attitudes and behaviors, while providing ideas for engaging or involving each of these segments. We will present six different segments: Trustful Adapters, Justice-Seeking Practitioners, Optimistic Pragmatists, Straightforward Individualists, Safety-Seeking Traditionalists, and Concerned Guardians*. 'Less sensitive' people can be found in any of these segments.

Like every other division of people, it's not clear-cut, and people's views can change through conversations and personal interactions. Hence, adjust your action plans based on the feedback and responses you observe.

Often, engaging one segment effectively can open pathways to others. For instance, mobilizing Trustful Adapters through an action like "Sewing Circles" can create momentum that Justice-Seeking Practitioners will follow, amplifying overall engagement efforts.

The content of this chapter is inspired by the segment analysis developed by **Democracy X (formerly DeltagerDanmark). The complete segment analysis can be found here: www.openpuljen.dk/media/lv1f5h02/segmentanalyse-til-at-na-malgrupper.pdf*

Tailoring your approach to the unique values and motivations of each segment ensures more effective communication and action – make better use of what you already got.

TIP

In the [Eurobarometer – Public opinion in the European Union](http://europa.eu) (europa.eu), you can find extensive data on which groups in your country or region are statistically less engaged.

However, these statistics primarily highlight general awareness trends within large groups and may not directly inform you on how to effectively engage individuals. It's crucial to remember that within any large demographic group, there are always exceptions.

These exceptions are worth paying special attention to, whether they fall into the less aware category (your actual focus) or whether they could serve as a gateway to engaging the less aware.



TRUSTFUL ADAPTERS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Open to new opportunities and changes
- ▶ Strong sense of social justice and empathy
- ▶ Prefer state-driven solutions for social issues
- ▶ Actively engage in community improvement and advocacy

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Initiate with global inequality discussions: “How do you feel about global inequality?”
- ▶ Organize debates and demonstrations to inspire participation
- ▶ Encourage leadership in community projects and political campaigns



JUSTICE-SEEKING PRACTITIONERS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Strong sense of fairness and solidarity
- ▶ Support for welfare improvement and harsher penalties for crime
- ▶ Believe in collective responsibility and state intervention

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Connect global issues to specific, local consequences that people can relate to in their everyday lives for example use local examples like community recycling projects to illustrate broader environmental issues.
- ▶ Arrange smaller community events such as a movie night connected with discussions on social issues
- ▶ Promote roles that align with their organisational skills, such as coordinating local events.



OPTIMISTIC PRAGMATISTS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Realistic and practical approach to problems
- ▶ Respect for tradition and authority
- ▶ Prefer straightforward and functional solutions

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Focus on hands-on activities like local recycling projects
- ▶ Involve them in practical problem-solving within their community
- ▶ Use relatable examples to discuss broader issues, like climate change



CASE

Photo: Morsø U-landsforening

SEWING CIRCLES – MORSØ U-LANDSFORENING

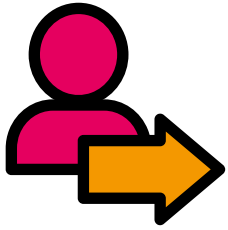
Interest-Based Communities

The “Sewing Circles” action by Morsø U-landsforening uses a common interest in sewing to bridge connections between women in Denmark and Tanzania, effectively engaging Straightforward Individualists. By prioritizing practical activities like fundraising and learning sewing techniques, participants create tangible outcomes rather than engaging in abstract discussions. This initiative fosters understanding and identification through direct involvement in sewing communities, leading to a greater appreciation of the challenges faced by women in Bukoba.

The action aims to deepen engagement among participants by highlighting shared experiences and inspiring them to explore global issues through the case of Tanzania.

Target group: High school students, association members, and sewing enthusiasts—who are drawn to practical solutions and personal responsibility, allowing them to connect with development work in Tanzania while raising awareness and funds for Bukoba.

Country: Tanzania



STRAIGHTFORWARD INDIVIDUALISTS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Value individual freedom and personal responsibility
- ▶ Skeptical of extensive welfare systems and prefer lower taxes
- ▶ Driven by logical and rational arguments

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Emphasize the personal benefits of community actions
- ▶ Engage them in debates about effective solutions for social issues
- ▶ Assign them tasks that leverage their practical skills and independence
- ▶ Demonstrate how contributing to global development can lead to personal growth and new skills.
- ▶ Offer hands-on workshops or volunteer opportunities that allow them to see the direct impact of their involvement.



SAFETY-SEEKING TRADITIONALISTS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Value stability, family, and community
- ▶ Prefer traditional roles and are cautious of rapid changes.
- ▶ Support welfare for vulnerable groups but favor personal responsibility

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Create safe and social activities, like cooking for community events
- ▶ Engage them in discussions that connect past positive experiences with current actions
- ▶ Highlight the local and immediate benefits of broader initiatives
- ▶ Make tailored communication using relatable stories and practical examples that connect global issues to their everyday lives. Like emphasize the stability and security that global development can bring to their community.



CONCERNED GUARDIANS

Characteristics:

- ▶ Worried about societal changes and safety
- ▶ Value consistency and have a strong sense of nostalgia
- ▶ Prefer small, manageable steps over large, abstract solutions

Suggestions for Approaches:

- ▶ Link global issues to local consequences, such as how global economic shifts affect job opportunities in your area.
- ▶ Organize familiar and low-risk activities, like local cleanups
- ▶ Use personal stories and practical examples to build trust
- ▶ Build on common interests and focus on how global development efforts can protect the environment and ensure a better future for their children. Practical Tip: organize community events or information sessions that highlight the local impact of global development.



CASE

Foto: Skoleliv i Nepal

GLOBAL GIRLS – SCHOOL LIFE IN NEPAL

Cross-Cultural Identification

The “Global Girls” action by School Life in Nepal demonstrates how video can effectively bridge cultural and social gaps, fostering engagement among Concerned Guardians. By sharing daily life experiences through videos on TikTok, girls from Denmark and Nepal were able to connect and understand each other’s realities. This method of visual storytelling overcame language and cultural barriers, aligning with the Concerned Guardians’ preference for manageable, relatable content. Also, it fosters friendships and deeper engagement across cultures.

The action aims to enhance engagement among participants by promoting empathy and identification through shared experiences, ultimately inspiring them to address broader global issues.

Target group: Girls, particularly those interested in building connections and understanding through relatable video content.

Country: Nepal

Youth Engagement

Youth as a target group is not holistic and unified. Like with any other target group, engaging young people in global development issues requires a thoughtful approach that resonates with their unique perspectives and interests. A common mistake is treating youth as a homogeneous group. Therefore, as with other target groups, if you are not one of them, start by getting to know them. Consider using ideas from previous chapters to help inform how to connect with different types of personalities.

DEFINITION

'Youth' is considered to be individuals aged 15 to 30, while youth organisations, networks, movements, and informal youth groups are led by young people and/or focus solely on involving those under 30.

If we were to characterize young people based on previous analyses, we could say that they are generally deeply engaged in the digital landscape, favoring platforms that reflect their interests and values. They seek meaningful participation that aligns with their passions and offers opportunities for personal and professional growth. Clear communication and immediate feedback are essential for keeping them motivated and involved. Creativity in presenting ideas is crucial, as innovative approaches capture their attention. While some are driven by a desire for change, they often feel frustrated or disconnected when progress is slow.



Photo: Jacob Crawford



CASE

BARRY BIOPHONY – AUDIOVISUAL CONCERT EXPERIENCES - REMULUS ENTERTAINMENT APS

A Concert Experience about the Rainforest for Young People in a smaller city

BARRY BIOPHONY— audiovisual work will be presented at an Animation Festival, exploring the pulse of the rainforest. This action aims to involve the audience directly in creating innovative concert experiences that raise awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals. The format, framing, and communication methods are co-created by an artistic focus group of local upper primary students, collaborating with artists from the music and animation sectors. The action is supported by stakeholders from the arts and culture sector.

The action aims to engage young audiences in the creative process while raising awareness about global environmental issues through art and music.

Target group: Upper secondary students (14-17 years old) involved in the development process, exploring identity and responsibility through art, as well as a larger audience of students attending the final performance at the festival.

Country: Brazil

Youth-led actions: Involve youth in planning the future and take actions

We encourage you to involve youth in exploring various scenarios and possibilities to inform actions.

Here is a step-by-step guide to fuel youth engagement, turning youth to positive activism, grassroots efforts, and social media to gain more control and influence, creating a complex dynamic to inspire action*:

1. Challenge Existing Narratives

How It Helps: By inviting young people to question and expand beyond current assumptions, you can help them identify and understand limitations that may prevent them from seeing new possibilities. Creative exercises like scenario planning and speculative storytelling allow them to explore alternative futures and broaden their perspectives.

Application: You could host workshops where participants work with hypothetical scenarios about future work environments or sustainability. This helps them think outside the box and challenge the status quo.

2. Foster Imagination

How It Helps: Encouraging young people to use their imagination helps them visualize different futures and find creative solutions to challenges. Artistic exercises, role-playing, and immersive experiences can activate their creativity and open them up to new ideas.

Application: Activities such as creating future-oriented art projects, simulating future scenarios, or participating in role-playing where they take on different future roles can inspire them to think of new possibilities.

3. Take Action

How It Helps: When young people turn their imaginative ideas into concrete actions, their visions become more tangible and achievable. This can increase their sense of agency and responsibility towards their future.

Application: Work with participants to identify practical steps they can take, such as starting local initiatives, engaging in community projects, or advocating for policy changes. For instance, if they envision a future with zero waste, they can plan and implement local recycling programs.

**The step-by-step idea is inspired by the idea of Futures Thinking. For more practical tips and inspiration on how to apply future thing in action planning you can look into the [Futures Frequency by Sitra](#) or the work of [UNESCO: Futures Literacy & Foresight | UNESCO](#)*

Consider if your action got it all to engage youth

In the following, we present a list of recommendations for you to consider when planning how you action can motivate youth* :

- ▶ **Empower:** Involve young people in every step of the action, from ideas to execution. Empowering them to take ownership and make decisions. Involve them in brainstorming sessions, decision-making processes, and the execution of actions, allowing them to shape and develop the actions they participate in.
- ▶ **Make it clear:** Provide straightforward, honest information about opportunities and expectations. Use clear and brief messages with powerful visual elements to enhance understanding and engagement, ensuring that people know what needs to be done, by whom, and how.
- ▶ **Customize it:** Offer both short-term and long-term actions to accommodate different levels of commitment. Provide a variety of activities, from quick, impactful actions to more involved, longer-term efforts, ensuring options for everyone, regardless of their availability or level of interest.
- ▶ **Short and sweet:** Young people often respond best to initiatives that offer quick, tangible results. Design actions that provide immediate feedback and clear benefits, keeping their attention and motivation high.

- ▶ **Be Creative:** Fresh, innovative ideas capture attention and drive engagement. Whether you're developing an action or guiding young leaders, think creatively about how to present and implement your initiatives.
- ▶ **Go Digital:** Young people are deeply immersed in the digital world. Utilize social media, apps, and other online platforms to reach them where they are most active. Remember to create meaningful engagement it should not just be about promotion; it should be about creating a dynamic and interactive space for participation and action. Think also about longer term participation.
- ▶ **Choose platform(s) and content carefully:** Don't try to guess which platforms and channels your target group is using – ask them. Focus on the most relevant platforms rather than trying to use all available channels. And be aware that platforms vary significantly in how they are used. Your content should be tailored to fit each specific platform.
- ▶ **Make it personal:** Create opportunities that reflect the young people's interests and show how their involvement can make a difference both personally and globally. Emphasize personal and professional gains from participation. This includes the development of new skills, personal growth, and the acquisition of valuable experiences.

- ▶ **Make it possible:** Offer support to youth-led initiatives. Provide funding if possible and provide tools for designing activities, reduce bureaucratic hurdles. Continue offering support through coaching sessions and regular updates during action implementation.
- ▶ **Build contact:** To go further build connections across various sectors. Encourage collaboration between local authorities, civil society organisations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to create thorough and unified opportunities.

TIP

Are you working with Schools?

Schools offer a structured environment with numerous students already there together in a class room – you have your target group seated! It makes it a valuable setting for outreach. Utilizing schools as spaces for engagement can be highly effective but requires careful planning. When targeting schools, it's important to include teachers in the process and integrate actions into the school's planning. Engaging pupils and students, who are often passively seated in classrooms, requires a tailored approach. Collaborating with teachers ensures alignment with curricular goals and increases the likelihood of successful implementation. In some contexts collaboration with parents will also be essential.

*The insights in this chapter are a condensed yet comprehensive extraction from the EU-funded project *Mindchangers Practical Guide on Youth Engagement*. You can access [the complete guide here](#).

! Involve the People Affected by Global Challenges

In the Connect for Global Change partnership, we are focused on involving the people affected by global challenges and development issues. We find it to be essential for meaningful engagement work. We encourage you to ensure that those affected play central roles as actors, narrators, participants, and collaborators, in a way that is both ethical and thoughtful*.

Effective engagement work is characterized by the extent to which people from affected communities are actively involved and empowered to shape the initiatives that address the challenges they face**.

We Recommend:

1. Putting People First:

We encourage you to ensure that your communications prioritize the rights, safety, and dignity of individuals and their communities. Consent is always obtained, and participants have the right to withdraw it. Remember to respect privacy, and to adapt if circumstances change.

2. Tackling Stereotypes:

We invite you to actively challenge harmful stereotypes and strive to portray people and situations with accuracy, respect, and inclusivity. Your communications should focus on truth, offer broad context, and highlight both challenges and solutions without oversimplifying complex issues.

3. Collaborative Planning:

We prompt you to create communications in partnership with local organisations and communities, following the principle of “nothing about us without us.” Be mindful to value local expertise, promote inclusivity, and ensure that stories are told authentically, without unnecessary jargon or professional terminology.

** As times change and with new international agendas like the ‘Shift the Power’ agenda/ Decolonization of Aid agenda’ we must reassess our approach and find new ways to address these topics. Therefore, in the autumn of 2024, we are on a journey together refining our approach, and in a near future we will present findings to future applicants and grantees. However, as an applicant for Connect for Global Change you can use the above following tools and considerations to enhance your work in ethical development communications.*

*** If you want to know more about Ethical Development Communications, you can look into the guide of Fingo which can be found here: [Guidelines-for-Ethical-Development-Communications.pdf \(fingo.fi\)](#)*



CASE

Photo: Jonas Vistisen

DISSEMINATION OF GAMBIAN MUSIC HISTORY ON A NATIONAL RADIO STATION

A podcast episode on a podcast serie on Jazz on national radio

The podcast series enhances the audience's knowledge and awareness of West African living conditions, culture, and history through a focus on Gambia. Each episode features music examples, reports, and interviews with locals to engage listeners in the colonial and slavery history that the Gambian population has endured and its ongoing consequences.

The action aims to raise awareness of Gambia's historical context while fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of its music, linking past and present experiences.

Target group: The target group consists of citizens aged 25-60 who listen to the national radio program about jazz, drawn by its music rather than global development topics.

Country: Gambia



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