STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

There are many different approaches to youth engagement. Below are some of the strengths and limitations of these approaches.

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|  | **ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE** | **ROLE OF POLICYMAKERS** | **STRENGTHS** | **LIMITATIONS** |
| **CONSULTATIVE** | Participants in consultations led by policymakers, or as advisors/consultants in facilitated youth advisory bodies. | Facilitate and lead one-off consultations (e.g. focus groups, workshops) or longer- term youth advisory bodies. | * Effective to understand young people’s lived experience, priorities, concerns and perspectives. * One-off consultations are quick and resource efficient. * Can support young people to feel included and heard. * Supports young people’s rights to have a say in issues that affect their lives. | * Can appear tokenistic without genuine action on young people’s input or opportunities for young people to determine the direction/create their own outputs. * Can mean only a small number of young people are engaged, which poses challenges for diverse representation. * Long term mechanisms are resource   intensive. |
| **COLLABORATIVE** | Facilitate opportunities for ongoing collaboration with young people, providing support and guidance to build young people’s skills and capacities to engage in the policymaking process. | Facilitate opportunities for ongoing collaboration with young people, providing support and guidance to build young people’s skills and capacities to engage in the policymaking process. | * Can increase the influence of young people in forming policy, by giving them a role to investigate and make recommendations. * Leads to impactful youth-centred policy, that responds directly to the needs and perspectives of young people. * Develops young people’s knowledge and skills. | * Both young people and policymakers require the skills and capabilities to work collaboratively. * Can require significant resources to start and sustain. * If power dynamics between policymakers and young people aren’t addressed, collaborative approaches can easily slide into tokenism. |
| **YOUTH-LED** | Leaders in the design and implementation of  consultations, campaigns,  programs and research. | Support, enable and strengthen initiatives led by young people and help amplify youth voice and influence. | * Youth empowered to influence policy dialogue. * Builds young people’s personal and professional skills. * Results in genuinely youth-centred outcomes. | * If policymakers completely step away, young people can feel unsupported. * Can lead to young people’s insights being marginalised from the debates that influence decision-making / young people working in parallel to policy- centred decision-making processes. |

