



# Engaging Young People in Politics in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings

# A GUIDEBOOK



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## PREFACE

The National Democratic Institute (NDI or Institute) is a non-profit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide by promoting citizen participation and openness and accountability in government. Established in 1984, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values and institutions. NDI often works in conflict and post-conflict contexts where its interventions aim to mitigate anticipated political violence in the short term and develop mechanisms to resolve conflict before violence has the opportunity to occur. Working toward these goals helps NDI's partners on the ground develop appropriate responses to the threat of violence and to reduce the causes of violence.

Children and young adults will soon make up nearly 70 percent of the population in many developing countries. This so-called "youth bulge" represents a potentially positive force for change. In countries beset by conflict, however, youth are often easy prey for extremist elements. Forced or recruited as child soldiers or under the sway of autocratic political leaders, they all too frequently become pawns in struggles that divide and tear apart their societies.

All too often, youth are excluded from political life, including policy development and implementation. However, when engaged substantively in politics, youth can create positive change. NDI believes that young people (individuals between the ages 18 to 35) \* are a fundamental part of the solution to the problems posed by weak political institutions and processes. Youth activism has contributed to democratic change in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Africa. By helping young people organize and become politically active, NDI aims to address the problems of alienation, apathy, frustration, fanaticism, and violence that may threaten democracy.

Inclusive political engagement, specifically youth engagement, is an important component to resolving and mitigating conflict. Nonetheless, development organizations and agencies have often placed youth political engagement on the margins when developing and implementing peace and conflict resolution or security programs. Likewise, there has been limited discussion in the development community and few resources created for practitioners and policy makers on how to engage conflict-affected youth in the political process.

NDI developed a three-part project to begin to fill this resource void. The project includes: case studies based on NDI programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

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\*The Introduction section discusses NDI's definition of youth.

\*\* A video of this conference can be found at [www.wilsoncenter.org](http://www.wilsoncenter.org)

Kenya, and Liberia; a seminar co-hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars that brought practitioners and other members of the development community together to discuss best practices and lessons learned\*\*; and this guidebook.

The Institute's examination of three of its youth programs – in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya and Liberia – illustrate the positive impact young citizens can have when they engage in politics in conflict and post-conflict settings. This guidebook is intended to provide lessons, tips, and tools for use by the larger democratic development community in the design of future youth programs.

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NDI staff member talking with children and young men in Pakistan

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*A young boy in Northern Uganda participates in a voting simulation*

# Introduction

## Youth and Political Engagement: Why?

In many conflict-affected societies, youth comprise the majority or a significant minority of the population and can be catalysts for change. Consequently, they can play an important role in conflict promotion, resolution, or prevention.

NDI has found that when the aspirations of youth are constructively channeled into the political process—for example by monitoring elections, community organizing, or becoming active political party members—they can become agents of positive change and contribute to sustained peace. Young people have embraced political action as a way to make their voices heard and address issues important to them. Often they learn that well-organized and peaceful political action allows them to work alongside adults in rebuilding their nation and mapping a future course. This is positive alternative to violence helps mitigate conflict and builds a foundation to support democratic development.



Young Liberians study election results

## Action-Oriented Approach

NDI has discovered that “action-oriented” youth programs achieve the most success. NDI has concluded that the best way to empower citizens and increase their sustained political participation is to help them organize and take action. NDI’s action-oriented approach de-emphasizes training as a primary intervention and instead focuses on a set of assistance techniques that place a premium on “learning-by-doing.” NDI has labeled this set of techniques *guided practice*, which includes coaching, facilitation and structured feedback. Secondly, because of the action-oriented approach, NDI has realized greater success when identifying citizens and civic groups with clear leadership potential and with existing issues and collective interests around which substantive action can be taken. Young people consistently identify a lack of respect from community members and leaders as one of their biggest challenges. An action-oriented approach helps build this respect by showing adults that young people are agents of positive change and have the ability to take on responsibility and contribute to improved community welfare.

## Young Women

NDI recognizes young women face a multitude of additional challenges in conflict-afflicted settings, which requires thoughtful and responsive programs. There is a list of organizations and potential resources for this in the Resources and Links section of the guidebook.

### Guidebook: For Whom And What Purpose

Once a decision is made to work on youth in politics, this guidebook will assist program planners and implementers. Although it does not offer solutions to end conflict, the guidebook can inform programs that engage young people in popular political participation .

### Guidebook Development: Analyzing NDI's Experience

NDI performed desk top reviews of more than 40 NDI programs from all regions of the world. The authors interviewed more than 25 NDI staff members and 10 program beneficiaries, and held conversations with an additional 15 development organizations. Research for developing the three case studies on NDI programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya, and Liberia and findings from the Woodrow Wilson seminar that is a part of this overall project have been incorporated. Lastly, the authors conducted research reviews of youth programming performed by others in the international development community and academia.

### Youth: Defined

Almost every society has its own definition for youth. Some cultures assign a right of passage and others a definitive age for young people; ages 15-30, 18-35 or 18-45; the United Nations identifies young people as ranging in age between 15-24. NDI defines youth as those between the ages of 18-35. Nevertheless, because its programs take place at the local, not global level, it recognizes and respects its host communities' definition when implementing programs.



#### Differences in Youth

Despite the 18-35 definition, NDI understands there are differences among this age grouping. Those aged 18-24, roughly the equivalent of a university student, tend to have different needs and responsibilities than their peers aged 24-35. Therefore, when developing programs, it may be wise to separate the two age groups as they may not relate to each other. Additionally, there may be culturally established hierarchies that prevent open and candid exchanges when members of these two subgroups come together.

## Guidebook: Layout and Format

This guide book is organized into four brief sections that addresses issues important to a successful youth program.

Section 1 – Principles for Youth Engagement

Section 2– Designing a Responsive Program

Section 3– Selecting Participants

Section 4– Delivering Practical Assistance

Throughout the guidebook there are various boxes that highlight specific information.



Tools – Specific techniques, approaches, methods, applications, etc. that have proven successful



Tips – Useful information that made programming either better or easier to implement



Program examples – Highlights of program successes that correspond to the topic being discussed

# Principles for Enhancing Youth Engagement

There is a difference between engaging young people and engaging adults in political life. Young people tend to have different life experiences, expectations, desires, and views of the future than older citizens. They have different issues and challenges, especially in conflict and post-conflict environments, including:

- △ The majority of young people have only lived through war and violence;
- △ They have had to take on adult responsibilities, such as taking care of their families or being the sole “breadwinner;”
- △ They feel that society does not want or allow them to control change;
- △ Their political participation is often stymied because of social and traditional norms, making it difficult and nearly impossible for them to voice their opinions.; and
- △ They feel they do not get the respect of their communities and that they have been used as pawns by adults.

However, there are reasons for optimism when it comes to the political engagement of young people.

- △ They are still *young* and have energy and creativity.
- △ They believe things can change and more importantly, they can and want to be a part of that change.
- △ Youth are more likely to take political risks.
- △ Young people are more open to new ideas and often have more time to dedicate to political causes than adults.
- △ Young, first-time voters are more open to voting for new parties, more willing to change political allegiances, more idealistic in their goals, and less loyal to established traditions



Young Lebanese leaders participating in a team building activity.



The following seven principles are the foundation for an action-oriented approach to involving young people in politics



## 7 Core Principles for Engaging Youth in Politics in Conflict Contexts

	Principle	NDI Program Example
1	<p>Understand the context: Every conflict is different as is every community. It is critical to understand why the conflict happened, what the current circumstances are, and what specific challenges and opportunities exist for young people.</p>	<p><i>Liberia, 2003-present</i> — Before implementing a program to strengthen youth organizations' ability to create and implement civic and voter education campaigns and monitor the 2005 presidential election, NDI conducted focus group research with young Liberians. As a result of this research, NDI understood many of the challenges youth in Liberia face, such as young Liberians lack of understanding of democratic institutions. These issues were addressed in the program's design.</p>
2	<p>Have a youth-centered approach: The program's activities should address and work towards producing results for young people's concerns. When young people see positive outcomes from their actions, they are more likely to stay engaged in politics. The program implementers should ask young people what challenges they face and focus the program around them. Using an action-oriented approach will put decision-making and program implementation into the hands of the young participants.</p>	<p><i>Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2001-present</i> — NDI created a youth parliamentary internship program to support the legislative body's staff. At the outset, the program included an orientation, training manual, and intern coaching by NDI staff members. Continuous assessment and intern feedback was incorporated into the program, leading to monthly seminars, an intern workstation in the NDI office, and an alumni organization.</p>
3	<p>Develop relationships based on trust by recognizing young people's value and potential: Youth that have lived through conflict have learned to distrust others. All of those interviewed said trusting relationships between NDI and the youth participants were at the core of the programs. Young people often feel left out of the political and decision making processes. Because NDI listened to them, treated them as peers, involving them in the program design, implementation, and evaluation stages they realized NDI had their best interest at heart. This was one of the first times the leaders were given responsibility and encouraged to take initiative, triggering their political engagement.</p>	<p><i>Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2001-Present</i> — For many of the young participants, the intern program was the first time they were listened to and given responsibility. Participants harnessed this as an opportunity to become leaders and produced much needed resources, such as research that was used to create legislation and staff manuals. Because of this experience, many participants have risen to leadership positions in their party, various government offices, and have been elected to office.</p>



## 7 Core Principles for Engaging Youth in Politics in Conflict Contexts

	Principle	NDI Program Example
4	Create opportunities for youth to demonstrate their value and worth to political leaders, public officials, and other leaders. Young people are frustrated when they are not respected by their community. They rarely have the opportunity to show they are responsible and have the ability to take constructive political action. Incorporating political action into the program, will demonstrate to the community that young people are legitimate citizens and their concerns and needs should be addressed.	<i>Kenya 2001</i> — NDI implemented the young political leadership academy to develop the skills of young politicians from opposing political parties as a means to reduce electoral violence. Before the academy, many Kenyans viewed youth as perpetrators of violence who could not be trusted or constructive members of society. At the conclusion of one of the program's workshops, the young participants took part in an education policy debate, which was aired on national television. At the debate's conclusion, all of the young leaders issued a joint press release renouncing electoral violence. The young leaders also created community projects aimed at reducing electoral violence. Through the television show and, and the participants' ability to publicly denounce and prevent violence, they contributed not only to a reduction in conflict, but to a change in the perception of young people.
5	Use participatory-learning techniques: Young people learn best when the information is relevant, there is an interactive exchange of ideas with immediate and practical application, and they can influence their own learning process, which a traditional lecture-style classroom setting does not provide.	<i>Kenya, 2001</i> – Academy training topics were informed by conversations with participants. The workshops included informal debates, role plays, simulations, and group discussions. The group projects were developed and designed by the participants, with guidance from NDI staff members. This combined approach allowed the young Kenyans to learn-by-doing and kept them interested and engaged in the program. Ultimately, they did not learn skills, but developed them, which they now use as party leaders, elected officials, and government officials.
6	Create a neutral and interactive space: Creating safe spaces allow young people learn about each other, breakdown stereotypes, and work through their differences in a safe environment. The program may be the first time they come together, raising the importance of this principle.	<i>Kenya, 2001</i> – Before the YPLA, the participants mistrusted and had negative images of each other. As a matter of fact, two had fought each at a political rally a week before the program started. The academy enabled the youth leaders to think about problems in order to find solutions and let them work through their disagreements. Throughout the academy, participants realized the shouting, yelling, and threats of violence that occurred the first week of the program were not solutions to problems; rather understanding each other produced shared results.
7	Have fun: Even though the youth participants have been forced to take on responsibilities beyond their years, they are extremely responsive to and enjoy social activities where they can express themselves and have fun.	<i>All three programs</i> – The programs allowed the young leaders to laugh, enjoy themselves, and participate in activities that encouraged them to be creative and active. Because of the conflicts they had been through, this opportunity energized them and lifted their spirits, ultimately enhancing their successful participation.

## Designing a Responsive Program

To achieve a successful youth political engagement program, it is necessary to understand the current situation, including existing political and social conditions, young peoples' role in the community, traditional values and views towards youth, and other impediments to political participation.

Likewise, youth need to have input and say in the direction, content, and delivery of the program to achieve the best results.

- △ Involving young people allows their voice to be heard, building trust and showing youth their issues are valid and concerns are important.
- △ Young people understand the issues they face, and often why they exist, better than an adult.
- △ Involvement creates participant buy-in and ownership. Both are crucial to program success.

The assessment is the first step in this process. As the program is further developed and implemented, the program team should elicit participant feedback, including topics and issues to cover, types of activities, and appropriate time frames for activity completion.

### Assessing the Context

The assessment should provide an understanding of:

- △ Youth priorities;
- △ The country's and/or community's political context;
- △ How young people organize;
- △ Local traditions and culture, including how youth are viewed in the community;
- △ Existing youth organizations;
- △ Where political power lies;
- △ How youth interact with those in power;
- △ Divisions that exist between youth;
- △ Existing entry points for youth to engage in the political process;
- △ Differences between young men and young women;
- △ Formal and informal youth political structures;
- △ The opportunities for youth participation in politics;



*Serbian youth school participants prepare for a debate as part of a mock campaign simulation*



## Pre-program Assessment in Liberia

After a five-year hiatus due to the civil war, NDI returned to Liberia in 2003 to implement a two-pronged program funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). NDI conducted focus group research to better understand the Liberians' concerns, with discussions in Monrovia, Buchanan, and Kakata, as well as in camps for internally displaced persons. The majority of the participants were under the age of 35, mirroring the country's youthful population. Participants discussed:

- △ The current the situation in Liberia
- △ Their personal life and family situation
- △ The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), including:
  - △ Their understanding of the agreement and how they learned about it
  - △ Who is responsible for implementing the agreement and how the implementation was going
- △ Democracy, including:
  - △ What it means and what are the most important aspects of democracy
  - △ What they thought of the relationship between citizens and the government are in a democracy
- △ Elections, including:
  - △ Their experiences in elections
  - △ The 1997 elections, specifically if they voted, why or why not, if they thought it was free and fair, if they agreed with the votes, and why or why not
  - △ What needs to be done to ensure the 2005 elections are free and fair and if they would vote
  - △ If they do not vote, would they trust the final results, is there a role for election observers, and how would the elections help the future of Liberia
- △ The political actors and institutions in Liberia
  - △ The role, function, purpose, and performance of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL)
  - △ The role and relevance of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA)
  - △ The role of factions in the disarmament and peace process
  - △ The current and future role of political parties in Liberia
  - △ The role and performance of the international community in the peace process

NDI used the information from the focus group research to design its program. It selected local partners, the majority of which were youth groups, that were interested in or already implementing civic education initiatives. The training sessions topics included the political process, the voting process, and civic responsibility. NDI worked with partners to create programs that addressed the key challenges highlighted in the focus group discussions. The focus groups also helped NDI establish contact with young people and groups working on their behalf.

- △ What young people are already doing in terms of political action; and
- △ Young people's political and organizing skill levels.

The assessment itself can take various forms, including surveys, key informant interviews, site visits, round table discussions, and focus group research. Spending time talking and listening to young people is important.

### Political Opportunity

The assessment highlights young peoples needs and youth political engagement entry points, such as the political will of those in power or political issues that are important to the community at large. Where there is overlap between the two, there is opportunity. For example, in Kenya political party leaders expressed their interest in developing young leaders so that they would not resort to violence, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina the parliament was open to having student interns as a way to provide staff support to parliamentarians. This space provided an opening for the political engagement of young people and formed the basis for the programs' objectives and activities.



### Examples of Program Objectives and Results

Country and Program	Objective	Results
Kenya YPLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△ To develop and strengthen young political party members' leadership skills</li> <li>△ To reduce electoral violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△ Parties demonstrate greater receptivity to appointing youth to key positions within the party structure</li> <li>△ Youth leaders implement a project that benefits their party or promotes inter-party dialogue</li> <li>△ There is less electoral violence than in previous elections</li> </ul>
Liberia – Youth Participation in the Electoral Process	Strengthen Liberian youth groups' ability to educate citizens and hold government officials and political parties accountable during and after the electoral period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△ Partner youth groups develop programs and undertake activities designed to inform youth about political processes during the electoral period.</li> <li>△ Youth have increased opportunities to directly interact with candidates, elected representatives and public officials</li> </ul>
Bosnia and Herzegovina– Women and Youth Advocacy	To strengthen the ability of youth and women groups to develop and launch coordinated advocacy initiatives at the municipal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>△ NDI partner youth groups develop and implement advocacy initiatives on issues of concern to their municipality.</li> <li>△ Like-minded youth groups coalesce around similar issues to develop and advance their initiatives</li> </ul>

## Content

Throughout the life of the program, the young participants' needs and opportunities, as they relate to political participation, should be a driving force in determining the program's direction. The program's content should be:

- △ Practical and based on the participants' knowledge, experience gaps
- △ Issue-based to address specific topics that are pertinent to the participants' projects or campaigns. Young people tend to have limited substantive exposure to issues and policies. In most contexts, they lack legitimacy and respect from adults. Therefore, it is important for young people to be able to articulate their problems and solutions. For example, During the YPLA in Kenya, NDI staff members conducted sessions on economic development and political party policy experts coached participants on education policy before they participated in a debate.



## Intervention Examples

	Intervention		
Identified Issue	Young people are not receiving government services	Youth-led Electoral Violence	Youth Lack Understanding of Political Process
Objective	Youth concerns are incorporated into government policy	Reduction in youth-related violent and non-violent electoral conflict	Youth use the political process to have their issues addressed
Citizen Participation	Develop youth groups' ability to advocate	Work with local youth groups to monitor elections	Build youth groups' ability to conduct civic education campaigns
Political Parties	Work to strengthen party youth wings	Host leadership academy for young politicians	Create an election simulation for young party members
Governance	Support efforts to set up local youth councils	Encourage youth to host public hearings with government officials	Create, with the parliament, a youth internship program

## Selecting Participants

To a large extent, program success requires the selection of motivated and ambitious participants. NDI works with organizations or directly with individuals. NDI's youth programming includes activities with youth leaders and with youth-led CSOs.

Experience has shown that using an application process yields enthusiastic participants. A systematic approach also helps promote transparency. Establishing criteria for ideal program participants has also proven to be successful. Ideally, potential participants should possess some of the following:

- △ Desire the assistance and understand its relevance so that the assistance can be absorbed and applied in a meaningful way;
- △ Possess essential "raw leadership" material (defined in terms of individuals that can envision a more capable organization in the future and that are willing to take responsibility for achieving the vision);
- △ Have a "track record" as doers;
- △ Already be focused on an issue area;
- △ Want to change something;
- △ Want to become more developed and sophisticated and be open to different methods and tools to achieve this;
- △ Wish to enhance their work by adding or expanding a political dimension;
- △ Be enthusiastic and motivated;
- △ Have a citizen-centered orientation;
- △ Serve a legitimate constituency and/or have significant membership; and
- △ Have a good understanding of their community and its problems.



### Engaging Ex-Combatants

NDI has found that ex-combatants often possess many useful qualities and characteristics, including leadership experience, the ability to influence a large number of young people, and an understanding of power and how to use it.

Additionally, their participation would send a message to many young people that positive political engagement is a way to be heard, have their issues addressed, and a better alternative to violence. This happened in Kenya. One of the YPLA participants was a former militia leader, well-known for instigating violence. He consequently changed his behavior and became a major proponent of non-violent elections, which influenced people's view of young people.

It is important to not only select eager participants, but also the right mix. This could mean young citizens from different sides of a conflict. When managed well, this can help promote dialogue and understanding. Although this creates the potential for additional conflict, NDI has found it useful for youth from different sides come together in a neutral setting with skilled facilitators. The conflict is often minimal and because it is in a safe environment, it is an opportunity for young people to dispel rumors and to work through prejudices and problems



## Selection Process for the Kenya YPLA

### Criteria:

#### Ideal youth participants:

- △ Had a proven leadership track record;
- △ Desired a future political career;
- △ Viewed themselves as agents of change;
- △ Were respected by their peers and party leaders;
- △ Sought to end electoral violence; and
- △ Were dedicated to the program and were willing to put the time and effort that was needed;

### Application:

#### Potential participants filled out an application in which they were asked to:

- △ Provide their general background information: name, contact information, education, etc.;
- △ Discuss their leadership track record;
- △ Outline their future goals;
- △ Develop a one-page project proposal; and
- △ Submitted a letter of recommendation from a party leader.

### Outreach:

In order to have the necessary multipartisan participant pool, NDI distributed 160 application packets to the eight major Kenyan political parties. Each of these parties had a significant impact on the political process and a previous working relationship with NDI.

### Selection:

#### A committee of NDI staff members scored the applications on the following criteria:

- △ Active participation of the applicants in their parties at the local level;
- △ Quality and content of the project proposals;
- △ Compliance with the application instructions, including the page limit; and
- △ A Letter of recommendation.



## Groups

Target all groups run by young people or working on behalf of young people, including issues-based groups, such as health, education, and job creation, not just youth issue-specific groups. NDI has found that issues-based youth groups are often times more effective at strengthening grassroots democratic development because the issues being addressed are pertinent to everyday life and survival.

Various methods for selecting local partners can be employed:

- △ *Youth groups approach* the organization for technical assistance. Over time, the organization implementing the program recognizes the local group is serious about creating change and is more interested in receiving technical assistance than financial assistants.
- △ *Systematic selection* begins by establishing selection criteria, mapping selected communities, and then reaching out to promising youth groups. Once potential groups are identified and contacted, the project team should meet with the prospective partners to discuss the program and each others objectives. Groups that match the criteria should be approached to develop a partnership. Once a partnership is formed, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) should be developed.

### Criteria for Local Partner Groups



Youth groups should:

- △ Want to change society;
- △ Want to become more developed and sophisticated and be open to different ways to achieve success;
- △ Wish to enhance their work by adding a political dimension;
- △ Be enthusiastic and motivated;
- △ Have an inherent desire and self-determined strategy for making change happen;
- △ Have a good understanding of their community and its problems; and
- △ Be willing to receive assistance.

# Delivering Practical Assistance

## Program Implementation Should Focus on Supporting the Actions of Young People

Program implementation should be youth driven and action oriented. This includes youth developing and implementing projects and other community activities that allow them to take on responsibility, make decisions, and learn-by-doing. The activities should be visible to public officials and community leaders. This may be the first time young people have the opportunity to show adults they are responsible, valuable members of the community. Action-oriented programs allow for young people to show their creativity, energy, and have fun!

### Include a Project Component

For demonstrating the value of youth activism; enhancing the leadership skills of young people; and contributing to broader democratic developments related to the participation of marginalized groups government accountability, and responsiveness and collective action.

- △ Have a mix of participants from all sides of the conflict if it is a group project. This can help them to work through decisions in a non-violent manner. This will also demonstrate to the community that young people can get along with opposing sides.
- △ Facilitate brainstorming sessions with the youth leaders to identify pertinent issues. Draw on issues identified during the program's assessment if needed.
- △ Provide guiding instruction on how mapping their community and power relationships. This will help them identify entry points that are youth friendly and where they can gain the most political traction. They can also identify potential resources.
- △ Work with them to develop a strategy and action plans. As they develop these, allow them to use their creativity and imagination. Let them speak their own language, use pop-culture, and other techniques that illustrate to community members that young people are involved. While the projects will be youth driven, they must still be professional; if they are not, the youth participants will lose credibility, instead of gaining it.
- △ Provide on-going support and guidance to them as they implement their projects. Provide professional and sincere advice. Allow them to make decisions while talking them through various options and potential consequences, good and bad, of the decisions they make.
- △ Link them with adult leaders.



### Involve Adult Leaders

It is also important to involve politicians, elected officials, and other community leaders. One of the biggest issues facing young people is a lack of respect from adults, especially those in power. Involving adult leaders in the program gives them a stake in the program's success as well as an opportunity to see that young people are hard-working, dedicated, and can be positive agents of change. Adult leaders can:

- △ Assist in participant selection
- △ Act as mentors
- △ Provide guidance for project development and implementation
- △ Workshop instructors
- △ Debate judges
- △ Speakers at participant events

## Participatory Education

Help them connect to the community, media, and to political institutions.

- △ Raise the profile of their actions
- △ Develop case studies that can be shared with other young people
- △ Help them interact with other leaders, academics, and community members

These tools can be used in situations where projects are not possible or in addition to projects. When conducting workshops, these should be incorporated into the methodology. Participants from different sides of the conflict should work together, as this forces them to use non-violent conflict mitigation techniques.



### Participatory Education Techniques

- △ *Using participatory education techniques* – This works towards creating a dynamic learning environment for the young leaders.
- △ *Role plays* – When using these, set up scenarios where young people face challenges to their credibility and other real life situations that will help them with encounters with adult leaders.
- △ *Simulations* – The youth participants will most likely lack an understanding of the political process and political organizing. Simulations allow them to learn in a safe setting where they can make mistakes and talk through difficult situations. It also allows them to work together on real-life issues without creating negative images if something goes wrong.
- △ *Debates*– These are an opportunity for young people to learn about issues, develop strategic thinking skills, and look at policies from different points of view, which is critical in a conflict and post-conflict setting. They will also have to work in a non-violent, competitive context that they may not be familiar with.
- △ *Employing informal learning techniques* – This includes traditional and cultural methods of communication and learning, such as songs, dance, spoken word, and plays or skits. When possible, the program should be delivered in the local language.
- △ *Creating opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange* – Young people tend to relate to each other better than they relate to adults. They also thrive when given a task to accomplish together and learn from each other. Providing space for them to do this, will increase the success of the program.
- △ *Having fun!* – Incorporate fun activities, such as team building, creating songs, and constructive competitions into the program. This will keep the young participants involved in the program and eager to continue.

## Implementation Techniques

In addition to the eight youth engagement principles, there are additional considerations the program implementation team should keep in mind during the intervention. These considerations will: assist with reducing and mediating conflict that may occur among participants; provide a framework and guidelines for interaction among participants, partner groups, and the implementing organization; and create mechanisms for participant input in the program.

- △ *Create a safe and interactive space* — Often young people are not able to discuss the conflict, their views of others from the opposing sides, why the conflict happened, and how to create a better life. Therefore it is important to create a space where youth will not be judged and are able to explore their feelings, and discuss their differences, similarities, and desires for change.
- △ *Set ground rules and expectations* — Ground rules for the entire program and individual activities should be set at the outset of the implementation phase. Consequences for breaking the ground rules should also be determined. The process should be democratic, with the young participants and the implementing organization deciding together what the parameters and penalties are. This process will empower them, show them the implementing organization respects and values their input. This acts as an example of how a democratic system works.

### Creating a Safe and Interactive Space in Kenya



Before the Young Political Leaders Academy, the young participants expressed concern that there would be violence at the workshops as there was tension and impatience in the air due to the political situation. There were tensions between young KANU members and those of other parties. In fact, a few of the participants had even fought each other the month before during an outbreak of political violence.

At the beginning of the first workshop, minor, non-violent conflicts did occur. At times during the first few days, discussions became so heated that participants stood on tables and desks and screamed at one another. During the workshop sessions NDI staff members allowed the arguments to continue, however they made sure the arguments did not lead to violence. After a few days, this eventually stopped as the Institute's facilitators worked with the participants on identifying common issues and solutions to the issues. NDI had each of the participants discuss their party platforms. Through these two exercises, the participants realized all of the parties had similar stances and their individual views were based on rumors and propagated by those in the media and power to keep the parties in conflict. Toward the end of the first workshop, the participants started to form friendships; while they were still wary of each other, they were friendly and wanted to work together. During the course of the seven-month program, the participants began to trust each other and formed friendships that last to this day.

- △ *Celebrate small success* – The young participants and partner groups have little experience with political action and will most likely be going against cultural and community norms by engaging in politics. They can get discouraged quickly because of these pressures and if they do not consider their actions successful. To help keep them motivated, it is important to celebrate small successes, such as securing a meeting with an elected official, recruiting the first volunteer, or having a non-violent negotiation with someone from an opposing political party.

### Creating a Sense of Community



Because of living through conflict, many young people do not feel a sense they are part of a community or see value in being a part of one. Establishing a sense of community in the program, will create ownership, membership, and a sense of belonging. There are many ways to do this including:

- △ Have the participants develop a program logo that can be put on the program documents and possibly t-shirts, bags, pens, etc.
- △ Create a newsletter, to highlight various participants' and groups' activities. If possible, participants should write and edit the articles. .
- △ Set up web-casts where participants can discuss overcoming challenges.
- △ Set up a program web-site , which can have pictures, success stories, biographies, etc.
- △ Attract national recognition. Conduct outreach to a national T.V. or radio station to interview participants or highlight the work they've done.



### Additional Ideas

- △ Incorporate popular culture, including hip-hop, celebrities, or television shows, into the program.
- △ Utilize information and communication technologies (ICT), such as SMS, developing blogs, and radio programs.
- △ Implement programs where youth are located, not where you are. Develop discussion clubs at cafes or youth centers, meet on university campuses, or hold activities at sporting venues.
- △ Speak their language. Being able to understand and use slang and speech used by youth will bring instant credibility.
- △ Use existing youth networks. Young people are great at informal networking and will be able to identify powerbrokers, allies, and adversaries.



Parliamentary Interns in Bosnia and Herzegovina work during the program's orientation session.

## Links and Resources

### Reports

Gender, Peace, and Security Agendas: Where are Girls and Young Women? (2004)

<http://action.web.ca/home/cpcc/attach/girlsywomensumdoc.pdf>

Youth Speak Out: New Voices on the Protection and Participation of Young People Affected by Armed Conflict (2005)

[http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/cap\\_ysofinal\\_rev.pdf](http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/cap_ysofinal_rev.pdf)

UNDP Youth and Violent Conflict Report (2006)

[http://www.undp.org/cpr/whats\\_new/UNDP\\_Youth\\_PN.pdf](http://www.undp.org/cpr/whats_new/UNDP_Youth_PN.pdf)

USAID Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention (2005)

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/cross-cutting\\_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM\\_Youth\\_and\\_Conflict\\_Toolkit\\_April\\_2005.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM_Youth_and_Conflict_Toolkit_April_2005.pdf)

RSC Working Paper: Protection through Participation: Young People Affected by Forced Migration and Political Crisis (2005)

<http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/RSCworkingpaper20.pdf>

The UNHCR Peace Education Programme: Skills for Life (2001)

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR11/fmr11.11.pdf>

UNICEF Adolescent Programming Experiences during Conflict and Post-Conflict (2004)

[http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/adolescent\\_conflict.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/adolescent_conflict.pdf)

CSIS – Engaging Youth to Build Safer Communities

<http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/bartonengagingyouth.pdf>

Youth as a Catalyst for Peace

[http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/Youth\\_Catalyst\\_Peace.pdf](http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/Youth_Catalyst_Peace.pdf)

### Organizations

International Youth Foundation

<http://www.yfnet.org>

Save the Children

<http://www.savethechildren.org>

Search for Common Ground

<http://www.sfcg.org>

International Rescue Committee – Children and Youth Protection and Development Programs

[http://www.theirc.org/what/irc\\_programs\\_for\\_children\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict.html](http://www.theirc.org/what/irc_programs_for_children_in_armed_conflict.html)

United Nations Youth Unit

<http://www.un.org/youth>

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/links.htm>

International Labor Organization – Youth Employment Network

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yett>

Youth Employment Summit

<http://www.youthemploymentsummit.org>

EQUIP3 - Education Quality Improvement Program

<http://www.equip123.net/>

World Bank – Children & Youth

<http://www.worldbank.org/childrenandyouth>

University of Essex – Children and Armed Conflict Unit

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/>

### Youth Political Participation

Center for Information and Research for Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

<http://www.civicyouth.org>

Close Up Foundation

<http://www.closeup.org>



## Youth Groups

YouthNOISE

<http://www.YouthNOISE.com>

European Youth Forum

<http://www.youthforum.org>

## Youth Networks

Global Youth Connect

<http://www.globalyouthconnect.org>

Taking IT Global

<http://www.takingitglobal.org>

You Think

<http://youthink.worldbank.org>

United Network of Young Peace Builders (UNOY)

<http://www.unoy.org>

YouthActionNet

<http://www.youthactionnet.org>

Youth for Development

<http://www.developmentgateway.org>

## Resources for Working with Young Women

iKNOWPolitics

<http://www.iknowpolitics.org/>

Women of Uganda Network:

<http://www.wougnet.org/Links/aboutwomen.html>

Women Peacemakers Program:

<http://www.ifor.org/WPP/>

Gender and Armed Conflict Report:

[www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/ecw\\_editor/Download.asp?table\\_name=other%20&field\\_name=id%20&FileID=%202](http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/ecw_editor/Download.asp?table_name=other%20&field_name=id%20&FileID=%202)

Women's Commission for Refugee Women & Children:

<http://www.womenscommission.org/resources/index.cfm?limit=restype&limitID=2>

USAID Women & Conflict:

[http://www.usaid.gov/.../conflict/publications/docs/cmm\\_women\\_and\\_conflict\\_toolkit\\_december\\_2006.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/.../conflict/publications/docs/cmm_women_and_conflict_toolkit_december_2006.pdf)

Initiative for Inclusive Security

[http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/7\\_the\\_initiative\\_for\\_inclusive\\_security.cfm](http://www.huntalternatives.org/pages/7_the_initiative_for_inclusive_security.cfm)

Bat Shalom

<http://www.batshalom.org/>

American Association of University Women *Community Coalitions Manual*

<http://www.aauw.org/research/upload/communityCoalitionsManual.pdf>

NDI Sudan Program Report *Stewards of Peace*

[www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1940\\_su\\_stewards\\_111605.pdf](http://www.accessdemocracy.org/library/1940_su_stewards_111605.pdf)

Various UNICEF Documents

[http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs\\_new/documents/wffc-en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docs_new/documents/wffc-en.pdf)

International Peace Research Institute Report *Demobilization and Political Participation of Female Fighters in Guatemala*

[www.peacewomen.org/resources/DDR/FemaleFightersGuatemala.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/DDR/FemaleFightersGuatemala.pdf)