CHOICE FOR YOUTH & SEXUALITY

HOW TO MAKE A *Youth Friendly* INTRODUCTION PACKAGE

Let's dive in...

To help you measure the state of Meaningful and Inclusive Youth Participation (MIYP) in your organisation, you can utilize the CHOICE MIYP checklists. When going through them, you will come across the question: "Is there a youth-friendly introduction package for young people joining the organisation?" To get an idea of what exactly a youth-friendly introduction package entails, we have compiled a list of checklists to help you create your own youth-friendly introduction package below. It can serve as a welcome package for a (young) person who is new to the organisation and/or the professional work environment in general, as well as capacity strengthening for the (young) person to learn more about the expertise, background, structure and ins and outs of the organisation. Before we get into the intro package, let's highlight a few key points. To keep it truly youth-friendly, it's important to think not just about the contents of the package, but also how the information is delivered. Here are a few tips to make the onboarding process fun, engaging, and easy to follow.

You can print these checklists and tick off the points that you have already got covered.

The package itself:

- One general tip for youth-friendly language: make sure to write and spell out acronyms and avoid lots of jargon. Just because a term is familiar to you, that doesn't mean that it's universally understood. If in doubt, spell it out!
- Make the package visually appealing by using youth-friendly designs, bright colors, and clear, readable fonts. Infographics and icons can make information easier to digest and more visually engaging which helps with memory!
- Include relatable, real-life examples or scenarios that are relevant to their work. This can help them understand how abstract policies and guidelines apply in practice.
- Tailor some parts of the package to the individual's role or background, allowing them to connect better with the content that's relevant to them.

The onboarding:

Avoid overwhelming them with all the information at once. Instead, it is helpful to spread it out over a few days or weeks, with clear checkpoints or a flexible onboarding schedule.

Assign a peer mentor or buddy to help guide them through the first weeks, answering questions informally and helping them feel more comfortable.

Create opportunities for the new staff to give feedback on their onboarding experience, which can be fun and interactive, like a survey or a group discussion.

Youth may appreciate the flexibility of how and when they receive the information, for example having access to an online hub where they can explore resources at their own speed.

By focusing on these aspects, you can create an onboarding process that is more engaging, digestible, and aligned with a youth-friendly approach.

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CHECKLIST: Welcome & Introduction Package

The purpose of a welcome & introduction package is to welcome newcomers into the organisation/project and give them a quick and easy reference document that answers the possible questions they might have. Of course, it's not always possible to anticipate every question, so make sure you emphasise that there's no such thing as a stupid question, and include the contact details of who to reach out to if they need more info. As more people join your organization, you might find that this document evolves over time with relevant additions new incomers point out. Use the following checklist as inspiration for creating your welcome and intro package:

- [ ] Welcome and general information about the organisation
- [ ] Organisational values and goals/vision/mission
- [ ] Guide to acronyms that are often used
- [ ] An illustration or diagram of your organisation, sometimes known as an "organigram"
- [ ] Overview of different teams within the organisation, with names and faces
- [ ] Background information on the programs/projects that the organisation currently works on
- [ ] Practical information (e.g. guide to using email, platform where the organisation stores documents, how to document hours, financial guidelines, reimbursement forms, contact details of members from different constituencies, social media handles)
- [ ] Accessibility information (for the building for instance)
- [ ] International support document for new employees that are not from the country where the organisation is based, for example it can cover topics like how to get health insurance
- [ ] Details and information on who to reach out for for confidential support in the event of harrassment or other issues at work
- [ ] Overview of the organisation's policies
- [ ] Tip: If diversity, equity and inclusivity (DEI) is an important value for your organisation, you might want to share your DEI strategy (if you have one) or guidance on inclusivity within your organisation and/or on cross-cultural communications
- [ ] Overview of any annual meetings
- [ ] Link to the organisation's year plan and/or multi-annual strategy
- [ ] Link to the most relevant reports or papers and useful documents
- [ ] Contact details for who to reach out to for specific questions (e.g. finances, timesheets, holiday, etc)

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CHECKLIST: Handover Agenda

As youth-led organisations, we experience high turnover. That means that people are frequently transitioning in and out of roles. To manage this well and ensure that knowledge isn't lost when people leave the organisation, it's important to organize good handover processes! Support your new team-mate in integrating into the organization by scheduling a proper handover process for them. Here's some best practices for inspiration:

- [ ] Schedule for the new team member for the first week (or two weeks) - you can use a table format
- [ ] Include times, headers with short descriptions, where to be, with whom to meet, and how to prepare
- [ ] Don't overload the new person with meetings, ensure there is enough time for reading introduction documents (organisational and programmatic), scanning through the website, and checking their emails. You can include the links to specific readings in the schedule.
- [ ] Include lunch times
- [ ] Include introduction meetings with colleagues. If the size of the team allows, block time for the new person to meet with each of the team members 1:1, so that the new colleague is able to understand everyone's specific roles.
- [ ] Schedule calendar invites for introduction meetings (tip: share in the invite what they – based on their role(s) in the organisation – should talk about with the new person)
- [ ] Example: when introducing someone to a program, you could share the following: background of the program; explanation of key objectives & Theory of Change; role of your organisation; governance structure: what and who; Work Plan.
- [ ] Tip: include daily check-out moments of 30 minutes in the schedule with the person who is training and/or mentoring the new person. The person can share about their day and ask all the questions they might have.
- [ ] After a few weeks, schedule a check-in meeting for the new person with the manager/Executive Director (depending on the size of your organisation) as well to see how everything is going, answer questions and to strengthen relationships.
- [ ] Optional: get flowers for the new person on their first day

Depending on the new person's role you might also want to prepare a handover document. You can combine the handover document and agenda in one or choose to create two separate documents...

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CHECKLIST: Handover Document

In addition to a proper handover process, a handover document will be an invaluable resource for your new colleague or teammate. This should be prepared by the outgoing staff member, or, if the role is new, by someone on the team who is familiar with the organisation and requirements of this new role. Here are suggestions for what to include:

- [ ] Important abbreviations
- [ ] Link to important documents/folders
- [ ] Contact details (who to reach out to for what topic or specific programmatic questions)
- [ ] Explanations and/or instructions about specific parts or tasks within the role. It can include tips or 'life hacks' for the new person. Try to think of this document as something to guide the new person for when you are not around (e.g. perhaps you are leaving the organisation and handing over your role).
- [ ] Upcoming events that are crucial for the new person's role

CHECKLIST: Mentoring a young person to attend an event

Imagine a big UN (United Nations) event coming up; your new colleague is a young person and is going to attend Summit of the Future. You know from experience that events like these can be overwhelming and you may feel pulled in different directions. How can you support them best? Well, you might want to share a companion document with them before going to this event. Here's some inspiration for what to include:

- [ ] Relevant information about the event (background, acronyms, program, useful links and opportunities)
- [ ] Guidance by asking questions that could help them to figure out what they want to get out of the event (opportunities, goals and aspirations), informing their approach to the event (which sessions to attend)
- [ ] Tip: also include space for them to voice any fears or concerns; to see with the mentor how this can be mitigated in advance
- [ ] Include contact details of relevant people who will be present at the event Signpost (side) events and opportunities happening during the event
- [ ] Make sure to schedule a debrief call after the event, in which you can use the document to reflect on their learnings and hear about any challenges or feedback they had

You can compile the questions into a shared document (e.g., Google Doc) for the person to fill out. The mentor can add comments, and then a 1:1 meeting can be held to discuss answers, concerns, and ways to address them. If digital tools are difficult, a printed version can be used instead.

For more inspiration about how to ensure young people have a safe, meaningful, and enjoyable experience attending conferences and events, check out this blog by We Trust You(th)! here