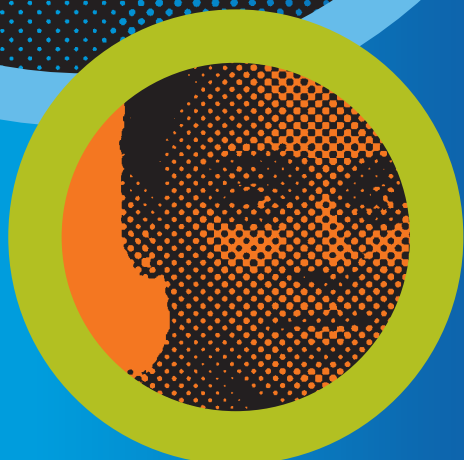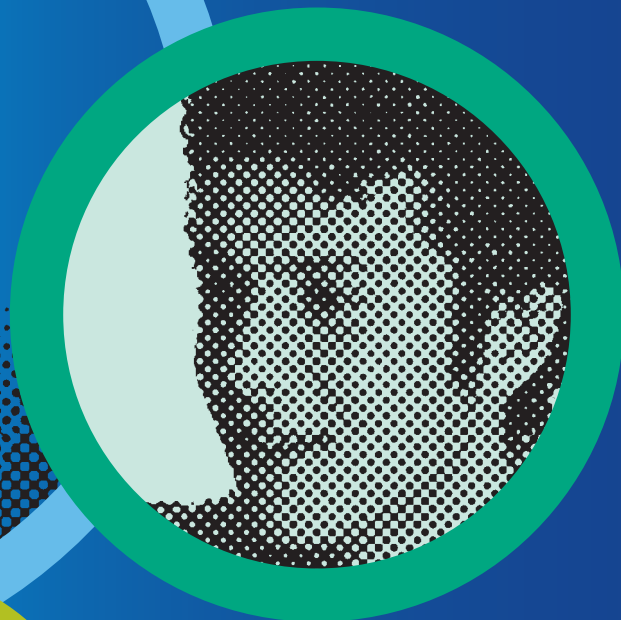# EXPLORE

Toolkit for involving young people as researchers in sexual and reproductive health programmes

Toolkit instructions and case studies

EXPLORE

Toolkit for involving young people as researchers in sexual and reproductive health programmes

Who we are

RUTGERS WPF

Rutgers WPF is a renowned expert centre on sexual and reproductive health and rights. We work towards a world in which all people are equally able to enjoy sexual and reproductive health and well-being, and exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. Central to our work is an open and positive attitude towards sexuality.

Rutgers WPF carries out activities in the Netherlands, Africa and Asia. Rutgers WPF supports partner organizations and professionals in their work, increasing their expertise on sexuality. Our activities are evidence-based, theoretically sound, culture and context sensitive, based on equality of gender, race, age and religion, and involve the participation of target groups.

Rutgers WPF evolved from the merger of the Rutgers Nisso Groep and the World Population Foundation (WPF). Rutgers WPF is a member of IPPF, the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

IPPF

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals.

IPPF works towards a world where women, men and young people everywhere have control over their own bodies, and therefore their destinies. A world where they are free to choose parenthood or not; free to decide how many children they will have and when; free to pursue healthy sexual lives without fear of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. We will not retreat from doing everything we can to safeguard these important choices and rights for current and future generations.

Introduction to this toolkit

This Explore toolkit is designed to support organizations and professionals in their efforts to build youth-adult partnerships and involve young people in monitoring, evaluation (M&E) and research of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programmes that target them.

The toolkit consists of:

→ **Toolkit instructions and case studies:**
   Guidelines to create conditions for successful youth participation in research and enhancing the effectiveness of youth SRHR programmes

→ **The training manuals:**
   Three types of manuals to train and support young people to conduct qualitative research:
   1. PEER review handbook
   2. Monitoring and evaluation and research in SRHR programmes for young people: Training manual (M&E&R training manual)
   3. Manual for training young people as researchers (Research training manual)

This publication contains the toolkit instructions and explains how to use the training manuals to compose your own specific training programme and for instructions on how to conduct an effective, youth-friendly training and how to support the young researcher during the research project.

Foreword: "Please make use of us"

"Because of the research project, I learned how to talk to people, how to interact with them. For the first time in my life I truly feel comfortable now talking about sexuality."
RACHEL, FROM MALAWI

"We plead to our organization: make use of us. We thank you for giving us the chance to be involved in this project. Now that we learned so much, we can do more for you. Please make use of us."
GUSTON, ON BEHALF OF THE MALAWI YOUTH RESEARCH TEAM

"I understand young people's problems more deeply now and I also understand the organization's programme better. The skills I learned through the training and research I can also use in other parts of my life."
KAMAL, FROM BANGLADESH

For both the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and Rutgers WPF, youth participation is an essential component of our work in young people's sexual and reproductive health, rights and development. Our organizations are committed to ensuring that our youth programmes respond to the realities of young people's lives, particularly the lives of those who are vulnerable, poor and marginalized. We must constantly strive to improve the quality of our services and education, and to think critically about which groups of young people remain under-served, and why.

One of the best ways to understand what is needed is to allow young people to participate in – and lead – our work on programme development.

We have developed this toolkit to motivate and support staff, researchers, other professionals and organizations to involve and train young people in research, monitoring and evaluation. Much has been written about the desirability and importance of youth participation in research; however, there is a lack of comprehensive hands-on tools to train young people to become researchers. This new 'Explore' toolkit offers a step-by-step guide to train and support young people to conduct research about matters that affect them, including progress on and benefits of projects that target them.

This toolkit is based on the original 'Explore' toolkit (published by IPPF in 2008), enhanced with experiences, feedback and materials from the participatory research project Do They Match?; experience gained by Rutgers WPF in training and involving young people in monitoring, evaluation and research; and IPPF's experiences with rapid PEER reviews carried out by young people. The training methodologies described in this toolkit have been applied and tested in different settings in Africa and Asia, with different groups of young people (children, adolescents and young people, with different social and educational backgrounds) and in the context of different research, monitoring and evaluation activities and projects. The training methodologies are developed in collaboration with young people and on the basis of their feedback and evaluations. We consider this toolkit a work in progress, as the methodology continues to develop and evolve through experience.

The development of this toolkit would not have been possible without financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the staff of the youth team at IPPF Central Office, the staff of the international research department at Rutgers WPF, staff at IPPF's Member Associations and Rutgers WPF's partner organizations, and the young researchers involved in the research projects, monitoring and evaluation, and PEER review activities that this toolkit is based on.

We hope that this publication will be an inspiration to all those who want to work with and for young people.

January 2013

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Rutgers WPF

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Contents

I

Part I: Youth participation in research: a process to achieve better results

Introduction to youth participation

For IPPF and its Dutch Member Association Rutgers WPF, youth participation is the process of enabling young people to influence decisions in matters that affect them. We believe that participation is a core human right and we feel we have a moral and legal obligation to involve young people in our activities that aim to promote young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Youth participation also enables us to achieve better results. Programmes that closely involve their target audiences are more effective and sustainable because:

- people feel they have ownership over the project and a role to play in the processes of change that the project wants to establish
- changes that the programme achieves are more sustainable
- participation increases support for the project
- participation of the target group in implementing the project increases its reach (for example, through peer educators)
- projects become more attractive and relevant to the target group (matching its realities and needs) when the target group can offer input on the design and methods or if the target group gets consulted on what can be improved, and how such improvements could be achieved

We also know that programmes are more effective if they:

- are based on a thorough understanding of the problem that they want to address
- monitor whether they achieve what they set out to achieve
- develop and improve interventions on the basis of data on what works or does not work
- use methods and activities that are attractive and relevant for the target group
- build their advocacy activities on evidence and use compelling cases to illustrate this evidence base

This toolkit will support you to achieve these objectives. We will describe examples of how you can increase the success of your programme by involving young people as advisors, informants and co-researchers, so that they can collect qualitative data that will help you to **improve programmatic learning, and effectiveness and sustainability of your youth sexual and reproductive health and rights programme.**

Why involve young people as co-researchers?

Sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes that target youth become more successful if they involve young people actively and meaningfully, and are based on a thorough understanding of the needs and realities of young people. Young people (aged 10–24 years) are the best people to provide us with information on their perceptions, experiences, realities and needs – on **what is at stake for them**. This is why consultation with young people, or participation of young people as informants in research or monitoring and evaluation, is crucial. But in this toolkit we go further: we involve young people not only as informants, but as co-researchers.

From our experience of training and involving young people in monitoring, evaluation and research we have learned that young people can be excellent co-researchers. Their participation in monitoring, evaluation and research had important effects on:

1. The quality of data
2. Individual and group empowerment
3. Partnerships and cooperation with adults
4. Improving programmatic learning and programme effectiveness

EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF DATA

One of the major reasons to decide to train young people as researchers is that young informants are less restrained when they talk about sexuality issues with researchers they can identify with. Young people are really good at establishing **rapport**[3] with young informants. Compared to adults, it is easier for them to create a safe environment for open and honest discussions with other young people on sexuality issues. This has a positive effect on the quality of the data that is collected: we get to the heart of a more truthful representation of what is really happening in the lives of young people. Because there is less difference in power between the researcher and the informant, it is also easier for informants to be honest about things that are not going so well in the project. This is a great advantage for **collecting reliable data** and for organizations that want to learn and improve their effectiveness (see section below 'Effect on improving programmatic learning and programme effectiveness').

There is, of course, also a risk of **bias** (data that is skewed, that distorts the results, that is less valid or reliable). Although involving young people as researchers can help to increase the 'truthfulness' of the data, young people may 'colour' the information they get from their informants in a variety of ways: for example, through the types of questions they ask, the way they ask the questions, the way they interpret the information, how they draw conclusions and select what is written down, and so on. Of course, this 'colouring' also happens with adult and with professional researchers and is unavoidable. However, the degree to which this colouring happens can be reduced considerably through the training process, with increased experience and by reflecting on how the data is coloured. We describe techniques for reducing bias in the sections 'Participation in data analysis' and 'Ensuring good quality results and producing a research report'.

EFFECT ON INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP EMPOWERMENT

Meaningful participation in research is an empowering process.[4] Participation enables young people to develop knowledge and skills, and to improve their self-confidence, and helps to create an environment where more young people can exercise their rights. When young people participate in researching youth sexuality issues, they become more aware of injustices and violations of sexual and reproductive rights of youth in their communities. This awareness can lead to individual and group actions such as discussing issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights with family, friends and other social contacts (directly and through social media), within the sexual health organization, and even at national and international forums during research dissemination and

3. The word 'rapport' refers to the degree to which a researcher and an informant relate to each other, experienced by the informant as feeling that the researcher understands him or her, that he or she can trust the researcher and that it feels like talking to a friend. Establishing rapport is easier when researcher and informant feel alike, and feel that they are on the same wavelength.

4. For more examples of empowering qualities, see IPPF (2008), *Explore*, available at: www.ippf.org/resources/publications/inspireexplore-ideas-youth-involvement-research; IPPF (2008), *Participate*, available at: www.ippf.org/resources/publications/inspireparticipate-voice-young-people-programmes-and-policies; Van Reeuwijk (2010), available at: www.dare.uva.nl/record/305838; Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010); *Do They Match? project report* (2011), available at: www.rutgerswpf.org/article/do-they-match-young-people-researchers-investigating-barriers-use-youth-friendly-services

advocacy activities. Some young researchers 'automatically' become advocates and activists, especially when their organization facilitates and nurtures this process. Being able to argue on the evidence base of research insights strengthens the position of these young activists. In turn, empowerment through meaningful participation can contribute to processes of social change and transformation.

EFFECT ON PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION WITH ADULTS

Youth participation helps to build **positive partnerships between young people and adults**. Youth participation in research can open up dialogue and discussions across generations and can lead to more interest and understanding of youth issues among adults, to more acceptance of young people's sexuality, and to increased adult support for youth participation within research and interventions related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The ideal scenario is to arrive at a process in which adults and young people are actively engaged in ways that are mutually respectful, beneficial and liberating, and where decisions are made democratically.[5] The goal is to build equitable partnerships between young and older people that are reciprocal, mutually beneficial and respectful of individual capacities and experiences.

EFFECT ON IMPROVING PROGRAMMATIC LEARNING AND PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

Youth participation in research can impact on your programme in the following ways. It can:

- capture the voices of those benefiting from your project
- gain youth perspectives on the progress of your project
- gather authentic accounts of the impact of your project at the local level
- find out about the real sexual behaviour and sexual and reproductive health and rights needs and concerns of young people in your community
- develop methodologies in a way that is more likely to be acceptable (and fun!) for young people
- discover innovative ways to create better conditions for young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights
- collect evidence for advocacy and empower young people to advocate for change
- build mutually beneficial and respectful partnerships between young people and adults (such as staff and community stakeholders)
- encourage youth participation within your organization
- empower young people to address barriers that impact on their sexual health and well-being

A programme that is built on such data, and that involves young people in key positions, has more chance of success, as the young people it targets will identify with it more and respond to it more. In addition, when programmes can demonstrate that they are having an effect, they can use this evidence:

- to increase their accountability and support with donors, stakeholders, communities and beneficiaries
- to acquire donor funding
- to motivate their staff to learn by showing them how the programme is achieving its goals
- to share with others and to scale up their programme

All these aspects will improve programmatic learning and increase the effectiveness and sustainability of your programme.

5. As formulated by Tisdall, Davis and Gallagher (2009).

Who is this toolkit for?

We hope this toolkit will be useful for those who want to involve young people in monitoring and evaluation, in needs assessments, rapid appraisals, explorative studies, PEER reviews, operations research, action research and in-depth research.

This toolkit is aimed at researchers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and project staff who want to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of their youth programmes. It is designed to support organizations in their efforts to involve young people in crucial parts of their programmes. The toolkit offers a step-by-step guide to train and support young people aged between 15 and 24[6] to conduct qualitative research (collecting narrative information on what, when, where, why, who and how) about matters that affect them, including the progress and benefits of projects that target them.

This toolkit specifically focuses on sexual and reproductive health and rights, but the examples and concepts can be replaced by other topics relevant for your particular field, research or organization. Similarly, although this toolkit focuses on youth participation, the same principles can be applied to participation by different target audiences and age groups.

How to involve young people as researchers

Youth participation can take many forms and happen at various levels within an organization and within different stages of a programme. The same applies to youth participation in research: it can be done in a very structured way, for example as part of a needs assessment or fully-fledged research project; but it can also be done less formally and in a more 'ad hoc' way, to help you gain feedback on the project, to make decisions on your programme strategies and activities, or to try out new methods. In this toolkit, we call the collection of qualitative data 'research'. But note that we do not necessarily mean 'scientific' research. The 'research' we are referring to can serve many purposes, from monitoring and evaluation data collection to inform outcome indicators, to ad hoc feedback on the project, to fully-fledged research.

How to involve young people as researchers depends on your objectives, on the amount of time and resources that you have available to train and support young people, on the individual capacities of the young people you work with, and on constraining and enabling factors in your particular work context.

To guide you towards making choices that enable the type of youth participation in research that fits best with your goals, organization and situation, we suggest a range of activities you can do to involve young people in research. We start from the assumption that you are interested in involving young people in research because you believe that within a safe and enabling environment, young people's views, perceptions and experiences can be of value to your programme or research project. We also assume that the programme or project is adult-led. And we assume that you share the following goals with us:

➡ 1. **Research results:** the goal is to increase the effectiveness of the programme.

2. **Process results:** the goal is to empower young people and facilitate a process in which adults and young people get actively engaged in ways that are mutually respectful and beneficial.

Youth participation in research has many dimensions,[7] but a general line of thought is that youth can participate more passively and more actively and at various stages of the project and research cycle. We start with examples of 'small

6. It is possible to involve children and young people who are younger than 15, but this requires more specialized methods that we do not cover in this toolkit. The principles and tips described in this toolkit are, however, useful for supporting children's participation in research, as are many of the training sessions in the manuals that come with this toolkit. For a more specialized toolkit, consult the *Monitoring and Evaluating with Children* toolkit from Plan International, available at: www.plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation-with-children

7. See, for example, publications on the 'ladder' and 'flower' of participation by Hart (1992); Pretty (1995); Cornwall (1995); Kanji and Greenwood (2001), available at: www.stayingfortea.org/2011/06/13/participation-ladders-101/

steps' and show how these can be expanded towards situations in which young people take increasingly active roles, increasing responsibility and increasing influence on decisions that affect them. There is a question of degree here too: the more active and meaningful the participation, the more impact this will have on empowering young people and increasing programme effectiveness. This does not mean that our ultimate goal is that adults cease to be involved in the research and hand over all power and responsibility to young people. Instead, our goal is a mutually beneficial partnership between adults and youth that is empowering and that reflects a democratic process that takes individual capacities and experiences into account.

Getting started

If youth participation is new to you or your organization, or if you have limited time and resources to train and support young people (which is the reality for many organizations), you can consider some **'small'** or **'easy' steps** to start with to strengthen your programme through youth participation:

1	**Start by doing interviews yourself** with some of the beneficiaries or youth volunteers in the project. Identify 'key informants' – young people who are vocal and can tell you a lot about their experiences and perceptions.
2	**Discuss with these key informants if and how they benefit from your project** and what they think are positive factors that contribute to its successes. Discuss what they think are barriers or constraining factors, and what they think could be done to further improve the project or tackle barriers.
3	**Document the young people's input and recommendations** and discuss these with your colleagues.

You will notice here that young people are involved as informants and advisors, and you are consulting them. You may already be doing this in your project, in a somewhat automatic way by asking for and receiving feedback. But you can make this process more structured by documenting your discussions and by asking particular sets of questions, for example to inform various indicators of your monitoring and evaluation framework.

If this goes well, you can consider the following step:

4	**Ask your key informants to sit with their friends who are also involved in the project to get their views.** Then sit together with these key informants and discuss the feedback they got from their friends. Together, you can formulate recommendations for the project.

Here you are making the shift to involving young people as co-researchers.

If this goes well, you can ask the key informants, or your 'co-researchers', to document what their friends are saying:

5	**Give the co-researchers a video recorder** to film their conversations or 'interviews' with their friends.
6	**Sit with your co-researchers and watch the film together,** and discuss (in other words, analyze) what the feedback in the film means for the project.
7	**Write down your conclusions and give a rationale** for your conclusions by drawing on information and quotes captured in the film.

If you do not have a video camera, you can use a tape recorder, or you can ask your co-researchers to write down what their friends are saying in key words. If they are recording the interview in writing, sit down with your co-researchers shortly after they have conducted their interviews while their recollection is still fresh.

If this goes well, you can expand the process:

| 8 | Ask your co-researchers not only to interview their friends, but also to interview other youth who are involved or targeted by the project. |

At this point, it will be useful to **give more instructions to your co-researchers on how to conduct interviews and on how to report back to you**. This is when the manuals in this toolkit may be useful (for example, the two-day training programme that includes the key sessions of the research training manual, described in the next section).

If you work with peer educators, you could follow this process with them too. The advantage of working with peer educators as co-researchers is that they have experience talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights issues and they have many insights into the project. However, it's worth noting that peer educators are used to giving information rather than collecting information, and tend to fall into their peer educating role during interviews. To avoid this, you can use the manuals in this toolkit to give them some guidance and instructions.

Which training manual to choose?

In this toolkit we offer three types of training manual:
- *PEER review handbook*
- *Monitoring and evaluation and research in SRHR programmes for young people: Training manual* (M&E&R training manual)
- *Manual for training young people as researchers* (Research training manual)

All three manuals are field tested and developed with input from young people. The three training manuals all focus on building skills for collecting qualitative data through interviews and focus group discussions, the most commonly used qualitative data collection methods. However, the tools focus on different data collection goals, so you will want to decide which manual, or which combination of sessions, would be most useful to you. A brief description of the manuals follows, outlining their main characteristics with an overview of content. In the following table, you will find an overview of which manual to use to meet specific goals and objectives.

As a generalization, young people will become increasingly able to collect high quality in-depth data the more sessions they conduct, and the more exercises they complete. At the same time, they will become more empowered and able to participate in research and project processes such as interpretation, dissemination, programme planning and implementation, advocacy and decision making. Trainees gain more insight and understanding of the project or programme itself through the training and participation process, which forms a good basis for further participation at decision making levels of the organization (see Part II for more details about process results).

The *Manual for training young people as researchers* is set up to enable young people to make a valuable contribution in several ways: for example, it allows young people to provide input on the research design, research questions, choice of methods, location, population, stakeholder involvement, data collection plan, interview questions, guidelines and other data collection tools. These techniques for collecting youth input can also be applied to the PEER review training methodology and the monitoring, evaluation and research training methodology.
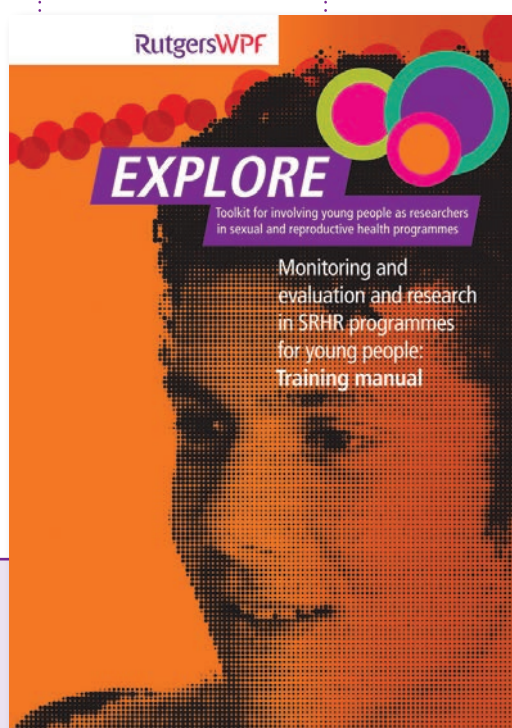
PEER REVIEW HANDBOOK

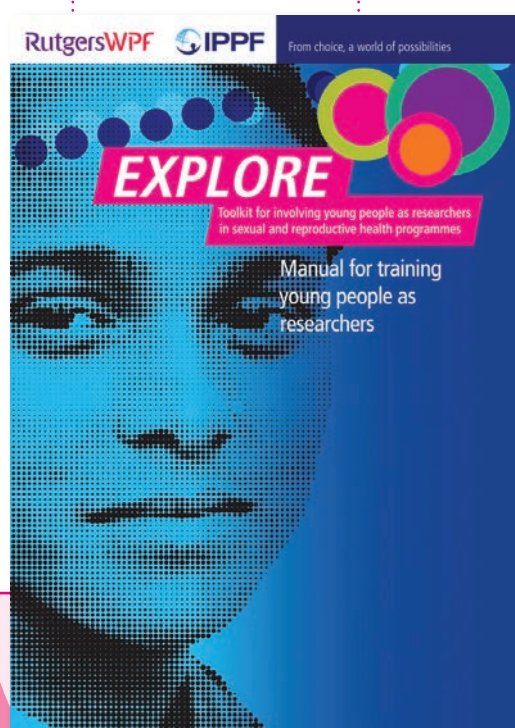| METHODS	RESULTS	TIME FRAME	CONTENT
■ Participatory, Ethnographic and Evaluation Research (PEER) approach ■ Beneficiaries conducting conversational interviews with friends (established trusting relationships) ■ Not difficult, and possible for younger youth and youth with limited education and literacy to participate in	■ Generates rich narrative data that provides insight into how people view their world, conceptualize their behaviour and experiences, and make key decisions ■ Effective for working with hard-to-research groups	■ The methodology is very useful to conduct in a short time frame, with a minimum of four full working days for training, data collection and documentation	**Peer interviewer workshop** ■ Introduction and overview of programme ■ Basics of ethics ■ Who is a peer? Identifying informants ■ Hello, how do you do? Practising the introduction ■ Preparing interview questions ■ What if they give short answers? Probing and practising interview techniques ■ Remembering the stories Reporting instructions ■ Practice makes perfect Interview exercise ■ Re-telling the stories Reporting practice ■ Optional: 'Say cheese!' instructions for using disposable camera to create project storyboard ■ Other issues that may crop up **Data collection** ■ One-to-one interviews with programme beneficiaries, stakeholders and staff **Story collection and initial data analysis** ■ Reporting back by researchers and recording the data ■ Identifying themes and choosing quotes **Peer interviewer workshop** ■ Discussion on most important findings ■ Mini evaluation of the review ■ Use photos to tell the story of the project (preparation and presentation) ■ Certificates **Staff debriefing** ■ Short presentation and discussion with staff on key findings of review

MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND RESEARCH IN SRHR PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINING MANUAL

METHODS	RESULTS	TIME FRAME	CONTENT
■ Equips young people with a basic understanding of monitoring, evaluation and research ■ Equips them with skills to help collect qualitative data on the effects of a project and the factors that form barriers or enable positive change to take place	■ Data collection to inform indicators	■ Active participation in monitoring and evaluation within short time frame: four–five days (for training and practice)	**Defining the qualitative indicators of the M&E plan** ■ Setting the scene in M&E ■ Working with indicators ■ Specifying qualitative indicators ■ Means of verification **Developing skills for qualitative data collection for M&E** ■ Interview techniques ■ Practising interview skills (role play) ■ Entry points and probing ■ Preparation of focus group discussions ■ Practising focus group discussions in the field **Reflecting on data and formulating conclusions** ■ Preparation of presentations ■ Presentations on focus group discussions ■ Drawing a good conclusion **Applying M&E data for project improvement** ■ Applying lessons learned ■ Reporting

RutgersWPF

EXPLORE
Toolkit for involving young people as researchers in sexual and reproductive health programmes

Monitoring and evaluation and research in SRHR programmes for young people:
Training manual

MANUAL FOR TRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE AS RESEARCHERS

METHODS	RESULTS	TIME FRAME	CONTENT
■ To train young people about qualitative research in greater depth ■ Focus on building skills for data collection (interview and probing techniques), ethical conduct, reflection, critical thinking and analysis ■ Builds thorough understanding of what is meant by sexuality and the various factors that influence sexuality and sexual behaviour	■ Equips young people to collect high quality in-depth data on youth issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights	■ Two–seven days – training sessions can be used as building blocks for devising your own training: a minimum of two days for basic research skills to seven days to cover all sessions and allow for practice and input on design of the research focus, interview guidelines and research plan	**Introduction to the research** ■ Welcome* ■ Why we are here* ■ Conceptualizing sexuality* **Specifying the research question** ■ Defining your key concepts ■ Working out research topics and questions ■ Formulating and practising your introduction* **Data collection** ■ Introduction to research methodology ■ Interview techniques* ■ Note taking and steps to take after interviews ■ Conducting a focus group discussion **Personal reflection and research ethics** ■ Exploring own boundaries and values ■ Research ethics, what does it mean?* ■ Ethical cases, protocols and procedures **Analyzing data and drawing conclusions** ■ How to order and analyze your data ■ Drawing a good conclusion ■ Reflecting on the quality of your data **Making a research plan** ■ Map and select informants and gatekeepers ■ Developing a stakeholder panel plan ■ Making a research timeline and work plan *Sessions marked with an asterisk: These are core sessions and form the basis of a minimum research training programme that can be expanded with other sessions*

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF WHICH MANUAL TO USE IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES				
MAIN OBJECTIVE	**POSSIBLE GOALS**	**FOCUS OF ATTENTION/ TYPE OF RESEARCH**	**MANUAL TO CHOOSE**	👁
Demonstrating effects	■ Raise profile of organization ■ Gain donor support ■ Capture voices of those benefiting from the project	■ Best practices ■ Success stories	■ *PEER review handbook*	See case study 1: PEER review – Malawi (page 14)
Programmatic learning	■ To find out if the project achieved what it set out to achieve ■ To inform indicators ■ To learn about what works and does not work ■ To improve accountability and support	■ Monitoring and evaluation ■ Operations research/action research ■ Qualitative (in-depth) research on sexual behaviour/ issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights	■ *M&E&R training manual* ■ *Research training manual*	See case study 2: Do They Match? research project – Bangladesh (page 18)
Project design and intervention development	■ To base project on thorough understanding of the problem the project wants to address ■ To fit project with realities and needs of target group ■ To develop attractive and relevant methods and activities	■ Needs assessment/ rapid appraisal ■ Intervention/ action research ■ Qualitative (in-depth) research on sexual behaviour/ issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights	■ *Research training manual*	See case study 3: Intervention development and research – Malawi (page 21)
Advocacy	■ To influence (local) leaders and policy makers	■ Compelling cases	■ *PEER review handbook* ■ *M&E&R training manual* ■ *Research training manual*	See case study 4: Youth Action Movement project on safe abortion – Rwanda (page 22)
Empowerment	■ To increase meaningful input and participation from young people in project ■ To encourage youth to become social change agents and activists	■ Critical thinking and reflection ■ Input into research design and plan	■ All manuals (But build in more emphasis on empowerment when adding critical reflection and input sessions)	See case study 5: Empowerment through youth participation (page 26)

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF WHICH MANUAL TO USE IN RELATION TO SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MAIN OBJECTIVE	POSSIBLE GOALS	FOCUS OF ATTENTION/ TYPE OF RESEARCH	MANUAL TO CHOOSE	👁
	■ To create environment where more young people can exercise their rights ■ To build a youth sexual and reproductive health and rights movement			
Encouraging youth participation	■ To build positive adult-youth partnerships ■ To increase meaningful input and participation from young people in project	■ Close cooperation with adults ■ Work with stakeholder panels	■ All manuals ■ Depends on facilitation process ■ Add *Research training manual* session 18 on stakeholder panel	See case study 6: Encouraging youth participation in organizations (page 29)

Case study 1

PEER REVIEW – MALAWI

The PEER review methodology is successful in extracting real stories of how IPPF youth programmes change young people's lives. In 2010, a PEER review was completed in Dowa, Malawi, to capture the voices of young people benefiting from the Making it Work project run by the Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM). The project focused on reaching under-served young people with integrated sexual and reproductive health services through outreach, drama, sexuality education, peer education and other innovative activities in rural areas.

One 19-year-old male who benefited from the project summarized the impact that it had on his life in this way, *"I went to FPAM to get information and counselling. Now, since being married, I introduced family planning to my wife … My life has totally changed because I learned more about family planning methods."*

Many of the young beneficiaries interviewed during the PEER review talked about how the Family Planning Association of Malawi is helping them to make more informed choices about sex, education and family planning, now that they know how to avoid unwanted pregnancy. One young woman said, *"My life has changed because I know how to use a condom. Had I not come to FPAM, I could have become pregnant."*

Overall, the PEER review methodology provides a rich base of data from which Member Associations can gauge the impact of their programmes on young people's lives. This information can be used to advertise sexual and reproductive health services to young people, mobilize more resources for youth programmes and to improve future youth programmes.

For more information, see:
www.ippf.org/resources/publications/ changing-lives-voices-malawi

Examples of training composition

If you have gone through the 'Getting started' steps, and you would like to involve your key informants or co-researchers in a more structured process of data collection, what are your options?

MY GOAL IS	MANUAL AND SESSIONS
To provide instructions on how they can conduct better interviews to get better and more in-depth data	*M&E&R training manual* or *Research training manual* – use the sessions from the data collection building blocks from either manual. These sessions are mostly the same. ⊕ Good to add: sessions on **ethics and interpretation** (analysis/drawing conclusions); **conceptualizing sexuality** and **defining key concepts**
To collect stories of change on empowerment for our outcome indicator on skill building	*M&E&R training manual* at minimum, the building blocks on **interview techniques**. ⊕ Good to add the *Research training manual* session 4 on **defining concepts** to conceptualize empowerment; and session 12 on **research ethics**
To demonstrate to donors that we are successful in preventing forced early marriages	*PEER review handbook*: identify cases where early marriage was prevented and let friends interview the cases. Analyze with staff the factors that made the intervention successful
To collect stories on unsafe abortion to present to policy makers during high level meeting	*PEER review handbook*: as above ⊕ Good to expand: **ethics session** from *PEER review handbook* with **sessions 12/13 on ethics** from *Manual for training young people as researchers* *Research training manual*: at minimum, the core sessions (see also Case study 4)
To understand why young people are not coming to our services (even though they are youth-friendly) and to formulate recommendations	*M&E&R training manual* or *Research training manual*: at minimum, sessions on interview techniques; reflection and analysis

Level of participation: empowerment and beneficial youth–adult partnerships

How can youth participation work in other research, monitoring and evaluation aspects such as design, planning, interpretation, data analysis, report writing, dissemination and project management?

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH DESIGN AND PLANNING

It is certainly possible to involve your co-researchers beyond data collection alone. In fact, it is advisable to do so. This will enhance the empowerment process, help to adjust the focus of the research to match the realities of young people, and help to produce research methods that are attractive, fun and enabling for young people to share their ideas and experiences. Use the training sessions to actively get input from the young co-researchers on the research questions, operationalizing the research, methodology, guidelines, protocols and research plan. This will **increase ownership** of the research project by the young people; increase opportunities for **beneficial youth–adult partnerships** with project staff and community stakeholders; equip the young researchers with skills to conduct in-depth research; and pave the path for further **participation on higher levels** of decision making within your organization.

PARTICIPATION IN DATA ANALYSIS

Involving young people in data analysis and interpretation will increase their critical reflection skills, for example on how they 'colour' the data, which will **reduce bias** in the data collection process. It will also help them to **increase their probing skills**, as they will start to understand the phenomena that they study more deeply and can adjust their questions to find new information. This thinking process will also help them to reflect on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in their community and society, and to discuss these in the team and in their private spheres. This is where some of them develop into **activists and advocates** for your project and organization and can become a great resource for energy, innovation and mobilization.

Participation in data analysis and interpretation can be achieved after data collection by discussing key findings with the team (for example, at the end of a day of data collection), and discussing the preliminary conclusions that emerge from your own analysis (for example, after analyzing larger sets of data). Discussions can be facilitated by using photo or film resources or by ordering or prioritizing cards that name themes or results. This helps to make the analysis process youth-friendly. Discussing preliminary findings and conclusions can also be done together with a stakeholder panel (involving, for example, project staff, community stakeholders, key informants) to triangulate the data and bring in their perceptions.

PARTICIPATION IN DISSEMINATING RESULTS

Working with stakeholder panels is a way to disseminate research results to the community and within the organization, and is also an excellent way to develop recommendations for the project that stakeholders are motivated to contribute to or implement. In our experience, one group of young researchers, despite being nervous, insisted on presenting the main research findings to the adult stakeholder panels themselves, followed by an interactive discussion in which stakeholder members and young researchers could make equal contributions. In some cases, the young researchers (the youngest being 17 at that time!) went on to present the research findings and recommendations at international conferences where donors were present. This was particularly powerful as it demonstrated **live evidence of empowerment** through participation; and because the findings and recommendations come from a direct representative of the group that the intervention targets, this **added to the credibility of the research outcomes.**

A youth-friendly way to involve young people in disseminating and presenting research findings is through photo and video resources. One example is to use photos to produce a project storyboard as described in the *PEER review handbook*. Or you could film interviews or ask your co-researchers to talk about the things they discovered and film this, subtitle it, and show it to colleagues and donors or at an international conference.

PARTICIPATION IN REPORT WRITING, MANAGEMENT, LOGISTICS AND FINANCES

Participation in these processes is possible, especially in close cooperation with adults and with sufficient time, resources and support. But it is important to consider the following questions:

- Is the young person motivated to be involved in this part of the process and is this motivation based on informed choice?
- Does it benefit, or at least not harm the young person him/herself? (Can I provide enough support?)
- Will there be a balance between participation and efficiency and between costs and benefits?

These questions need consideration at any stage or level of involvement in the project and need to be discussed with the young people. In our experience, young people themselves will suggest that certain tasks and responsibilities relating to project management, logistics, finances, dissemination and reporting are best done by more experienced adults and that their participation in these processes is through consultation.
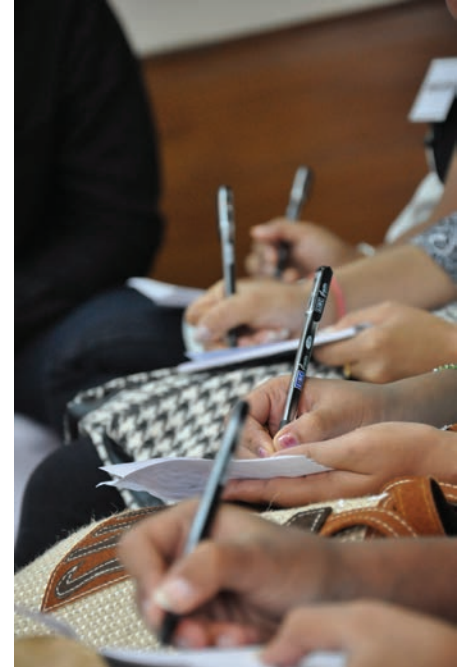
WHO TO SELECT FOR PARTICIPATION THAT GOES BEYOND DATA COLLECTION

The **key is to translate monitoring, evaluation and research concepts** and processes in such a way that children and young people can understand them, and that they make sense to them in their contexts. These include, for example, the concepts of 'sexuality', 'rights', 'informed decision making', 'ethics' and so on. These concepts can best be explained through illustrating them with examples that young people understand and recognize. Success depends on your 'translation' skills, the individual capacities of the young person, and the amount of time and money you have available to invest in this translation and to support them. Another key element is to **find creative, youth-friendly ways to involve them** in these processes, such as using photos and videos, cards, drawings and games.

So … consider your goals and resources and the questions above, and use common sense when selecting young people to be involved as researchers. But do not automatically limit your choice to higher educated, older youth: consider creative methods that enable you to target less elite youth and invite their participation too.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PHASE	RESULTS
Research design and plan	■ Adjustment of focus to realities of youth ■ Deeper understanding of key concepts ■ Attractive and enabling methods ■ Motivation and ownership over research project
Data collection	■ Quality data reflecting real life experiences
Data analysis and interpretation	■ Critical reflection, reduction of bias, increased probing skills and in-depth data, active citizenship and advocacy
Formulating recommendations	■ Support of and contribution to implementing recommendations, increased ownership ■ Powerful, and adds credibility to findings
Use youth-friendly methods to enable participation	■ **Empowerment** ■ **Beneficial youth-adult partnerships**

Limitations of research training

It's important to note that trainees cannot be expected to gain the same research skills in a short period of training as a professional researcher with a university degree. It is therefore conditional that a professional staff member, researcher or monitoring and evaluation officer will be responsible for coordinating the project and youth research team, for the final analysis and report, and for ensuring ethical support and guidance to the young people in the team. This process of training and guiding young people as co-researchers in a team with adults needs consideration in relation to the different roles and responsibilities of the young people and adults involved and comes with a number of challenges as well as benefits.

The second part of this toolkit suggests some top tips on how you can best provide this support, how you can prepare and deal with some common challenges, and what conditions are necessary to make the participatory research ethical and successful. The next part also offers tips for how you can involve young people in the different stages of the research process and how you can offer support to the young people at these different stages.

Case study 2

DO THEY MATCH? RESEARCH PROJECT – BANGLADESH AND MALAWI

In the Do They Match? research project, young people were trained as researchers, following the *Manual for training young people as researchers*. The young people investigated the reasons why the uptake of services by adolescents remains low, despite the services being youth-friendly.

Contrary to more traditional research on the uptake of services, the young people collected rich data and insights on how adolescents experience sexuality and relationships and what is most at stake for them. They found that many adolescents in Bangladesh and Malawi suffer from the taboos surrounding sexuality that lead to misconceptions, insecurities and fears. Despite these strict norms and taboos, young people seek out ways to find information, romance and eroticism as part of their normal sexual development. However, because of these taboos and strict norms, they cannot access full and accurate information, and this in turn leads to misconceptions, insecurities, fears and feelings of guilt.

Issues that the adolescents in these studies struggled with most, concerned sexual harassment (and not being able to report this), not being able to communicate wishes and boundaries with a partner, lack of space to develop relationships, and threats and fear relating to forced marriage and unwanted pregnancy. Most of these issues are not really addressed by sexual and reproductive health services that mainly focus on health-related issues relating to sexual activity.

In addition, many adolescents did not perceive the services as relevant for them. They perceive the services to be for married adults only. Unmarried young people face a high level of social stigma when they attempt to access services. The adolescents and youth preferred to deal with their problems by turning to the informal and traditional sectors which are easier to access and fit in better with their ideas about fertility, health and sexual power.

What makes this project special is that the young people provided the programme designers and implementers with insights into youth sexual culture that they would not otherwise have had. The young researchers – together with community stakeholders, programme staff and service providers – discussed these findings, and formulated recommendations and steps to improve the youth sexual and reproductive health and rights programme.

For more information, see:
www.rutgerswpf.org/article/do-they-match-young-people-researchers-investigating-barriers-use-youth-friendly-services

Part II: Creating conditions for successful youth participation in research

Safeguarding the quality and success of the research project

During the process of training young people and involving them in the research project, you and/or a team of adult staff will be responsible and accountable for the well-being of your team of young researchers and the people they interview. As well as supporting and protecting the team of young researchers, you will also have to ensure that the research project is managed and will produce the best possible results. To summarize, you will need to:

■ select and train the young people to build up their research skills

■ protect and support them during fieldwork

■ manage and coordinate the team and research project

■ ensure quality results of the project and produce a research report

■ evaluate the research process and have a plan for dissemination and follow-up

This means you will have to be **a teacher, a manager, a researcher and a guardian all at the same time**. This part of the toolkit will help you to prepare for these tasks and also explores some of the challenges that you may encounter. We also offer some suggestions to find ways for young people to participate at different levels and phases of the research project. In this part of the toolkit we focus on two key conditions for success:

■ being youth-friendly

■ supporting and protecting

Who can be involved in what? Selection of co-researchers

The key strength of young people's participation as co-researchers is that they can collect data on youth sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights that provides unique and valuable insights that adult researchers alone might not be able to bring. When selecting young people to become co-researchers, you have to consider the people you want to get information from, and who or what kind of people they might like to talk with. The criteria might be:

■ friendly, easy to relate to and talk with (somebody who they feel can understand them)

■ same gender

■ similar age

■ similar background or social position

■ non-judgemental

■ a good listener

It is also important that the young researchers themselves can communicate about sexuality issues, so they should not be too shy. In Part I, 'Getting started', we suggested that you select 'key informants' or peer educators who already

had some exposure to your project and experience of talking about sexuality issues. You can build on – and improve – these characteristics during the training.

We advise you to work with a group of 8–12 young researchers for protection, efficiency and quality reasons (the group should be manageable, with enough scope for individual attention). Select the same number of boys and girls in your team. An advantage of having a team of young researchers is that they can team up (for example, they can work in couples) and support each other during data collection. There will always be differences in the individual capacities and talents of the young people and therefore in the quality and usefulness of the data they collect. With 8–12 people collecting data, you can decide to leave any data of lesser quality out of the analysis. It helps to see participatory research as a way of using mixed methods and triangulation that enhance the quality of the interpretations.

In general, it helps to select young people who are slightly older (± two years) than the interview group, or at least not much younger. The 'research position' comes with a certain power dynamic and for many people it feels strange or unnatural to be asked questions on sexuality by someone who is younger or much younger. If the group you want to interview is made up of mixed ages, make sure you select young people in your team with different ages.

If many young people show an interest in taking part as co-researchers, ask them to write you a letter describing their motivation for the role. This may help you to select the most appropriate candidates. Ensure you get consent from the parents or carers of the co-researchers to participate in your project.

Training young people: making your training youth-friendly

You have selected your co-researchers and you know which training manuals to use and which sessions you want to teach them. But as important as what you are going to teach is how you are going to teach them.

PARTICIPATORY, LEARNER-CENTRED EDUCATIONAL METHODS[8]

Education is not a process of passive absorption. The most effective methods for teaching are participatory, learner-centred educational methods that actively engage students in their own learning. This is particularly so when teaching young people to conduct research, as the key to becoming a good researcher lies in critical thinking, self-reflection, analysis and practice.

CREATING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

You need to encourage your trainees to engage fully into this process by creating a safe and supportive learning environment where they feel comfortable and able to share ideas, feel safe from ridicule and judgement, and have space to learn from mistakes.

TWO-WAY PROCESS

It is important that the training facilitates an open and honest discussion between young researchers-to-be and the trainers. The training should be a two-way process. Not only does the young researcher contribute to the work of the organization, but he or she can also expect something in return – for example, the opportunity to make new friends, and gain knowledge, skills and experience. An open and friendly atmosphere and a good relationship between the young researcher and the trainers are necessary to enable an open and democratic approach to training.

TRANSLATE CONCEPTS INTO UNDERSTANDABLE TERMS

A crucial part of making your training successful is to communicate in a way that allows young people to grasp and understand the subject matter. This means

explaining the concepts in terms and language that the young people can understand and building in plenty of opportunities for them to ask questions. In order to 'translate' abstract concepts, you need to work with concrete examples, triggered by the trainees. Many of the training sessions therefore start with brainstorms and discussions, inviting the trainees to provide you with concrete examples to work with. It is important to create a safe environment for the trainees to speak freely, ask you questions and 'try out' their new-found skills.

This participatory, interactive learning process will teach the trainees crucial reflection and critical thinking skills that they need for their work as researchers. It will empower them and they will be appreciative. It will empower you too, as they will feed you with youth perspectives and insights that enable you to gain a deeper understanding of their world and, in turn, to interpret research data more accurately.

TURNING YOUNG RESEARCHERS INTO STAKEHOLDERS

Young people's creativity and resourcefulness are often underestimated. Training should take as its starting point the idea that young people not only have valuable contributions to the implementation of research, but also the right to participate in research that affects them, and therefore in the processes of training to be a researcher. It is therefore crucial that they are equipped with the relevant information, attitudes and skills to do so.

Case study 3

INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH – MALAWI

Based on the Do They Match? research project findings in Malawi (see case study 2), the Family Planning Association of Malawi – together with the young researchers, community stakeholders and researchers from Rutgers WPF – formulated recommendations to improve the uptake of services by unmarried young people. To see if the recommendations would work, the Member Association and some of the young researchers conducted an intervention research exercise, with support from IPPF and Rutgers WPF.

Building on the rich and in-depth data from the Do They Match? research, a script outline was written for an interactive role play on adolescent priority concerns relating to sexuality. Young people further developed this script (facilitated by staff from the Member Association and Rutgers WPF) and practised the role play. The role play was performed during the Association's services outreach sessions, before offering SRH services. Youth volunteers had mobilized young people from the community. The role play was performed in front of them and was followed by an interactive question and answer session with service providers and peer educators. This allowed the service providers to re-emphasize the key point – that the Association's services are there for young people, married and unmarried and whether they have a physical health problem or not. The young people were then invited to use the services.

The researchers evaluated how the young people liked the role play, interactive drama and services, and whether this approach to mobilizing youth and using attractive and relevant methods and activities helped to increase access to services. The young people were very enthusiastic about the role play, especially as it addressed issues that were relevant for them and that they recognized. One participant said, *"It would be good if more adults would also see this play, as it is good for them to understand what kind of problems we face."*

The question and answer session was particularly useful to counteract misconceptions about modern contraception and to increase awareness about what services the Association has to offer to young people. also It proved equally useful for young people to see for themselves who the service providers are and that they are warm, welcoming, open, knowledgeable and non-judgemental. Although uptake of services is still restricted because of the limited number of service providers who can conduct the services, the service providers themselves said that considerably more young people make use of the services compared to 'normal' outreach sessions.

More results from the intervention research will be available on the Rutgers WPF website when the report is finished, at: **www.rutgerswpf.org**

ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION

Young people continue to be discriminated against on the basis of many factors including gender, ability, sexual orientation, and ethnic or religious background. The training should make sure that this discrimination is properly addressed.

POSITIVE APPROACH TO SEXUALITY

The training should nurture a positive approach to sexuality and the sexuality of young people. It recognizes young people as 'sexual beings' and promotes the integration of different sexual identities and practices. It promotes sexuality and pleasure as a normal part of everyone's life. At the same time it acknowledges that many young people are subjected to unacceptable forms of gender-based and sexual violence. All young people have the right to make their own choices on their lives, including their sexual lives, respecting the choices of others and being protected against any form of harm. Trainees need to understand sexual rights and adopt a positive approach as it is a crucial step in their ethical conduct and becoming non-judgemental. The session on conceptualizing sexuality in the research training manual can help you to teach these concepts, and enable trainees to adopt a rights-based and positive approach.

YOUTH-FRIENDLY METHODS

Find methods that encourage young people to engage in the learning process and that they enjoy. Here are some examples:

- Use **energizers**[9] to help break the ice, create a positive group atmosphere, overcome shyness, and stimulate energy and motivation. Young people themselves often know some energizers, and like to lead these sessions.
- Hold an **evaluation session** at the end of every day. This will provide you with useful feedback on what could be improved or topics that might need more attention. Start each training day with a brief recap of the day before. This is a good way to assess what information the trainees have retained from your sessions and to set the scene for the new day.
- Make use of **cards, paper, arrows and other interactive tools** to visualize and create order. If you can, obtain a **'sticky wall'** with spray glue. (A sticky wall is a piece of cloth that you can hang on the wall and on which you can stick cards or notes that can be removed and re-stuck over and over again.)
- Use **brainstorm sessions, agree/disagree exercises, group work, role play, games** and other creative methods to engage trainees.

9. You can find examples of energizers online (for example, available at: www.wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html

Case study 4

YOUTH ACTION MOVEMENT PROJECT ON SAFE ABORTION – RWANDA

The Youth Action Movement in Rwanda, the organization with volunteers who support the Rwandan Member Association ARBEF, wanted to address the issue of unsafe abortion and the need for legal and safe abortion services in their country. As one of the steps in their advocacy plan, they put into practice the research skills they gained during a training programme on monitoring, evaluation and research. They visited prisons and interviewed girls and young women who were serving a sentence because of having an abortion.

The Youth Action Movement published the stories they collected from these women in a booklet, combined with data on abortion-related statistics. They now use this booklet to sensitize other youth-serving organizations in Rwanda to support the idea that young people should have access to safe abortion services when they need them. Together with AREBEF and these allied organizations, the Youth Action Movement conduct activities to influence public opinion and decision making about abortion in Rwanda. They mobilized university students and presented the booklet to parliamentarians. They have been successful in triggering dialogue with politicians and public discussions, and the process is ongoing.

For more information, and to read the booklet, see: **www.rutgerswpf.org/article/abortion-and-young-people-rwanda-booklet-personal-stories-abortion**

Conditions for success: protecting and supporting young people

In general, successful youth participation can only take place when the young people who are participating are protected against harm, abuse and exploitation. Working closely with young people in itself requires **ethics for conduct**, as there will be power differentials between you and other adults on the one side and the young people on the other. This makes them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, for which they need protection. A good way to guarantee protection is to adopt a child protection policy. Furthermore, participation in research, especially research related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, may entail **certain risks to young people that increase their vulnerability to harm**. The following sections outline some common challenges that may be experienced when working with young people on research, monitoring and evaluation, together with some suggestions on how you can prevent or prepare for these challenges and ethical dilemmas.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

IPPF's Governing Body developed a policy that states that each Member Association should have a policy in place to protect children and young people in the organization.[10] Each organization that works with and for young people should have a child protection policy to safeguard young people's integrity, well-being and safety. Such a policy promotes a positive attitude to young people and their sexual and reproductive health needs and rights. The policy should not simply focus on sexual abuse, but should encompass all aspects of child protection including, but not limited to, disciplinary measures, health and safety aspects, physical harm, how to deal with sensitive information about children, proper recruitment and managerial procedures, and the implications of misconduct.

While there are core principles for child protection, the detailed policy and procedures need to be developed with staff, volunteers, young people (for example, peer researchers, educators and other young volunteers) and other important stakeholders. It is crucial that all those involved feel ownership over the policy, have a common understanding about the policy, and agree on its content and how the policy should be implemented.

NON-ACCEPTANCE AND ENVY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS RESEARCHERS

In many contexts, research is considered an academic exercise carried out by professionals with an advanced educational background and a high social status. If youth participation in research is not explained to people (and sometimes even when it is), adults may consider young people taking on such a position to be arrogant. Many doubt the ability of young people to carry out research activities. This leads to adults refusing to consent to, participate in or support the research project. If the research is carried out in the context of an intervention project, staff of the implementing organization(s) may feel they are being 'evaluated by children' and disrespected. A driver may not honour agreements for picking up the young people at a particular time 'because they are only young people'. Sometimes, other young people (including informants) share the same misgivings and may not accept the young people as researchers or take them seriously. If the researchers get monetary and/or other compensation for their work, jealousy and envy may increase these feelings even further.[11]

This non-acceptance and jealousy can be harmful for the young researchers as it might damage their social relationships and hurt their feelings. It is therefore important that you give a full explanation to people directly involved with the research why young people need to be involved instead of adults, and why they need to be rewarded. It is also important to inform young researchers in advance about potential resistance and jealousy that they might encounter, and discuss strategies to avoid or manage this. They might, for instance, have to be extra polite in their behaviour and learn how to explain their role as researchers in a modest way. When older informants need to be interviewed, it might be better if the young researchers conduct the interview jointly with you or another

10. IPPF Policy 4.19 Creating a safe environment for children and young people in IPPF, available at: www.ippf.org/resources/publications/creating-safe-environment-children-and-young-people-ippf

11. For a more detailed description of such challenges, see Do They Match? research project report, Van Reeuwijk (2011), available at: www.rutgerswpf.org/article/do-they-match-young-people-researchers-investigating-barriers-use-youth-friendly-services

adult researcher. At times, should such negativity occur, you will have to assert your own authority in order to support and protect the young researchers. Similarly, you might have to be the person who approaches community members, gatekeepers and stakeholders to seek their participation or support instead of, or together with young researchers.

LABELLING YOUNG RESEARCHERS AS BEING BAD AND ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO HAVE SEX

Another common challenge relates to young researchers being labelled as 'bad' for talking about sexuality issues and allegedly 'encouraging other young people to have sex'. In principle, these labels are not different to the challenges that peer educators encounter, or the challenges faced by others whose work promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights. But such labelling can be very harmful for the reputation of boys, and particularly girls, and may even affect their marital prospects. Again, it is important to give good explanations of the purpose of the research to staff and community gatekeepers, and to warn and prepare the young researchers that this may occur. A useful exercise in this context is to practice responses to negative or aggressive encounters. For this reason, you may want to consider selecting young people who are fairly assertive and able to stand up for themselves. You could also consider selecting young researchers from areas outside the research locations.

HARASSMENT BY INFORMANTS OR CO-RESEARCHERS

Young researchers can be vulnerable to harassment by informants or co-researchers. It is the young researchers' task to create a safe environment to openly discuss sexuality issues. However, informants and co-researchers are often not used to talking openly and honestly about such issues, let alone with members of the opposite sex. When a safe environment is created to do so, some young people do not recognize the boundaries between talking about intimate topics and becoming intimate; or they do not respect such boundaries or misunderstand the 'rapport' as flirting.

Here, too, it is important to raise awareness of these possibilities, and to prepare the young researchers to recognize them in time, to recognize and respect other people's boundaries, and to assert their own boundaries. The carousel game in Session 11 'Exploring boundaries and values' of the ethics building block in the *Research training manual* is particularly useful for this. To increase protection, it helps if the young researchers work in pairs or teams, especially if they collect data with members of the opposite sex (for example, in mixed focus group discussions), and to consider only having in-depth interviews between a researcher and informant of the same gender.

PREVENTING YOUNG RESEARCHERS FROM DOING HARM

Children and young people are considered to be evolving their ability to make informed decisions and can therefore not be held responsible for their actions until they reach a degree of adulthood when they are fully responsible. This implies that you can be held responsible for the actions your young researchers undertake while participating in your project.

You will have to monitor the young researchers' ethical conduct during the data collection process and correct their behaviour where necessary. It is important that the young researchers understand the power and responsibilities that come with being a researcher and how their conduct and actions have the potential to cause harm to others. This is particularly important when there is a possibility of personal information being revealed by informants, which may have severe consequences if it is leaked (for example, information on being sexually active, sexual orientation, abortion, sexual violence and so on). Such information in itself may cause ethical dilemmas, for instance if someone asks for help. We therefore strongly suggest that during the training you instruct the young people on ethical conduct (see the ethics building block in the *Research training manual*) and prepare them for how to act in case they encounter ethical dilemmas. You can do this by having an ethical research protocol with referral options in place that the young researchers know they can follow (examples

are provided in the appendices of this toolkit). In addition, it is good practice to have debriefing sessions at the end of the day, during which you reflect on the research findings with the team and any challenges they have encountered. In cases where they have heard sad stories from informants, the debriefing and follow-up conversations may help them cope with this.

We also suggest that trainees make a pledge of honour during the certificate ceremony at the end of the training. This is a powerful way to emphasize that young people's tasks and responsibilities as researchers are serious and that there are consequences if they do not conduct themselves seriously. It also serves as an 'initiation ceremony' and makes young people feel professional and motivated.

Managing and coordinating the team and research project

TEAM DYNAMICS

You will probably be working with a team of young people. This implies that you will have to manage and coordinate this team and be prepared for individual and inter-group dynamics and challenges. Competition and jealousy are normal and healthy phenomena in groups of young people, but if someone feels left behind or excluded, it is your responsibility to remedy this with the group.

CHALLENGES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH	TOP TIPS TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES
Adults not accepting young people as researchers	■ Explain fully why young people need to be involved instead of adults and why they need to be paid
Competition with peers and adults for 'research job'	■ Get higher level managers on board to endorse facilitation and cooperation from staff
Jealousy and envy of adults and peers	■ Warn young researchers about potential resistance, jealousy, harassment and harm to their reputation
Young researchers considered as 'arrogant'	■ Equip them with skills to avoid or manage this, and practice assertion skills
Staff feeling they are being tested and criticized by 'children'	■ Consider selecting young people from areas outside the research location (except when PEER review methodology is used)
Young researchers labelled as 'bad' or 'dirty' for talking about sexuality issues	■ Select young people who are assertive
Risk of harm to researchers' reputation and marital prospects	■ Ensure young researchers work in pairs or teams
Harassment by informants	■ Carefully weigh up the appropriateness of young people interviewing older people, or team them up with an adult researcher
Risks of young researchers doing harm to their informants	■ Ensure that young researchers have ongoing support from an adult coordinator with authority, who can 'teach on the job', negotiate on behalf of young researchers and protect them when necessary ■ Train the young people on research ethics and develop protocols for handling ethical dilemmas
Risks of abuse and exploitation	■ Make sure your organization and/or the organization(s) you work with have a child protection policy in place

Focus on the strengths of working as a team and encourage those who do well to be responsible for supporting others who do not shine so much. Make sure the young people can trust you and come to you if they encounter problems. At the beginning and end of the day, sit together with the team to discuss, plan and evaluate the day's activities and the cooperation within the team. During training and research, schedule enough time for breaks and relaxation. Allow and facilitate the young people to use this time in their own way; they often like to listen to music, make music or dance as a way to relax.

LOGISTICS

You and/or other professional staff will probably also be responsible for running the research project and taking care of logistics and finances. Be aware of the extra logistical efforts that come on top of the research project logistics, such as organizing a training facility and a place where you and your team can work; equipment such as tape recorders, cameras and computers; overnight accommodation for you and your team; transport; food; and remuneration for the young researchers.

REMUNERATING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

We recommend you compensate young people fairly for the work they do as researchers. It is often hard work (especially the fieldwork and writing up notes) that takes up considerable time and effort from the young people. Fair (monetary) compensation increases their motivation and commitment, and

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Case study 5

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH YOUTH PARTICIPATION

It's like I look at the world through new glasses."

During evaluations (after training programmes, at the end of a research project, or a monitoring and evaluation data collection phase) we ask young people how they themselves have benefited from their involvement. Among all the things they mention – such as skills acquired, increased employment opportunities, material gains and so on – perhaps the most notable benefit they mention, and are most grateful for, are the things that relate to personal growth, self-confidence and deepened understanding:

"The research taught me to understand more deeply. We learned to ask questions about root causes, how society influences our ideas and behaviour. I now understand how important it is for us to have good information on sexuality and that we ourselves need to claim our rights to this."

"I have started to discuss the problems of young people with my friends and family. Before I was shy to talk about these things, but now that I understand the problems better, I feel I need to discuss these with others."

Investigating and reflecting on sexuality, sexual socialization and sexual behaviour provides young people with insights and answers to questions and feelings they

themselves struggle with. Research, as well as participation in other programmatic aspects and activities, helps young people to find answers to their questions. A young woman from Rwanda explained it as follows:

"I have come to realize that it is OK that I have sexual feelings. Before my involvement in the project, I felt guilty whenever I spoke about sex, thought about sex, or had sexual feelings. Our culture tells us these things are bad. But since I started working with the youth programme, I learned that these feelings are natural and that I do not have to feel guilty. That I have a right to experience these feelings. When I help with the activities, for instance during the empowerment training for boys and girls, I tell them that they do not have to feel guilty, that it is normal and natural and that they have a right to have sex. But that they have to try to be responsible about it and protect themselves and others."

For more information about the empowering effect of youth participation, see the process evaluation of the Do They Match? research project at: **www.rutgerswpf.org/article/do-they-match-young-people-researchers-investigating-barriers-use-youth-friendly-services**

shows that you take them and their work seriously, which in turn encourages them to conduct themselves seriously and responsibly. Young people and their families also value the non-monetary benefits of participation, such as the mentorship that may develop with adults, friendships forged through the process, and building up skills and experience. Provide them with certificates at the end of the training, and with individual letters of recommendation at the end of the research project that they can use for their CVs and future job applications.

CREATE SUPPORT FOR YOUR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

Make sure all relevant adults in the community and organization understand the purpose and plan of the research, the role of the young people, and why they are being involved and paid or rewarded. Remember to communicate this to others too, for example the driver, and the support staff of the organization and staff at the hostel where the team stays. The more background they have, and the better they understand, the more likely they are to keep to agreements. A good way to inform key staff and community gatekeepers is to inform them via a stakeholder panel. Working with a stakeholder panel is also very useful for collecting data on stakeholder perceptions, verification of data, and formulating recommendations and action plans (see Session 18 in the *Research training manual*).

Ensuring good quality results and producing a research report

QUALITY DATA AND REDUCTION OF BIAS

A report with quality conclusions and recommendations needs to be built on the foundations of good quality data and analysis. In this toolkit we provide you with steps and suggestions to train, support and guide young researchers to produce quality data. The training sessions are built in a way that will equip young people with critical reflection skills that help to reduce bias and enable them to reflect on how the data is influenced or 'coloured'. The more sessions are conducted on interview techniques, personal reflection, analysis and drawing conclusions, the more skills and experience young people will develop to collect quality data, assist in interpretation, draw conclusions and formulate useful recommendations. The more support they get from you, and the stronger the youth-adult partnerships you help to forge, the better quality data they will produce (and the more empowerment results you'll establish).

INPUT INTO DATA ANALYSIS

However, as mentioned earlier, young people cannot be expected to gain the same research skills as a professional researcher with a university degree. Their skills in data analysis and report writing will probably be limited, and responsibility for these tasks is likely to rest with you or another professional. As described in the section 'Level of participation: empowerment and beneficial youth-adult partnerships', young people can participate in these processes but most of the time they do not carry (and do not want to carry) the full responsibility for these aspects of the research. A good way to gain the input of young co-researchers into the data analysis and interpretation processes is through the daily debriefing sessions. Use the sessions to discuss the main findings, what these mean, and where contradictions occur or more data is needed. To cope with the amount of data that the team collects, try to analyze their transcripts as quickly as possible and only enter important data, or new data or insights into the computer. If you choose not to ask the young researchers to write up their notes or transcribe their interviews, you will need the verbal feedback session to capture the data. Record and document these sessions carefully and use all the feedback for the final analysis. Film and photo resources can also be analyzed and interpreted during such sessions.

Top tips for managing and coordinating the team and project

- Pay attention to group dynamics and team building
- Have a plenary session at the beginning and end of the working day
- Be aware of extra logistical responsibilities to meet the needs of the team
- Compensate the young researchers fairly
- Provide them with certificates and letters of recommendation
- Organize a stakeholder panel for research purposes and to ensure the organization and community understand the purpose of the research and the role of the young people

VERIFYING CONCLUSIONS AND FORMULATING RECOMMENDATIONS

After your own analyses, verify your conclusions with the youth research team. Then verify with the stakeholder panel. You can also use these meetings to discuss and formulate recommendations on the basis of the research results. Write each key recommendation on a separate sheet of paper and ask the young people and the stakeholders, working in separate teams, to prioritize the recommendations. Compare the results and let them debate the priorities. Describe consensus and differences in your report and give your own final suggestions.

Finalization: evaluation, dissemination and follow-up

PROCESS EVALUATION

We strongly encourage you to evaluate the results of the process of involving young people as researchers in your project and to describe these. There is a need for more evidence on the usefulness, challenges and benefits of youth participation in research and, by extension, interventions and youth programming. You can evaluate this process through interviewing the young researchers, and the adults and stakeholders who cooperated in the project, and by adding your own observations and experiences.[12]

Use the data on the young researchers' experienced, perceived and observed challenges and benefits of their participation to evaluate the effects of youth participation in research on:
■ the quality of data
■ partnerships with adults
■ individual empowerment
■ ability of young people to address barriers to their sexual well-being
■ effect on improving programmatic learning and programme effectiveness

DISSEMINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

It is always good to have a plan and budget to disseminate the research findings, to follow up on recommendations and to follow up on further participation of the young people you trained in the organization they support. It would be a shame not to make use of the capacities you build with these young people and often the young researchers are highly motivated to continue being involved in the project or programme.

When you conduct a participatory research, monitoring and evaluation, or PEER review project, consider how young people can be involved in dissemination and follow-up activities. Discuss this plan with the organization they are involved with and find out how the young researchers can continue to be involved in research, monitoring and evaluation, or how they can be involved in the activities that follow, such as advocacy, organizational learning sessions, implementation of recommendations and so on. When you have the opportunity, try to involve at least some of the young researchers in dissemination activities. In our experience, the strongest impressions are made when the findings, and implications of the findings, are presented by the young people themselves (see section 'Level of participation: empowerment and beneficial youth-adult partnerships'). Make sure you disseminate the results and follow-up plans to the young researchers and key stakeholders, for example through workshops or meetings and through sharing the research report or an executive summary of its key points.

12. For an example of such an evaluation, see Do They Match? research project report, Van Reeuwijk (2011), available at: www.rutgerswpf.org/article/do-they-match-young-people-researchers-investigating-barriers-use-youth-friendly-services

Case study 6

ENCOURAGING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Being involved in data collection for monitoring and evaluation, baselines or research projects such as Do They Match? has enabled young people and adult staff to work together towards a common goal. These processes, though in some cases more than others, have led to an increase of meaningful input and participation from young people in projects. In Bangladesh, for example, the youth research team were involved in writing a shadow report on Millennium Development Goal 5b and presented this to national and Dutch politicians during advocacy opportunities. Young people trained to help collect data for monitoring and evaluation outcome indicators were also involved in the programme's final evaluation.

The youth incentives programme, a collaborative programme between Rutgers WPF and IPPF, had as its core value a policy to increase meaningful youth participation in the partner organizations and the youth sexual and reproductive health and rights programme. As a result, it mainstreamed the practice of having 50 per cent young people and 50 per cent adults participating in its capacity building training programmes. By inviting young people and adult staff to participate together, young people were given the opportunity to prove their added value to adult staff and to demonstrate that youth-adult partnerships can be mutually rewarding. Through participation in training programmes for advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and research and communication about sexuality, young people's capacity to implement and manage project activities increased. Young people were involved in implementing project activities such as empowerment training, community awareness raising, interviews with media, peer education training, advocacy activities, data collection for monitoring and evaluation, report writing, and designing and planning new activities. Increased and meaningful participation improved feelings of ownership and motivation among youth volunteers, and increased the reach, quality and accessibility of the services and information offered by the projects.

Appreciation of young people's contributions to the programme was demonstrated by the fact that partner organizations recruited new staff members from their pool of active youth volunteers and by giving the young people more and more responsibility, in line with their growing capacities. In Bangladesh, talented youth volunteers were trained and embedded as paid staff within the Member Association's service provision as youth counsellors. The youth counsellors have played a very important role by successfully encouraging younger people to access sexual and reproductive health services. According to a branch coordinator of the Mali Member Association:

"The young people in the Youth Action Movement structure, the focal point and I, together, we are the core of the organization of the youth to youth activities in our branch. I am very committed to working with young people on this project. I see we are reaching many more young people this way."

And here are the voices of some young people themselves, talking about participating in capacity building training with adult staff:

"In the beginning, I was not comfortable because most of the participants were very senior people, this was intimidating. However after a while the atmosphere was very relaxed, and I felt comfortable as the training went on, and realized we are all here to learn. I feel that the group has to be mixed, this is very important in terms of stimulating discussions amongst different stakeholders in the communities, as well as to boost my confidence to discuss issues with bosses of the programme."
FRESTON, 19, AT MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH TRAINING, MALAWI

"

I was afraid in the beginning, because I thought that the issues going to be discussed were mostly for adults, however this was not the case as I learned in the course of the training."
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Notes

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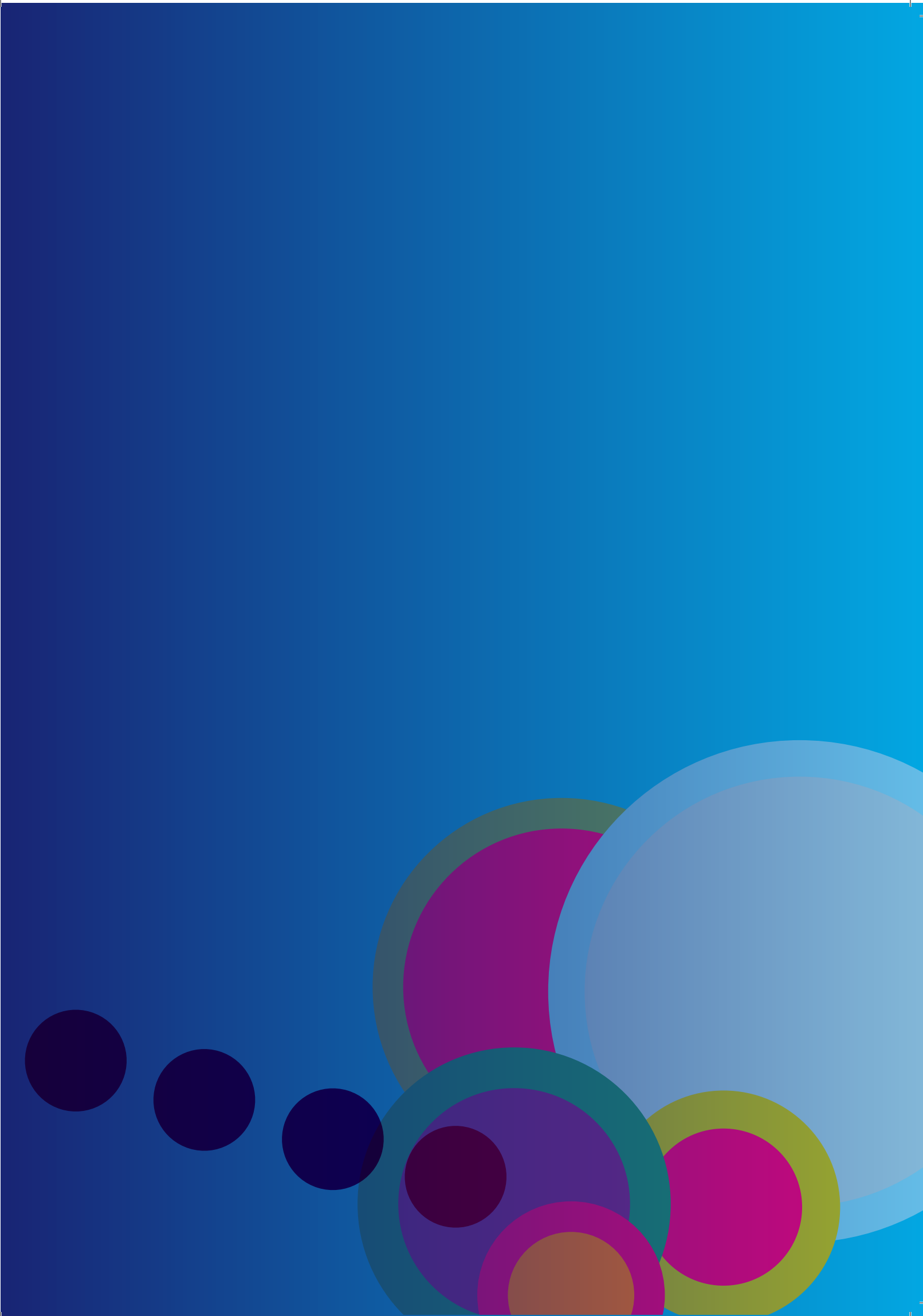
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