



NEEDS AND OFFERS ACTIVITY:

Strengthening Ally Relationships Between Youth and Youth Workers

Purpose: This activity is designed for youth and adult allies who want to strengthen relationships, particularly in settings where youth workers support or mentor young people. It is designed to help youth workers identify how to guide young people in taking on leadership roles and developing necessary skills, while also facilitating meaningful conversations to better understand and address youth needs. Through a collaborative matching exercise, participants explore the strengths of the allyship, while acknowledging its limitations and identifying areas for future growth.

Time: approximately 2 hours, depending on the number of participants

Participants: This activity requires a group consisting of both youth (aged 12 years and older) and the adult allies they engage with or work alongside, such as youth workers, educators, or other individuals in a support role.

Ideal group size: 10-12 participants, including both youth and adults. The activity can be adapted for larger or smaller groups, but adults should never outnumber youth.

Link to Human Rights Education:

This activity promotes collaboration, problem-solving and relationship-building, fostering a strong sense of community through allyship. It supports youth leadership, adult mentorship and cultivates allyship grounded in human rights values and principles, such as non-discrimination, safety, security, and shared responsibility.



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Materials:

- Reference Sheet: Establishing group guidelines based on human rights values (refer to Annex A)
- Flip chart 1: Needs versus Offerings (refer to Annex B)
- Flip chart 2: Matching Needs and Offerings (refer to Annex C)
- Optional Note-taking template (refer to Annex D)
- Visual: Allyship from a human rights perspective (refer to Annex E)
- Flip chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Sticky (post-it) notes, two different colors (e.g. yellow and blue)
- Pencils or pens



Key considerations before starting

The **'Do No Harm' principle** must remain a central consideration when conducting this activity with youth. Facilitators are therefore expected, at a minimum, to adhere to the following guidelines to ensure this principle is upheld:

- Ensure you have established a strong rapport with the youth and taken time to get to know them before introducing this activity. If you do not have a close relationship with the youth, consider co-facilitating with someone who does (ideally a youth).
- Reflect on your own limitations and potential biases (e.g., cultural biases), and carefully consider the context in which you'll be facilitating.
- Ask participants - whether adults or youth - to avoid personalizing their contributions. Encourage youth to speak about "adults" or "adult allies" as a group, rather than referring to a specific youth worker or individual. Likewise, ask adults to refer to "youth" collectively, rather than singling out particular young people. This approach helps keep the focus on broader issues rather than individual situations, and can help avoid discomfort, awkwardness, or unnecessary confrontation.

Finally, be sure to adapt the content and language to suit the group. Depending on participants' language abilities and their familiarity or interest in human rights, you may need to simplify the language or spend additional time (or less time) on certain parts of the activity.



Part I: Introduction (20-25 minutes)

It is advisable for at least one adult to take responsibility for leading the activity. If two facilitators are available, they can both be adults, though we highly recommend having one adult and one youth co-lead.

- 1 Explain that the purpose of the Needs and Offers activity is to strengthen relationships between young people and adult allies (youth workers, educators, and others) by helping adults better understand youth needs and by clarifying the type of support adult allies can provide. Mention that this activity will help all participants enhance collaboration by identifying untapped opportunities and/or limitations that exist within their current relationships.
- 2 Take a moment to collaboratively **establish Group Guidelines** that everyone agrees to follow throughout the activity. Participants can be encouraged to base group guidelines on human rights values, such as the ones listed below.

Human Rights Values	Cooperation	Acceptance	Responsibility
Respect for diversity	Respect	Fairness	Inclusion

For example, the value of acceptance can help formulate a guideline like: *"We commit to staying open to all ideas, even if we don't fully agree with them."*

The group should establish at least 3-4 guidelines (or group norms) to help foster a respectful and supportive environment throughout the activity. It is also a good idea to record these guidelines and to display them (on a flipchart, for example) where everyone can see them. This will serve as a reminder for everyone to stay accountable to the group agreements.

For more information on **Human Rights values and guidance on establishing group guidelines**, refer to the Reference Sheet in **Annex A**.

3 To introduce the theme of the activity, invite all participants to raise their hand and respond to the question: ***"How would you define an adult ally?"***

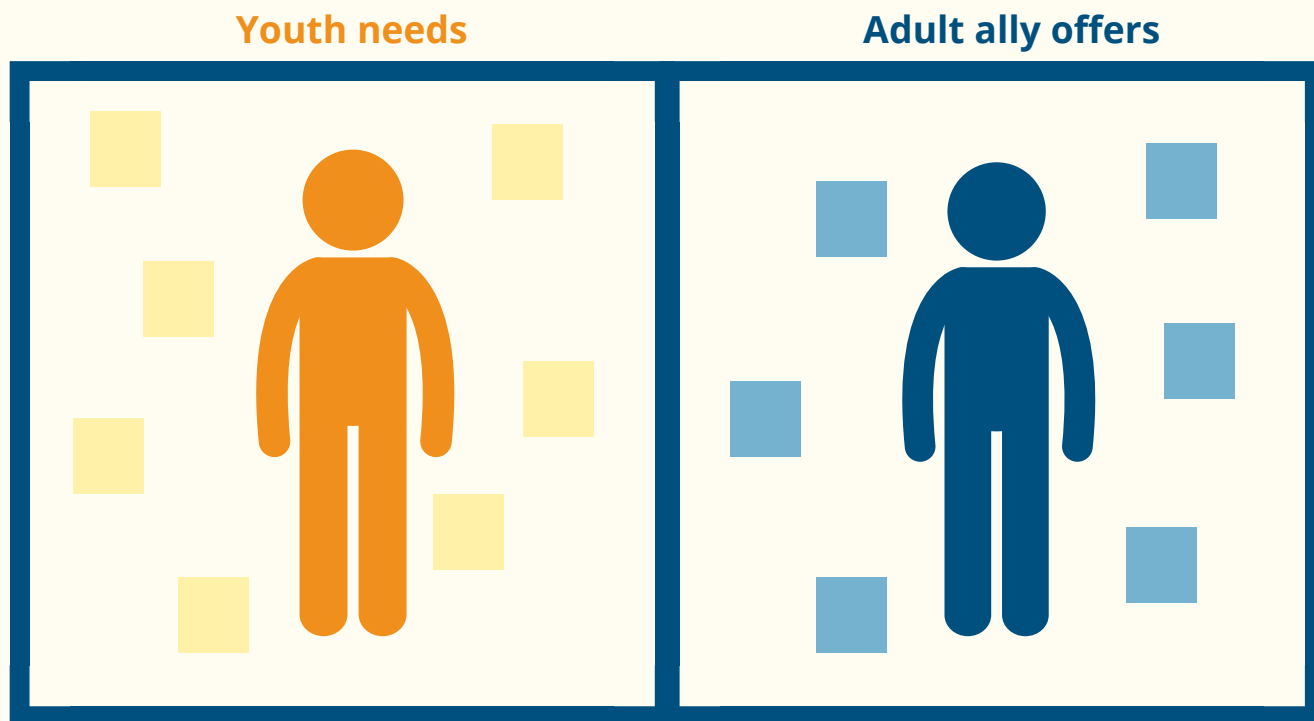
Highlight any similarities or differences that arise between the adult and youth responses and consider noting them for reference.

Variation: Another way to engage participants in exploring the concept of adult allyship is to present the following definition, inviting them to modify it to reflect their own experiences and perspectives: ***"An adult ally listens, supports, and actively helps youth build confidence, take the lead, and thrive"***.


Working together to define allyship from their own perspectives will encourage participants to focus on the unique dynamics, expectations, and needs of their group

Part II: Sharing Needs and Offers (15 minutes)

1 Display **Flip Chart 1: Needs and Offers**, which should be prepared in advance (refer to **Annex B** for instructions on creating this flipchart).



 Post-it notes completed by youth participants

 Post-it notes completed by adult allies

- 2** Invite youth to reflect on and share their **NEEDS** in relation to adult allies by responding to one or more of the following questions. Youth should write their responses on yellow sticky notes (one need per note) and place them in the "Youth Needs" section of the visual.

WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM THE ADULT ALLIES WHO SUPPORT AND WORK WITH YOU [SPECIFY CONTEXT*]?

- What do you need from an adult ally to feel safe and secure?
- What actions do you expect an ally to take to actively support you and other youth?

- 3** Invite the adults to reflect on what they can **OFFER** to the youth in their role as allies by responding to one or more of the following questions. Adult allies should write their responses on blue sticky notes (one offer per note) and place them in the "Adult Ally Offers" section of the visual.

AS AN ALLY, WHAT DO YOU OFFER THE YOUTH YOU SUPPORT AND WORK WITH [SPECIFY CONTEXT*]?

- What do you do to help youth feel safe and secure?
- What actions do you take as an adult ally to make a meaningful impact in the lives of youth?

** It is important to clearly define a specific context or focus - such as a program (e.g., in relation to tutoring, group counselling, arts-based activities) or a goal (e.g., youth leadership development). Establishing a clear and specific objective for the discussion helps prevent it from becoming too broad and ensures that the needs and offers shared remain relevant and actionable.*

At this stage of the activity, Needs and Offers are kept separate whilst remaining visible to all participants.

Part III: Matching Needs and Offers (45 minutes)




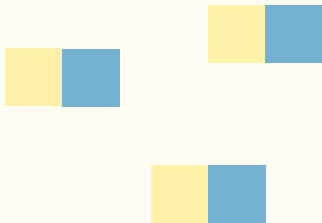
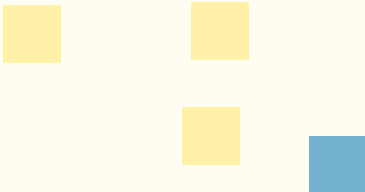

- 1** Using a popcorn-style approach (a discussion technique where participants speak spontaneously and without a set order), invite both youth and adults to share aloud the needs and offers they have posted. Encourage brief contributions to ensure everyone has a chance to participate.

- 2** Display **Flip Chart 2: Matching Needs and Offers**, which should be prepared in advance (see **Annex C** for instructions on creating this flipchart).

3 Lead youth and adult allies through a collaborative matching exercise, reviewing both the needs and offers for the purpose of identifying:

- **Alignment:** Youth needs that are being addressed by adult offers.
- **Misalignment requiring attention:** Youth needs that are not currently being addressed but can and should be. Offerings that do not match any youth needs can also be placed here for review.
- **Misalignment due to limitations:** Youth needs that cannot be addressed due to limitations such as lack of time, lack of resources, or other factors.

In the matching exercise, the facilitator can start by matching an offering to a need, or begin with a need and find the corresponding offers. Some overlap or repetition between needs and offers may occur. The facilitator's role is to guide the group in sorting each need and offer into one of the three categories, as shown in the diagram below.

Aligned 	Misaligned and require attention 	Misaligned due to limitations 
		

4 As the matching process unfolds, the facilitator guides a discussion between the youth and their adult allies, focusing on the reasons behind the alignment or misalignment of needs and offerings. While the perspectives of adult allies are valuable for understanding the context, it is important that youth voices take priority in this conversation.

5 During the matching process and conversation, ensure that a participant or an adult takes notes. The note-taking template provided in **Appendix D** can be used for this purpose.

Part IV: A human rights-based approach to allyship (15-20 minutes)

In this segment, participants are encouraged to explore allyship from a human rights perspective and to compare their reflections with the findings from the earlier matching exercise.

- 1 Present the following definition to participants: ***“A human rights-based approach involves collaborating with youth in ways that respect and uphold their rights, challenging power imbalances, and promoting equity and justice. This approach to allyship focuses on enabling youth to take charge of their own lives while offering support and standing in solidarity with them”***
- 2 Display the visual entitled: ***Allyship from a human rights perspective***, which should be prepared in advance (refer to **Annex D** for presentation options). Allow time for reflection.



- 3 Encourage participants to consider how allyship can be leveraged to promote and protect youth rights by:
 - Asking youth: ***“Does a Human Rights-Based Approach bring to mind any additional needs that are important to you or other youth?”***
 - Asking adult allies: ***“Does a Human Rights-Based Approach highlight any new areas where your support is especially needed?”***

- 4 Following the discussion, the group may choose to add post-it notes to **Flip Chart 2**.

Part V: Closing discussion (20 minutes)

Using the prompts below, engage participants in a discussion to evaluate the activity and to help both youth and adult allies plan their next steps.

FEEL



How do we feel?

- Did you enjoy participating in this activity? Why or why not?
 - What parts did you find easy or enjoyable?
 - What aspects did you find challenging or uncomfortable?
-

THINK



What did we learn?

- In what areas has allyship been successful? How can we sustain these efforts and ensure continued progress?
 - What unmet needs do youth have that should be addressed by adult allies?
 - What unmet youth needs fall outside the scope of what the current adult allies in the room can provide? Identify the areas where action is limited and where existing allies face constraints.
 - Was it helpful to reflect on allyship from a human rights perspective? Why or why not?
-

ACT

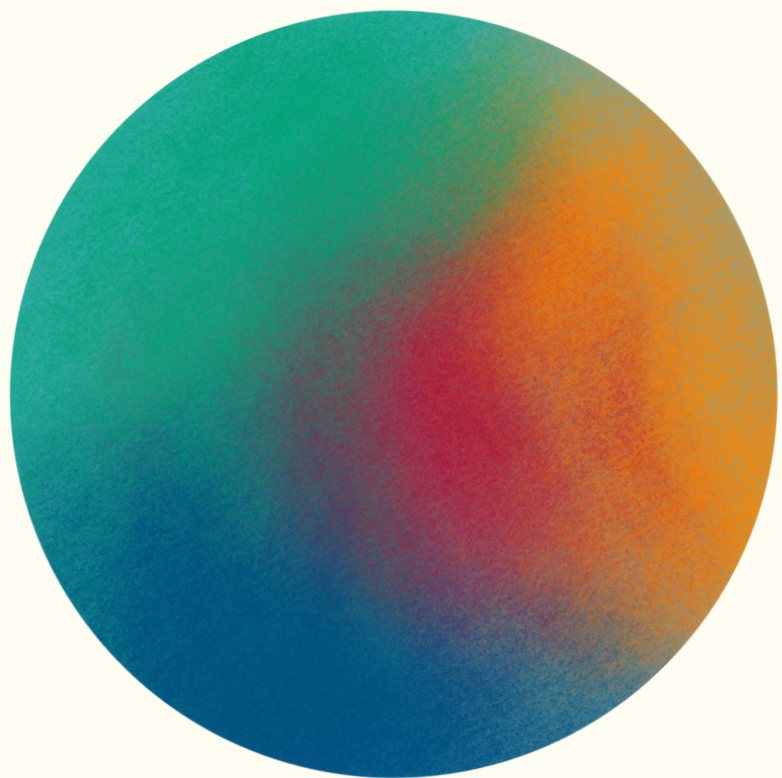


How can we work better together?

- What commitments can both youth and adult allies make to improve alignment between youth needs and adult ally offers?
- What additional support, resources, or strategies are needed to address unmet youth needs more effectively? Consider identifying other potential allies who could offer assistance in areas beyond the capacity of current adult allies.
- How can we ensure that youth and adult allies continue to share and adjust their needs and offers as their relationships evolve?

Possible variations

- Facilitators may choose to divide this activity into two parts: first, lead a discussion on allyship and introduce a human rights-based approach to the concept using Annex D; then, in a separate session, carry out the Needs and Offers activity, once those ideas have been fully introduced and processed by participants.
- Part II of the activity (**Sharing Needs and Offers**) can take place in two separate rooms - one for youth to reflect on their needs and another for adult allies to reflect on their offers - if this setup feels more comfortable for participants. Alternatively, it can be done anonymously in a shared space, with the facilitator reading aloud ideas written on post-it notes.
- Young people don't need to focus solely on their needs. Facilitators can also invite them to share what they have to 'offer' in support of one another. This can encourage skill-sharing among youth and help address certain needs that may not be met by adult allies.



ANNEX A – Reference Sheet:

Establishing group guidelines based on human rights values

What are human rights values?

The seven human rights values below stem from human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By promoting the values of cooperation, respect, fairness, inclusion, respect for diversity, responsibility, and acceptance, and by bringing them into our everyday behavior, we can demonstrate respect for human rights. As such, these values can be used to create group guidelines and norms that foster respectful discussion.

Human Rights Value	Definition	Example of a group guideline
Cooperation	Cooperation is working together to achieve a common goal, as well as helping one another achieve personal goals.	<i>"We will work together to achieve common goals and keep each other accountable throughout the discussion"</i>
Respect	Respect is recognizing that every person is important and must be treated with dignity. In the context of human rights, respect does not need to be earned; it is the right of every person in all circumstances.	<i>"We will avoid offensive language or insults and be mindful of our body language"</i>
Fairness	Fairness is giving everyone the same value, the same rights, and the same opportunities.	<i>"We will give everyone an equal opportunity to speak; and will take care not to take up too much space (leave room for others)"</i>
Inclusion	Inclusion is acting to ensure full participation from everyone, without exception.	<i>"We will allow individuals to choose when and how they participate, without pressuring anyone"</i>
Respect for diversity	Respect for diversity is recognizing and appreciating individual differences.	<i>"We will strive to understand each other's perspectives, recognizing we can all learn from one another"</i>
Acceptance	Acceptance is recognizing that each person is a full member of society and of the group.	<i>"We commit to staying open to all ideas, even if we don't fully agree with them"</i>

ANNEX B - Flip Chart 1: Needs and Offers

Prepare this visual by either using chart paper or drawing on a whiteboard. On one side, draw a figure and label it "Youth Needs". On the opposite side, draw another figure and label it "Adult Ally Offers". Ensure both areas are large enough to accommodate post-it notes from participants (the larger the group, the more space will be needed).

Youth needs






Adult ally offers



ANNEX C - Flip Chart 2: Matching Needs and Offers

Prepare this visual by either using chart paper or drawing on a whiteboard. You can use the terms "match" (instead of "aligned") and "mismatch" (instead of "misaligned") if you feel that simpler language is needed.




Ensure that all three sections are large enough to accommodate post-it notes from participants (the larger the group, the more space will be needed).

Aligned 	Misaligned and require attention 	Misaligned due to limitations 

ANNEX D – Note-taking template (optional)

During the matching process and conversation, it may be helpful for either a youth participant or an adult to take notes. This template is provided for that purpose.

Participants must be asked for their consent, and all data must be collected in an anonymous fashion to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

<p>Aligned: </p> <p>Youth needs that are being addressed by adult offers</p>	
<p>Misaligned and require attention: </p> <p>Unmet youth needs</p> <p>+</p> <p>Actions, commitments and resources required to address these needs</p>	
<p>Misaligned due to limitations: </p> <p>Unmet youth needs that cannot be addressed due to limitations.</p>	
<p>Additional reflections or questions</p>	

ANNEX E – Visual: A human rights-based approach to allyship

Facilitators can either project this visual or distribute paper copies to participants for reference.

A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO ALLYSHIP*

How can adults promote young people's rights by being allies?

- 1. Promote Human Rights Education:** Help youth understand their rights and responsibilities enabling them to better recognize, assert, and uphold those rights.
- 2. Stand up for inclusion:** Promote and safeguard young people's right to non-discrimination. Actively challenge unjust systems that reinforce inequity and disadvantage youth.
- 3. Raise youth voices:** Amplify youth voices by supporting their right to be heard and to have their views respected.
- 4. Enable youth access:** Assist youth in accessing the resources, information, and services they need, while helping them unlock new opportunities.
- 5. Create safe spaces:** Help provide secure environments for youth to thrive.
- 6. Champion youth participation:** Uphold young people's right to participate and be involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- 7. Uphold dignity:** Ensure that youth are being treated with respect and that their rights are being honored.

** A human rights-based perspective is about collaborating with youth in ways that respect and uphold their rights, challenge power imbalances, and promote equity and justice. This approach to allyship focuses on enabling youth to take charge of their own lives while offering support and standing in solidarity with them.*