



How to support Youth once they reach 18 years old?

New Delhi, June 2019



How to support Youth once they reach 18 years old?

INTRODUCTION

Since August 2018, the Youth 4 Change Network team has been based in Delhi, India. When we arrived here, we met many NGOs working for Youth inclusion, mostly with young adults, but also organisations working with children and encountering challenges to keep supporting these children after they turned 18 years old.

From our conversations with these organisations and with Youths themselves, we understood that many were concerned about **the transition towards independence of children reaching adulthood.**

Therefore, we decided to organize a series of workshops with some of our members and partners in Delhi, on the topic **“How to support Youth once they reach 18 years old?”**. The objective was to brainstorm on the different challenges, to share experiences and best practices, and to find solutions together.

During these rich discussions, we realized that the inputs and solutions shared would certainly interest other organisations working for Youth inclusion around the world, and that is why we decided to compile everything in this report.

We hope that you will find this guide useful.

The Y4CN team.

How to support Youth once they reach 18 years old?

LIST OF CHALLENGES

During these workshops, we identified together **4 categories of challenges** that can be faced either by Youths or by NGOs:

- **SELF & PERSONALITY** → How to prepare the Youth to **become healthy and fulfilled adults**, starting as early as possible since it is a long-term process?
- **PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION** → How to prepare the Youth for their professional inclusion and **career development**: how can they find a job that matches their skills and interests, but also their level of education? How can NGOs prepare them to enter the job market? And once the Youth have found a job, how can we make sure that they stay happy in it?
- **LIVING ON THEIR OWN** → How can we ensure a smooth transition to independence for the Youth, who often have to **manage their own lives and live on their own** once they turn 18 years old? For Youth who grew up in child care institutions, this transition can be even more difficult, because it usually means that they have to leave their shelter home and become fully independent. This category deals with challenges that are more “technical”.
- **ADMINISTRATION, FUNDING & STAFF** → How can NGOs **manage their resources and activities**, and make sure that their programs run smoothly (funds, staff...)?

In the following pages, we listed the **ideas of solutions** that were discussed during the workshops for each of these categories, both for the challenges faced by the Youth and those faced by the NGOs. You will find some of these solutions several times, as they can be used to tackle different challenges.





1. Self & personality

Challenges faced by the Youth:

- Knowing and expressing yourself
- Finding role models and getting positive exposure
- Dealing with transitions and attachment

Challenges faced by NGOs:

- Guiding Youth through the process of self-acceptance
- Giving Youth enough time and space to grow at their own rhythm
- Supporting Youth in their rehabilitation process
- Empowering them and giving them a platform to raise their voices
- Having a positive impact when interactions with the Youth are punctual

2. Professional inclusion

Challenges faced by the Youth:

- Career choice
- Skills development and job readiness
- Weak educational basis
- Keeping a job

Challenges faced by NGOs:

- Making Youth understand the meaning of commitment
- Dealing with communities and families

3. Living on their own

Challenges faced by the Youth:

- Documentation (ex: ID card, minimum school education, bank)
- Financial (accommodation, living expenses, education)
- Legal literacy

Challenges faced by NGOs:

- Keeping in touch and following up with Youth who leave

4. Administration, funding & staff

Challenges faced by NGOs:

- Dealing with government and regulations
- Pressure from funders
- Capacity-building, counselling, psychology, etc.
- Training volunteers



1. SELF & PERSONALITY

1. SELF & PERSONALITY



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

KNOWING & EXPRESSING YOURSELF

- Organize **mentoring, one-to-one coaching sessions**
- Organize **workshops, activities** that will help the Youth to tackle issues (i.e. self-love) in a concrete and impactful way
- **Provide a space** where Youth can experience things that they don't find elsewhere, like talking, drawing, arts, sports, crafts... It will increase their self-confidence, open their minds to new horizons and enable them to find out what they like
- Help the Youth **accept themselves and their differences** by exposing them to as many different types of models as possible in terms of activities, profiles, opinions, physical abilities or looks... → so the Youth can recognize richness in diversity and do not develop complexes
- Keep using all opportunities to **convey key messages** (love yourself, be confident, be benevolent to your peers, try your best, etc.)
- **Encourage** the Youth to speak up, **motivate** them and **show them appreciation** through rewards and appraisal → it will develop their self-confidence!

FINDING ROLE MODELS & GETTING POSITIVE EXPOSURE

- Staff should be **friendly and understanding, non-judgmental**, encouraging, developing a **bond of trust** with children and adolescents, and pushing them to gain in confidence → the staff should be **positive models**, especially since they will probably be around children and Youth the most
- Organize activities that will **inspire** the Youth and show them **positive things**:
 - Visits of museums, companies, parks, conferences...
 - Testimonies from inspiring people
 - Testimonies from former Youth (alumni or Youth from other NGOs) who are successful, happy, and can convey instructive messages
 - Mentoring sessions

1. SELF & PERSONALITY

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

DEALING WITH TRANSITIONS AND ATTACHMENT

1. This can concern the attachment between children / Youth and staff.

Both will get attached to each other, but when trainers or volunteers leave, it can be particularly difficult for children and adolescents, who can be emotional and sensitive at that age.

- **Explain the situation** to the volunteers and tell them they should be careful about the impact their relationship can have on the Youth
- Make sure the volunteers and Youth are aware that **the relationship will be temporary**:
 - Prepare the Youth by telling them about the temporary character of the time together (speak about it openly);
 - Make the date of departure clear for everyone (whether it concerns Youth or volunteers) and organize a celebration / closure event! It can also be a great opportunity to introduce new volunteers / trainers!
- Offer the possibility of **long-term bonds**:
 - By having “lifelong” volunteers, if they are willing to (like in [Udayan Care](#))
 - By providing facilities to ensure Youth are able to keep the bond through chatting, etc. once the volunteer has left

2. Youth can also be attached to organizations and encounter difficulties when transitioning to a different environment once they turn 18 years old and have to move on.

- Importance of helping them to know and express themselves, so they are **emotionally strong**
- Make it clear to the Youth that the **doors will always be open to them** whatever happens (whether they are successful or encounter challenges)
 - It can be the opportunity to also tell them clearly that the organization will always be happy to see them and was proud / happy to see them growing up
- **Organize events** with former Youth to keep the link with them (through an alumni network for instance)
- **Involve former Youth** in the ongoing activities, for example by having them give testimonies, etc.



1. SELF & PERSONALITY

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

GUIDING YOUTH THROUGH THE PROCESS OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

- Engage them in as many different activities as possible so that they can **experience and figure out what they like** for themselves, and not just copy anything that their peers do (for example, all boys wanting to become athletes and all girls, singers...)
- Use **various means**, for example arts, to tackle certain issues in a light way (body acceptance, gender...)
- **Give responsibilities** to children and Youth, **challenge** them to solve problems. It will enable them to:
 - Think and take action to **engage themselves** → according to Om Prakash, a former Youth from [Life Project 4 Youth](#): "Responsibilities always make people intelligent!"
 - Understand how they feel about a specific topic, how they react and what they like
 - Become more confident, they will desire to thrive

GIVING YOUTH ENOUGH TIME AND SPACE TO GROW AT THEIR OWN RHYTHM

- Accept that **growing up takes time** and that the Youth might experience some rebellious phases, where they will get emotional, hurt others or get hurt, and take irrational or unhealthy decisions
- **Progressively** give the Youth **responsibilities**, and even start from a young age, with simple tasks (for example in shelters, make children responsible of each other with a "buddy system"...) → it will help them to **discover their skills** and **gain confidence**.
 - As OP said: "in the beginning, everything is difficult. But if you keep helping the Youth, they will start enjoying and then get more confident."
- Adapt educational facilities so Youth don't compare themselves if they are on different levels
→ encourage a **system of support between the Youth**



1. SELF & PERSONALITY

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

SUPPORTING YOUTH IN THEIR SOCIAL REHABILITATION PROCESS

1. When dealing with *misbehaviours*:

- Don't hesitate to call upon specialized rehabilitation centers and to **partner with experts** to give sessions
- Adopt a **benevolent attitude** towards the Youth, but also maintain a **“framework” and discipline**:
 - Trainers need to **explain the problem** and the effects it can have on them or on other people around, to show the Youth what is good / bad or positive / painful for others
 - Respect the **discipline** of your organization (which is key for the Youth since they need a frame)
 - Follow the rules (punishments like no pocket money, no permission to go outside)
 - Treat all children / Youth equally, so they know what to expect
 - When it concerns a Youth and a particular staff member, try to **involve other staff** → so the Youth doesn't feel like his/her bond is broken with the whole organisation and loses trust in it
 - Approach specialized NGOs, outreach to **experts**
 - Show **good examples** with former Youths, to motivate Youth or children to get better

2. To ensure a *smooth integration into society*:

- Follow up with them → take **regular news** of the Youth and **keep in touch** with those who have left, even without having anything to ask them (otherwise, the Youth might think that the exchanges are only interested), so they feel supported
- Organize events with alumni, make them feel like they are still part of the **“family”** and continue to be there as a support
- For Youth who might have lost contact with their families, create a **space of forgiveness** where they can try to **reconnect** with them if they are willing to do so → they will feel less alone when they have to leave their “NGO family”.
- It is also important to note that social rebonding is the responsibility of **society as a whole** as well, it is everyone's role to engage young adults and make them feel like they belong to society.



1. SELF & PERSONALITY

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

EMPOWERING THEM AND GIVING THEM A PLATFORM TO RAISE THEIR VOICES

- Partner with NGOs that organize **awareness-raising programs**:
 - Example of [Swechha](#), an NGO working on environmental awareness, in addition to education
- Give the Youth responsibilities, keep them busy, engage them in projects with an **impact on society** (organize awareness-raising events for the community, set up a communal garden...) so they understand:
 - The challenges of the society they belong to
 - That they can be actors and citizens

HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT WHEN INTERACTIONS WITH THE YOUTH ARE PUNCTUAL

For NGOs working on non-residential programs, it can be difficult to convey messages and have a **sustainable impact** on the Youth who go back to the same environment outside of their punctual / short sessions.

- **Deal with families and the community** → even though families are usually not hostile, they can put pressure on the Youth for financial reasons and/or have trouble understanding the programs.
 - Show families how their role is important for their child to grow, how it is important for them to be supportive
 - Organize sessions to explain to them the importance of studies, but also of extra-curricular activities
 - Show them concrete examples of successful former Youth
- Try your best to **create a “family” environment** in your centers, so the Youth feel like they belong there:
 - Organize a nice space where you can be together, with pictures, etc.
 - Co-manage the center with the Youth
 - Make it clear that the Youth can push your doors if they are in need, whatever happens





2. PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION

2. PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

CAREER CHOICE

- **Counselling** → this will help the Youth to develop their personality and know what they like doing:
 - Meet with a career counsellor who can suggest different **realistic career options** that the Youth can explore
 - Start to ask the questions of "What do I like and why do I like it?" from an early age
 - Take personality tests to know themselves better
 - Offer mentorship to the Youth
 - This can be done by alumni → to inspire the Youth even more, with other Youth who have gone through the same things

Best practice from Salaam Baalak Trust

Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) tries to make children and adolescents have a deeper knowledge and understanding of themselves, by learning to label their emotions and always asking themselves "why?". This is easier if it is started from a young age. However, they also recognize that it can be difficult with some children, especially those who have experienced trauma. It can also be difficult when working with children only on the short-term, as it requires a lot of time and trust to make the children open up.

- **Exposure** → this will help the Youth becoming aware of the different options open to them and the different career paths that they can pursue:
 - Have people from companies come to volunteer, to give trainings, workshops...
 - Connect with alumni, for example through testimonies
 - Make the Youth conduct market surveys:
 - They will have a better understanding of what jobs are available, what are their requirements...
 - By checking wages, job conditions, etc. → they will have more realistic expectations



2. PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & JOB READINESS

- Offer the youth **different options**, let them try and see what they like
- **Prepare them for interviews**, through practice and mock-interviews
- Orient them towards **vocational trainings**
- Encourage **professional internships** → so they gain practical experience of the work environment and what is expected from them
- Help the youth develop their **self-motivation**, because it is an important skill for their future job search and job!
 - Importance of the environment, of meeting successful and motivated people
 - Have a positive group influence, motivated youth who will give others a boost

WEAK EDUCATIONAL BASIS

Lack of education can lead the Youth to have a low awareness of their options, which can in turn make it difficult for them to break the poverty cycle.

- Make children understand the **value of education**, and start from a young age

Best practice from Salaam Baalak Trust

SBT organizes workshops to encourage adolescents (13-14 years old) to stay in school, because it broadens their opportunities. They try to explain to children what they should take out of school → not just content, but behaviours, etc.

2. PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

- Try to **find opportunities** that match the **abilities** of the Youth

Best practice from Swechha

Tanvee, who is managing Swechha's adolescent programme, noted that "choosing a career is a luxury" for the Youths they work with, who are coming from underprivileged backgrounds. At Swechha, they therefore try to first ensure that the Youths have a minimum understanding and educational basis, before surveying the area to find job opportunities and try to match the Youth to them.

KEEPING A JOB

- Have a **strong support system** for the Youth:
 - Support of former coaches, of the NGO's staff
 - Support of other Youth / graduates, for example through an alumni network

Best practice from Life Project 4 Youth

Om Prakash, a graduate from the NGO LP4Y, got a job as hostel manager when he finished his LP4Y program. When he started, he faced some problems, and the owner of the hostel told him "I can't help you all the time". OP said that the transition phase was therefore difficult, but that he received a lot of support from his former LP4Y coaches, who told him not to give up. Thanks to this, he managed to stay in the job.

- For the NGOs, **keep in touch with the employers:**
 - It can allow NGOs to see problems coming and prevent them before the Youth quit their job
 - The NGO can act as a third-party / mediator between the Youth and the company if needed

2. PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

MAKING YOUTH UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT

- Create **motivation and engagement** from the Youth:
 - Make them meet successful, motivated people (who can be alumni from other NGOs, etc.) who will talk not only about their successes, but also the challenges that they faced along the way → if the Youth can picture the results of **hard work**, it will increase their motivation during hard times
 - Involve them in projects, give them responsibilities and challenges
- **Make them accountable:**
 - To each other, through a **peer system** → children will be able to reinforce each other, which can be better received than the descending style of an adult telling a child what to do
 - By making them sign a contract (for example, before they start an internship or enter a different step of the program) → Youth then become **stakeholders** rather than subjects being acted upon

DEALING WITH COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

Communities and families can be opposed to your programs and your work with the Youths for many reasons: a patriarchal society, the need for “quick money”, a misunderstanding of your motivations...

Best practice from Swechha

The NGO Swechha attaches a lot of importance to **developing a good relationship** with the families and community of their students. They do so through different ways:

- They reward children for making their parents come to the centers and exposing them to the NGO's work
- They send Youths identified as “community leaders” to speak to their communities and explain them the importance of education, etc
- They also send representants from outside the community, because sometimes the people don't want to listen to Youths who are from the community itself





3. LIVING ON THEIR OWN

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Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

DOCUMENTATION

In India, it is not rare for Youth to have issues with their ID documents, like mistakes in their names or addresses. This information can be very difficult to modify afterwards, as the Youth often don't have access to an address proof or birth certificate. Therefore, it is crucial for NGOs to accompany the Youth and help them get the information right the first time. *This applies especially to Child Care Institutions (CCI).*

- **Accompany the Youth** in the process of getting their documents
 - Have staff members who are trained and can be considered as focal points / referents for each type of documents
 - Approach specialists / take advantage of specialized initiatives → for example, [Salaam Baalak Trust](#) is working with the NGO Save the Children to conduct "Aadhaar card camps" in slums
 - Think twice about the information that is given when making the documents (especially for children in CCIs) since it will be difficult to modify afterwards
 - Don't hesitate to check their information directly with the children / Youth: most of the time, they have information about their families, so it will make it easier to get the right info from the start
- **Anticipate the needs of the Youth** after they leave the programs, and don't just focus on their immediate needs
 - Make sure all the necessary documents are obtained before the Youth have to leave → once they have left, CCIs can't give them residence proof or other proof documents
- **Sensitize the families and communities** → ensure that they are aware of the importance for their children to have the right documents for their professional inclusion and future
- **Involve the Youth in the process**
 - Organize workshops to guide the Youth on the processes
 - They will be able to take it forward by themselves once they leave your programs
 - They will feel less dependent and more actors of their lives

3. LIVING ON THEIR OWN



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the Youth

FINANCE

According to Alice from Salaam Baalak Trust, **managing money is one of the biggest issues** for young adults.

- **Organize workshops / trainings** on money management
- **Use pedagogical tools** to have the Youth practice managing money:
 - Example of [Life Project 4 Youth](#) → LP4Y provides Life Project Money to the Youth so they can learn to manage a budget, as well as take care of their basic needs and take actions towards their professional integration. The money is split into :
 - The weekly allowance that the Youth receive to fulfill their basic needs, after having completed a budget sheet
 - The savings that the Youth can get access to at the end of the program, for their professional inclusion (professional attires, transportation to go to interviews, etc.)
 It can be an interesting way to teach them how to manage and save their money, while financially enabling them to come and benefit from the NGO's programs
- **Ensure a smooth transition** to financial independence
 - Example of [Salaam Baalak Trust](#) → once they reach 18 years old and leave their homes, SBT provides 5,000 INR to the Youth for 2 months so they have time to adapt

LEGAL LITERACY

It is important for the Youth to **be aware of their rights and duties**, so they know how to protect themselves and can be active members of society.

- **Organize workshops to raise awareness** to specific issues (for example, on corporal punishment)
 - Make them **interactive**, otherwise the Youth will not stay interested (if they have to read long, boring documents for instance)
 - Talk about issues before they arise → **prevention**
 - **Sensitize a larger public** and have different, adapted modules for each type of actors (Youth, staff, families, etc.)

3. LIVING ON THEIR OWN

Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

KEEPING IN TOUCH & FOLLOWING UP WITH YOUTH WHO LEAVE

Keeping in touch with Youth once they leave your programs is very important, as it will allow you to:

- a. **Keep supporting them** if they need it, by knowing what is going on in their lives
- b. Be able to see and **measure the impact** of your programs

However, it can be difficult to do → the Youth will be busy with their new lives, they might move to a different location, get a different phone number...

We identified a few tips to help you with this follow-up:

- **Develop a sense of belonging** with the Youth while they are still in your programs
 - It will develop their **trust** in your organisation and they will be more willing to stay in touch afterwards
 - If there is a sense of belonging among different batches and age groups, the Youth who left the program will be more likely to **come back to visit their friends**, and it will be easier for you to keep in touch with them
- **Create an alumni group**
 - Organise regular events with alumni
 - Involve them as well in your daily activities with the other children and Youth → but keep in mind that alumni also have their own limits and that, in the words of an alumni from [Salaam Baalak Trust](#), "it is up to the own willingness of the Youth."





4. ADMINISTRATION, FUNDING & STAFF

4. ADMINISTRATION, FUNDING & STAFF



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

DEALING WITH GOVERNMENT AND REGULATIONS

Organizations can encounter difficulties when dealing with government regulations. In some countries (like India), they can't have an approach too political, or they can risk losing their license. For [IGSSS](#), it can be challenging to work in illegal communities, where they have a lot of their programs. This relationship with the government can be especially problematic for organizations working on empowerment, governance, giving a voice to Youth...

It was quite difficult to find solutions to these types of challenges, but everyone agreed that **planning in advance** was the best option for NGOs → to avoid administrative challenges, **anticipate** as much as possible (for example if you have to get specific documents or approval, either from your own organization or from the government).

PRESSURE FROM FUNDERS

A lot of donors and CSR initiatives seem to be interested in numbers and have quite a quantitative approach, whereas **changes in Youth** are more **qualitative** and can take a lot of time (especially when working on soft skills, governance, etc.). This can cause difficulties for NGOs that might be falling short on numbers, for instance if they have to focus more on meeting the funders' requirements than on their work with the Youth → it can lead to **disbelief from beneficiaries** and prevent organisations from focusing on things that they could benefit from in the future (like a solid alumni network), but that are not part of the project for which funds are raised.

- When **drafting your project**:
 - Be **clear** when formulating your proposal, and be **honest** about your objectives
 - Highlight the fact that you might have less projects, but that you prefer to **focus on quality**
- **Target the funding initiatives** that are more interested in quality than quantity



4. ADMINISTRATION, FUNDING & STAFF



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

- Find the **right balance** between the needs of the project & beneficiaries, and those of the funders
 - According to Tanvee from [Swechha](#), funders can change quite regularly, so the objectives and requirements change too → it can affect the Youth going through these programs, because of the lack of consistency, so make sure to set your priorities
- **Explore different sources of funding**
 - Crowdfunding
 - Online platforms → some online platforms exist where you can look for specific projects and/or apply with a proposal, such as "[Youth opportunities](#)"
 - Fundraising by the Youths → for instance, [Pravah](#) asks young people to contribute to their own projects, on a small scale. It allows Pravah to give opportunities to more people (by giving each of them less money), while the Youth are also learning fundraising skills.

CAPACITY-BUILDING, COUNSELLING, PSYCHOLOGY, ETC.

When working with Youth, and especially with Youth who might come from difficult and/or excluded backgrounds, it is crucial to make sure that your **staff is fully prepared and supported**. It is important to allocate funds to capacity-building, counselling, etc.

- **Train the trainers** → make sure your staff is adequately trained and update them with "refresher" trainings regularly
 - Organize **capacity-building** sessions → for instance, in [Reality Gives](#), staff members have an opportunity to give "staff development sessions" (on any topic) to other staff, in order to build their confidence
 - Make sure that the staff is **sensitized** and trained to engage with the mental health of the Youth
 - Having a **clear staff posture** is particularly important when working with young adults, because the age difference can be quite small between your staff and beneficiaries. It also allows to make sure that your staff is **accountable** and does not make false promises.



4. ADMINISTRATION, FUNDING & STAFF



Ideas of solutions to challenges faced by the NGOs

- **Organize regular meetings** between management and staff to discuss challenges and how to solve them
 - It can be one-on-one meetings, group sessions, or both → but make sure that **trust** can be built
 - Give **feedback** to your staff so they can continuously improve
 - Don't hesitate to orient them towards **professionals** if more help is needed → sometimes, Youth share their personal problems with the staff and it can be quite heavy, so it is important to also have counselling for the staff

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

Working with volunteers can be a great resource for your organization, but it also comes with some challenges. As Om Prakash (a Youth who has been involved with various NGOs during his life) highlighted, children and young adults are very emotional and it can be difficult for them to deal with attachment when volunteers leave.

- **Train the volunteers** → even if they are working with you for a short time, you should make sure that some things are clear before engaging with volunteers, such as your **pedagogy** and **what you expect from them** regarding :
 - Appropriate attachment with the beneficiaries → to make sure that no one gets hurt when one has to leave
 - Keeping contact with the beneficiaries outside of your programs
 - Relationship with the community → how to approach / mobilize them
- Of course, you can also apply the **solutions given above** (train your trainers, organize regular meetings), especially when working with full-time or long-term volunteers





Additional tips to keep in mind

In this section, we gathered additional tips shared during the different workshops, that can be applied globally in your work.

GIVE TIME AND SPACE

Patience is crucial when working with children and young adults. NGOs should not forget to leave enough space and time for Youth to grow at their own rhythm, and not expect too much from them from the beginning. Youth should feel like they are able to **experience** things and **learn from their mistakes**: it is okay to fail, to try a job and want to stop because you don't like it...

SENSITIZE STAFF

As well as time and space, children and adolescents also need **trust**. It is important for NGOs to sensitize their staff and volunteers to the difficulties that they will face when working with young adults with a difficult past or trust issues. The staff should be friendly so that children / adolescents feel like they can open up to them. They should also adopt an empathetic attitude towards the difficulties that Youth can face, and be positive about their future.

CONNECT WITH OTHER ACTORS

All participants to the workshops highlighted the importance of **support between organisations** → NGOs should help each other and not hesitate to connect with other organisations with a different expertise and to share best practices!

They also talked about the importance of **connecting with other actors** such as companies, vocational institutes and/or the government → it is crucial to develop an **ecosystem of inclusion** with all types of actors. It will enable NGOs to ensure a **smooth transition** to the full independence of the Youth, by reducing their support system little by little - and not all at once.



TRUST & COMMUNICATION

The main element that kept coming back during our discussions was about **trust and communication** between children / Youth and the staff from NGOs. Indeed, problems of communication can easily arise when both parties have different interests and priorities, are busy with their own agenda, and can forget to take the other side into account.

Keep in mind that it is a two-way process → efforts should come from both sides

- Have genuine interactions, not only getting in touch when one party needs something from the other
- Sensitize both the Youth and the staff to the needs, feelings, and limits of the other side
 - For this, you can involve alumni who still have a good relationship with the NGO
- Children / Youth should recognize that they are not entitled to everything and will need to work to obtain certain things
- Create space for this constructive two-way communication between the Youth and the staff
 - Once again, you can also include alumni, who might have additional elements to share (through regular meetings, etc.)

Be honest and transparent

- Sometimes, NGO staff and counsellors are not able to provide information to the Youth and they should be straightforward about it
- NGOs can only support their beneficiaries up to a certain extent, which is totally fine, but they should communicate about their limits
 - That way, the Youth won't develop unrealistic expectations and consider that the NGO is lacking respect by not giving them what they "deserve"
- Even if it is difficult, the Youth should do their best to share honestly with the staff
 - Their needs will be better understood
 - The NGO will be able to do their best to help them

Respect your own rules

- The NGO should respect its own rules to avoid creating precedents
- The NGO should treat all Youth in the same way and respect equity to avoid the Youth feeling like they benefit from an "unfair" treatment



How to support Youth once they reach 18 years old?

CONCLUSION

Entering adulthood can be a challenging step for anyone, but even more so for Youth in a situation of exclusion.

Whether they grew up with a family or in child care institutions, they can feel lost when beginning their adult lives. The transition to independence is a big step and if they don't know the rules of this new world, it can be quite difficult.

During the discussions reported here, both Youth and organisations working towards their inclusion highlighted the importance of starting from a young age to equip Youth as best as we can. **It is crucial to support children and Youth throughout the different stages of their lives and their inclusion process** - from growing up and learning to know themselves, to keeping a job on the long term and becoming empowered citizens.

The solutions gathered here have been suggested by our members, partners, and Youth themselves in India, but we are convinced that they can be applied to your work with Youth anywhere in the world.

So let's all keep working together, being sincere and patient, communicating, and we'll be able to accompany many more Youth towards their social and professional inclusion!

Have a nice day,

The Y4CN team

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS...



...AND PARTNERS!



Youth 4 Change Network ([Y4CN](#)) is an international network of support and exchange between organizations working in favour of the inclusion of Youths who are victims of exclusion.