



USEFUL TIPS
for ensuring enjoyable
and meaningful interaction
with children and young people

World Vision promotes participatory approaches that recognise children and young people as key stakeholders in the process of social change. The voices, and opinions of both boys and girls are critical to influencing decisions at the local, national and global level. World Vision acknowledges that interacting and communicating with children and young people relies on many factors such as personality, age, cultural norms and social skills. We want you to have a rewarding experience in meeting and working alongside children and young delegates at global, regional and national forums. Here some useful tips:



EMPATHETIC COMMUNICATIONS

- ✔ Be happy, smiling and relaxed. If children and young people see that you are laid back and enjoying meeting with them, they will be more open and will have a good time too.
- ✔ Make no assumptions that children and young people will speak to you immediately. It is important to build rapport, as they are more likely to feel more comfortable to talk when adults listen to them patiently, tell stories or play with them. Tell them something about you, about your family or your hometown.
- ✔ Experiences in public forums have shown that children and young people's participation can be thought provoking. Do not underestimate children and young people. Be prepared – they will challenge you.
- ✔ If you feel challenged by children and young people, do not simply dismiss a child and young person's question or standpoint. If you disagree, you can always clearly present your perspective. Explain your position in a simple and easy way and acknowledge that adults and young people can have different but equally valid opinions about one issue.
- ✔ Don't try to be cool or to speak in young people's language to fit in. Just be you. Be clear about who you are and who you are not. Children and young people will see you as an adult, so they expect you to behave like an adult, but they want you to be friendly, sympathetic, and non-judgmental.
- ✔ Make sure that you use an appropriate, age appropriate language when meeting the children and young people. Don't use jargon or slang, and most importantly do not talk down to the children but instead use vocabulary that will be familiar to them.
- ✔ Make every single child and young person feel valued and highlight that his or her input and contribution during the meeting is crucial.
- ✔ Give everyone a chance to speak. If a child or young person is not participating, you can ask open questions that can't be answered with a yes or no. For instance, ask the children generally what their opinion is of the issue being discussed.
- ✔ In many groups children and young people prefer to be listeners. Do not push them to talk but do encourage and praise their participation.

CHILD PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

- ✔ Many of the children and young people will ask for your e-mail or your home address to send you letters or will want to add you as their friend on Facebook. Feel free to decline their request but be sensitive to their expectations. You can explain that due to child protection policies you are not allowed to share your personal information with them or any young people you meet through your work. From our experience, this situation is explained in a rational and respectful way, children and young people completely understand this kind of caution.
- ✔ In the case of a stressful or unmanageable situation, do not raise your voice or strike any child or young person. If you need assistance, ask the designated child protection focal point person for help.
- ✔ When meeting children or young people there are many appropriate greetings that you can use such as a handshake, touching their shoulders or bowing. All of these can be used to create a bond, but you need to be mindful that appropriateness depends on cultural norms; gender, age, etc. For instance, it is generally inappropriate to sit a child or young person on your knee, but in some countries, a standard greeting is a kiss on the cheek but in many others this is considered inappropriate. Choose your greeting based on recommendations from local staff members. However, be also sensitive – you may be greeted with a hug and if so, you can respond by hugging back even though you may not be used to it.