

Y!PARTICIPATE

Informed actions, meaningful connections

What is Y!Participate?

Y!Participate uniquely positions itself as a global initiative dedicated to enhancing meaningful participation among young advocates in mental health and wellbeing. This initiative was co-created with youth, providing a dual approach: on one hand, it opens avenues for young people to access engagement opportunities and resources to enhance their capacity; on the other hand, it offers engaging entities a suite of simplified, effective strategies ('recipes') for involving young people meaningfully as well as a platform to reach a diverse group of young people looking to engage in their work. Through focus group discussions and collaborative workshops with young people and the people who work with them, Y!Participate has been tailored to meet the specific needs and aspirations of young individuals and organizations alike.

Why is this initiative necessary?

Y!Participate emerges as a crucial initiative at a time when the essence of meaningful youth participation is often overshadowed by challenges such as limited access to engagement platforms, inadequate resources, and scarce opportunities for skill development. These barriers hinder young advocates from making effective contributions, leaving their unique perspectives and innovative solutions untapped in mental health and well-being initiatives. Additionally, many organizations face difficulties in engaging young people in non-tokenistic ways due to a lack of specialized knowledge and resources, coupled with the absence of a centralized platform for easily accessible, tailored information on youth engagement. Recognizing these gaps, Y!Participate aims to foster an environment where the contributions of young people are not only valued but are instrumental in shaping decisions that impact their lives and wellbeing.

How will Y!Participate bridge the gap.

Y!Participate addresses these challenges by establishing a comprehensive platform that serves a dual purpose: it empowers young people with direct access to engagement opportunities, resources, workshops, and avenues for sharing building and sharing their capacity, while also providing organizations with the tools and knowledge necessary for facilitating impactful but safe and meaningful youth participation. The platform will be particularly beneficial for entities looking to engage youth, offering solutions to common challenges such as limited know-how on meaningful youth involvement and the need for a diverse pool of young individuals ready to be engaged. Y!Participate stands out as a pivotal solution, demystifying non-tokenistic youth engagement for organizations through a repository of curated resources and best practices. It actively connects these entities with a broad network of young advocates eager to lend their voices to mental health and well-being initiatives, improving the quality of programs with diverse perspectives and fostering a culture of genuine youth-adult partnerships. Through Y!Participate, the collective efforts towards advancing mental health and well-being advocacy, policy, and programming will be significantly enhanced, making it an essential initiative for ensuring young people's involvement is both meaningful and transformative.

What should we expect in the developing year of this initiative?

The forthcoming year marks a pivotal phase for Y!Participate, focusing on the launch and operationalization of the initiative. Key milestones include the formation of the Youth Expert Advisory (YEA) to guide the initiative's direction and ensuring the platform accurately reflects the needs and preferences of young people. Young participants can anticipate a rich offering of engagement opportunities, capacity-building workshops, and platforms to voice their perspectives. Concurrently, engaging entities will find valuable resources and assessments to fine-tune their approach to youth participation.

How will we involve young people in the development of this initiative?

Y!Participate is deeply committed to an inclusive development process, with young people at its core. The Youth Expert Advisory (YEA) will lead the creation of the project's brand and voice, shape communication strategies, and play a critical role in the co-development and evaluation of foundational components like the RAYE Scale. This collaborative approach ensures that Y!Participate not only serves the needs of young advocates but is shaped by their experiences, insights, and aspirations, guaranteeing relevance and effectiveness in promoting meaningful participation in mental health and wellbeing.

Y!Participate symbolizes a significant step forward in acknowledging and leveraging the power of young voices in mental health and wellbeing, fostering a synergistic relationship between young advocates and engaging entities for a more inclusive and impactful future.