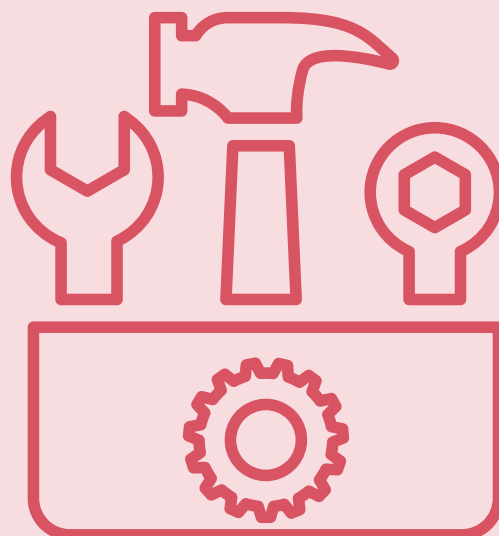


INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH
THINK TANK

THE IYTT
PARTICIPATION
TOOLBOX



The IYTT Participation Toolbox © 2026 by International Youth Think Tank is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

To view a copy of this license, visit:

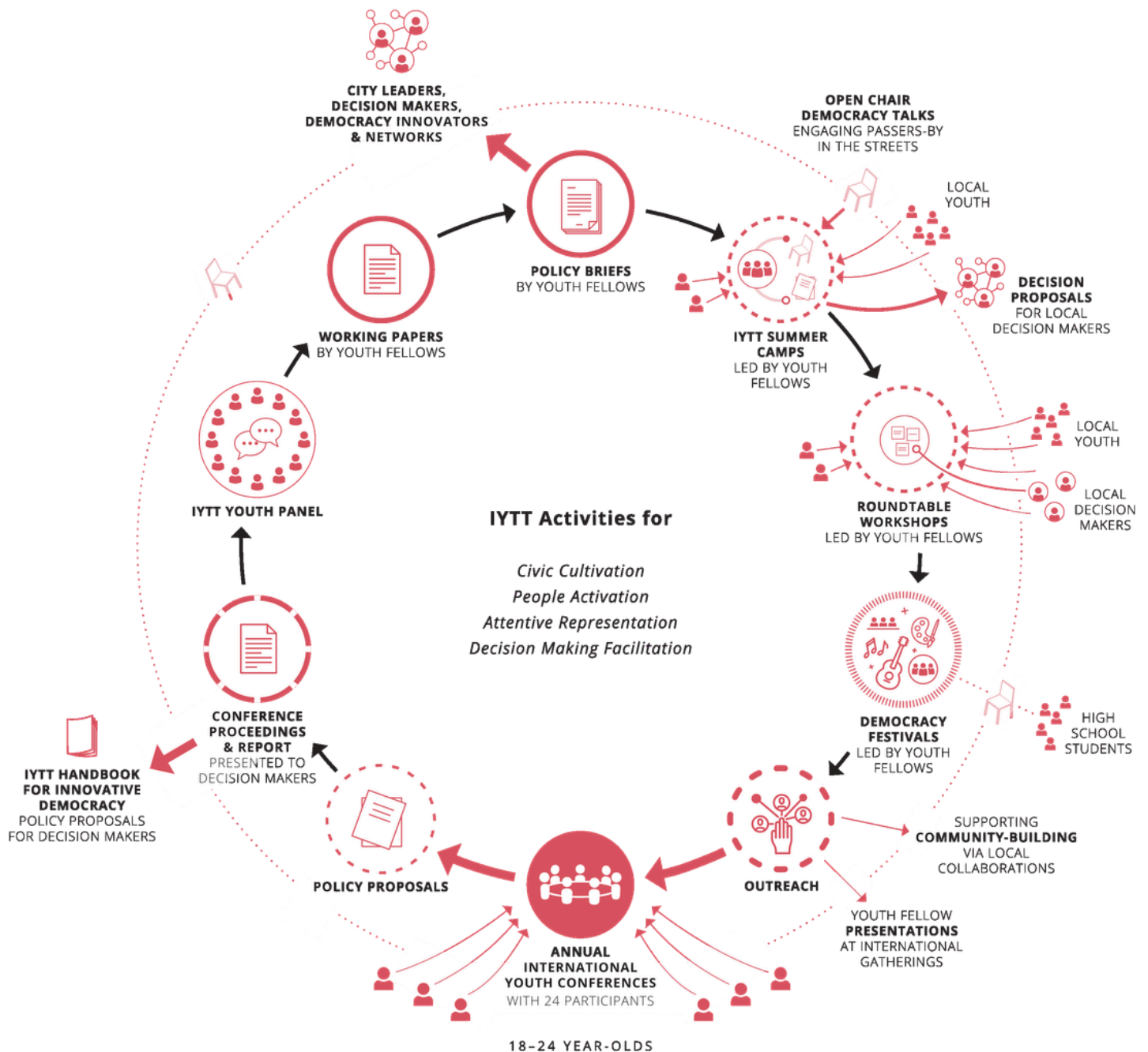
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

For more information contact:

**Urban Strandberg, Director & Co-Founder at
urban.strandberg@lindholmen.se,**

Or visit our website at www.iythinktank.com.

THE IYTT BOTTOM-UP POLICY ADVISE LOOP



Thanks to our IYTT Bottom-Up Policy Advice Loop and the creativity of our Youth Fellows, we have, over the years, developed a repertoire of methods that we design and test in local communities worldwide.

THE IYTT

PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Part of the activities of the IYTT are those of a do-thank, engaging in meaningful action to foster democratic renewal and youth engagement. Thanks to our *IYTT Bottom-Up Policy Advice Loop* and the creativity of our Youth Fellows, we have, over the years, developed a **repertoire of methods** that we design and test in local communities worldwide. This is a live catalogue of these methods, **available to everyone to experiment with in their local communities.**

OPEN CHAIR DEMOCRACY TALKS Pg. 1

IYTT SUMMER CAMPS Pg. 2

IYTT ROUNDTABLE WORKSHOPS Pg. 3

IYTT DEMOCRATIC WORLD CAFES Pg. 4

DEMOCRACY FESTIVALS Pg. 5

**NEIGHBOURHOODING
DEMOCRACY** Pg. 6

IYTT YOUTH PANEL Pg. 7

OPEN CHAIR DEMOCRACY TALKS

**Empowering everyday citizens through conversations
about democracy**

The Open Chair Democracy Talks (OCDTs) is a format launched by the International Youth Think Tank which takes inspiration from the brilliant Free Conversation Movement.

By running OCDTs, people have the chance to open their mind and heart to fellow humans coming from all backgrounds and life paths. OCDTs are a tool to remind ourselves that we are parts and parcels of democracy and of the change we want to see in the world. That change requires just a very small effort: talking to each other.

So far, we have conducted Open Chair Democracy Talks at more than 80 occasions across Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe and published the answers we received on our website. An OCDT session usually lasts between 1 and 2 hours, and happens in a buzzy public street or square where participants offer free conversations about democracy to passers-by. The conversations revolve around 4 questions:

- What are the first 3 words that come to your mind when you think about democracy?
- Do you feel free when it comes to choosing your life's path?
- Do you feel like you have any power as a citizen?
- What would you need to change for you to be more powerful?

IYTT SUMMER CAMPS

**Giving voice to citizens and advising decision-makers:
a meaningful task for youth**

IYTT Youth Fellows are role models when they lead three-day Summer Camps with local youth. The purpose is to give youth a meaningful task, to promote local citizens' political participation and engagement, and to transform local citizens' views into policy proposals and convey them to local policy makers.

During the first day, the youth run Open Chair Democracy Talks with local citizens. During the second day, the youth transform the citizens' views and ideas into a few concrete decision proposals. On the third day, the youth meet local decision makers to present and discuss the decision proposals.

Carried out successfully, the IYTT Summer Camps would have a three-fold contribution:

- Youth are included and entrusted with a meaningful task (listen to and voice local citizens and transforming their views to policy proposals that they present to local policy makers).
- Local citizens are provided with a new means/channel for engagement and participation (for example, taking part in Open Chair Democracy Talks).
- Local policy makers are provided with a new method to sound out views among the local citizens and a new method for input/advise (i.e. the youth's policy proposals).

IYTT ROUNDTABLE WORKSHOPS

Solving local problems through solution-oriented exchanges with local leaders

Local leaders - be it mayors, civil servants, business executives, or civil society managers - have a crucial role to play, since they have the hands-on scope for action. Young minds are indispensable too, since they are uniquely equipped to think outside the box with energized future-oriented perspectives. The IYTT is piloting a method based on small-scale and roundtable-format workshops in which IYTT Youth Fellows together with local youth, and local leaders, jointly evolve tangible proposals for local change.

The workshops revolve around a few questions or themes, which are introduced and framed by the Youth Fellows/local youth. In each session, one Youth Fellow/local youth moderate the discussion, while the other Youth Fellows/local youth takes notes. The role of Youth Fellows/local youth is thus to inspire, drive, and document the conversations. The role of the leaders on the other hand, is to use their experiences and current assignments to transform the pointed themes to concrete and actionable ideas for change. Merging the leaders' challenges and their own perspective and ideas, the Youth Fellows and local youth will prior to the workshop formulate the pointed questions or themes that will outline the workshop.

IYTT DEMOCRATIC WORLD CAFES

A bottom-up ESG initiative for trust, inclusion and organisational resilience

Democratic World Cafés for Workplaces (DWC) offer an informal, safe space for employees to engage in open dialogue around current social and political issues. This model brings democratic discourse into the workplace, fostering a stronger sense of civic engagement. Encouraging diverse perspectives and collaborative reflection drives innovation, enhances employee satisfaction, and supports better decision-making. Ultimately, it empowers organizations to align internal culture with societal values, creating a more engaged, forward-thinking workforce. DWC don't aim to meet external benchmarks, instead, they create a participatory culture where diverse voices shape internal dynamics.

To implement a Democratic World Café, simply:

- Plan by defining a purpose, getting leadership support, inviting a diverse mix of employees, and preparing 2-3 open-ended questions.
- Execute by creating small, rotating discussion groups led by neutral facilitators like a university scholar or a local NGO in a relaxed setting, capturing insights as they emerge.
- Follow up by synthesizing key themes into a visual summary, sharing outcomes across the workplace, and highlighting potential takeaways for workplace culture or policy.

DEMOCRACY FESTIVALS

Transforming democracy aspirations and hopes into art through creative expression

The IYTT proposes to collaborate with arts centers to host immersive Democracy Multi Medium Art Festivals for high-school aged youth. Such an event is envisioned as a vibrant platform for young people to explore and express their understanding of democracy, governance, and civic engagement through various art forms.

With democracy being a cornerstone for sustainable societies, these festivals aims to nurture the next generation of leaders by fostering critical thinking, creativity, and active participation.

The festivals invite young people to reflect on the state of democracy in their communities and globally. Moreover, it also encourages them to envision how they can shape a more inclusive, equitable, and participatory democratic future. The festivals are expected to enhance:

- **Youth Empowerment:** amplify the voices of young people and place them at the forefront of shaping, building and maintaining democratic societies.
- **Creative Expression:** encourage the youth to articulate their ideas on democracy through art, shifting focus from traditional means of expression and encouraging creativity to speak to wider and diverse audiences.
- **Education and Awareness:** provide a dynamic and open space for students to learn about democracy and governance in ways that speak to them and are able to use their skills and abilities.

NEIGHBORHOODING DEMOCRACY

Designing neighborhoods tailored to democracy
participation and inhabitants' needs

Neighborhooding Democracy is designed as an urban exploration exercise aimed at reflecting on the connections between public space, community, and democracy. The goal is to encourage a conscious and critical perspective on urban spaces, going beyond superficial perceptions to investigate how material elements shape both the liveability and the democratic dimension of a neighbourhood, while also acknowledging that observations are inevitably external and partial impressions, to be interpreted with caution and without claims of thoroughness.

The activity involves the visit of participants to different neighbourhoods of a city following a structured methodology that includes individual observations, discussions in pairs and in group, and direct engagement with residents through OCDTs. The experience culminates in a collective exhibition where the groups translate their impressions into visual and multimedia posters, aiming to raise questions about their visit rather than provide definitive answers.

In this way, Neighborhooding Democracy represents not only an exploration of different urban spaces but also an exercise in participatory and reflexive democracy, leveraging the power of an outsider's perspective while imagining more inclusive ways to involve local communities in the future.

IYTT YOUTH PANEL

Solving local problems through solution-oriented exchanges with local leaders

Our panel presently consist of 200+ young persons from more than 50 countries. With their strong interest in the development of the open society, they provide a unique opportunity to probe the minds of the emerging informed citizenry.

Where many barometers focus on political opinion, the IYTT Youth Panel addresses political ideas and concepts, and gives young people the opportunity to challenge conventional attitudes that define current political leadership.

The IYTT piloted the Youth Panel in 2019 with a survey of two questions about democracy, activism and information. Since then the Panel has addressed questions of great relevance for the democratic challenges we face in our times. Some of them were directly concerned with questions of participation and political change, but others deal with various themes including the importance of truth, populism, unpaid care work, sports and social cohesion, youth unemployment, children's rights, and the authoritarian surge.

The panel has served in the past as an ethnographic research method to account for young people's perspective in social research. And it also is a way for the IYTT to initiate research on important social issues and publish our Working Papers and Policy Briefs.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH THINK TANK

Every year, 24 Youth Fellows are selected through a conference held in a different part of the world. The task of the conferences is to single out challenges for the open democratic society and to develop policy proposals for dealing with them. After the conferences, the Youth Fellows develop their proposals through our tools, which include policy research and participatory methods in what we call the *IYTT Bottom-Up Policy Advise Loop*. Through the Loop the Youth Fellows learn and develop their policy proposals in open deliberation together with decision makers, scholars, peers, and laymen.

For more information contact:

Urban Strandberg, Director & Co-Founder,

urban.strandberg@lindholmen.se, +46 730 59 55 15,

www.iythinktank.com.