



Preliminary Literature review about Youth-Adult relationships

Ashley MacIntosh

Key points:

1. Youth involvement is initiated when there is a concrete reward:
 - o Financial incentive, resume building, or direct benefit to close friend or family member.
 - o Example: Volunteer youth could be given job titles (i.e. “administrative assistant”, “publicity officer”).
2. Youth are involved with *some* aspects of organizational infrastructure, but mostly tend to be placed in communicative roles (i.e. canvassing) or other jobs in which tasks are implemented.
3. When organizations are deliberately including youth members, the primary goal should not be to foster youth development. Rather, the focus should be some external goal to which youth can contribute. Youth development is an outcome, but not a goal.
4. The relationship between youth and adults changes over time, with adults seeking youth contribution to a greater extent as time passes.

See “Table of Major Themes” on page 2 and “Arising Issues” below for additional information on these key points.

ARISING ISSUES

- Youth have to be motivated or have a motivated peer or adult in their life to facilitate involvement. How to initiate involvement with disengaged youth who associate with other disengaged people?
- How can an organization strive to promote youth development without making youth development its primary goal?
- How can the issue of time be fixed? Most organizations run on business time (9:00am-5:00pm) which is in conflict with the time that most students spend in school.
- The evidence suggests that the respect and power that youth wield within an organization increases over time – is this a problem to be dealt with (i.e. they should be given a high degree of respect and power initially) or simply a reflection of how all new members of a group may be treated?
- Likewise, if partnerships are expected to change over time (i.e. adults give them more respect and power as time progresses) should youth be told that their power and respect will likely increase with time, or would this be discouraging to newcomers?
- The role of culture: How much does a youth’s culture value respect and deference to adults? Is staying quiet and deferring a sign of respect?
- Possible role ambiguity: In entering into egalitarian youth-adult partnerships for the first time, youth are shifting from a relationship with defined roles to a relationship that is largely unportrayed and undefined in our culture.

Table of Major Themes

Summary of Themes in Literature	Relevant Citations
<p>Youth Motivation for Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentive • Looks good on resume • Salience of cause (i.e. family member or close friend affected) • Generally joined upon the encouragement of an adult or another youth 	<p>Bozlak, C.T. & Kelly, M.A. (2010). Youth Participation in a Community Campaign to Pass a Clean Indoor Air Ordinance. <i>Health Promotion Practice, 11</i>, 530-540.</p>
<p>What does youth involvement look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with the community (i.e. canvassing, speaking, passing out information) • Implementation of necessary action but less involved in organizational infrastructure (i.e. financing and organizing meetings). • Time was the most frequently mentioned barrier to youth participation. 	<p>Bozlak, C.T. & Kelly, M.A. (2010). Youth Participation in a Community Campaign to Pass a Clean Indoor Air Ordinance. <i>Health Promotion Practice, 11</i>, 530-540.</p> <p>Lekies, K.S., Baker, B., & Baldini, J. (2009). Assessing Participation in Youth Community Action Projects: Opportunities and Barriers. <i>Community Development, 40</i>, 346–358.</p>
<p>What youth gained from involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills • Resume building (i.e. more opportunities arise as a result) • Learned how to facilitate change • If the focus of youth organizational groups is primarily geared at promoting youth development, the partnership may not achieve community-level and developmental impacts • Opportunities for planning and taking initiative may promote positive youth development. 	<p>Bozlak, C.T. & Kelly, M.A. (2010). Youth Participation in a Community Campaign to Pass a Clean Indoor Air Ordinance. <i>Health Promotion Practice, 11</i>, 530-540.</p> <p>Christens, B.D., & Dolan, T. (2011). Interweaving Youth Development, Community Development, and Social Change Through Youth Organizing. <i>Youth & Society, 43(2)</i>, 528–548.</p> <p>Ramey, H. & Krasnor, L.R. (2009). Contexts of Structured Youth Activities and Positive Youth Development. <i>Child Development Perspectives, 0</i>, 1-7.</p>
<p>Different adults play different roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two types of adults in relation to youth, adult “partners” and “adults in power” (i.e. government officials) • Overall, relationship between youth and adults in power changed over time, with youth being taken more seriously as the partnership progressed. • Relationships with adult partners changed over time as well, but were unambiguously supportive from the start. • Initially adults sought youth contribution out of obligation (i.e. it was in their mandate) but eventually did so proactively and without being required to. • Young people who develop positive relationships with adults perceive they have more voice in the program and in turn perceive more benefits to program participation • Participants in youth-led collaborations were significantly more positive toward youth involvement than participants in adult-led collaborations. Moreover, adults in youth-adult partnerships were significantly more positive toward youth involvement and youth-adult interaction than those adults in adult-led collaborations. 	<p>Christens, B.D., & Dolan, T. (2011). Interweaving Youth Development, Community Development, and Social Change Through Youth Organizing. <i>Youth & Society, 43(2)</i>, 528–548.</p> <p>Serido, J., Borden, L.M., & Perkins, D.F. (2011). Moving Beyond Youth Voice. <i>Youth & Society, 43</i>, 44–63.</p> <p>Jones, K.R., & Perkins, D.F. (2006). Youth and Adult Perceptions of Their Relationships Within Community-Based Youth Programs. <i>Youth & Society, 38</i>, 90-109.</p>