



THE YOUNG DECISION MAKERS MODEL KIT



The Students
Commission
Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement



THE YOUNG DECISION MAKERS MODEL KIT

When groups are using the YDM Model,
we encourage them to use this kit
to explore each step further with ideas and tools.
There is also space provided to record
the group process.

The Young Decision Makers Project Model

Young Decision Makers (YDM)
Project: _____

LEGEND

- Completed
- Underway
- Not started

Discussing Issues

- Materials for young people to inform and explore with others.
- Space for exploring and communicating ideas.

Decision Making

- Deciding how we decide.
- YDM positions on topics.
- Defining our voice to others.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

- Choosing how youth participate and/or are chosen as Reps.
- Ensuring Reps consult and represent diverse youth.
- Creating action opportunities to involve other youth.

Studying Issues

- Identifying the issues related to the topic.
- Gathering research: our own experience, others' experience and science.

Inform Policy Makers

- Recommendations to governments, businesses and youth organizations.
- Reporting responses back to members.

WIDESPREAD PARTICIPATION

Action : Child and Youth Programs

- INITIATOR:** Action or idea identified by a young person or organization to explore.
- SUSTAINER:** Acting upon some of the recommendations and evaluating.

SUPPORTS

Sustainers: new action steps

ACTION: CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS



Initiator: Action or idea identified by a young person or organization to explore.

- This is the initial realization of an individual or a group that “someone needs to do something about this”.
- A group forms around a topic of interest.
- A process is in place to involve and engage as many diverse young people from the start as possible.



ACTION: CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Our group topic is

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STUDYING ISSUES



Identifying the issues related to the topic

- What specifically is the group trying to address within this broad topic?
- It's about breaking the topic down into specific questions that can be more effectively researched and decided upon.
- The group needs to decide on how it decides on the issue.

Gathering Research

- To have informed discussions, it's important for individuals to become informed from personal experiences, from their family and friends, and from research by themselves to consult diverse youth or research by others.
- It's important for individuals to ask themselves what do I know about the issue and how do I know that? It's important that they think about the credibility of their sources of information? Is it biased, pushing a point of view or objective?
- Often others need to be consulted to better understand how others are affected by the issue.

STUDYING ISSUES



The issue that our group is going to run through the YDM model is

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Three things that I learnt about the issue from my group are

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TOOLS FOR STUDYING ISSUES



CONSULTING WITH OTHERS

Constituency Building – Speaking with a broader voice than your own.

1. **Text messaging:** If your friends are people you want to hear from regarding your issue, you can text them and ask. Text messaging is being used more and more to gather input from young people. You can send the same text message to a large group at once and gather their responses as they come.
2. **Workshop / Focus Group:** You can host your own workshop and facilitate a conversation to learn more about how other thinks about the issue.
3. **Quick questionnaires:** You can always draft up a few questions and photocopy them. These can be distributed in your organizations, schools and amongst your friends to get some answers! You might need to sit down with each person and explain to them why they are being asked to do this. You can put a survey on line (Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, etc.)
4. **Emails & Facebook messages:** You are encouraged to send your questions along through online communication tools like email and Facebook to hear back from people all across the world! Remember to let them know when to get back to you by though.
5. **Electronic Polling Systems:** If you have ever watched *How To Be A Millionaire*, you know how these work. You ask a large group of people a multiple choice question and they choose their answers on their response devices. Within seconds, you get to view the results in a graph format! These devices can be quite expensive and technical though.
6. You can **search for surveys by others** about the issue, and the **opinions of young people**. You can **contact organizations** that do work on the issue. They may have done consulting with their members.

STUDYING ISSUES



Three things that I learnt about the issue from research are

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The two questions that we want to consult with the large group are:

1.

2.

My group used other consulting tools. They are:

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DISCUSSING FINDINGS



Discuss Findings

- This step allows for a real exchange of knowledge and expertise happening between young people and the adults.
- Group members discuss questions like

What surprised us?

What is the most important thing we learned?

What is the most interesting thing we learned?

What do we think others should know?

What should we spend more time learning?

Were there other questions that we should have asked the large group?

DISCUSSING FINDINGS



What did the group learn from our consultations?

1.
2.

How do I feel about what I am learning?

1.
2.

What do I want to do about this issue now that I have learned more?

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DECISION MAKING



Deciding how we decide

- It is crucial to recognize how is it that the group is going to arrive at their decision.
- What will happen with the minority voices?
- What are the pros and cons of the decision-making tools we want to use?

Making the decision!

Defining the group voice to others

- It's time to analyze the results and figure out "what is it that we want to say to others?"
- What needs to happen around the issue that is not happening?

DECISION MAKING



What are some things that we think should be done about the issue?

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How is the group deciding on the one recommendation they wish to put forth?

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TOOLS FOR DECISION MAKING



Here are a list of decision-making tools that groups can use depending on their resources and preferences. To help groups compare the tools, we provide an example that follows the story of a group of ten volunteers deciding on what toppings should go on the extra large pizza they are going to share. What tools are not listed here that you have used before? Which of these tools work for your group?

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE: Pizza Picking
Dotmocracy	All choices brainstormed through discussion are laid out on paper. Individuals are given time to vote on their preferred choices through some visible means like stickers or markers. A scoring system is designed after which their votes are then tallied and the group proceeds to make a decision.	The group lists their topping choices on a flipchart paper. Each individual is given three stickers (for example, a green, a yellow, and a red one). Green is 3 points, yellow is 2 points, and red is one point. Every one then votes on the flipchart paper. At the end, the scores are tallied and the pizza toppings are decided upon.
Fist to five	This tool can be used to quickly gather how the group feels about a choice or choices being put forth by the loudest voices at table. The facilitator asks individuals to throw up their hand to show how they feel. A fist is strong disagreement, 1 finger is disagreement, 2 fingers is I don't like what I am hearing, 3 fingers mean I am okay with that, 4 fingers indicate I like what I am hearing, and 5 fingers indicate strong agreement.	The facilitator is hearing two people say they would really like anchovies on their pizza. Another three people are keen on getting pineapple on their pizza. A volunteer asks the group to show their interest in getting anchovies on their pizza and 5 volunteers throw up fists. It is decided that they are not getting anchovies. Then the group decides on pineapple. Only one puts up a fist but that's because she is allergic to pineapple. The group also decides to not get pineapples on their pizza.
Stop light	For this decision making tool, each individual will need a green, yellow, and red piece of paper. The facilitator puts forth a choice; individuals raise the colour paper based in their answer. Green means "I like the idea," yellow means "I am okay with the idea" and red means "I do not agree with the idea." Discussions and voting can occur simultaneously.	A volunteer asks the group "what if we got a meat lovers pizza?" Few yellows and greens go up. Then the volunteer asks "what about a vegetarian pizza?" Few yellows and reds go up. Depending on where the group is in their discussions, the group can either continue the cycle and go through more toppings or decide upon meat lovers pizza.
Consensus Building	The group agrees to discuss and review the choices until everyone agrees on the final choice. This means everyone supports the decision, although it may not be his or her first choice.	People put forth their choices. The discussions continue until everyone agrees on the topping choices. In this method, complete agreement of the group is highly valued. Individuals compromise slightly to reach group agreement. Choices move forward as long as there's a strong reason for objecting (e.g. allergies).
.Input of targeted vote (only under 18)	In YDM groups, special attention is paid to youth voice and youth being the real decision makers. Any of the previous tools can be used but the important distinction is that only those under the age of 18 participate in the decision-making.	All participants are encouraged to share their topping choices but when it comes time to make decisions, only those under the age of 18 can use the decision making tool – unless of course those under 18 want to do it differently.

INFORM DECISION MAKERS



Making recommendations

- Who are the recommendations being made to? Youth, young people in general, adults, parents, teachers, schools, media, the YDM Network, other organizations and the governments are just some of the options. Adults can help here with their experience – in explaining what different levels of government are, and what they are responsible for, so that recommendations are targeted at places that are able to do something with them. There is a balance here between saying, “That’s not impossible” and reframing that to “there’d be a better chance of success for that idea – which is great – if...”
- How does the group want to communicate its message?

Reporting responses back to members.

- The group is accountable to the people it consulted, to each other and Canadians in general.
- Reporting needs to be accessible and in language that the recipient can understand.

INFORM DECISION MAKERS



The recommendation the group is putting forth is

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How are we making our pitch? How did we decide on that?

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What are some new recommendations put forth by the large group

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TOOLS FOR INFORM DECISION MAKERS



Tools To Make Pitches For Recommendations

After a group walks through most of the YDM Model, they reach a point where it's time to pitch their recommendations to governments, businesses, young people and so on. Here are some ways to make pitches.

1. First you need a commercial: Each pitch should be short, attention-grabbing and to the point. Make sure you can state your recommendations. Why it is important in about 45 seconds to a minute and a half.
2. Skits and plays.
3. PowerPoint Presentations.
4. Songs and poems.
5. Posters.
6. Formal Reports (to see the Young Decision Makers reporting tool, please see the next page).
7. Photovoice projects.
8. Rallies and sit-ins.
9. Requesting a formal meeting, perhaps with your MP, or head of the organization.
- 10.Video
- 11.Other ideas

ACTION: CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS



Sustainer: Acting upon some of the recommendations and evaluating

- This is the direct link between getting youth involved in decision and recommendations making and its impact on informing and improving existing child and youth programs.
- Individuals and groups go out into their communities and begin to act on some of the recommendations.
- Evaluations are conducted to see how engaging and respectful the entire process was for youth.

ACTION: CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS



Is the work we did this weekend going to continue further? How so?

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