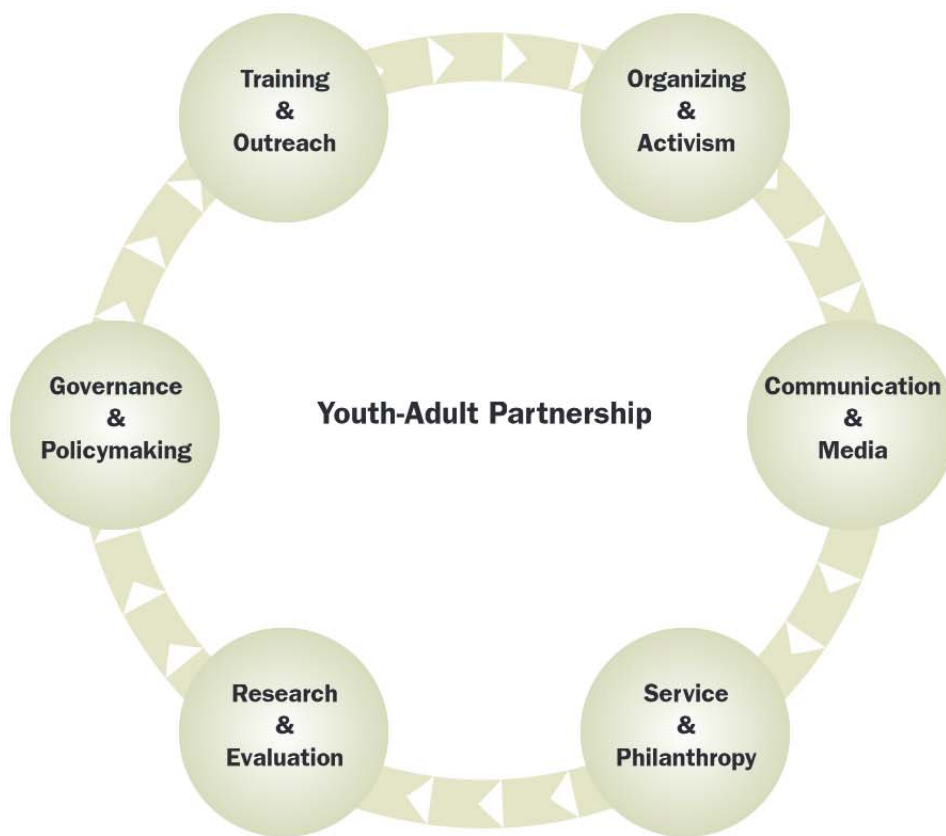


Necessary Knowledge

There are many organizational functions where youth can engage. These functions include training and outreach; governance and policy making; research and evaluation; service and philanthropy; communication and media; and organizing and activism.

Research indicates that positive youth development and positive organizational change occurs when youth engage in these functions. The challenge, therefore, is for the organization to decide in which functions it wants youth to participate.



Governance and Policymaking

If an organization serves young people, then it makes sense to have youth in key roles of organizational decision-making. Youth may serve on the board of directors or key committees, allowing their input to be heard on important organizational matters.

Training and Outreach

Youth can contribute significantly to training of adult staff and community members. At a minimum, adults benefit from hearing the youth perspective. But, adults also learn from observing youth at work. Youth often raise questions and issues that others may not have considered.

Organizing and Activism

Youth can work with staff to organize community members around issues. Youth often know how best to recruit youth to get involved with the organization. Adults can learn recruitment strategies from youth.

Communication and Media

Youth can offer much in helping the organization get its story out to the public. Youth can contribute to press releases, they can meet with reporters, they can facilitate public forums, they can create staff newsletters. The list goes on. Youth can use new media technologies to create and widely disseminate videos and to communicate through text directly to their own networks.

Service and Philanthropy

While they may not have much money to give, young people have time, experience, and skills to offer to others. Youth of all ages can serve as mentors for younger youth within their organizations or within the larger community. Youth can supervise program activities, and they can do one-on-one work. Almost all youth wish to give back to the “next generation.”

Research and Evaluation

Organizations are increasingly required by funders to demonstrate their accountability and accomplishments. Organizations are also using self-assessment strategies to explore program quality and to create program improvement plans. Youth can contribute to these efforts in many ways. Not only can they serve as “subjects,” giving their judgments on key organizational issues, but equally important, youth can serve as researchers. They can interview other youth and community members, work with staff to analyze the data, and help present it to organizational stakeholders.

Take Away Message

It's important that the work youth engage in is of high priority to the organization. If youth are only invited to participate in minor issues, then youth engagement will never have a positive impact on youth or on the organization.



Chapter 3

Tools



Now it's time to consider how this information relates to your organization. There are three tools in this section:

- The first tool, *Identifying the Quality of Youth-Adult Partnership in Your Organization*, asks you to rate the quality of current youth engagement in your organization.
- The second tool, *Establishing a Goal*, asks you to develop a tentative goal for youth engagement.
- The final tool, *Considering Organizational Readiness*, has you assess whether your organization is prepared to accomplish your identified goal.

The tools in this section allow you to begin developing a vision for youth engagement in your organization.

Tool #6

Identifying the Quality of Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP) in Your Organization



In Chapter One, you defined what “quality” Y-AP means to you and your organization. Using that definition, indicate the quality of Y-AP in each of the following organizational areas. Only circle “Not Applicable” if the function does not exist in your organization. If there is no youth engagement, but the function exists, circle one.

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

		<i>Low Quality</i>			<i>High Quality</i>	
Governance and Policymaking	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Training and Outreach	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Organizing and Activism	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Communication and Media	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Service and Philanthropy	n/a	1	2	3	4	5
Research and Evaluation	n/a	1	2	3	4	5

Remember, the power is in the discussion. How do your assessments differ from your colleagues?

Tool #7

Establishing a Goal



This tool is the first critical step towards developing a vision for Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP) in your organization. Be sure to include others in this process.

Step One: Identifying an Area for Y-AP

Review the previous activity, Identifying the Quality of Y-AP in Your Organization, and collectively identify one area where your organization would like to strengthen youth engagement. Explain why you chose this area.

Step Two: Develop a Goal Statement

Based on your above response, develop a goal statement for youth engagement in your organization. For example, if you identified “Research and Evaluation,” the goal statement might read:

Our goal is to involve youth in the research and evaluation of our current youth program.

Write your goal below:

Remember this is only an initial goal and it may change later.

Tool #8

Considering Organizational Readiness



Once your goal is established, it's necessary to consider if your organization is ready for the required work. Respond "yes" or "no" to the following questions to assess your organizational readiness.

Is the area you chose to strengthen Youth-Adult Partnership of high priority for your organization or program?

If the answer is *no*, is there another area of higher priority you might consider focusing on?

Do staff and youth have the knowledge and skills to successfully complete the work needed to accomplish the goal?

If the answer is *no*, what external resources are available to help you accomplish your goal?

Based on your above responses, is your goal the best area for engaging young people in your organization?

(If applicable) Our revised goal is:

Chapter Four

Essential Question:

How do we build
a culture of partnership
in our organization?