

3.2 Handout

Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations

The authors (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, Calvert, 2000) concluded that while it does not happen all the time, when conditions are right, youth can have powerful and positive effects on adults and organizations.

Adults were positively impacted by youth involvement in four main ways:

1. They experienced the competence of youth first hand and perceived them as critical to organizational improvement
2. Working with youth enhanced their commitment and energy to the organization
3. Adults felt more effective and confident in working with and relating to youth
4. Adults gained a strong sense of connectedness with those on the board and in the organization – they developed a sense of community.

Involving youth in decision-making benefited organizations and community as well. Organizational leaders found that young people:

- Helped clarify and bring focus to the organization's mission, and
- Led the organization to reach out to the community in more diverse ways, including community advocacy, policy making, and service.
- The adults and organization became more connected and responsive to youth in the community.
- Organizations are more appealing to potential funders.

Copies of the publication, Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations are available on-line:

www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/Youth_in_Decision_Making.pdf