
Youth Involvement

3.3 Benefits of Youth Involvement

Objective: Participants will explore the benefits of youth involvement

Material: Prepared newsprint, markers, tape
Handout: 3. 2. Youth in Decision-Making

Time: 40 minutes

Audience: General

Lesson Plan

Prepare in advance: Hang sheets of newsprint in four different locations. Label one: Benefits for young people, the second: Benefits for adults, the third: Benefits for the organization, and the last one: Benefits for the community. Place several markers with each newsprint.

Young people can get engaged in organization in many different ways and in many meaningful roles. Ultimately we want them to reach the point that they share leadership with adults. This requires time, commitment and work. That raises the question: Why should we do this? We need to know if this will be beneficial for us, our organization and our community, right?! Let's take a look at the benefits of youth involvement.

Step 1> Small group activity (45 min)

I have four stations prepared for you. *Point at each of the stations.*

- 1) What are the benefits for young people to be involved in our organization?
- 2) What are the benefits for us, the adults, to have young people involved in our agency? What do we get out of this?
- 3) What are the benefits for your organization or agency?
- 4) What are the benefits for the community?

I think we all have some ideas about that, and as a group we will come up with even more. You all will have a chance to comment on all four.

Form 4 groups and assign each group to a station to get started.

Share your ideas and write them down. You have 5 minutes at each station. I will tell you when to move on. Please keep in mind not repeat comments, just add ideas.

Rotate groups clockwise after 5 minutes (three times). Then ask groups to report out, starting with the 'benefits for young people' group. Ask if there are clarification questions or additions.

Summarize the findings; highlight especially the benefits for adults, organizations and communities. Distribute the handout: 3.2. Youth in Decision-Making. Stress the importance of having evidence of

the benefits of youth involvement; they will be useful when they need to convince other adults to engage young people.

Facilitation Tips

1. The activity can be shortened by eliminating benefits for young people. It is fairly evident what the benefits for young people would be – gaining skills, experiences, exposure to new responsibilities, etc. This could be stated right up front; then the exercise would focus mainly on the benefits for adults.
2. Best in combination with activities 3.1 Meaningful Roles for Young People and 3.4 Organizational Roadblocks to Youth Involvement.
3. For more comprehensive information on the research on youth involvement, review the complete report by Shep Zeldin et al. 2000. Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations, www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/Youth_in_Decision_Making.pdf