



Engage Youth! Colorado's Guide to Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships

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of Public Health
and Environment

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

September 29, 2008

Dear Citizens of Colorado:

I am pleased to write this letter expressing the strong support of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (the department) for the work of the Youth Partnership for Health. For the past eight years, diverse youth ages 14-18 from across Colorado have come together monthly to provide guidance to our department and other state programs and initiatives addressing the health of adolescents.

The department began the Youth Partnership for Health (YPH) in 2000 because we know that ideas and input from youth are vital to the success of any program targeting youth. Since its inception, YPH has provided feedback and recommendations to many programs and initiatives that resulted in policy and practice changes, written articles for Colorado prevention newsletters, presented and served as workshop assistants at statewide conferences, and provided technical assistance to various public and private partners. Most recently, YPH has developed an original DVD and this accompanying guidebook on effective youth-adult partnerships, which is being distributed nationally.

It has been our pleasure to promote effective youth-adult partnerships by supporting YPH, and we hope this guidebook serves as a valuable resource for others who are interested in creating opportunities for youth-adult partnerships.

Sincerely,


James B. Martin
Executive Director

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Acknowledgements

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The guide also is available online at www.healthyyouthcolorado.org

For more information on Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health

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A special thanks to the Center for Systems Integration for its exemplary work in preparing the guide. For more information regarding the Center for Systems Integration

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This guide is a resource for any organization seeking to develop and maintain a successful youth-adult partnership effort. Youth-adult partnerships are a powerful approach to improving policies, programs and practices related to youth. Partnerships require a shift in how youth think about adults and adults think about youth, and this guide provides insight into how to make that transition successful.

Using the experiences of the Colorado Youth Partnership for Health and many other national resources, this guide is filled with tips that are tried and tested by youth and adults.

Contents

Overview of Youth-Adult Partnerships	4
Examples of Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships	11
The International Experience	12
The National Experience	12
The Colorado Experience	14
Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership	19
Challenges to Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership	27
Expectations of Youth and Adult Participants	31
Evaluating a Youth-Adult Partnership	39
Sustaining a Youth-Adult Partnership	49
Resources for Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership	52
References	54
Appendices	57

Overview of Youth-Adult Partnerships

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What is a Youth-Adult Partnership?

Youth-adult partnerships are based on the understanding that young people have a right to participate in programs that affect them and that, with training and assistance, they can become powerful advocates for positive change (UNFPA, 2008). Youth-adult partnerships can take on many forms, from youth involvement and engagement to youth leadership and policy boards. A youth-adult partnership occurs when adults and youth share responsibility for decisions related to issues directly affecting the lives of youth.

Youth-adult partnerships can take many forms and have different types of decision-making roles. Sometimes a youth-adult partnership plays an advisory role to a program or policy-making body, reviewing and discussing important issues before coming to recommendations. Other youth-adult partnerships share directly in the decision-making, either by having the authority to make decisions themselves or by participating as youth representatives on the "adult" boards invested with decision-making authority.

Youth play an important role in everything from the first steps of helping to design a new program or policy to the evaluation of a program or policy's success.

In fact, the roles that youth can take are as varied as the roles of adults. They are limited only by the willingness of everyone involved to engage young voices in important issues.

Youth Infusion, an organization created and run by young people, says, "Targeting youth without first engaging youth is inefficient, ineffective and inconsistent with their rights and competencies. Yet translating the idea of youth participation into effective, everyday practice is hard to do. Organizations are increasingly in need of how-to guidance to shift from working **for** youth to working **with** youth. Agencies and individuals do exist to provide concrete, how-to guidance." For more information, go to www.youthinfusion.com

Why is Youth-Adult Partnership Important?

Youth voice - the perspectives, ideas, experiences, knowledge and actions of young people - is vital to the success of any program targeting youth. Research supports

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the value of youth involvement, not just for the youth, but for adults and organizations too. The success of youth involvement efforts is widely recognized, so widely that there are international efforts to engage youth as leaders in policy and program design and delivery.

Organizational structures and systems usually are built around the needs of adults, not of youth. By analyzing the structure of organizations, establishing youth-adult work groups and advisory boards, training youth and adults in cooperative decision-making, and updating institutional cultures, an effective youth-adult partnership can enhance an organization's capacity to meet its youth-related goals, and organizations can move from simply providing youth services to engaging youth in the development of policy and programs (Youth Infusion Brochure on www.youthinfusion.com, accessed May 15, 2008).

What Does "Partnership" Really Mean?

"Partnership" means sharing power. A youth-adult partnership is a real partnership only if the youth and the adults have the ability to make decisions TOGETHER!

An important part of making decisions together is trusting in the expertise and knowledge of everyone at the table.

- Adults - Remember that youth are the experts in today's youth culture. Things have changed since you were a kid.
- Youth - Remember that adults are the experts in many of the issues they work on. Take the time to learn from them too.

Youth Infusion Says, "One of society's greatest resources is its youth, but youth require guidance, experience and support. Youth working alongside adults is the winning combination for positive social change. What could be more powerful than youth serving as the experts on youth-focused issues?"

How Is a Youth-Adult Partnership Different from a Youth Program?

A youth program is one-way commitment from adults to help youth. A youth-adult partnership program is a two-way commitment from adults to help youth by

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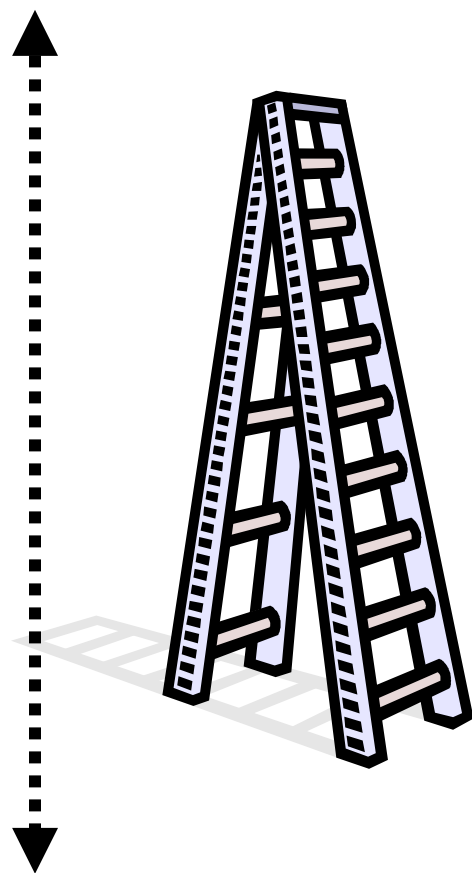
establishing policies and programs that understand youth and from youth to help adults understand youth issues. Everyone benefits, including the youth.

In a youth program, youth don't share power with adults. In a partnership, they do. Sharing power can happen in many ways and at many levels, with youth as objects of adult decision-making; recipients of adults' ideas; or partners with adults, initiating ideas and shaping decisions (Texas Network, 2002).

Ladder of Youth Participation

Adapted from Hart, R. (1994).

Youth as Partners (Maximum Youth Involvement)



- Youth and adults initiate and direct actions together. Decision-making authority is shared.
- Adults initiate actions, and share decisions with youth.
- Youth are consulted and informed about actions.
- Youth are informed about actions and assigned tasks.
- Youth are decorations and/or tokens, where the organization creates a false appearance of including youth (i.e., they may be sitting at the table, but are not given the opportunity or power to provide input).
- Youth are used solely to communicate adults' messages.

Youth as Objects (Minimum Youth Involvement)

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Reasons to Start a Youth-Adult Partnership

Organizations might want to start a youth-adult partnership, if they see value in

- ◆ having more diverse perspectives in their decision-making processes;
- ◆ engaging the perspective of youth, knowing that it will differ from an adult's perspective;
- ◆ incorporating specific knowledge in their decision-making - knowledge that young people are more likely to have;
- ◆ creating opportunities for leadership and partnership for youth;
- ◆ acknowledging the importance of youth participation in any program (Texas Network, 2002).

Research and Benefits of Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships

Research demonstrates that engaging youth voice is an essential element of effective organizational development among community and youth-serving organizations (Zeldin, 2004). Involving the target population in the identification of needs and the development of high-quality programs is one way of improving current prevention programs (Olsen, Goddard, Solheim & Sandt, 2004). In 1981, Rappaport stated that prevention programs are more successful if members of the target audience are involved and empowered in addressing their own needs. In addition, other scholars have noted the merits of involving people in the discovery process and solution (Greene, 1987; Greene, 1988). It is likely that such a participatory approach to developing programs for youth would provide similar positive effects. Moreover, it is vital to consider young people's ideas and input, rather than rely exclusively on adults' understanding of issues when developing prevention programs (Olsen, Goddard, Solheim & Sandt, 2004).

The bottom line is that involving young people in program development and implementation can increase the potential for success. Research indicates that programs using youth-adult partnerships often demonstrate greater effectiveness, and offer potential benefits not only to youth, but to the adults and organizations that serve them.

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Adult benefits of effectively using the voice of young people include

- ◆ experiencing the competence of young people and viewing them as legitimate, crucial contributors to organizational decision-making processes;
- ◆ enhancing commitment and energy to the adult's organization;
- ◆ feeling more effective and confident in working with and relating to youth;
- ◆ developing a stronger sense of community connectedness;
- ◆ enhancing strategies for how to most effectively listen to and communicate with youth (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes & Calvert, 2000).

Organizational benefits of effectively using the voice of youth include

- ◆ developing more effective youth-serving programs, initiatives and/or organizations;
- ◆ strengthening the organization's focus on its youth-serving mission;
- ◆ becoming more connected and responsive to youth in the organization's community;
- ◆ placing greater value on inclusiveness and diverse representation;
- ◆ becoming more appealing to potential funders (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes & Calvert, 2000).

Youth benefits of effectively using the voice of youth include

- ◆ increasing self-esteem, sense of personal control and enhanced identity development;
- ◆ increasing academic achievement;
- ◆ enhancing development of life skills including leadership, public speaking and job responsibility;
- ◆ strengthening communication skills with adults, peers and family;
- ◆ decreasing loneliness, shyness and hopelessness;
- ◆ decreasing involvement in risky behaviors, such as drug use, leading to an increase in overall safety (Scales & Leffert, 1997).

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"[Young people] need ample opportunities to try on the adult roles they are preparing for. This means they need to participate in making age-appropriate decisions for themselves and others, ranging from deciding what activities to participate in to choosing responsible alternatives to negative behaviors ... They also need to practice taking leadership roles ...[and] need to experience themselves as individuals who have something of value to contribute to their different communities." -Dr. James Connell, Co-Founder and President of the Institute for Research and Reform in Education based in Philadelphia.

**Examples of
Successful
Youth-Adult
Partnerships**

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The International Experience

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Partnerships

The **United Nations Population Fund** works with young people to build on and use their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm in a wide variety of activities, initiatives and programs. Representatives of UNFPA feel that including young people in program and policy decisions not only helps prepare youth to exercise the rights and responsibilities of adulthood and citizenship, but that it is also essential to the development of successful programs.

UNFPA Youth Partnership's Key Program: Global Youth Advisory Panel

This is a committee of young people aged 15-24 from developing and developed countries that gives advice on promoting the rights and needs of youth within the **United Nations Population Fund**. The members represent a wide variety of national, regional and international youth organizations, and make comprehensive annual recommendations on planning, policy-making and programs. The panel's 2005 recommendations included setting up national Youth Advisory Panels to ensure that the needs of youth are considered in the development of processes in participating countries. Twenty countries currently are establishing Youth Advisory Panels.

UNFPA Contact Info: For more information and to contact the UNFPA, visit <http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents/initiatives.htm>.

The National Experience

Here in our country, youth-adult partnership efforts are widely underway. They take many different forms, from advisory and leadership groups, to organizations run by youth with assistance from adults, to training opportunities for youth and adults to learn together. The descriptions below are drawn from the websites of each of the groups. For more information, please contact them.

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America's Promise Alliance

A youth partnership team with 10 - 15 youth from across the nation helps to lead and guide America's Promise Alliance. The alliance, started by General Colin Powell, is dedicated to "forging a strong and effective partnership alliance committed to seeing that children experience the fundamental resources they need to succeed." The youth on the team are full voting members of the Alliance Board of Directors and Trustees. They participate in conference calls, online chats, and in-person meetings in Washington, D.C. <http://www.americaspromise.org/>

Youth/Adult Partnership Academy

The Youth/Adult Partnership Academy brings teams of youth and adults together from their home communities. In partnership, they go through an intensive training to enhance their leadership and partnership skills. The academy is geared toward helping young people and the adults they work with to improve programs, policy and practices for young people. Attending this academy will allow participants to build skills and knowledge that will help them support youth advisory groups and other activities that involve young people on a local, state and national level. <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/conferences/yap07/about.html>

California Youth Connection

The California Youth Connection is guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth with the assistance of other committed community members. California Youth Connection promotes the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system. California Youth Connection strives to improve social work practice and child welfare policy. <http://www.cal youthconn.org/site/cyc/>

Maine's Youth Leadership Advisory Team

The Youth Leadership Advisory Team is a team of Maine youth in care (in state custody), ages 14-21, engaged in the education of the government, general public, caregivers and peers regarding the needs of children and young adults in the child welfare system. Advocating for positive changes in the child welfare system, Youth Leadership Advisory Team members help develop, guide and revise the Bureau of Child and Family Services policies to create safety, comfort and opportunities for all kids in care. <http://www.ylat.org/>

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The Colorado Experience

Since 2000, the Youth Partnership for Health (YPH) has provided recommendations to many initiatives and programs; written articles for prevention newsletters; developed a DVD on its work; provided consultation and technical assistance to other groups; and presented at statewide conferences.

YPH's Motto

Nothing about us without us!

Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health (YPH) is dedicated to helping Colorado communities by advising the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and its partners on health issues affecting young people across the state. In addition, YPH advocates for Colorado youth by taking on special projects and participating in statewide conferences.

Youth help make decisions, provide insight and give advice to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on a wide spectrum of topics on adolescent health. They work directly with the adults who help make decisions affecting youth in Colorado. Every month, they meet to learn about important teen issues and develop recommendations.

Who are the Youth? They are a group of energetic young people, 14-18 years old, from across Colorado who are enthusiastic about shaping how Colorado responds to important youth issues that we all experience. They work directly with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to inform its efforts and efforts of other state leaders. They are willing to talk about hard issues, learn about health and other youth issues, and dedicate four hours a month to this important work.

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YPH began in 2000 and has been meeting monthly since that time; however, participants do take a break during the summer months. YPH began out of the realization that youth voice is vital to any successful program targeting youth. It continues because it has proven to be a successful model of engaging youth leadership in policy and program decision-making.

Issues YPH has Helped Address in Colorado

- ◆ Positive youth development
- ◆ Substance use/abuse
- ◆ HIV and STD prevention
- ◆ Youth leadership
- ◆ Teen pregnancy and parenting
- ◆ Health and fitness
- ◆ Depression and suicide
- ◆ Eating disorders
- ◆ Teen motor vehicle safety
- ◆ Mental health

- ◆ Violence - gang, sexual, relationship
- ◆ Diverse needs of urban, rural and frontier schools and communities
- ◆ Body image and media
- ◆ Self-mutilation / cutting
- ◆ Healthy eating habits / nutrition
- ◆ Child abuse
- ◆ Comprehensive health education in schools
- ◆ Peer pressure

YPH Meeting Structure

A typical YPH meeting begins with introductions and an icebreaker question or activity, followed by lunch. After lunch, a health issue is presented to the group for feedback. The group often breaks into smaller groups to analyze, discuss and provide feedback to the larger group. After YPH recommendations are compiled and finalized, the meetings usually end with reflections of the meeting and completion of mileage, stipend and evaluation forms.

Please refer to the Appendices section for sample materials - i.e. agenda, sign-in sheet, mileage and stipend forms, etc.

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Example of Accomplishments from the YPH Evaluation

In the fall of 2007, an evaluation was conducted of the YPH goals. Two types of outcomes were found: behavior and attitude changes and program and practice changes. These same types of outcomes have been found with other youth-adult partnerships.

The behavioral and attitude changes of the participants included being more open to discuss sensitive topics with youth, listening to youth better, wanting to ask more in-depth and sophisticated questions in the future, and learning how to phrase things so that youth "take it seriously."

One respondent reported that he was taught how to phrase questions to youth who are parents in a more sensitive way and another respondent reported learning how to phrase questions in a more culturally respectful way.

The program and practice outcomes included the following:

- ◆ A change in the graduated driver's licensing social marketing campaign by the Colorado Department of Transportation that will affect approximately 89,000 new drivers per year. Youth advisory members also reported they would follow the law if their parents enforced it.
- ◆ A change in a data collection tool for a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant at the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The youth's input and the improved tool resulted in helping move Colorado's approach to pregnancy prevention from an abstinence-only approach to comprehensive evidence or science-based approaches to pregnancy prevention.
- ◆ Changes to a statewide survey to assess attitudes about barriers to contraception used to prevent teen pregnancy. Changes were made to the survey to be more culturally respectful of youth and to include an at-risk population not previously identified. The results from this survey are being used for statewide policy change and education.

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- ◆ A change in strategies for communication with teens regarding a pregnancy prevention program. The timing of meetings for teens, payment to the teens, structure of parental involvement, location of intervention and strategies for communication with teens about pregnancy issues were all changed in response to youth input.
- ◆ A change in a statewide sunscreen education and promotion program. The campaign has been implemented and to date has distributed 17,000 tip cards, offered education to approximately 600 teachers in all K-8 schools in Colorado, and provided online training for more than 200 people.
- ◆ A change in the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) high school seat belt policy. This policy will be distributed to all high schools in Colorado and can be individually adopted by each superintendent or school district official. The youth who participated in this YPH meeting told CDOT they would be more likely to obey their high schools' seat belt policy and encourage their friends to obey their high schools' seat belt policy because they participated in creating the policy.
- ◆ The University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center used the YPH as a pilot to assess barriers to seeking help from adults when youth are suicidal. These data were added to the Health Sciences Center's research data, reported at two conferences and shared with more than 200 youth in one high school.

Other Accomplishments

YPH also has engaged in many other activities over the last few years. While it is important to track outcomes like the ones above, it also is important for any youth-adult partnership to document the activities the partners successfully undertake together:

- Provided input and recommendations for various adolescent health initiatives such as

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- The Colorado Association of School Based Health Care
 - The State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership
 - The Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program
 - The Youth Risk Behavior Survey
 - The Colorado Coordinated School Health Initiative
 - The Colorado Abstinence Education Program
 - Rocky Mountain Public Health Consortium
 - Cardiovascular Risk Reduction
 - Colorado's 2003 Adolescent Health Report
- Wrote articles for the Partners in Prevention Newsletter on youth involvement and developmental assets
 - Provided technical assistance to organizations starting a youth advisory board such as Colorado Minority Health Forum and Kaiser Permanente
 - Served as workshop assistants (introduced speakers, greeted and assisted attendees, worked the registration table and provided a visible youth presence) at the 2002 Colorado Association of School-Based Health Care Convention and the 2008 Voices of Strength Conference
 - Conducted a youth panel and presentation at the 2005 and 2006 Voices of Strength Conferences
 - Developed an original DVD video presentation, "Nothing About Us Without Us"

Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership

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Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership

Youth-adult partnerships can be initiated by organizations or by youth. Regardless of who develops the idea of a youth-adult partnership, both the youth and adults need to design the fundamental plan for the effort together - from the beginning.

Different Youth-Adult Partnership Approaches

Starting a youth-adult partnership requires understanding the goal of the partnership. Different approaches to partnerships will meet different goals. A few of the well-known areas for involving youth include the following (Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Power, 2005):

◆ **Youth as Planners:** Bringing youth in from the beginning, when a new program or policy is being developed, can help ensure success from Day One! Don't limit youth involvement to being advisors. The youth also can be on staff or on the adult decision-making board.

◆ **Youth as Trainers:** Youth can help train adults and other youth in how to provide services to youth, how to participate in youth-adult partnerships and many other topics! Youth can participate in identifying training needs, developing training materials, training to become trainers and implementing the training.

◆ **Youth as Evaluators:** Youth not only can help identify what "success" really looks like, they also can collect the data and help interpret it. In fact, there is no part of evaluation that cannot include a youth component. Researchers working with youth may find they are helpful in creating surveys, conducting interviews, interpreting findings or presenting results.

Within each of these areas, youth can serve as partners in different ways. A few formal structures that youth-adult partnerships have taken include the following (Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Power, 2005):

◆ **Youth Advisory Boards:** Youth advisory boards/councils/committees may be charged with a specific issue to provide advice about or may be asked to

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- ◆ Are youth ready to take on more responsibilities?
- ◆ Do adults and youth have the skills to partner together effectively?

If these conditions are met, it's time to start a partnership!

Tips for Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership

(Adapted from Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Power, 2005)

There are many things to figure out. Some of the issues to consider are listed below:

Organization and adult readiness

Building a framework

Finding the resources

Identifying an adult ally

Defining roles and responsibilities

Recruiting youth broadly

Recruiting organizations broadly

Marketing the partnership

Structuring the group

Figuring out how to use time

Orientations and trainings

Developing an action plan

Personal reflection and evaluation

Process and outcome evaluation

Measures of success

Recognizing youth and adult members

Including the "fun" factor

The many successful youth-adult partnerships already underway have a lot of advice to offer on all of these issues:

1. **Assess organization and adult readiness.** You will need to find answers to questions such as: What are adult attitudes in the organization toward youth? Is the organizational structure able to support a partnership?
2. **Build a framework.** Gather a group of young people and a few adults to define the purpose of the advisory board and define the framework of how it will work. Some issues to address include membership, recruitment, application and selection process, role of the host organization, structure, funding and logistics.

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3. **Find the resources.** With the framework in mind, secure a funding source either from your host organization or from an outside source. This money will pay for meetings in a friendly meeting environment, stipends, materials, travel expenses, site visits, staff time and food (a vital component!).
4. **Identify an adult ally.** Determine who the staff contact will be and make sure that key staff members are brought in to meet and connect with the advisory board members. Be sure it is someone who “gets” youth-adult partnerships.
5. **Define roles and responsibilities.** Be sure to clarify roles and responsibilities for both the advisory board members and the adult allies.
6. **Recruit youth broadly.** Send applications to all junior high and high schools, colleges, and community groups in the area. Develop and stick to the timeline for recruitment and selection; identify ways to recruit diverse participation (culturally, socio-economically, geographically). Also remember that for thorough and comprehensive youth participation, you must recruit from broadly diverse backgrounds. For example, try to include gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered (GLBT) youth; male youth; female youth; diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages; youth with mental health care needs; youth with developmental disabilities; youth with substance abuse issues; youth with learning disabilities; and teen parents. For more tips, see the Recruitment Tips in the *Appendices* section of this guide.
7. **Recruit adults broadly.** Look for adults to partner and connect with youth through schools, government agencies, policy-making bodies, civic organizations and parent groups, as well as through local nonprofit organizations, such as youth centers, health centers and treatment programs.
8. **Market the partnership.** Youth in your group can help create tailored materials for marketing. For example, YPH youth and adults created a DVD to explain the value of their group and youth voice to adults, youth and organizations.

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9. **Develop a Fair Application and Selection Process.** Be sure the process is transparent and that youth are involved from the beginning. Selection processes vary based upon the needs of the group. For example, processes can be based on a specific set of criteria developed by the group or they can be even based on a lottery system. The point is this: The process is up to the group and youth must help drive the process.
10. **Structure of the group.** Make sure to have adult and youth facilitators. This can be challenging and hard work, but it is well worth it.
11. **Time.** Ensure that the meeting is the appropriate length for the activities to be accomplished. Depending on the length of the meeting, include time for breaks, lunch or dinner and socializing.
12. **Provide orientation and training.** Once the group has been formed, bring members together for orientation and training. This is an important opportunity to develop skills including group facilitation, public speaking and problem-solving. Team-building exercises also help create a sense of community and purpose.
13. **Develop and implement a logic model or action plan.** Based on its purpose, have the advisory board develop a logic model or an action plan. See the *Appendices* section for further details.
14. **Provide opportunities for reflection and personal evaluation.** Have members reflect on their experience. What have they gained personally? How is the advisory board working? What are its outcomes?
15. **Process and outcome evaluation.** Formal evaluations take time and resources, but they are very important to show the difference a youth-adult partnership can make. Put an evaluation process in place that the youth help to design and implement. (See the *Evaluating a Youth-Adult Partnership section*.)

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16. **Create concrete measures of success.** It is vital to measure the impact of the partnership on the organization, adults and the youth. Results might include outcomes such as your state health department trains and has available a group of young people with a unique perspective and expertise; programs gain insights into how better to serve youth in your state and use the information gathered to significantly shape how they serve youth; adults who attend, better understand how to partner with youth; youth gain skills in group dynamics, public speaking, writing and other leadership qualities; youth talk to their friends and schools about teen health issues and encourage their friends to make healthy choices.
17. **Recognize advisory board members.** Don't forget to recognize members for their hard work. This can be a simple thank-you and/or a party at the end of the program year.
18. **The "Fun" factor.** Remember, you're working with youth, not stockbrokers. Meetings that involve youth should not be formal business meetings. They should take place in an informal environment or manner, and there should be opportunities for learning, providing input and fun. One way to ensure the meetings are fun is to have youth help plan them!

Making the Meetings Work

For adults starting a youth-adult partnership, you need to remember that the meetings you usually attend and the meetings youth will want to and be able to attend are two very different things. Make sure that your organization considers the following:

- ◆ **Timing:** Meetings during the week conflict with school and other youth activities. One of the ways adults can show their commitment to the youth-adult partnership is to schedule meetings outside their normal workweek. The Colorado Youth Partnership for Health has found Saturday early afternoon to be a good time to meet.

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◆ **Food:** Meetings with food are popular with everyone: adults and youth alike! Healthy meals also give participants energy to engage fully in the discussion.

◆ **Transportation:** Be prepared to address transportation difficulties. Not all youth will have their own vehicles or parents who can drive. Make sure the meeting location is near public transportation, and be creative and helpful if a youth cannot identify a way to get to the meeting. Be sure to plan and budget for travel reimbursement.

These issues often are the stumbling blocks to getting a successful youth-adult partnership off the ground. Don't let these stop your effort: Plan accordingly!

Challenges to Starting a Youth-Adult Partnership

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Common Challenges and Recommendations to Address Them

Partnerships of any type are challenging, and youth-adult partnerships are no exception. Bringing people of different ages and backgrounds together requires facing some barriers. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development asked young people and adults to identify characteristics or perspectives that may pose challenges to young people and adults working together (Jones & Perkins, 2006):

Adults identified about youth

Youth receive an overload of information (Internet, television, cell phones, etc.)

Black-and-white thinking

Lack patience for planning

Lack of experience

Peer pressure and priorities

Conflict between adult and youth expectations

Difficult for adults to be heard and accepted by youth

Strong desire for independence

Youth identified about adults

Power; do it by themselves; no youth needed

Won't admit they are wrong or apologize

Selfish

Want opinions but shun ideas

Think that age creates power

Can't handle youth growing up

Inflexible about rules

Stress winning too much

Too involved with adults, not kids

Challenges may exist, but the many successful youth-adult partnerships underway across the country and world have figured out ways to address the challenges (Youth Partnership for Health, personal communication, September 15, 2007; Klindera & Menderweld, 2001; Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Texas Network, 2002):

Sharing Power: It is difficult for any organization to share power with a new partner, regardless of who the partner is. For some adults, it may be even more difficult to share power with youth. Likewise, for many youth, power sharing may be a new and difficult role. Youth who are helping to make decisions need to be

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comfortable taking on a new level of responsibility and feel supported in their efforts.

Recommendation to Share Power: Take small steps! Adults may need to define specific decisions or responsibilities that they are ready to share as a starting point, with agreement to expand those over time. Youth may want to take on a specific responsibility in partnership with an adult as they take their first steps in having power.

Stereotypes: Youth and adults both hold stereotypes about one another. They also may both hold stereotypes about others from different backgrounds from themselves. Having a diverse partnership of youth and adults will require everyone being open to learning new things about each other.

Recommendation to Overcome Stereotypes: Focusing on the strengths of each individual may help everyone let go of stereotypes and see each other more clearly. Make sure there is time in the meetings to learn about each other and build relationships.

Changing Attitudes: Every youth can tell you that there are some adults who sincerely believe they “know best” and have difficulty doing anything but attempting to control the youth around them. Even adults who are more open to partnering with youth may do so more out of a desire to help the youth gain skills than out of a belief that the youth voice will result in genuinely better decisions. For them, youth are the recipients of knowledge and experiences, becoming better people as a result of their participation. Unfortunately, both of these attitudes can be significant barriers to true partnership. For a partnership to be successful, adults have to believe that youth and youth voice are critical to the success of the policy or program.

Recommendation to Help Change Attitudes: Both adults and youth should participate in an orientation before they join a youth-adult partnership. Learning about how youth have been successfully making a difference in other policies and programs around the country, and even the world, may help adults broaden their view of the role youth should play in their own program. Adults also may want to

Nothing About Us Without Us

take cultural competency and/or responsiveness trainings to prepare for working with youth. Youth culture is just as unique as any other culture that adults may encounter in their jobs.

Policies and Procedures: Sometimes organizational policies can get in the way of successful youth-adult partnerships. They may not provide for enough time to make decisions together, or they may include requirements around parental consent for involving youth. Some procedures may not even be policy, but rather a practice that is common to the organization and everyone just “knows.”

Recommendation to Address Problem Policies: Finding out which policies are requirements and which are practices that can be changed is a first step. If policies do create barriers, working with the youth, and even their parents, to overcome them may be necessary. Don't hesitate to talk to the organization about developing more youth-friendly policies.

Logistics: Everything from the scheduling of meetings to the materials and equipment for meetings can create barriers. Youth may not have transportation to the meetings, or the times may conflict with times when youth are generally available. If adults have access to equipment and materials that youth don't have, it could give the impression that the youth are not as important as adults.

Recommendation to Address Logistics: Making decisions with youth from the very beginning can help with these problems. Find out what times work best for the youth you hope to recruit. Identify a location with many transportation options or provide transportation for the youth. Ask youth what materials and equipment they need available to successfully participate as partners.

Expectations of Youth and Adult Participants

Nothing About Us Without Us

Expectations for Participants

Every group should create its own ground rules for involvement in the group. Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health has a few, all of which were established together by both youth and adults:

- ✓ One set of ground rules for youth;
- ✓ One set of ground rules for adults; and
- ✓ One set of guidelines for both youth and adults that are meant to help participation.

As mentioned previously, adults and youth identify different challenges in interacting with one another. Creating separate ground rules respects these differences and allows for more appropriate rules to be developed *and followed*.

Expectations for Youth Participants

Guides to youth involvement have suggested the following guidelines and expectations for youth participating in a partnership (Youth Partnership for Health, personal communication, September 15, 2007; Justinianno & Scherer, 2001 & Texas Network, 2002):

1. **Look Inward** - Both adults and youth must assess their own attitudes and behaviors. Ask
 - a. "Do I appreciate different perspectives?"
 - b. "How does my experience as a youth affect my view of youth today?"
 - c. "What stereotypes do I hold about youth/adults?"
2. **Open the Door to Communication** - Youth and adults many times avoid genuinely communicating with one another. Both youth and adults need to listen - really listen - to one another. Be honest and open in communicating. And don't be afraid to ask for an explanation. Adults may use terms you don't know or forget to provide background on a new topic.
3. **Create Opportunities to Partner** - Both adults and youth need to learn from their experiences and their mistakes. They also need to learn about each other. Let the adults know what your capabilities are and how you want to partner with them.

Nothing About Us Without Us

4. **Outline Expectations and Commitments** - This is essential to a productive youth - adult partnership. Don't assume anything about the partnership.
5. **Spread the Word** - Be ambassadors of your experiences. Break the stereotypes whenever possible!
6. **Reflecting** - Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership. Ask "What have we learned and how can we do things better together?"
7. **Be patient** - Progress doesn't happen overnight. Misunderstanding and mistakes will happen. Remember, this is just as new for the adults as it is for the youth. Learn from your mistakes and then move on!
8. **Accept criticism** - Adults are used to critiquing ideas and brainstorming new ones. If adults critique your ideas or work, it doesn't necessarily mean they don't value your efforts, and it might even mean they are treating you like they would treat any adult colleague.
9. **Say no** - Don't be afraid to let adults know when you can't make a commitment. They understand balancing many different activities and will respect that you are up front about your limited time.

Example Ground Rules for Youth

These are Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health ground rules for 2007-2008 for the youth. The youth developed these group rules with the YPH coordinator. Each group should create its own ground rules, partly because the process of creating ground rules creates a positive environment for all the work to come, and partly because what works for one group may not work for another.

Dos and Don'ts for Youth

- ◆ Do speak up! Invite adults to share their skills, experiences and resources.
- ◆ Do commit time and energy to do the work. Take responsibility seriously. Seek to involve other youth.
- ◆ Don't stereotype adults.
- ◆ Don't assume all adults will treat you like you are "just a kid" (Zeldin, Kusgen McDaniel, Topitzes & Calvert, 2000).

Nothing About Us Without Us

YPH Ground Rules

- ◆ Be honest about your experiences.
- ◆ Be open-minded.
- ◆ Give your opinions and feedback.
- ◆ Be respectful.
- ◆ Commit to attend meetings.
- ◆ Keep things confidential as a large group and in break-out groups.
- ◆ No interrupting.
- ◆ No side conversations.
- ◆ It's OK to disagree, but you must be accepting of others' opinions.
- ◆ Share what isn't working as well as what is.
- ◆ Offer both criticism and support.
- ◆ Have fun!

Expectations for Adult Participants

Adults participating in a youth-adult partnership need to follow guidelines and expectations too, whether they are coordinators for the group or presenters coming to seek feedback from the group. Many of these are the same expectations as for youth, but others are specific to the challenges adults face as they enter youth-adult partnerships (Youth Partnership for Health, personal communication, September 15, 2007; Texas Network, 2002; Justinianno & Scherer, 2001):

1. **True Partnership** - A true youth-adult partnership requires youth and adults working together, sharing power and learning from one another.

2. **Change Your Paradigm - the way you think about youth**

- a. From problem-focused to strengths-based
- b. From at-risk to resilient
- c. From "mainstreaming" to cultural awareness and diversity
- d. From focusing on the individual youth to the youth within his/her family and community

Nothing About Us Without Us

- e. From dependence to self-efficacy and responsibility
- f. From alienation to connectedness

3. **Look Inward** - Both adults and youth must assess their own attitudes and behaviors. Being nonjudgmental means understanding the stereotypes and expectations you hold for others. Ask yourself

- a. Do I appreciate different perspectives?
- b. How does my experience as a youth affect my view of youth today?
- c. What stereotypes do I hold about youth/adults?

4. **Open the Door to Communication** - Youth and adults many times avoid genuinely communicating with one another. Both youth and adults need to listen - really listen - to one another. Be honest and open in communicating.

5. **Create Opportunities to Partner** - Both adults and youth need to learn from their experiences and their mistakes. They also need to learn about each other, overcoming expectations and stereotypes they may hold.

6. **Outline Expectations and Commitments** - This is essential to a productive youth - adult partnership. Have realistic expectations, and share those with the youth. Don't patronize youth by expecting too little, but don't set the partnership up for failure by expecting too much.

7. **Spread the Word** - Be ambassadors to your experiences. Break the stereotypes whenever possible!

8. **Reflecting** - Reflect on the partnership's strengths and weaknesses. Ask

- a. What have we learned?
- b. How can we do things better together?

9. **Be patient** - Progress doesn't happen overnight. Misunderstanding and mistakes will happen. Learn from them and move on!

10. **Work with Individual Youth**. Treat each youth as an individual, not a representative of all youth voices. Make sure the youth knows you are not asking him or her to speak on behalf of all youth, but that his or her individual view is important.

Nothing About Us Without Us

11. **Allow "no."** Youth who get involved with youth-adult partnerships are often engaged in many other activities. Just as you have to juggle priorities and make sure you don't take on too much work, so do youth. Make sure the youth know they can say "no" and it won't be held against them.
12. **Take time.** You may have things you want the partnership to accomplish right away, but it is important to take time to develop trust and relationships with the youth. If you don't take time, it may appear to the youth that you don't want their partnership.

Example Ground Rules for Adults

Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health holds the adults to the same ground rules as the youth. But they also have a few more for any presenters who come to ask for their ideas and insights.

YPH Adult Ground Rules

- ◆ Don't be condescending.
- ◆ Be strength-based.
- ◆ Be ready to accept criticism.
- ◆ Treat the youth like the experts they are on today's youth culture.
- ◆ Don't lecture or dismiss feedback.
- ◆ Be prepared to listen openly.
- ◆ If you don't understand, ask.

Dos and Don'ts for Adults

- ◆ Do involve youth in the decision-making that affects their lives.
- ◆ Do listen - *really* listen!
- ◆ Do be willing to learn from youth. Provide them with information and training to be successful
- ◆ Do be thoughtful about providing special consideration and support (i.e. transportation, evening/weekend meetings, etc.).
- ◆ Don't stereotype youth.
- ◆ Don't blame all youth for the actions of one individual youth (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes & Calvert, 2000).

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A Few More Tips for Adults

Even with good intentions, it may take more than ground rules for adults to be successful at truly partnering with youth. It's a big change in how things are normally done! Any adults partnering with youth need to do the following (Youth Partnership for Health, personal communication, 2007; Justiniano & Scherer, 2001):

- ◆ Remember, cultural diversity isn't about just color. It includes other diverse factors such as sexual orientation, ability, politics, socio-economic status, geography, etc.
- ◆ Regularly assess your own strengths and weaknesses in the area of diversity, and make efforts to improve them by attending trainings, reading about cultural issues, becoming more involved in the broader community, etc.
- ◆ Ask questions about cultural needs as well as how to help build or strengthen diversity.
- ◆ Recognize how bonding only with those who are "like you" may exclude or be perceived as excluding others.
- ◆ Take interest in the ideas of people who don't think the same as you, and respect their opinions when you disagree.
- ◆ Recognize we are products of our backgrounds, but our way is not the only way.
- ◆ Be aware of prejudices and consciously try to control assumptions about people.
- ◆ Try to help others understand your differences.

Nothing About Us Without Us

- ◆ Work to make sure that people who are different from you are heard and respected.
- ◆ Share power and accountability.
- ◆ Model desired behaviors.
- ◆ Know your own assets, liabilities and biases.
- ◆ Identify and advocate for organizational change pertaining to diversity.
- ◆ Develop clarity across cultures and language differences.

Evaluating a Youth-Adult Partnership

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What is evaluation?

Evaluation involves collecting information about a program to help make the program better. We gather information about the program's activities, characteristics and outcomes to see if it's doing what it's supposed to do and, if so, determine if it can be done better. Basically, results from an evaluation should show what was done, to whom it was done, how it was done, how much it cost and how well it worked.

Why do evaluation?

There are many reasons organizations evaluate their programs. Many want to see if their program is working or meeting its goals and objectives. Program staff often use information collected from an evaluation to make changes and improvements to their program. They also use the information to show the public and their funders how well their program is performing, so they can continue to operate, get more money for the program or improve their reputation and credibility.

Programs that are evaluated are typically more effective, have better reputations, and gain more trust and support from their communities and the public. In addition, they often get more money from funders and last longer.

When you evaluate your youth-adult partnership (hereafter called "partnership"), you will want to show what the partnership is doing and how well. You first will want to evaluate your partnership's process. This will be done by **process evaluation**, (as described below) and will answer questions about how your partnership operates and the resources used. Beyond the partnership's process, you will want to demonstrate its outcomes

Cultural Competency and Evaluation

A culturally competent approach to evaluation calls attention to the needs of diverse stakeholders and involves cultural groups in choosing the most appropriate evaluation methods. For example, is using a paper-and-pencil survey the best way to collect data from a population that has a low literacy rate? Additionally, select your outside evaluator carefully. He or she should have experience working with diverse populations and understand that a one-size-fits-all evaluation approach will not work with all the communities or coalitions you serve.

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or the ways your partnership improved youth programs. This will be done by an **outcome evaluation**, (also explained below).

Types of Evaluation

There are several different types of evaluation, but for our purposes, we are most interested in process and outcome evaluations.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation also is called program monitoring, and its main purpose is to describe how a program operates. It measures what was done; when, where and how it was done; and who was reached. It answers questions about the activities planned and/or accomplished, and components of the program that are or are not working.

The measures collected in process evaluation include things like the number and kinds of people participating in a program or attending an event, the number and types of materials distributed in a given time, the number of meetings conducted and numbers of participants, or the percentage of participants who report getting certain information or recall hearing or seeing a specific message.

Some process measures you can collect for your board include:

- What types of people (gender, race, age, county of residence, etc.) participate in our partnership?
- How many meetings were held and how many people attended?
- How many pamphlets or other types of materials have we distributed?
- How many programs have we advised?
- What kinds of programs have we advised and where do they operate?

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation measures the results of your program on your target audience, such as changes in knowledge, self-efficacy, skills, attitudes and behaviors. It answers these questions:

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- Did the desired changes in outcomes take place?
- How much did knowledge, attitudes and behavior change?

The measures collected include things like the proportion of participants who report a specific attitude or belief, know a recommended behavior, demonstrate increased awareness of a subject, or report practicing a recommended behavior. Some outcome measures you can collect for your partnership include:

- In what ways has the partnership improved the programs you advised?
- How has the partnership's input changed how programs operate?
- What have programs done differently based on the partnership's input?
- Have more youth been reached as a result of the partnership input?
- Are programs more culturally competent as a result of partnership input?

Starting Your Evaluation

Evaluation ideally begins before a program even starts, when the program's goals and objectives are being identified. To start evaluating your partnership, there are three steps:

1. Establish clear and understandable goals and SMART objectives for your partnership.
2. Identify the purpose of your evaluation.
3. List the questions you want the evaluation to answer.

Step 1: Establish Your Goal and Objectives

The first step in evaluating your partnership is to make sure its goal and objectives are clear and understood by its members.

A **goal** is the overall mission or purpose of your partnership. It is a more general statement about a program's long-term impact. Examples of goals are: "to make youth programs in Colorado more effective in reaching youth," or "to increase the level of youth leadership in youth-serving programs."

Once you have identified your partnership's goal, ask yourself these questions: "Do we know what this means?"

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"How will we know when our goal was met?"

"Is there information available or that can be collected that will tell us if our goal was achieved?"

Objectives are the milestones or steps you will accomplish to reach your goal. Objectives are best when written in the "SMART" format (RapidBi, 2008). SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. *Specific* and *measurable* imply that the objective identifies a specific task or activity that can be measured, such as numbers of meetings, participants, materials or even levels of satisfaction.

Achievable means that it is something you can accomplish. You may not have the time or resources to conduct 10 meetings by a certain date, but you can conduct three. *Relevant* means it's related to your goals. An example of a relevant objective is "The board will advise five youth programs before their implementation in the next 12 months." An irrelevant objective would be "The board shares youth information with six adult service programs." *Time-bound* means that you specify a date for when the objective will be accomplished.

Examples of **process** objectives are:

- Enlist 15 youth board members by Aug. 31, 2008
- Conduct three board meetings by Dec. 31, 2008

Examples of **outcome** objectives are:

- By Dec. 31, 2009, 80 percent of youth members will report learning new leadership skills.
- By Aug. 31, 2010, 95 percent of programs advised by the partnership will report that the partnership's input improved their program outcomes, i.e. more youth were reached.
- Identify the number of youth programs to review and advise by Dec. 31, 2008.

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Step 2: Identify the Purpose of Your Evaluation

As stated earlier, programs get evaluated for many reasons. To identify your purpose for evaluating your partnership, determine what you want to show and to whom, e.g., other youth, staff of programs you advise, your funders, other boards, schools, the general public. Do you want to show your funders and/or the public how your program works and, specifically, what you do? Do you want information to help you reduce difficulties or improve how the partnership functions? You may want all of the above and more, but it's important that your purpose(s) be written down in words that your partnership's members and stakeholders understand and interpret in the same way.

Step 3: Identify the Questions You Want Answered by your Evaluation

Here, you can list the things you want to know about your program. These will determine the type of evaluation you will do and the type of information you collect. You may not have the time or resources to get all your questions answered immediately, so select one or a few questions that you can get answered in the immediate future. To answer other questions, you may need to get assistance from others, particularly those with knowledge and experience in conducting program evaluation.

Some questions you may want to answer for your partnership:

- What types of people are involved in our partnership?
- How do we communicate, i.e. what types of meetings do we conduct?
- How do others learn about our partnership?
- Is our partnership meeting its purpose?
- Are programs that use our partnership satisfied with our service?
- Are partnership members satisfied?
- Have attitudes of partnership members or programs changed because of the partnership?
- Do programs incorporate youth input and involve youth in decision-making?
- Are programs reaching more youth as a result of the partnership's input?
- What does the partnership do well, and what can we do better?
- How can we improve our services?

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To help you generate the right evaluation questions consider the following key elements:

1. For what purpose(s) is the evaluation being done, i.e., what do you want to be able to decide as a result of the evaluation?
2. Who are the audiences for the information from the evaluation, e.g., customers, other programs or agencies, funders, another partnership, schools, staff, youth, etc.
3. What kinds of information are needed to make the decisions you need to make and/or enlighten your intended audiences?
4. From what sources should the information be collected, e.g., youth, customers, clients, groups of customers or clients and employees together, program documentation, etc.
5. How can that information be collected in a reasonable fashion, e.g., questionnaires, interviews, examining documentation, observing customers or employees, conducting focus groups among customers or employees, etc.
6. When is the information needed (so, by when must it be collected)?
7. What resources are available to collect the information?

Logic Models

It can be helpful to organize information about how your partnership works in a logic model. A logic model is a visual picture that shows how your partnership's activities and participants are linked to its goals, objectives and outcomes. See *the Appendices* section for an example of a logic model. To learn more about logic models go to <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>.

Collecting Information to Answer Your Evaluation Questions

What types of information are needed to determine if the partnership is meeting its objectives and answer other questions you have about the partnership? You may want to count the numbers of meetings and materials distributed. You may want to see what types of people are involved in the partnership in terms of gender, age and race/ethnicity or other characteristics. You may want to determine how the partnership has improved the programs it advises and ask program staff about improvements they have seen.

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Once you determine the information you need to answer your questions, you need to identify where you will get the information and how to collect it. Methods for collecting information include counting activities or materials, examining documentation, recording observations, doing surveys or interviews of clients or staff, and conducting focus groups. Table 1 lists different methods of data collection, their purposes and the types of information they obtain, and the advantages and challenges of each.

Since some data collection methods take more time and effort than others, you must consider when the evaluation results are needed and what resources are available to collect the information.

Who Should Conduct the Evaluation?

Ideally you could employ a professional evaluator or team of evaluators to collect the information and report the results. However, professional evaluators are often expensive, so you may need to collect the information yourself. You often can find evaluation experts in universities and local and state health departments that can provide you with no-cost guidance. There is a list of evaluation resources at the end of this chapter to guide you.

Using Your Evaluation Results

Sadly, people often spend time and energy evaluating their programs and then don't use the results. Use the information you get to improve your partnership's services and function! Don't put the results of your evaluation on a shelf! The results of your evaluation should show what activities your partnership did, who participated and/or received services, and ideally, how well it worked.

Once you have evaluation results, you will want to share them with your stakeholders, people who are interested and invested in your partnership's activities, such as local, state and national government agencies, nonprofit organizations working with youth and schools, and school board members. You can share, or distribute, your results through written reports, oral presentations, fact sheets or on a website. How you distribute and share your results will depend on your audience.

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Keep in mind that evaluation is an ongoing and dynamic process. If possible, you will evaluate your partnership continually and use the results to improve your partnership's service. Remember, programs that are evaluated typically have more trust and support from their communities, have better reputations and greater credibility, and usually are more effective in achieving their goals and objectives. Because of this, they often get more money from funders and last longer.

Table 1.

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, surveys, checklists	when you need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non-threatening way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can complete anonymously ✓ inexpensive to administer ✓ easy to compare and analyze ✓ administer to many people ✓ can get lots of data ✓ many sample questionnaires already exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ might not get careful feedback ✓ wording can bias client's responses ✓ are impersonal ✓ in surveys, may need sampling expert ✓ doesn't get full story ✓ literacy and language barriers
Interviews	when you want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ get full range and depth of information ✓ develops relationship with client ✓ can be flexible with client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can take much time ✓ can be hard to analyze and compare ✓ can be costly ✓ interviewer can bias client's responses
Documentation review	when you want impressions of how program operates without interrupting the program; from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ get comprehensive and historical information ✓ doesn't interrupt program or client's routine in program ✓ information already exists ✓ few biases about information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ often takes much time ✓ info may be incomplete ✓ need to be quite clear about what you're looking for ✓ not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Observation	to gather accurate information about how a program actually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ view operations of a program as they are actually occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can be difficult to interpret observed behaviors ✓ can be complex to categorize

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	operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can adapt to events as they occur 	<p>observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can influence behaviors of program participants ✓ can be expensive
Focus groups	to explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ quickly and reliably get common impressions ✓ can be efficient way to get range and depth of information in short time ✓ can convey key information about programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ can be hard to analyze responses ✓ need good facilitator for safety and closure ✓ difficult to schedule 6-8 people together
Case studies	to fully understand or depict client's experiences in a program and conduct comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ fully depicts client's experience in program input, process and results ✓ powerful means to portray program to outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ usually quite time-consuming to collect, organize and describe ✓ represents depth of information, rather than breadth

Sustaining a Youth-Adult Partnership

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Sustaining a Youth-Adult Partnership

Just because a partnership is successfully underway doesn't mean your work is done. Sustaining partnerships requires an ongoing commitment of adults and youth. Part of sustaining partnership is making sure the partnership is successful. Signs of success include the following (Texas Network, 2002):

- ◆ Enthusiastic participation: Are adults and youth actively involved, not just at meetings, but between them too?
- ◆ Dialogue and questions: Are the youth asking questions and engaging in the conversations?
- ◆ Clarity: Do youth and adults have the information they need to partner together effectively? Do they have the same information?
- ◆ Commitments: Are youth and adults following through on any commitments they make to the partnership? Does the work get done between meetings?
- ◆ Growth: Are new youth, or new organizations, getting involved in the partnership? Is attendance dropping or growing among already involved youth?
- ◆ Fun: Are the youth laughing? Are the adults laughing? Everyone should be having fun! The fun factor is important, but successful partnership doesn't mean a rowdy group. Balancing fun with meaningful dialogue and decisions is important.

If the partnership is successful, what can you do to ensure it continues to be? Make sure the partnership has an action plan to keep it moving forward. An action plan can include

- ◆ clearly defined goals and objectives that everyone helps develop and agrees to pursue;

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- ◆ a way of tracking whether goals and objectives are met and sharing that information with the youth-adult partnership;
- ◆ a timeline for meeting the goal and objectives—one that considers when youth are available; and
- ◆ an organizational chart that clarifies where the youth-adult partnership sits in the decision-making structure and helps define responsibilities within the partnership.

Action plans are important, but a successful youth-adult partnership also needs to be able to change over time. As participants and issues evolve, make sure the goals and objectives remain relevant to everyone involved.

**Resources for
Starting a
Youth-Adult
Partnership**

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Websites with more information about youth-adult partnerships

- ◆ Youth Infusion Website: <http://youthinfusion.com>
- ◆ Enfusion Network : <http://enfusion-network.org>
- ◆ Effective Youth Development Practice with Teens of Color
www.cartainc.org/youthengagement.html
- ◆ Building Partnerships for Youth
<http://cals-f.calsnet.arizona.edu/fcs/bpy/content.cfm?content=YAPartners>
- ◆ Freechild Project www.freechild.org/yapartnerships.htm

Evaluation Resources

- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health. MMWR 1999;48(No. RR-11). Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm>. Accessed July 30, 2008.
- ◆ Kellogg foundation logic model development guide. Website: <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf> Accessed June 2, 2008.
- ◆ Harvard family research. Website: http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm adopted from [Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation](#). Accessed June 2, 2008.

Toolkit and Training Resources

- ◆ Youth Infusion Website: <http://youthinfusion.com>
- ◆ Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development
www.theinnovationcenter.org/r_toolkits.asp
- ◆ Youth-Adult Partnership Training Curriculum (YouthNet/Family Health International in collaboration with Advocates for Youth)
<http://tinyurl.com/6jomya>
- ◆ The Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence: A Practical Guide for Program Assessment and Action Planning ACT for Youth)
www.actforyouth.net/?publications

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Nothing About Us Without Us

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Nothing About Us Without Us

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Appendices

Nothing About Us Without Us

Appendices - Forms and Materials

Youth-adult partnerships are like any other formal group. They require organization and coordination - which requires many forms and documents! In the back of this guidebook, example materials from Colorado's Youth Partnership for Health are included as appendices. Here is a list of included items:

- Appendix A Discussion Guides for the DVD, *Nothing About Us Without Us*
- Appendix B Brochure
- Appendix C Fact Sheet for Policymakers on the Youth Partnership for Health
- Appendix D Logic Model
- Appendix E Budget Detail
- Appendix F Recruitment Tips
- Appendix G Recruitment Flyer
- Appendix H Application for New Members
- Appendix I Member Continuation Application
- Appendix J Receipt of Application Letter
- Appendix K Application Review Form
- Appendix L Acceptance Letter
- Appendix M Alternate Letter
- Appendix N E-mail Announcements of Meeting Dates and Times
- Appendix O Orientation Outline
- Appendix P Meeting Calendar
- Appendix Q Sign-In Sheet
- Appendix R Sample Meeting Agenda
- Appendix S W-9 Tax Form
- Appendix T Expense Reimbursement Form
- Appendix U Evaluation Letter to Past Presenters
- Appendix V Evaluation Interview Script
- Appendix W Evaluation Report