



Why involve young people?

Youth Participation Kit: Organisations

Resource 2

Organisations can benefit from young people's energy and creativity by involving them in decision making and opportunities to influence change.

The rationale for involving young people

Young people represent approximately 20 per cent of our community. They participate in community life, use community services and resources, and have ideas and opinions about the community. Harnessing their ideas, energy and innovative thinking can help to shape the future of Western Australia and your organisation in new and exciting ways.

This is particularly relevant if your organisation provides services to young people. The United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* provides that young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them (Article 12).

In addition, young people also receive many personal benefits from participating in organisations and the community.

The term 'youth participation' is used to refer to the practice of involving young people in service delivery and decision-making in their communities.

How your organisation may benefit

There are many ways your organisation may benefit from involving young people.

- Young people are good at coming up with new ideas and projects and are often capable of creating and managing them with minimal support.
- Young people have unique knowledge and experience and can be a fantastic resource for many aspects of your organisation.
- Young people can adapt to and use new technology and can use technology to improve organisational efficiency.
- Youth participation enhances your organisation's understanding of this large, diverse section of the community.



Why involve young people?

- Involving young people increases the diversity of your organisation's engagement with the community.
- Input from young people will keep your organisation informed of current and emerging issues.
- For organisations that provide services to young people, involving young people will increase the likelihood that your initiatives will be relevant and effective.
- Young people involved in your organisation will become great community advocates.

Why encourage young people to participate?

Young people that participate in organisations engage in practical learning and develop skills that will help them in their own lives. The experience helps them understand the world around them and gives them realistic expectations as to what they can do in their community. Participation:

- teaches strategic decision making, problem solving and negotiation skills
- shows how organisations work
- gives young people a sense of social inclusion
- provides experience and grounds them in the real world
- connects young people and the community
- empowers young people and increases confidence.

Case Study: Engaging young leaders on aged care and community boards

The [Engaging Young Leaders on Aged Care and Community Boards](#) program aims to create a world class aged care and community sector by creating age diversity on boards. This is achieved through an annual training program for emerging leaders in governance, a series of 'unconventions' and a best practice [online toolkit](#).

"Young Directors are beneficial not only on youth organisations but for a wide range of community organisations including aged care". – Alicia Curtis, Program Coordinator

The program demonstrates that engaging the fresh perspectives of younger leaders has many positive outcomes for organisations. These include:

- championing collaboration between the aged care and youth sectors
- accessing an untapped resource to assist with the challenges of the aged care and community sector
- strengthening the succession planning of organisations as many Boards are filled with 'Baby Boomer' Board Directors



Why involve young people?

- improving the diversity of Boards ensures better conversations, representing diverse interests and perspectives.

The program is an initiative of Southcare in a unique partnership with a number of community organisations, which was started with seed funding from a Department of Communities' Social Innovation Grant.

For more information visit their [website](#).

How to involve young people

Step-by-step guide to involving young people

Step 1	Make sure you understand what youth participation is about	See Resource Sheet 2
Step 2	Set goals for what you want to achieve by involving young people	See Resource Sheet 3
Step 3	Choose a method of involvement	See Resource Sheets 4 and 5
Step 4	Develop a plan for involving young people, including a plan for evaluation	See Resource Sheets 3 and 6
Step 5	Recruit young people	See Resource Sheet 3
Step 6	Put your plan into action	See Resource Sheet 6
Step 7	Monitor your initiative	See Resource Sheet 6
Step 8	Evaluate your initiative and store the lessons learned for future initiatives	See Resource Sheet 3