

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS: HOW TO CREATE STRONG YOUTH-LED PROJECTS

STEPS TO CREATING A STRONG YOUTH-LED PROJECT

1. Invite teens to get involved
2. Identify the problem
3. Set a reachable goal
4. Define actions needed to reach your goal
5. Inventory resources (what do you have, what do you need?)
6. Set up a timeline with clear “bite-size” action steps & deadlines
7. Promote your event through media, publicity
8. Celebrate & Thank
9. Reflect & Evaluate

Don't Forget:

- HAVE FUN!
- Tell Adults what they're doing great; be specific in how they can help you. (Or, for adults: ask youth what they appreciate about your support; ask for suggestions on what to do differently)

CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find self motivated youth ✓ Getting youth together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Propose a project and ASK youth to get involved ✓ Announcements at school, targeted to relevant subject/ class ✓ Food!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finding a youth leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask adults who work with youth (teachers, youth group coordinators, etc) ✓ Find a leadership training to send teens to (see ayea.org) Build a relationship with the teens and follow up to see if they're interested in collaborating on a project when they get back ✓ Ask youth for feedback about what kind of project they would like to lead.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Broaden the group ✓ Motivation to other students/ people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make relevant to youth ✓ Advertising, including everyone ✓ Make activities fun, exciting ✓ Reach out to youth beyond the current members friends ✓ Go to the school, teen center, community events, sports, where youth “hang out”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting youth interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a good project with realistic goals and tangible results ✓ Provide new opportunities, \$, media, rewards ✓ See below- youth are more likely to stay interested if they have clear responsibilities and know that the group is counting on them. ✓ Increase awareness about the issue, educate youth about problem/ cause
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keeping youth on task/ motivated ✓ Work ethic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set realistic goals so youth feel like they can reach the goals, provide structure and accountability. ✓ Ask youth what kind of reminders they would like from you & then remind them (via text, phone, in person, facebook, etc) ✓ Make sure everyone is clear about what the group is committing to and what each individual is committing too. When teens know that their piece is important to the success of the overall project, and they have the support they need to do their piece, they are more likely to follow through. ✓ Provide incentives: extra credit for school, chance to win money/ prizes, recognition ✓ Make agendas for each meeting, have steps to follow for the project, keep lists of tasks to do, create/ update/ follow your timeline ✓ Make it fun! Play games, Have celebrations, ✓ Help teens make the connection to the project: emphasize the impact/ importance of the project Find a coach or chaperone ✓ Have short meetings with interesting work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time commitment/ conflicts/ sports/ hunting/ seasonal activities/ etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prioritizing/ Scheduling/ Deadlines/ Organization ✓ Reach out to teens that aren't already overcommitted. Teens with too busy schedules may be less available to work on this project and they already have other leadership development opportunities. Many teens do not. ✓ If the project is fun & the youth take ownership of it then they will want to prioritize it over their other activities – encourage this by having clear expectations about how much time is required. Be clear about what meetings/events are mandatory and how many can be missed. ✓ Observe everyone's schedules, make it a reasonable time commitment ✓ Set the project schedule around when youth are available. This may mean meetings on evenings or weekends. Be sure that youth have transportation to get to the meeting. ✓ Deep connection to project = commitment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting youth to communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social networking (have fun, social events to build relationships) ✓ Play games to build trust ✓ Work with youth to create communication expectations. Give them the space to suggest what are the best ways for them to communicate with adults. Provide lots of support and encouragement; hold them accountable to sticking with the plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Technology access/ skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask youth what the best way is to communicate with them (email, phone, texting, facebook, myspace, etc) Use the tools that they have access too. If the group as a whole decides to adopt one uniform communication tool, then spend time training teens who aren't familiar with this tool. Use their preferred tools to remind them (eg. Text teens to remind them to check email if they're not used to using email).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Technology – is it a tool or a problem? Should we be getting unplugged? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ask teens “When is technology a useful communication or education tool?” “When is technology a problem? Do you ever feel like it keeps you from other things you love – your family, friends, culture, hunting, fishing, playing outside, etc)?” Engage the youth in respectful dialogue. You can challenge their ideas, but do not dismiss them as incorrect or invalid. Share your experience with technology in your own life and working with youth. ✓ Brainstorm some ideas about how to use technology as an effective tool in your group/ project. Pick one or two ideas and incorporate them into your project plan (e.g. texting friends to remind them to come to meetings/ events, making a facebook event or a facebook page about your project, etc) ✓ Work with teens to create some guidelines for using technology in the group (e.g. no phones and no texting during meetings, no screens at fish camp, etc). Be clear about why you want guidelines (respect) and ask youth if they are okay with the guidelines before finalizing them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Generational differences in communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Correct levels of communication ✓ Educating each other (youth educate adults & visa versa) ✓ Adults: be willing to adjust your expectations, but also be clear about what you need to feel respected. Don't be disrespectful towards youth, think “Would I say this to another adult?” to help you think about how to frame your thoughts ✓ Youth: help adults understand what you mean by what you say & be clear about what you need to feel respected by them.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trust → students, culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build relationships. Spend time with each other & get to know each other. Arrange fun activities that are low-commitment before inviting teens to join a project. Partner with other organizations that teens are connected to (e.g. school teachers, churches, youth centers, tribal council, etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Language Barrier (youth / elders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Language Bridge ✓ Find translators who can speak to youth & edlers and who can teach youth tools to communicate with elders ✓ Play the game we played with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Disrespectful behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Role models, speak on same level ✓ Create clear expectations with the whole group when you begin. Explain that this will be a place of respect. Have everyone go around and say what they need to feel respected. Ask everyone to agree to the list. Later if people are being disrespectful, refer back to the group agreement and call them out on not following it. If they agree to try again, give them another chance. If they do not agree or if they continue to be disrespectful, then ask them to leave.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cliques/ Group dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (See above)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adults taking too much control ✓ Power-tripping adults (or youth leaders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make sure it is youth-led. Adults give the tools and support, but don't construct the whole thing. Maintain good communication between youth and adults throughout the project. ✓ Have a frank talk. Be open and honest about how you feel. ✓ If the whole group agrees (votes), ask them to step down or change their role so they have less leadership power.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sharing visions, adults don't want to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Get a new adult mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finding a good project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make it local ✓ Something that everyone can contribute too / something that makes sense for youth to work on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Environmental Education ✓ Sharing correct information that students can understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (see guest speakers below) ✓ Ask one or two teens to help do research and create a presentation to educate others. ✓ Fact-check presentations with experts over email.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Setting a reachable goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Start simple, you can always build more later. ✓ Do a brainstorm of all of everyone's ideas, then pick one and make a timeline for it. If there's extra time/ resources, add a second idea.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prioritizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ (see above) ✓ Common issues first ✓ Stick to the schedule/ timeline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of focus/ short attention span 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adults, be disciplined about keeping the goal/ tasks/ timeline very realistic & focused. Do not add every single idea to the project plan just because it is “youth led”. The role for adults is to help the youth learn how to be strategic in evaluating which ideas should go in the plan and how to carry out those actions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting the group to agree about what to do/ making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a decision-making process that everyone agrees to (we discuss, come up with a few options, try to come to consensus, and then vote if we can’t come to consensus). ✓ If you think one option is more strategic, be open with the group about your perspective. Talk through decisions with individuals one-on-one before a meeting to help them prepare for the discussion to make the decision. ✓ Be okay with the outcome even if it’s not what you wanted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not knowing if you are successful at the end of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have a very clear & achievable goal with measurable outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting presenters in remote areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use technology to have virtual presentations via webcam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth & Adults - completing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collaboration, rewards, celebration ✓ Set a clear goal with a realistic timeline. Don’t create a giant project that you don’t have the time or resources to finish successfully. ✓ Make sure it’s clear from the beginning that youth and adults are committing to stay involved until the end of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understanding rural vs urban ✓ Different timelines (rural vs urban pace) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a timeline that is relevant for your community. Eg: July 10- July 14 may work in Anchorage, while “early summer” may work in the village ✓ Communicate with rural/urban partners about your timeline needs and be flexible when working across cultures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of resources ✓ Finding money/ funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consultants ✓ Professional Network ✓ Share resources ✓ Use technology ✓ ASK. Youth ask locally ✓ Hold Fundraisers (which also build awareness about your project) ✓ Grants for student projects ✓ Networking ✓ Partnerships ✓ Advertising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be flexible with your timelines. Have a backup plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leadership/ Skill level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support teens. They are leaders, but they are still learning how to be leaders. Have high expectations, but provide lots of support. ✓ Reach out to youth one-on-one to offer extra leadership opportunities to teens you think are ready. ✓ Send teens to leadership trainings to build their skills and then ask them to mentor younger teens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Paperwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Minimize when possible. ✓ Prioritize when necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Garnering support from administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Talk about the importance of building leadership in our youth and the duty we have to our future leaders ✓ Create measurable outcomes (see above) to show the impact your work will have. Include outcomes about youth development and youth leadership in addition to the project outcomes the youth create. ✓ Seek out research that shows the impact of youth and adult partnerships (see ayea.org) ✓ Ask the youth to prepare a presentation about why their project is important and why they need your organizations support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustainability: youth turnover/ adult turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One group of teens cannot be responsible for sustaining a project for many years. Youth-led projects should have short timelines with goals that can be achieved by the teens involved. Projects can build on past projects if new youth are interested. ✓ Adult mentors are very important to successful youth-led projects. Adults must be able to commit to seeing the project to the end and must coach/ train a new adult to fill their role if needed. ✓ SOUL-LOTION: keeping your spirit soft and supple