

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

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

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

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

Involving youth in decision making benefited organizations and community as well.

Organizational leaders found that:

1. Young people helped clarify and bring focus to the organization's mission.
2. Young people led the organization to reach out to the community in more diverse ways, including community advocacy, policy making, and service.
3. The adults and organization became more connected and responsive to youth in the community.
4. Organizations that involve youth in decision making were more appealing to potential funders.

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

http://www.cpn.org/topics/youth/cyd/pdfs/youth_in_decision_making.pdf