



# Youth Leaders

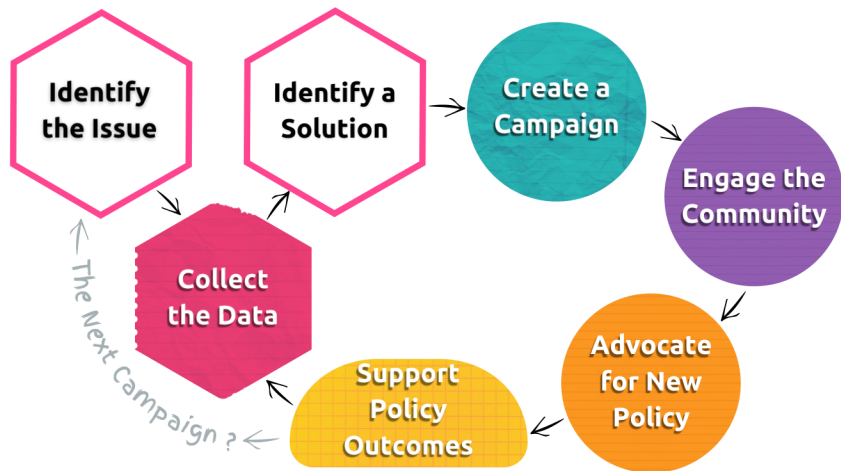
## Youth As Advocates

"Young people are not just decision-takers; they can be decision-makers too."

-Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

Young people, individually and as a group, represent the many intersections within our society (i.e. race, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and beyond). Yet, youth have historically been excluded from the process of decision-making across the globe.<sup>1</sup> In order to create policy solutions that actually work to benefit youth safety, well-being, and overall growth, youth need to be able to share their perspective and be part of the decision making process.<sup>2</sup>

## Youth Leading in Policy Change



The process of policy change can be complex and lengthy, yet young people can still lead in various actions along the way.<sup>3</sup>

Not every process is inclusive to youth participation. The role of adult partners is to empower youth advocates and represent their voice when existing systems work against their equal participation in policy change.

Below is a small example of activities that youth can lead.

- Discussion Groups
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations

- Research
- Strategy Development
- Key Messages

- Public Forums
- Tabling Events
- Town Halls

- Legislative Visits
- Letters of Support
- Media Advocacy

- Surveys
- Data Collection
- Implementation

# YOUTH Are Critical Partners

The experiences of young people are not always included in policy decisions that benefit other age groups.<sup>4</sup> Young advocates are able to speak on the ways they are impacted, share their stories that support data, and be a powerful and collective force for community change.

**1**

## Perspective

Young people are targeted, exploited and impacted. Which is why youth advocates SEE and UNDERSTAND different aspects of an issue.

**2**

## Stories

There is power in youth testimonies. Youth can share their lived experience AND agencies can elevate youth perspectives and stories.

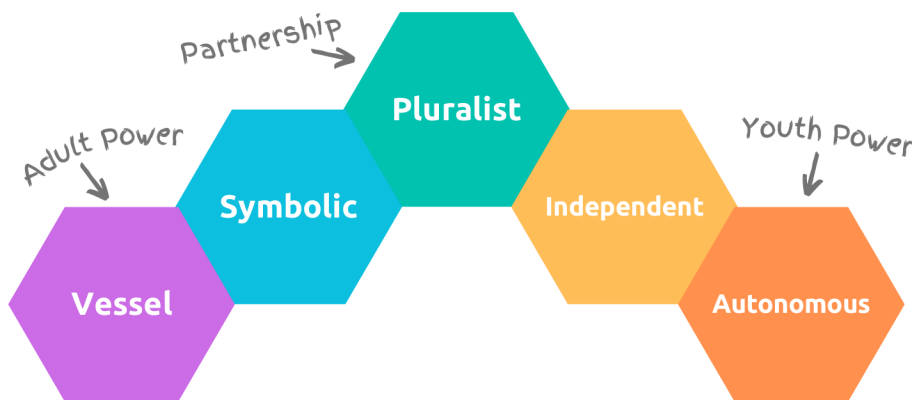
**3**

## Advocacy

Young advocates are critical partners in the advocacy process. When youth are a part of the solution - policies become more sustainable.

# YOUTH-Adult Partnerships

Youth have the right to engage with governments and influence matters that affect them.<sup>5</sup> However, youth are not always welcome in adult-centered spaces where policy work is done. A healthy youth-adult partnership is critical in ensuring young people have access to different spaces and systems where they can use their power to influence change.



More flexible power dynamics will support healthy partnerships between youth and adults.<sup>6</sup>

**Vessel**  
Adults have full control and youth lack opportunities

**Symbolic**  
Adults have most control and youth have minimal voice

**Autonomous**  
Youth have complete control and adult offer no support

**Independent**  
Youth have most control and adults offer minimal support

**Pluralist (True Partnership)**  
Youth and adults share control and support one another

## REFERENCES

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