

# STAYING POWER

Sustaining Youth-Led Projects  
For The Long Haul

Tools for Adult Allies  
of Youth-Led Projects and Programs



**YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

[www.yli.org](http://www.yli.org)



## **ABOUT THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**



The **Youth Leadership Institute** (YLI) is a national organization that works with young people and adults to build communities that invest in youth. A leader in the field of youth development, YLI operates a national Training Institute and local Community-Based Programs, focusing on three disciplines: youth philanthropy, policy and civic engagement, and linking prevention with youth development.

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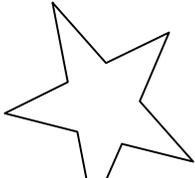
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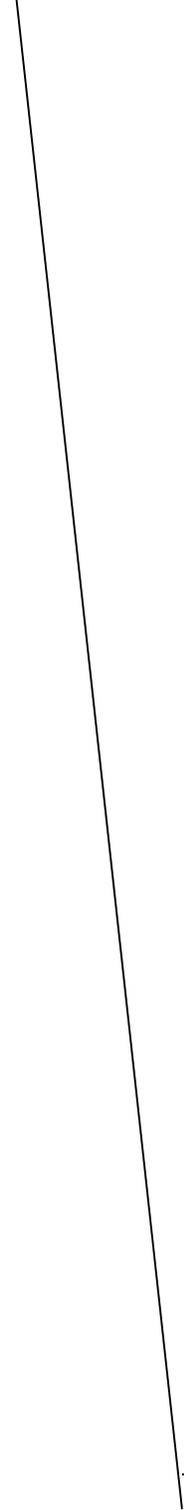


**chapter one:**

# **INTRODUCTION**



**YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**



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# INTRODUCTION

*"Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and be free."*

Cesar Chavez, labor organizer and founder of the United Farm Workers<sup>1</sup>

## WHAT ARE THESE TOOLS?

These tools aim to give adults who support youth-led projects and programs—tools about how to help youth lead and sustain their work over time. While the process of adults learning how to be real allies to youth is not simple, and the work of youth leading their own projects and programs is often fragmented and challenging, there are many common lessons to learn from adults who are veterans of this work.

At the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) we have heard a lot of feedback from youth leaders and their adult allies about the need for a collection of tools like this one, one that focuses on the special challenges of trying to sustain a youth-led project over the course of a longer period of time than just a one-time event or even an academic school year. This collection focuses on how adults can support youth leaders to carry out their projects and programs over the course of a year or more, and contains many tips and lessons for groups at different stages of development. It will also provide important lessons learned for those interested in helping projects become meaningfully youth-led.

## WHY THESE TOOLS?

Over the last 12 years in its youth philanthropy programs, YLI has provided more than three-quarters of a million dollars in direct funding to hundreds of youth-led groups for community action projects and programs. Our years of direct experience with this work has revealed some important themes and trends:

The vast majority of youth-led projects proposed by youth are short-term.

Youth want to do longer term, bigger impact projects and programs but need specific guidance, larger grants and more consistent adult support to do so.

While there are several high-quality tools and materials to support project-based, youth-led research, action planning, and campaign development,

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1995 Cesar E. Chavez Foundation

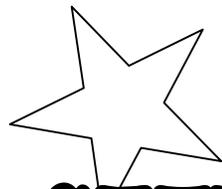
there are few formal resources for young people or adult allies for carrying out and sustaining youth-led projects over time.

In response to these trends, YLI is not only building a pool of resources to increase the amount of funds it can offer projects by youth-led groups, but also strengthening and expanding the type of assistance it can provide. These tools are part of a larger strategy that includes more specialized workshops and direct assistance to adult allies working with youth-led projects.

## WHY IS **STAYING POWER** IMPORTANT?

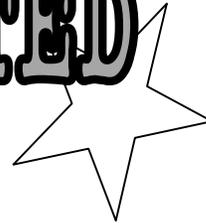
**Why is it important to help youth start and sustain youth-led projects?**  
Because of the following:

- ★ **Youth Development:** the young people involved in these long term projects develop valuable skills, experiences, relationships and community connections that are at the core of positive youth development practice.
- ★ **Community Impact:** The projects and programs that are created often provide important services and address key community concerns in innovative and cost efficient ways.
- ★ **Changes in adult and organizational attitudes.** The presence of sustainable, significant youth-led initiatives helps increase recognition by adult community members, as well as organizational leaders and key community stakeholders (like elected officials), of the positive contributions that youth can make.



**chapter two:**

# **GETTING STARTED**

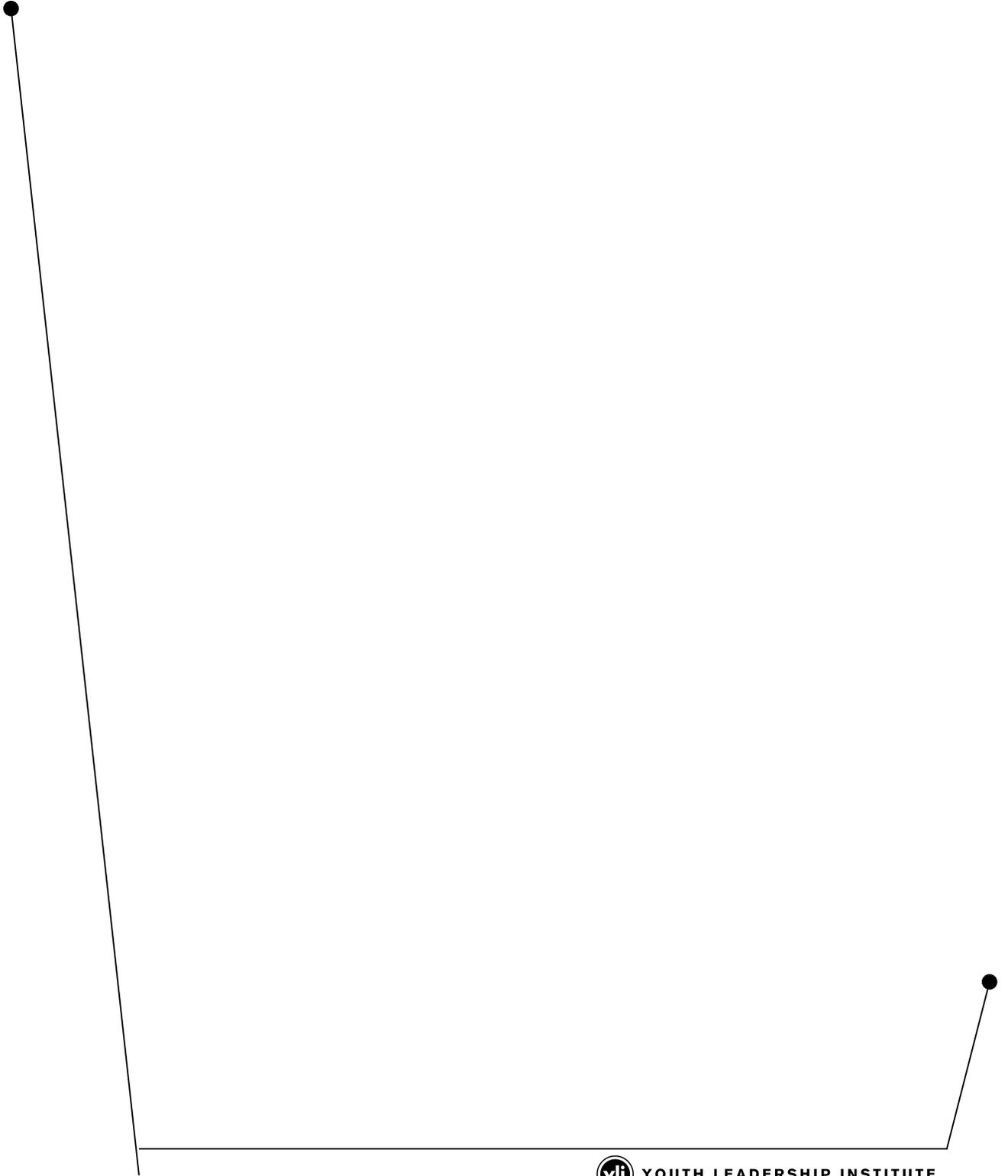


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# GETTING STARTED

## HOW CAN YOU USE THESE TOOLS?

These tools present suggestions, lessons, ideas and activities grounded in the experiences of adult allies who are doing this work. You can use this collection of tools from beginning to end, just like you would any other workbook. You might find it more helpful to use certain exercises that are more appropriate to your current work with youth. In either case, start off with the assessment survey in this section and go from there, as it will help you figure out which chapters will be most relevant to your youth-led project.

## WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?

In order to help your project figure out which chapters will be most helpful, we have provided an assessment tool for your use, called the Youth-Led Group Development Intake Survey. The Intake Survey will help you assess where your group stands on a continuum of overall development. There are two broad categories of youth-led groups that we talk about, based on feedback from groups that YLI works with, along with other youth-led projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. These two categories are:



**EMERGING** youth-led groups. These groups are usually very new, less than 1 year old, and are in the start-up phase of their work. If you recently received funds from a local youth grantmaking board or smaller foundation, then your group is likely an emerging group, probably in the midst of creating your vision, recruiting youth, or starting up your project activities. You have a committed group, a passionate idea and some money to see it through, but you are looking for guidance on how to get going.



**ESTABLISHED** youth-led groups have been around for more than a year, and usually have some ongoing program work—an arts training program, workshop on conflict resolution for students, an organizing campaign, etc.—that they are carrying out over time. A more established group probably has a core of active youth leaders who do the planning and program work of the project, and who are committed to helping the project grow and improve.



## INTAKE SURVEY FOR YOUTH-LED GROUPS

The survey on the next page will help you figure out whether your group is an **EMERGING** or **ESTABLISHED** group, and, consequently which sections of this workbook to concentrate on. The length of time your project has been around is one way of assessing whether you are emerging or established. However, you may find that even though your project has been in existence for several years, you are still operating in start-up mode and can benefit from the tips and tools we have for emerging groups; this is not uncommon in groups with high youth turnover and attrition.

It is best to have at least 2 people from your group (preferably a youth leader and an adult ally) fill out this assessment, so that young people in your project are also considering where the group falls on the emerging/established scale. Have each person fill out the assessment, and discuss the results afterwards.



### YOUTH MOVEMENT RECORDS: AN ESTABLISHED YOUTH-LED PROJECT

An example of a more established youth-led group is **Youth Movement Records (YMR)** in the East Bay. YMR is a youth-run record label that trains young people to run their own companies. YMR has a core of about 20 young people who attend company meetings and make decisions, write and record their own music, perform at local events and sell CDs. Although YMR is still fairly new (they have no paid staff, and have been around for less than two years), they have the advantage of being supported by an adult ally who helped launch a similar youth-led project in Ann Arbor, Michigan, called Youth-Owned Records.



# YOUTH-LED GROUP DEVELOPMENT INTAKE SURVEY

Please circle the answer that fits best for your project or program. Then see page 7 for directions on scoring.

1. **How long has your project or program been around?**
  - A. 1 year or less
  - B. More than 1 year
  - C. More than 2 years
  
2. **Has your project gone through major changes (staff or youth turnover, loss of funding, change in program work or direction) since it started?**
  - A. No major changes.
  - B. We have had one or two major changes.
  - C. We have had many major changes since we started up.
  
3. **How many paid adult support staff (if any) do you have?**
  - A. No paid staff
  - B. 1 part-time to one full-time paid staff person
  - C. 2 or more full time staff people
  
4. **How many committed youth leaders are involved with the project? (This means youth who come to meetings regularly, who identify as being a member of your group, etc.)**
  - A. 4 or fewer youth leaders.
  - B. 5-10 youth leaders
  - C. More than 10 youth leaders.
  
5. **Does your group have a yearlong plan for your work?**
  - A. No, we haven't thought about doing that yet.
  - B. No, but we are planning to do one soon.
  - C. Yes, we do have a yearlong plan.
  
6. **Does your group have a working leadership structure?**
  - A. No, we don't have a structure; whoever shows up ends up leading the group.
  - B. Yes, we have a leadership structure, but it's not clear if and how it works.
  - C. Yes, we have a leadership structure. Both adult allies and youth know what it is and know how it works.



7. **Do you run a regular program that has been going on for more than one school year?**
- A. No, our program has been going on for less than one school year.
  - B. Yes, our program has been going on for at least one school year.
  - C. Yes, our program has been happening for at least two school years.
8. **Does your group have a long-term vision to guide its work?**
- A. No. We're not ready for that yet.
  - B. Sort of, but it is not clear and / or very broad.
  - C. Yes, and we come back to the vision often for guidance.
9. **Do you plan to continue doing your work over the next few years?**
- A. Not sure. We haven't thought that far ahead yet.
  - B. Probably. We're thinking about how to plan to stay around.
  - C. Yes. We have a long-term plan for how to sustain our project even when our current leaders leave.
10. **Do you feel that lots of people outside your project know about your work?**
- A. No, not that many people outside of our project know about us.
  - B. Yes, some people know about us but not as many as I'd like.
  - C. Yes, we have many allies and supporters in the broader community.



## INTAKE SURVEY: SCORING YOUR ANSWERS

For every A answer, give yourself 3 points.

For every B answer, give yourself 2 points.

For every C answer, give yourself 1 point.



**20-30 POINTS:** You are more likely an **EMERGING** youth-led group. This means that you are in the start-up phase of your project, and will most likely come up against some of the same obstacles that other groups have gone through. Your project will probably need support in areas like:

**Basic skills** for youth leaders, such as facilitation, decision-making and fundraising; *see Chapter 3: Preparing Youth to Lead*

Figuring out how to work within a larger **organizational structure**; *see Chapter 4: Sustainability*

Creating a **vision** for your project; *see Chapter 4: Planning for the Long Term*

Short and long-term **planning**; *see Chapter 4: Planning for the Long Term*

Creating a system to **develop youth leadership**; *see Chapter 5: Each One, Teach One*)

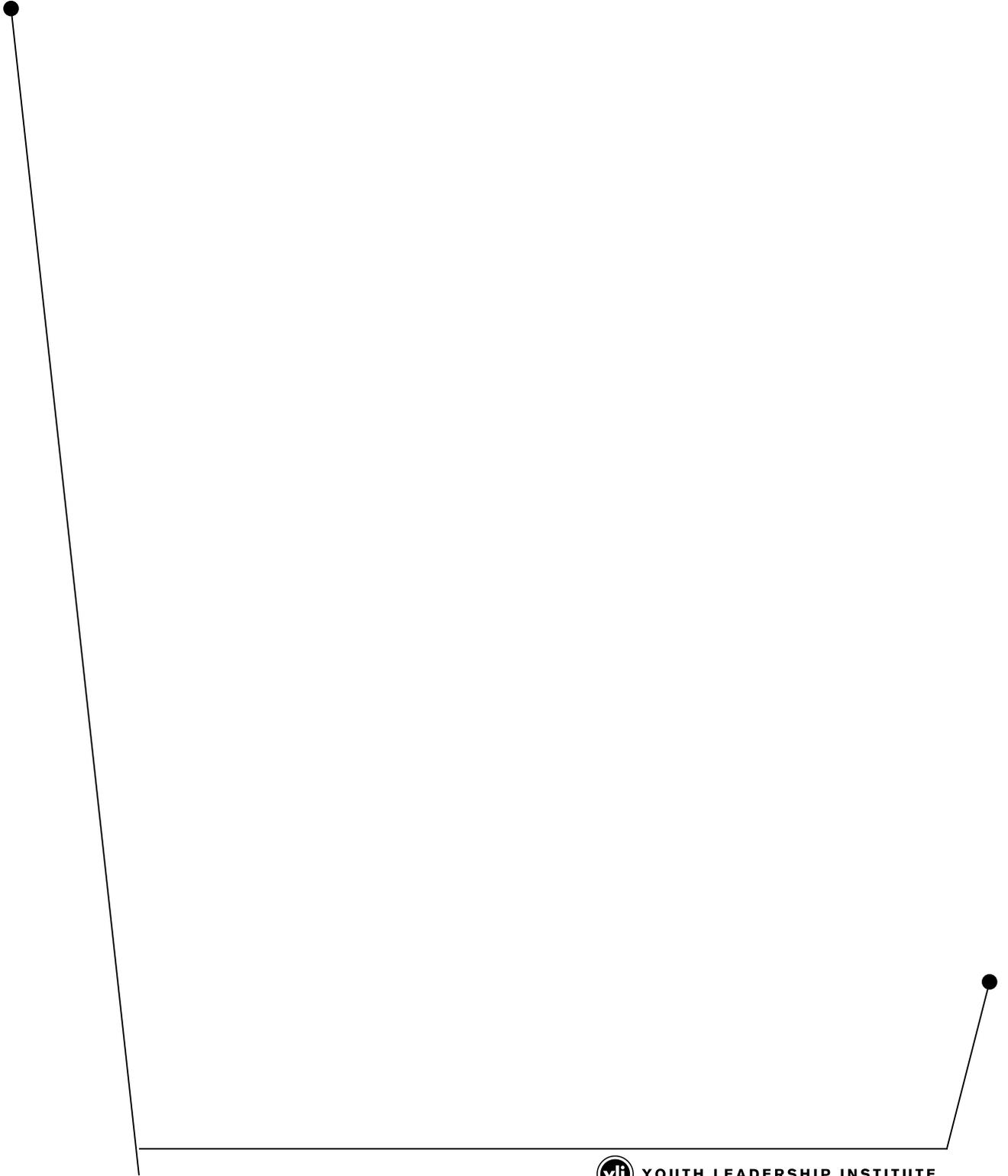


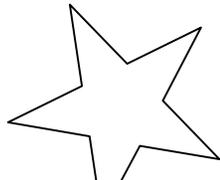
**1-19 POINTS:** You are more likely an **ESTABLISHED** youth-led group. This means you have a strong sense of your purpose and program work, but may still need capacity-building to increase funding, improve management and planning, and further clarify your vision. In addition to fine-tuning the areas outlined for emerging groups (above), you will most likely benefit from help in areas such as:

**Long-term planning** for one year or more; *see Chapter 4: Planning for the Long Term*

Creating a system to **develop youth leadership**; *see Chapter 5: Each One, Teach One*)

**Transitioning skills and leadership to new youth** as more experienced youth leaders “age out” of the group; *see Chapter 5: Each One, Teach One*)



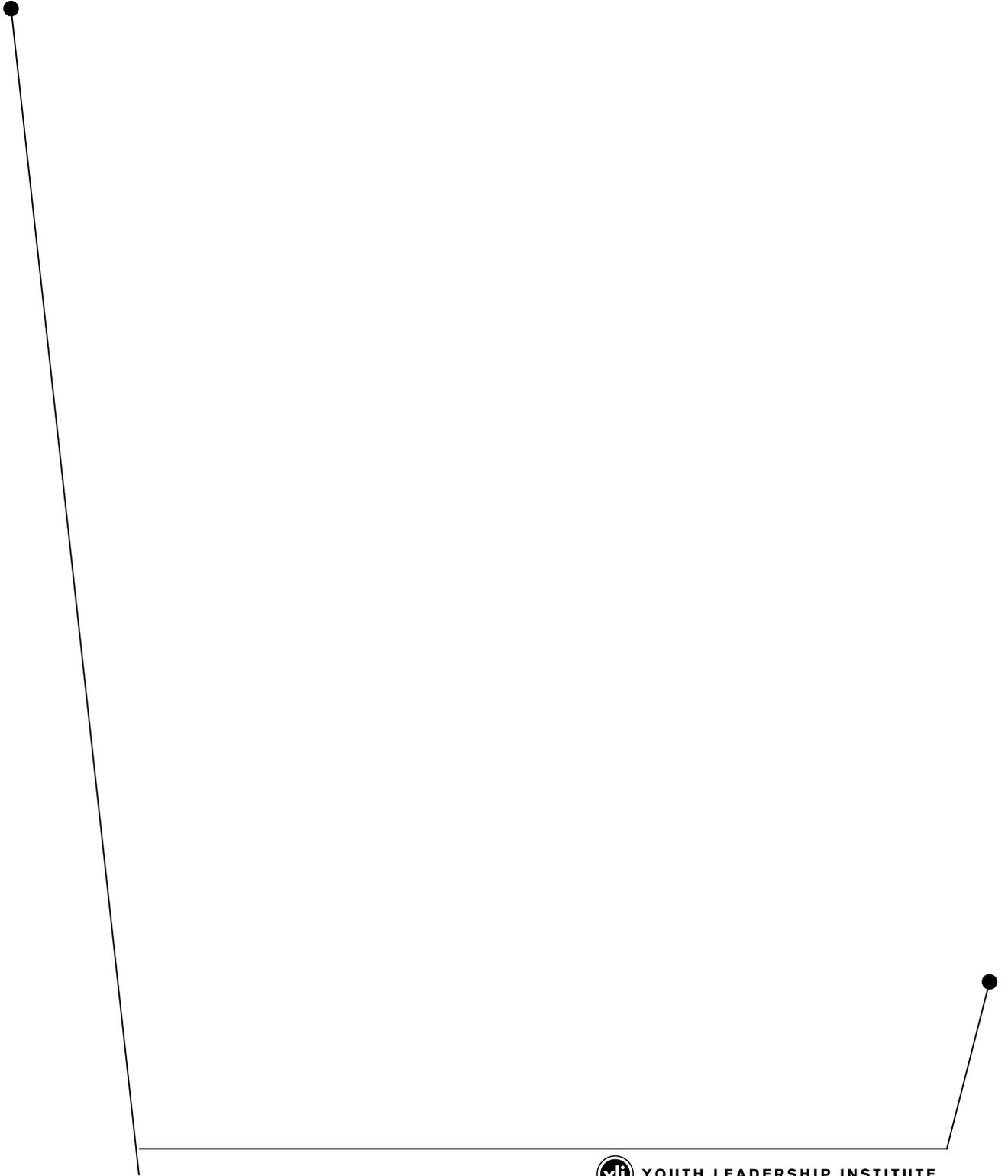


**chapter three:**

# **PREPARING YOUTH TO LEAD**



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# PREPARING YOUTH TO LEAD

## FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS FOR SUSTAINING YOUTH-LED PROJECTS

*“I believe in the right of people to expect those who are older, those who claim to have had more experience, to help them grow.”*

Ella Baker, Civil Rights Movement organizer

Adults play an important role in youth-led groups and organizations. This is true no matter what kind of group you work with, whether it’s an arts group, a youth organizing project or a tutoring program. The most important role for adult allies or partners in youth-led groups is to **PREPARE** and **SUPPORT** youth leaders.

What this means for your group might be different than what it means for another group. The people in your organization, how you work together, and what your values are will all affect how you prepare and support youth. You may decide that adults won’t spend a lot of time training youth, but that peer training is a better way to go. Or you may realize that you need help from adults with special skills that you want your youth leaders to have—such as fundraising, money-management or networking skills.

**Skill Workshops**  
presented in this chapter:

- ★ **Facilitation**
- ★ **Decision-making**
- ★ **Fund Development**

\***Project Planning** – another critical skill – is addressed in Chapter 4.

**Other important skill areas**  
(see Chapter 7: Resources):

- ★ Public Speaking
- ★ Problem Solving
- ★ Meeting Planning
- ★ Working as a Team
- ★ Networking with Adult Allies

For both emerging and established groups, it can be helpful to periodically survey members about their own assessments of these skills in order to guide future skill development trainings. You may find that adults will also benefit from these tools and workshops. All these tools can be used by both adults and youth, alone or in mixed groups, although adults may find more age-appropriate tools by looking through **Chapter 7: Resources**.

### WORDS OF WISDOM

Nancy Hernandez, young adult leader of TOJIL, a SF Bay Area youth-led organizing group, explains: “It’s important to tell adult allies not to run the meetings,” Hernandez says. “Our job is to train the youth to run meetings. It’s important for adult allies to know their role—to provide structure, support, balance and continuity. Youth can represent, adults need to know when to step up and step back.”

## **SKILL #1: MEETING FACILITATION**

A lot of learning, planning, decision-making and other work happens in **Meetings**. The people who help run these meetings—creating the agenda, making sure they are a good use of everyone’s time, calling on people to speak, achieving the outcomes established for the meeting etc.—are called **Facilitators**.

### **WHY IS FACILITATION IMPORTANT?**

Good facilitation helps meetings run smoothly, and helps the people attending the meetings feel heard, included and involved. Also, good facilitation can make it easier to make decisions, plan events and other work, and build community with other folks.

### **WHAT OTHER SKILLS WILL YOUTH LEADERS DEVELOP WHEN FACILITATING MEETINGS?**

Meeting facilitation is a crucial skill, but it is also easy to learn and goes a long way towards helping young people:

- Build confidence in their public speaking ability;
- Learn to be active listeners;
- Learn how to work and communicate well with others;
- Learn how to synthesize information—taking lots of information and giving it back to the group in a way that is simple and easy to understand.
- Learn how to lead a group to action.

### **WHEN SHOULD YOUNG LEADERS LEARN THESE SKILLS?**

It is important that young leaders have had some exposure to good meeting facilitation before being expected to facilitate on their own. Before asking a youth leader to facilitate an entire meeting on their own, it would be best if they:

1. Attend at least one productive and inclusive meeting facilitated by adults or more experienced youth leaders.
2. Attend a facilitation workshop (like the one below).
3. Get some facilitation experience by facilitating one or two agenda items in a regular meeting that they are familiar with (for example, youth intern meetings or weekly youth membership meetings).
4. Sit down with an adult or youth facilitator with more experience to develop an agenda and role-play some facilitation scenarios (the workshop below can help).

# MEETING FACILITATION WORKSHOP: LISTENING AND PARAPHRASING

1 hour

## Materials:

- Listening points written on flipchart/butcher paper
- Facilitation definition (below) written on flipchart/butcher paper
- What does a facilitator do? (below) written on flipchart/butcher paper
- Paraphrasing definition, what and how written on flipchart/butcher paper
- Markers
- 3 blank flipchart/butcher papers

### 1. Introduction to Meeting Facilitation (3 minutes)

*Facilitator:* Meeting facilitation is an important skill for youth leaders to have. Good meetings help us get our work done, make good decisions, keep us on track with our goals, and help us build community with each other. *Listening* is a key skill in facilitating a meeting.

*Facilitator asks group:* How many people have felt misunderstood or not listened to in a meeting? Did that make you want to do more work in that group? (*Wait for 1-3 responses from the group*). Listening is key to making people in your group feel included and important. We are going to practice listening so that we can become better meeting facilitators.

### 2. Listening Exercise 1: Telephone (7 minutes)

*Facilitator gives exercise instructions:* I am going to start by whispering something to only one person—and only once! Make sure you listen so that you can understand enough to whisper to the next person what I said. We will pass on this message person to person, whispering so no one else can hear us, until we get to the end. Then the last person to receive the message will tell us what the message is.

Have group do the exercise. At the end, emphasize how the message changed (if it did) as it passed from person to person. Main points to focus on:

*Listening is a skill, and it is not always easy, but it can be learned.*

*It is important to listen carefully when people are speaking in meetings so you do not misunderstand or misrepresent what they say. We want to make sure everyone feels heard in meetings.*



### 3. Listening Exercise 2: Pair & Share (15 minutes)

*Facilitator Instructions:* Break the group into pairs. Have each pair face each other, and have each person in each pair talk for 5 minutes about a topic of your choice (for example, what they did this past weekend, what kind of music they like, etc.), with the other person just observing and listening. The listener DOES NOT speak, but only listens. After 5 minutes, have them switch roles, so that the listener speaks and the speaker listens.

After each person in the pairs has spoken, bring everyone back to the large group and ask the following questions:

*What was it like to do this exercise? Weird? Fun?*

*Did you feel that your partner was listening? Why or why not?*

Facilitator puts up the Listening butcher paper and reviews good listening and bad listening points, asking for additional ideas from participants

*Good listening: head-nods, uh-huhs, eye contact, alert body language*

*Not so good listening: glancing around, interrupting, glazed over looks*

Facilitator conclusion: *There are lots of definitions of leadership—one important one says that a good leader isn't someone who tells people what to do, but who listens to the group and helps them make decisions about what they want to do. The foundation of facilitation is listening and how we need to be conscious of it as we move forward.*

### 4. What does a facilitator do? (10 minutes)

Facilitator gives definition of facilitation (on butcher paper) and puts up What Does a Facilitator Do? butcher paper. Facilitator then asks group to brainstorm what a good facilitator does, making sure to include the following points:

Helps the group focus

Creates a meeting agenda

Listens well

Paraphrases and summarizes what the group is saying

Offers suggestions for action and moving forward

Remains neutral

Facilitator ends this section by emphasizing that facilitation is a skill that can be learned and that it takes practice to do it well. Encourage the group to be patient and to use their instincts on how to facilitate well in addition to the information they are receiving today.

## 5. Paraphrasing Exercise: Pair & Share (20 minutes)

Facilitator puts up the Paraphrasing flipchart/butcher paper and reviews.

Paraphrasing: using your own words to repeat what someone said.

Why: to let members of the group think out loud; to ensure that you as the facilitator understand what was said; to make sure that other group members understood what was said

How: it sounds like you are saying....Did I get that right?<sup>2</sup>

Then break the group into the pairs again. Give the pairs a topic to discuss, such as an event the group is working on or a current event that is in the news. Tell each pair that they want to work towards a certain decision or outcome, depending on the topic. Have the partners in each pair take turns paraphrasing each other, using the paraphrasing tips.

Have each pair discuss this topic for 10 minutes, switching paraphrasing roles after 5 minutes. After 10 minutes, have everyone come back to the large group. Facilitator asks large group:

*How did it feel to paraphrase your partner's words?*

*Did you feel that your partner was paraphrasing accurately?*

*What was challenging about paraphrasing?*

Facilitator concludes by emphasizing the following points:

*Paraphrasing can be difficult, but will get easier with practice.*

*Being a good listener is key to being able to paraphrase well.*

*Knowing where the group is headed helps with paraphrasing.*

## 6. Closing and Evaluations (5 minutes)

Facilitator closes by making the following points:

These are some of the basic skills of facilitation, which will also help you become better leaders overall.

Practice makes perfect. Make sure to facilitate often so you can get practice.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Community at Work. (1999). Group Facilitation: Putting participatory values into practice.

## **SKILL #2: MAKING DECISIONS**

### **WHY IS DECISION-MAKING AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR YOUNG LEADERS?**

As you work with your group, you'll be making decisions and working as a team everyday. If your group cannot make decisions in a way that is time-conscious and inclusive of everyone who is affected by these decisions, then people will feel less excited about your work and eventually may not want to work with you as much. Making good decisions not only **helps you get your work done**, but also **gives youth leaders crucial life skills** that can help them deal with personal decisions or on-the-job situations in which critical thinking skills are necessary.

### **WHAT OTHER SKILLS WILL YOUTH LEADERS DEVELOP THROUGH DECISION-MAKING?**

Decision-making is probably the most crucial and life-changing skill that young people can learn through their involvement in youth-led projects and programs. At every stage of their lives, young people will be faced with decisions that will affect their futures significantly. Modeling and exposing young people to healthy and effective decision-making processes can go a long way towards helping them make positive choices for themselves. And when youth learn decision-making skills, they also benefit from learning how to:

*Be active listeners;*

*Work and communicate well with others.*

*Acknowledge and appreciate different points of view.*

### **WHEN SHOULD YOUNG LEADERS LEARN THESE SKILLS?**

**The sooner, the better.** Youth should be exposed to good decision-making processes and practices as much as possible, so that these processes can be modeled for them. As in the case of Youth Movement Records (see example on page 4), youth are part of weekly company meetings, during which they make major decisions that affect the whole project. In the Youth Movement Records example, it is important for adults and youth to facilitate decisions well (see facilitation training above) and for youth to have had some exposure to healthy decision-making processes so that they have a context for their own decision-making experience.

# TOOL: FACILITATING A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

## 1. *UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE, PROBLEM OR SITUATION YOU ARE DEALING WITH FIRST.*

Example: “We are trying to decide what to do about decline in membership of our group over the last two months. Let’s make sure we all know what’s happening and why we think its happening.”



Things to consider: Understanding these issues might mean more than just a discussion. Use brainstorming, small group fact-finding, outside interviews, or background reading as a way for people to understand. Emphasize to the group that understanding **WHAT** is happening and **WHY** it is happening—rather than jumping into opinions about what to do about it—is crucial at this stage.

## 2. *COME UP WITH DIFFERENT DECISIONS YOU CAN MAKE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE.*

Example: “We have a much better understanding of what’s happening. One decision we could make would be to find a better time to meet. Are there other things we could do instead?”



Things to consider: In the example above, the facilitator was able to narrow down a single decision. However, there could be more than one possible decision that could come out of your analysis (Making reminder calls might be something else they could decide to do, for example). The facilitator plays a key role here in helping present decisions that could be made. Once the group has generated different kinds of decisions it can make, they should be written up and displayed for the rest of the decision-process.

## 3. *DISCUSS PROS AND CONS, STRENGTHS AND CONCERNS OF DIFFERENT DECISIONS YOU CAN MAKE.*

Example: “Let’s talk about changing our meeting times as a way to deal with losing membership.” What are the pros of doing this? What are the cons?”



Things to consider: Emphasize consequences—results of the decisions—as a way to help members think about pros and cons. Use a flip chart to place pros and cons in side-by-side columns.



4. **FOCUS ON THE DISAGREEMENTS AMONG GROUP MEMBERS AND TRY TO RESOLVE.**

Example: “Let’s figure out why some folks feel like changing meeting times won’t address the issue.”



Things to consider: Facilitator should try his or her best to clarify what the actual disagreement is for the rest of the group, and get members on different sides of the issue to explain their positions.

5. **PROPOSE A DECISION TO THE GROUP.**

Example: “Based on everything I have heard, I think we are ready to make a decision to change our meeting times to Wednesdays, but make sure that everyone gets reminder calls the night before.” Did I get this right?



Things to consider: This is a critical time in the decision process. The facilitator needs to take a risk here and suggest a decision to be made, not merely ask group members. “What’s your decision?” The process gets bogged down if people are not clear what they are deciding on.

6. **DECIDE AS A GROUP.**

Example: The facilitator could say something like: “Can we all agree to this?” or ask for a vote.



Things to consider: The group should have determined which kind of final decision method they use prior to starting the process. See below for different kinds of decision techniques.

7. **REFLECT ON THE OUTCOME.**

Example: How do folks feel about the decision we made? Did the process work for you?



Things to consider: For important decisions, a reflection on the process and outcome helps members identify how to improve decision making and address any concerns that dissenting members might have had about the outcomes.



## TAKE NOTE: CONSENSUS VERSUS MAJORITY VOTE

Help your group choose whether to use consensus or majority vote as its decision-making method. Consensus means that everyone can at least live with the decision. Majority vote means that you can reach a decision even if a certain percentage (1/3 of your group, for example) disagrees with the majority. Consensus takes longer and is often not realistic for groups greater than 8. However, it fosters a more complete discussion of the issues and ensures that once a decision is made, everyone in the group is behind the decision. Majority vote is faster, but the group runs the risk of alienating those members who don't agree with the majority. Some groups use modified consensus, where they try to reach consensus, but "fall back" to majority vote if agreement can't be reached.

## TOOL: WHEN YOU ARE READY TO DECIDE

Below are a few tools that your group can use when they are ready to decide on a particular decision:

***Thumbs up and down:*** Ask people to give a hand sign (thumbs up = YES; thumbs to the side = you are OK with the decision; thumbs down = NO).

***Polling the group:*** Do a go-around, asking each person to verbally state where he or she stands: YES, OK (I can live with this decision) or NO.

***"Any opposition?"*** State the decision you think the group is leaning towards and ask, "Anyone disagree?" This is much quicker than going around the room and having everyone make a statement.



**EXERCISE: PRACTICE DECISION MAKING**

Use a simple example to help participants practice facilitating and participating in a group decision. For example: What to do about dinner for next week's meeting. In advance, generate some facts to share with the participants if they inquire (how much money they have to spend; that there needs to be veggie options, etc.)

1. Adapting the steps above, place a list of decision steps on flip chart paper and review each one with the group.
2. Break participants into groups of 3 or 4 and ask one person to facilitate the decision process, and another to be the process watcher and presenter. Let them know that they can come to you to get questions answered.
3. Assign different decision method (Voting or consensus) and techniques for polling the group (thumbs, etc) for different groups to use.
4. Have members try to reach a decision about dinner for next week using the steps and their assigned decision methods and polling strategies
5. Afterward, have the process-watcher present what they saw to the group, especially what worked and what didn't work.
6. As a group, discuss the activity:
  - What did people think about this kind of structure?*
  - How was it different than other structures you have used in the past?*
  - What things would you change about this process or the tools we used?*

## **SKILL #3: FUNDRAISING**

### **WHY IS FUNDRAISING AN IMPORTANT SKILL FOR YOUNG LEADERS?**

Having youth involved in or leading fundraising efforts is crucial for a project to be truly youth-led. Often, adults handle all the fundraising and financial aspects of running a project, feeling that these areas are too difficult or complex for youth to handle. This can be dangerous and can lead to adults having too much power over what is supposed to be a youth-led project or program. Often, those who control the money in a project have the real power. It is also important for young people to understand what it takes to build support. It can deepen their conviction in the project by having to raise resources to support and sustain it.

### **WHAT OTHER SKILLS WILL YOUTH LEADERS DEVELOP THROUGH DECISION-MAKING?**

Fundraising can offer some concrete program and youth development benefits. If they are involved in fundraising, youth will:

- Be better prepared to advocate for your project in general, because they will develop stronger communication skills about your project's work.

- Establish or strengthen relationships with potential funders and other supportive adults who have access to resources besides money (like contacts, facilities, or information) that can benefit your program work.

- Become better equipped to make educated decisions about long-term planning and vision, because they will have been exposed to more big-picture thinking about youth-led groups and social change.

- Develop an important career skill. Fundraising is an important and marketable skill that will help them in any future career.

Lastly, getting youth involved in fundraising often leads to greater accountability to young people, who should know about and have a say over how their group is presented to donors and funders.

### **WHEN SHOULD YOUNG LEADERS LEARN THESE SKILLS?**

When they are familiar enough with the group's work that they feel comfortable talking to youth and adults outside the organization about what they do. Young

leaders should also be thoroughly prepared by adult allies (use the tips and information below as a resource) for meetings with funders and donors.

## **EXERCISE: MAKING THE CASE FOR YOUR PROJECT**

**15 minutes**

Facilitator explains that “making the case” for your project’s work means having a brief, convincing few sentences that explain why your project is important and necessary. Facilitator explains that the group is going to take a few minutes to come up with a brief “case statement” that can be used in a lot of different fundraising scenarios.

Facilitator breaks the group up into pairs, and instructs each pair to come up with 1-3 brief sentences that answer the following questions:

Why are you involved with [group name]?

Why is [group name]’s work important to the community?

Coach each pair to come up with a brief case statement, based on your mission and vision. Have them practice saying it aloud to each other until they feel comfortable saying it. Encourage them to put the statement into different words to make it feel more natural when they say it aloud.

You will now use the case statements that you developed in this exercise for the fundraising role-plays below.

# FUNDRAISING ROLE-PLAYS

30 minutes each

The following role-plays can help youth become more comfortable with interacting with different kinds of people around fundraising. Try each one with your group to help them get over their fears of fundraising and to help demystify the process for them. These role-plays are good to use after doing the workshop above, as a supplement and a way for youth to practice fundraising in a safe and supportive setting.

Please note, however, that these role-plays are brief and that other, more thorough role-plays and trainings are out there to help youth develop more advanced fundraising skills. These role-plays should be conducted by an adult ally or youth leader who has some level of experience with one or more of the following fundraising tasks.

## ROLE PLAY #1: A FUNDER SITE VISIT

This is a good role-play to do first because it is the most foreign to young people's daily experiences and can be one of the most intimidating of the fundraising scenarios. Conducting this role-play early has the effect of getting the "hard stuff" out of the way first.

1. Have an adult ally with some fundraising experience play a foundation staff person, and have the youth (in a large group) pretend they are attending a site visit from the funder. The adult should speak in big "adult" words, ideally in a different voice—to make the role-play more fun—and ask pointed questions about the group's mission, vision and programs, and the youth participants should take turns answering. (15 minutes)
2. Debrief the role-play afterwards, asking the youth how it felt to talk about their group, what went well and what they could improve. Take notes and keep them for further training and evaluation. (15 minutes)

## ROLE PLAY #2: PHONE CALLS TO POTENTIAL DONORS

This role-play can be done in pairs, by having one pair of volunteers (either two youth or one adult and one youth) sit in front of the large group to demonstrate.

1. Choose two volunteers (an adult and a youth or two youth) to role-play calling a supporter to ask for a donation. If having one pair demonstrate the role-play in the group, do the demo role play first, and then split the whole group into pairs, or have the group split up into pairs immediately.
2. Instruct one person in each pair to be the donor, and the other person to be the fundraiser.
3. Have the fundraiser prepare a short "rap" with 1-3 talking points about why their project is important, and with a specific dollar amount to ask the donor for. (For example, "Project Y has been helping runaway youth



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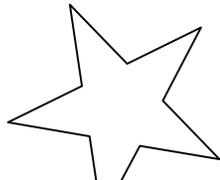
get counseling and find safe places to stay. Would you donate \$50 to help Project Y continue providing our counseling services?”).

4. Have the fundraiser “call” the donor and talk to them, giving them their rap and asking for a specific amount of money. The donor can respond however they like, but should be taking the role-play seriously. What would they really do in that situation?
5. After each pair has switched roles, have the whole group debrief the experience. What did they like about making the call? What was difficult about it? What did they do well? What do they need to improve on? Were they successful at getting the donor to give their group a donation?

## ROLE PLAY #3: A BENEFIT PARTY

This role-play is especially good for young people who are natural “crowd pleasers” and performers—the ones who like to be in front of people and don’t mind the attention. At the same time, learning this skill is helpful for youth who may be shyer in order to coax them out of their shell. In either case, avoid the temptation to pigeonhole youth by only encouraging more outgoing youth to make fundraising pitches at events. Everyone can learn the skills it takes to do this type of fundraising.

1. Ask 1 or 2 youth leaders (2 youth can tag-team with each other during the role play) to volunteer to be the fundraisers for this role-play. Have the rest of the group role play the audience at a benefit fundraiser event.
2. Give the fundraisers 5-7 minutes to come up with a brief “pitch” (presentation to ask for money) to give at a benefit party for your project. The pitch should contain the following: 1) why they think your project is necessary and important 2) how the project has affected their lives; and 3) a specific dollar amount that they want people in the “audience” to give (this dollar amount should be realistic, say \$50 or \$100). The pitch should be no more than 3-5 minutes long.
3. If you like, you can also assign roles for people in the audience, such as 1) someone to raise their hand after the fundraiser makes *the ask* and volunteer to donate \$100; 2) someone to ask whether they can make a donation in monthly payments. Encourage the audience to be supportive and not heckle or make fun of the fundraisers.
4. Have the fundraisers pitch to their audience and get a response.
5. After the role-play, have the fundraisers and audience debrief together on 1) how it felt for the fundraisers to make the pitch 2) what the fundraisers did well; and 3) what they could improve on.

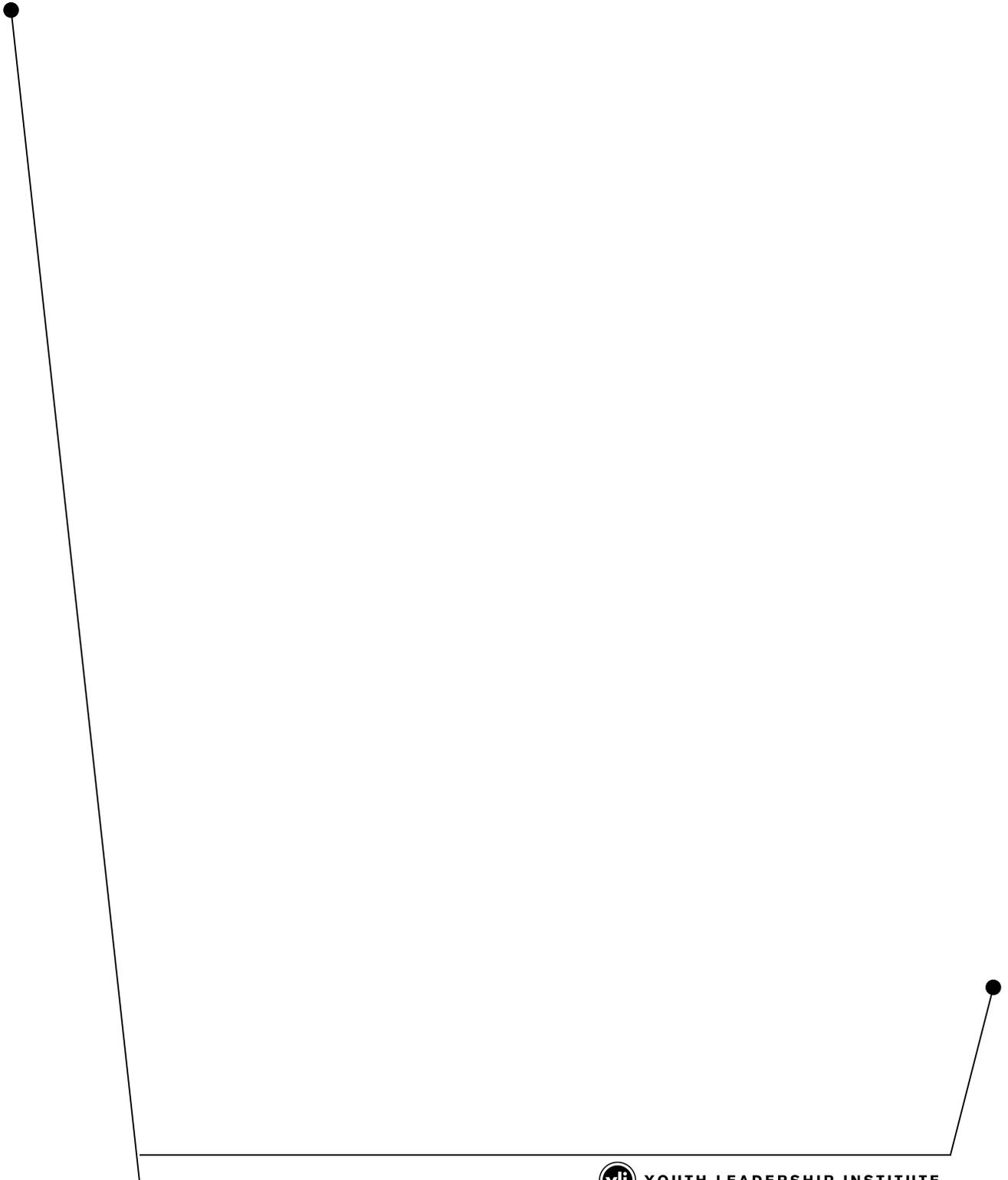


**chapter four:**

# **PLANNING FOR THE LONG TERM**



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# PLANNING FOR THE LONG-TERM

*“Young people are not coming in to create a long-term plan—they want to deal with stuff immediately—not necessarily what do you want do in six months or a year. But a really important role for adult allies is helping youth members stay accountable to long-term goals and vision...and whether [their projects are] building towards that vision.”*

Nancy Hernandez, Young Adult Ally & Organizer, Tojil

NOTE: Planning is not something that happens once, but is ongoing. This chapter considers a number of planning techniques, with the important exception of research and assessment. Groups at this stage can turn to a number of important resources for research in **Chapter 7: Resources**.

Groups use planning to make sure they are using their time, people power, money and other resources well. Planning includes figuring out your big vision as well as what tasks each person in your group should be doing in a given week. Plans are valuable tools to help make sure youth are included in decision-making and other important work. A lot of people don't like planning because it can be difficult or confusing. But having a strong and clear plan is the best preparation to make sure your project or program can operate smoothly and effectively.

Adult allies have a special role to play in helping youth-led groups do planning. As Nancy Hernandez' quote above says, adults need to help youth stay accountable and focused on their vision and long-term goals, instead of getting distracted by new opportunities and issues that emerge over time.



## DO'S AND DON'TS OF PLANNING

DO create a vision for your project as the foundation of your planning, and come back to it frequently as you carry out your work.

DON'T fall back on the plan you wrote for your fundraising proposal as your end-all, be-all plan. Often, groups don't make the time to plan, and end up using the plan they needed to develop for their fundraising proposals instead. Your funding proposals should be based on your own, more detailed plan, not the other way around.

DO stay focused and DON'T get caught up doing things that don't help you move towards your goals. Adult allies should help youth stay focused on your core work.

DON'T underestimate how much time things take—including planning time itself! Tasks generally take a lot longer to get done than you think they will. Give your group lots of time—twice the amount you think you need—to create your plans and finish your tasks.

DON'T plan too much work when school is starting-up or ending.

DON'T try to do too much at once; make sure your plan is realistic and do-able. Having a realistic plan means that your group will gain a greater sense of accomplishment by getting most of it done, instead of a sense of failure because they haven't met their own goals.

DO make a colorful, visual plan, listing out activities, dates, tasks and roles in a way that you can display on a wall or other visible place. This provides an important reminder to youth about the specific tasks in front of them.

# ACTIVITY 1: CRAFTING VISION FOR YOUR PROJECT

45 minutes

A key step in creating a solid, effective plan for your youth-led project or program is to create a vision of what your group wants to change. This is an important first step for a few reasons:

It helps keep the group focused on the big picture while planning, instead of just getting an activity or event done

It inspires hope and power in young people as the basis of planning their work, instead of planning from a perspective of disempowerment

It helps planners imagine a positive future beyond what they currently experience.

## Materials needed:

Flipchart or butcher paper

Different colored markers

1. Give a definition of a vision. Our definition is “A shared hope or dream for what could be in the future.”
2. Give some examples of visions. Use examples from other youth-led groups in your community if possible. Here are some general examples to share:
  - Plenty of free and safe spaces for youth to hang out and have fun
  - A neighborhood where we can get healthy nutritious food more easily than we can get alcohol or cigarettes
  - A high school where students have a real say in how things are done
3. Explain that context and history is important background in the group’s effort to create a shared vision. Use one of the following techniques to present the group’s history (what happened in previous years):
  - Oral presentation by returning members about past years’ activities, successes and challenges
  - Review of a timeline of activities and milestones for previous years
  - Group discussion or brainstorm of accomplishments, activities, milestones, and learnings from previous years.
4. After presentation and collection of information, have the group collectively identify themes, facts, ideas, etc. that came out of this section that we should keep in mind when we create our own vision. Use large group brainstorming to capture these ideas.



## CASE IN POINT: SFLeans

Laura Critchfield, Director of SFLeans, has been partnering with young people in the Bayview-Hunter’s Point district of San Francisco for the past 4 years to create a community high school. She emphasizes the importance of mapping out a vision for what young people want. According to Laura, young people need to create this vision, and a vision is particularly valuable when youth leaders are coming in and out of the project, as often happens.



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5. Explain to participants that they will now take steps toward creating a shared vision for their work.

6. Give instructions for small group work. Here's a script you can use:

*"Use flip chart paper and markers to create your small group vision of what we could do. Because words are sometimes difficult to come by in this kind of visioning, feel free to use pictures or symbols to convey what you want to say. You can even create a poem or rap as your vision statement if that works for you."*

7. Start by organizing participants into small groups, making sure that each small group has at least one member or ally with some reasonable history or context on the project.

8. Give people about fifteen minutes to brainstorm their vision and be prepared to present their findings.

9. Ask each small group to present their findings. Assign "idea capturers" to gather themes and concepts that emerge from each presentation and write them on flip chart paper. The Facilitator should offer other themes that "idea capturers" missed.

10. As a facilitator, review concepts that were generated, and add any others that participants suggest.

11. Ask an experienced facilitator (who is a youth member) to help present a statement that encompasses these concepts and then seek agreement from the group about whether this can be their vision.

12. Seek final confirmation of the vision by asking one or more participants to "wordsmith" the statement and prepare to present an updated version at the next meeting.

13. [Optional] Brainstorm ways that they group can transform these words into something they continue to use. For example: "write out the vision statement at that top of each meeting agenda" or "every three months, dedicate time towards the end of the meeting to review accomplishments with our vision."

## ACTIVITY 2: CREATING SHORT-TERM WORK PLANS

1 hour

For emerging groups, creating short-term work plans is an important, necessary introduction to planning concepts. You might have a solid idea, a clear vision, and a motivated team. However, your group may need a structured way to explore the specific steps for implementing its project, or components of the project. Below is an activity that will help you make a plan for a short-term project, like a youth dance, a planning retreat, or a rally. It has several steps, but is straightforward, active, and fun. It is best to have this facilitated by an adult or a youth leader with experience making plans and facilitating group processes.

### Materials:

Lots of large post-it notes (3X5 inch size or larger)

Markers

Flip chart paper

2 pieces of flip chart paper or butcher roll taped together for a timeline.

### Directions:

1. Tape a flip chart on the wall—write **BEFORE** at the top. Explain that we are going to brainstorm potential activities that need to happen to get the project started. Give one example; if you are doing an activism workshop, a possible task might be: *“find a space to hold the workshop.”*
2. Pass out at least 10 post-it notes to each person. Have the group write on post-it notes all the activities they think they need to accomplish. Remind them that a separate post-it note should be used for each activity.
3. Have everyone put their post-it notes on the BEFORE flip chart. At the chart, have someone cluster similar activities. The facilitator should ask if any activities were left out. If additional ones are given, have someone record them on post-it notes and add them to the flip chart.
4. Now you are ready for the timeline. First decide as a group how long you want the timeline to be (1 month, 4 months, 6 months, a year? Keep in mind outside deadlines). Use cross marks to denote months.
5. One at a time, have participants take a post-it that represents a specific activity and put it in a place they think it needs to be. Give an example like this first: *“If you are doing a large event, you might want to reserve the room 3 months in advance to be sure you get it.”*



- As a group, look at all the tasks arranged on the timeline. See if it makes sense to move tasks around, or add and remove tasks. Use the following questions to help stimulate discussion:

Do any activities seem out of order? Example: sometimes, people make the mistake of finishing a flyer before they secure dates and locations that need to be on the flyer.

Do any activities need more time to be accomplished?

Are there any activities that should be on this list but aren't yet?

- Reserve time in this exercise for group members to assign people to carry out tasks. Write names of participants under the post-it notes.
- Copy all of the information into a chart so you have this information for planning! Below is an example of a chart you can use.

## A SAMPLE WORKPLAN CHART

PROJECT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY START DATE	ACTIVITY COMPLETION DATE	WHO'S RESPONSIBLE
Secure location for big event	2/2/04	2/14/04	Anthony
Design recruitment flyer	2/14/04	2/25/04	Lydia and Miguel
Write story for school newspaper	2/14/04	3/3/04	Angelo

## MAKING A YEAR-LONG PLAN

The exercise above will help you create short-term plans for specific activities or events that happen over the course of a few months or weeks. Keeping the project going, making it stronger, or deciding new directions for the group demands long-term planning. Long-term planning means planning for a whole year or several years. Often, groups will go on annual retreats, taking a few days away from the day-to-day work as a time to reflect, evaluate the past year's work, and plan for the coming year. Planning retreats are also an excellent way to build community, celebrate your group's accomplishments, figure out what didn't go so well, and plan for the future.

If your group is just starting out, it might sound overwhelming to plan for a whole year. But if your group plans to stick around for more than few months or a year, it would be wise to sit down and have a planning retreat to get everyone on the same page about what you all want to do together over a longer period of time. It would probably be most useful, if you are a new or emerging group starting up a brand-new program, to carry out your work for at least a semester if not a whole year, go through all the changes and vision shifts that will happen in that first year, and then as you go into your second year, take some time—at a weekend retreat or other set-aside time—to evaluate your first year of work, make decisions about future direction, and plan the year ahead.

Also, be sure to bring all your wisdom and thinking around your vision, strategies and even your short-term plans. Knowing how long certain tasks or programs take, who has the knowledge to run them and what kinds of help and funding you will need to make your programs successful is important. This knowledge will go a long way towards creating a plan that will not only be realistic and achievable, but ambitious enough to be inspiring for both youth and adult allies.



## TOOL: CREATING A YEAR-LONG PLAN

The sample plan at the end of this chapter shows what an annual plan might look like for an emerging group that has a set program. You can use this sample to help you create a one-year plan for your group. Below are some basic steps to create your own yearlong plan.

- STEP #1. SET ASIDE A CHUNK OF TIME TO DEVOTE MOSTLY TO PLANNING.** This can be done at a weekend retreat or during a series of extended meetings. Either way, build in time for fun and group building, so that participants will look forward to planning instead of dreading it!
- STEP #2. CRAFT AN AGENDA FOR YOUR PLANNING RETREAT OR MEETINGS CAREFULLY.** Include youth leaders in **planning** and **facilitating** different parts of the planning sessions. Remember to: (1) use people's time wisely; (2) tackle what you can handle (not too much!); and (3) assign tasks to specific people so that everyone leaves with a sense of purpose and responsibility for some aspect of the project.
- STEP #3. HAVE YOUR PLANNING RETREAT OR MEETINGS.** Take notes and transcribe them later into notes that can be saved, shared, and used for future evaluation and planning meetings. Allow time at the end for evaluation and reflection to see if people feel engaged or not in the process. You want everyone's voices to be included!
- STEP #4. REVISE AND REFINE THE PLAN AS NECESSARY, AND PRESENT IT TO THE WHOLE GROUP FOR FINAL REVISIONS AND APPROVAL.** This important step ensures that your plan does more than collect dust in someone's desk. Your plan should be a **real guide** for everyone to do their work and stay focused on their goals. Revisiting the plan with the whole group also reminds people what they committed to.
- STEP #5. CARRY OUT YOUR PLAN!** Follow the plans created by the group, making notes about what got done, what didn't (and why), and what popped up that you hadn't planned on (it happens all the time!). Monthly or weekly meetings can help you keep the group on track with their long-term plan.
- STEP #6. REFLECT AND EVALUATE.** Set aside another retreat or series of meetings to not only evaluate the plan you just finished, but also to plan for the coming year. Evaluations are a great opportunity for youth to develop real critical thinking and planning skills, especially if you've kept track of how the group did with the original plan. If your group didn't accomplish what it set out to do, focus on why when planning for the future. On the other hand, if you achieved more than what you set out to do, consider setting higher goals for the future.

## OTHER TIPS AND TOOLS

Remind the group of the importance of planning a project, but don't force your own plan onto them. Make suggestions and let them decide what will work best for them, offering guidance along the way.

Gaining some experience with planning and carrying out short-term projects gives young people a foundation for doing longer-term planning. It also can help them make a connection to a bigger vision for what they want. Adult allies should see long-term and strategic planning as something that should probably follow planning and implementation of short-term projects.

Evaluation is just as important as planning, and helps you move to the next phase of planning once your initial plan has been finished.

## A SAMPLE YEAR LONG PLAN

Below (and continued on the next page) you'll find a sample yearlong plan from a youth-led theater group. This plan describes their efforts to get ready for two performances, while at the same time recruiting and training new members and raising funds for their work.

MONTH	OUTREACH ACTIVITIES	TRAINING	PERFORMANCES	FUNDRAISING
JAN.	Design and print flyers for spring performance	Hold training on outreach for performances	Schedule rehearsals for spring show	Finalize fundraising plan for the year
FEB.	Mail spring perf. flyers	Hold recruiting training	REHEARSE!	YIP Proposal: DUE 2/20
MARCH	Start recruitment of new members			Go to 3-2-1 Youth Fund-raising workshop
APRIL	Publicize Spring performance	Find location for Fall training and retreat	Hand out rehearsal schedule/ do dress and tech rehearsal <b>4/21: SPRING PERFORMANCE!</b>	Prepare letter for fundraising mailing
MAY	Recruit for next year		Secure theater for summer performance	Host fund-raising mailing party

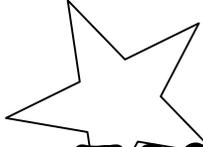


**Sample Year Long Plan, continued...**

MONTH	OUTREACH ACTIVITIES	TRAINING	PERFORMANCES	FUNDRAISING
JUNE	Design and mail flyers for summer performances	Do agenda and task list for fall training session and retreat	Rehearse Schedule tech and dress rehearsals with theater	Track donations as they come in
JULY	Publicize Summer performance	Plan for Fall training/retreat	Schedule tech and dress rehearsals Do dress and tech rehearsals	Call all donors and funders re: summer performance
AUG.	Schedule interview with applicants Interview applicants	Finish planning for fall training/retreat	8/2: SUMMER PERFORMANCE	
SEPT.	Invite new members to join New members join	Hold fall training for old and new members		Start house party planning
OCT.			Start planning for Spring Performance	House party fundraiser planning
NOV.			Keep planning for Spring performance	Finish house party planning
DEC.		Plan for winter training session	Start Spring Rehearsals	<b>12/5: HOUSE PARTY!!!</b>



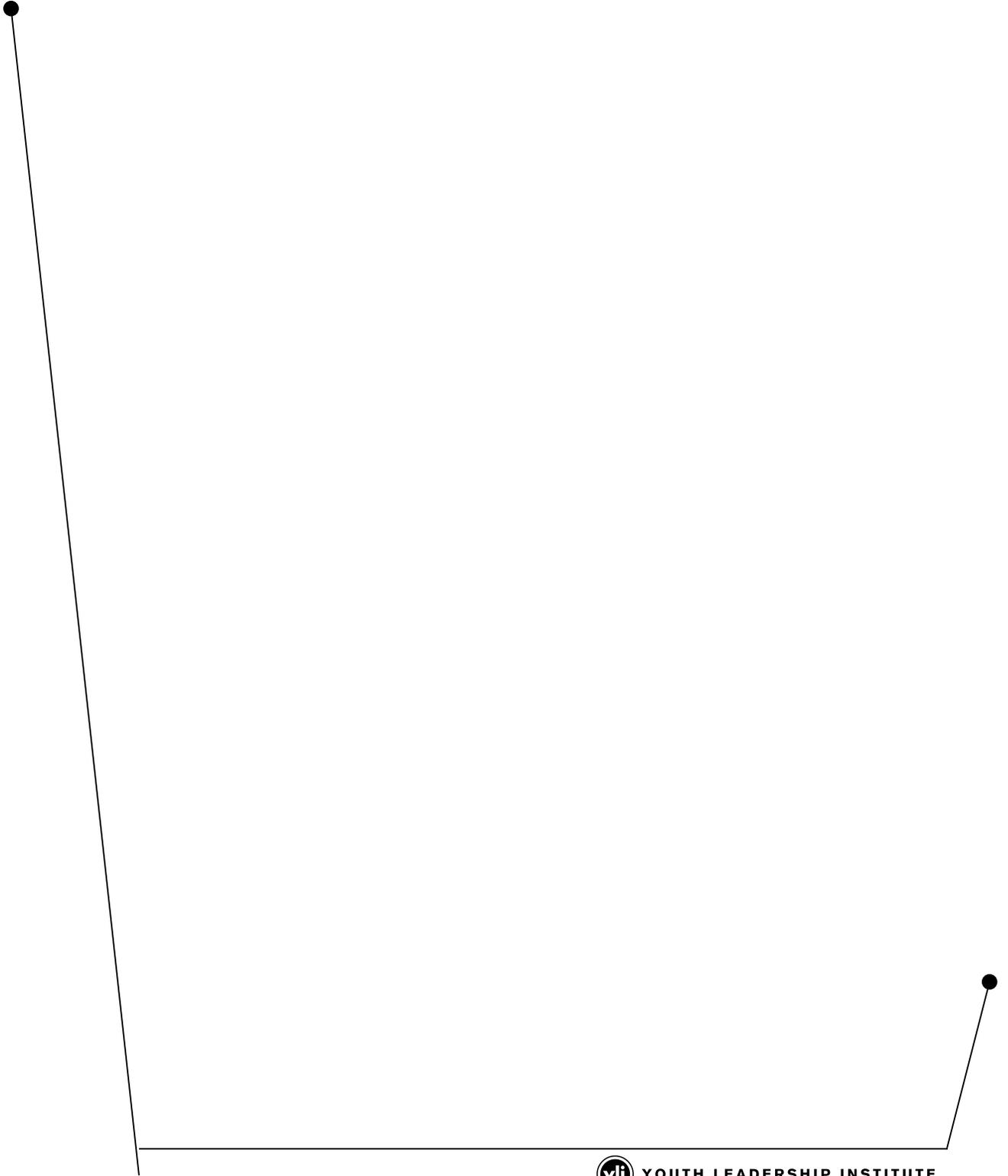
**chapter five:**



**TEACH ONE, TEACH ONE**



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# EACH ONE, TEACH ONE

## HOW DO WE TRANSFER SKILLS TO NEW MEMBERS? HOW DO WE PREPARE FOR TRANSITIONS BY CURRENT LEADERSHIP?

*“I have always thought that what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership in others.”*

**Ella Baker, Civil Rights Movement organizer**

Leadership development is a constant process of teaching, coaching, learning and passing on skills. Developing youth’s skills and experience as leaders is important because it ensures that they have been adequately prepared to make decisions about their projects and programs. At the same time, there is often high turnover in youth-led groups, with young people aging out from year to year, transferring to other schools, getting involved in other interests, or moving on to college or the working world. Adult allies and youth leaders alike need to keep in mind that current youth leaders transition out of programs and consider plans and strategies to develop new youth leaders to take their places.

Often, groups do not prepare for transitioning or aging out youth leaders until they are on the verge of leaving the project—often too late to begin any real transfer of skills and knowledge. This is why we emphasize that ongoing, consistent and systematic youth leadership development—for the first-time youth participant and the veteran youth leader—needs to happen in order for your youth-led project to survive and thrive.

It is common for adult allies of youth groups to fall into the “easy way” of doing the work—thinking, “It will get done faster if I do it” or “If this doesn’t get done right, the whole project will fall apart” or “This is too hard for youth to understand.” But remember, it is the adult allies’ job to teach youth (and allow youth to teach themselves and each other) about these “hard” tasks and ideas, so that youth have the tools they need to make their own decisions.

All tasks—large and small, boring and exciting—are opportunities for youth to learn new skills and practice leading, even teaching, others. This doesn’t mean that all the youth should make photocopies while the adults make all-important calls to funders. It does mean that youth should have a fair and balanced workload of both the not-so-exciting tasks (making copies and running errands) as well as the more fun and fulfilling tasks (like running meetings and coordinating events).

## TOOL: CREATING A SYSTEM FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The chart at the end of this chapter offers one way of thinking about the “each one, teach one” philosophy, and shows how youth can be developed over time, and can help develop each other. Use this chart as a guide and a sample, and use the steps below as well, to develop a unique Leadership Development System for your own project.

Step #1. Assess your leadership development needs.

The skill lists on page 15 in **Chapter 3: Preparing Youth to Lead**, can be transformed into a survey, giving you a sense of where your youth leaders’ strengths and weaknesses are, both individually and as a group. Don’t always play to your strengths—only training new youth leaders on things that other youth leaders and adult allies are already good at. Look at training each new generation of leaders as an opportunity to expand the range of leadership skills youth members. This will keep your organization from growing stagnant.

Step #2. Identify 3 to 5 main work/skill areas for your project.

Based on your assessment above, write out these main areas, making sure you include training or skill development areas that you are less comfortable with as a trainer. For example, you as an adult might be really good at training in public speaking, but not so strong on fundraising and facilitation.

Step #3. For each work/skill area, brainstorm 3-5 key tasks that need to be done on a regular, ongoing basis.

Include tasks that, for now, may be only done by adult allies and not youth. For example, if you are a health education program, you may do workshops in high schools on an ongoing basis as a regular part of your work. Under “workshops” you can write down the tasks: 1) schedule workshops; 2) create or adapt workshop curriculum; 3) prepare visuals for workshops; 4) facilitate workshops; and 5) train youth to facilitate workshops. Don’t forget about big annual events like conferences or retreats that your group does every year. These can be great opportunities for youth leadership development because they often generate a lot of excitement and visibility in the community and youth are attracted to working on them.



### CASE IN POINT Youth Together: Walking the Walk

Youth Together—a student organizing group in the East Bay—has built into its organizational structure a core group of youth leaders, who are supported by adult allies to nurture leadership among their peers. “This allows the youth organizers in our program to understand their own style of leadership,” says YT’s Director, Kimberley Aceves, “and that they have the power to support their peers in important ways.”

Step #4. Break down the tasks in each area into 3 categories—for new members, for somewhat experienced youth, and for experienced youth leaders.

As shown in the chart, breaking your work tasks down into these categories can help you figure out which tasks are appropriate for youth who are brand-new to your group as opposed to those that are better-suited to youth with more experience. Writing these tasks down in a chart as shown also helps you come up with a clear leadership development continuum for young people. Of course, leadership development is not this clear-cut and linear, but visualizing how young leaders can be developed this way helps you be more intentional and clear about how to prepare for smooth leadership transitions.

Step #5. Carry out your plan.

Just like your short-term and annual project plans, your youth leadership development plan needs to be a living document, something that you put into practice. You can also check-in with yourself, the other adult allies you work with, and of course your youth leaders to see if your plan is working. See *Chapter 7: Checking In*, for a tool to help you do some evaluation in this area.



#### **CASE IN POINT** **LOCO BLOCO: YOUTH LEADERS AGING OUT**

Loco Bloco, a popular youth performance troupe based in San Francisco's Mission District, can often be seen and heard at community events, with their driving drumbeats and dynamic dancers. The group is currently at a crossroads, with Loco Bloco's "old guard"—youth who have been involved for a long time—poised to transition out. Younger members are being urged to assume more responsibility; if this **doesn't** happen, adult allies will need to assume more control in order for the group's programs to continue at the same pace. Jose Carrasco, Loco Bloco co-founder and adult partner, emphasizes that building these youth's capacity to sustain the management and leadership of the program is crucial at this time.



## OTHER TIPS AND TOOLS

DO give youth a choice of tasks, at least at first. They will tend to pick what they like to do or are comfortable with.

DON'T fall into the trap of letting the youth "do everything," a sure-fire way to set them up for failure. This is the extreme opposite of adults taking over every aspect of a youth project's work, but has an equally negative effect.

DO encourage youth to teach each other new skills and knowledge. This will help youth model good leadership for each other as well as give them solid experience in developing up-and-coming leaders. You can also create buddy or mentor systems to help orient and support new youth members.

DO bring youth to youth conferences, trainings and other large events. These are places where young people can receive age-appropriate training, network with other young leaders, and conduct workshops or presentations.

DO bring stories about positive youth leadership to your group. Clip out an article about a youth program out of the newspaper, seek out books on youth leadership, and ask other young leaders and adult allies to speak at your organization. Tell stories about young people in other parts of the country and the world that are making powerful changes in their communities.

### ONE YOUNG LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSITION

Jesse Contrell, San Francisco youth activist and former chair of San Francisco's Youth Commission, says that it's important for adult allies to be aware of the natural tendency of young people to move on from particular projects, especially those with a repetitive and structured delivery system—like a tutoring program. The initial excitement that the founders feel beginning of the project diminishes after time, and founders move on. Adults should recognize that initially, youth joining the project might not have the same level of commitment as departing veterans.

### ONE ADULT ALLY'S EXPERIENCE WITH LEADERSHIP TRANSITION:

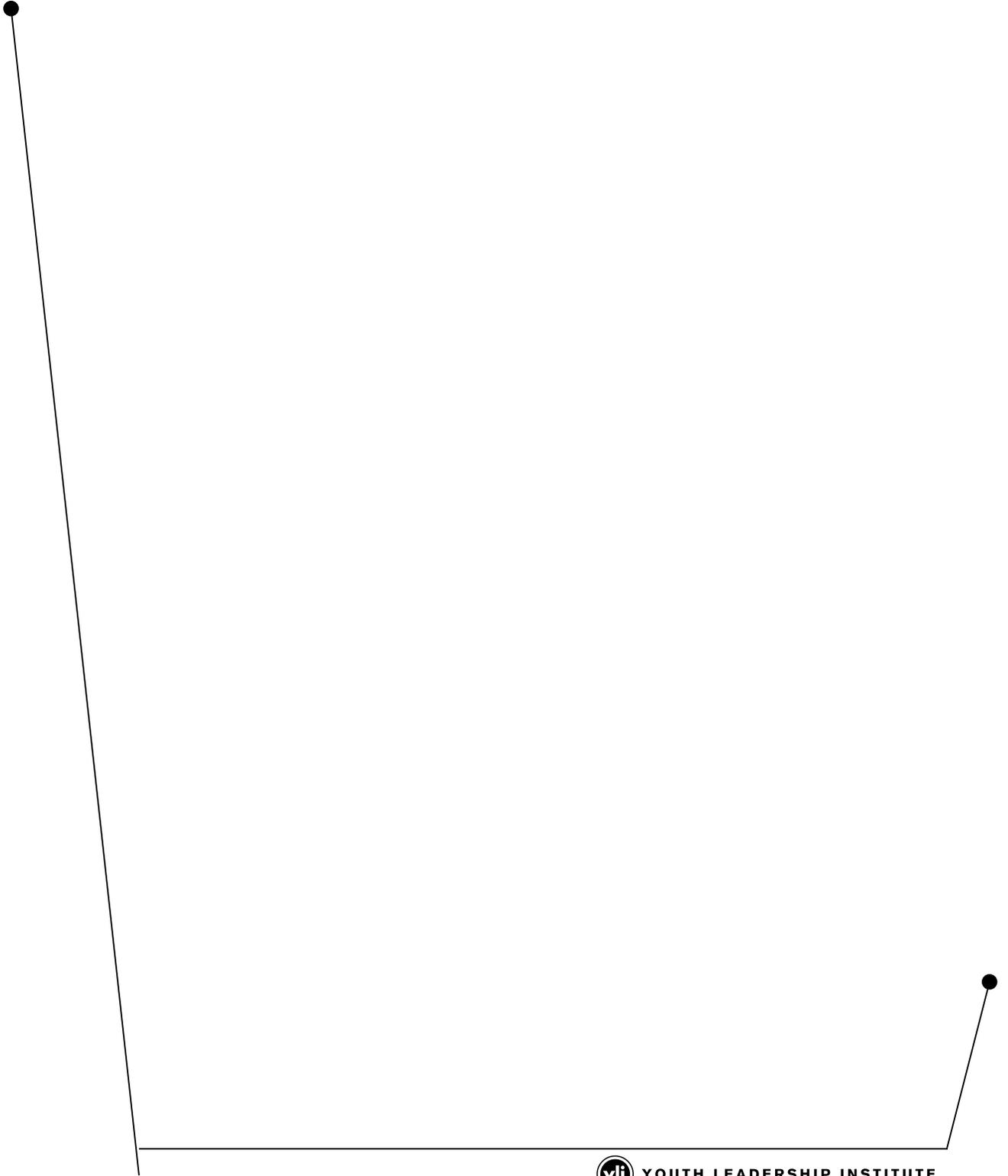
"Juan" works at a local youth organization where he staffs a leadership program. At the program's outset, Juan worked with youth members to do research in the neighborhood to identify programs local youth wanted most. They discovered that music and DJ-ing ranked high among young people's interests, and so they designed an ongoing program that met this need. Over two years later, the DJ training program is still going, although the original youth founders have moved on. Juan now struggles to sustain current youth leadership with youth who are not founders. On some days, he feels like he is "the boss"—not an ally. The project continues to attract youth interest and participation, but it's not clear that the original level of real youth leadership will continue. A new leadership structure might be necessary.

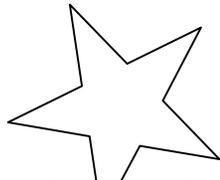
## EACH ONE, TEACH ONE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHART

This chart can be adapted to reflect the work areas that are relevant to the group. We have included examples of how two skill areas—meeting facilitation and fundraising—can be broken down into smaller tasks and skills that can help prepare less experienced youth leaders to take on the kinds of roles that are important for projects to be sustainable over time. We have also broken down the tasks into three categories—youth who are new to your group, youth who are already involved, and experienced youth leaders—to show that there is a continuum of development.

SKILL AREA	YOUTH WHO ARE NEW TO YOUR GROUP	YOUTH WHO ARE ALREADY INVOLVED	EXPERIENCED YOUTH LEADERS
★ MEETING FACILITATION	Attend a meeting facilitated by youth	Participate in a workshop on meeting facilitation	Help develop the agenda for your meeting
	Participate in a facilitation workshop	Facilitate one or two agenda items at a meeting	Co-facilitate a whole meeting
		Help develop the agenda for your group's meeting	Help train and support other youth to facilitate
★ FUNDRAISING	Get comfortable articulating the group's vision and purpose	Plan house parties and similar fundraising events	Talk-face-to-face with funders about their project
	Sell raffle tickets, help with fundraising mailings	Request donations from local merchants	Partner with adult allies to write grant proposals to foundation funders
		Write youth-to-youth grant proposals [shorter and more appropriate for high-school age youth to write.]	

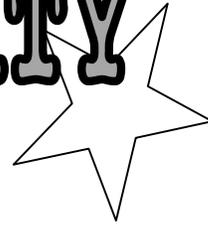




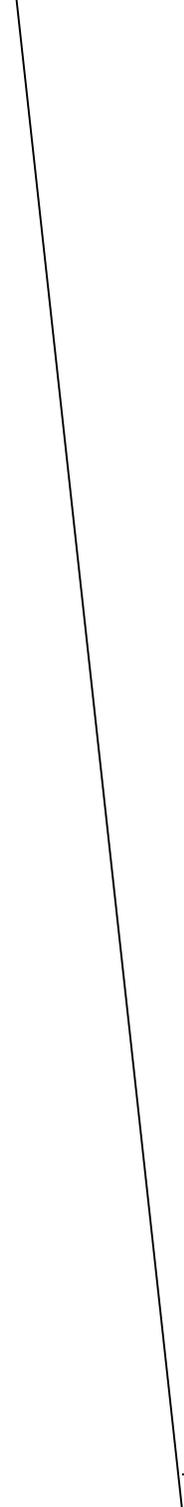


**chapter six:**

# **SUSTAINABILITY**



**YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**



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# SUSTAINABILITY: STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS FOR YOUR GROUP

## WHAT WILL SUSTAIN YOUTH LEADERSHIP?

We concluded section four with a method for creating a yearlong plan to guide the ongoing work of your group. Youth-led groups need strong plans for carrying out their work, but they also need systems, rituals, and processes that help them follow their plans. This section addresses some of these areas. The following section focuses specifically on ongoing strategies for leadership development that addresses normal participant transitions.

## TRACKING PROGRESS: TOOLS AND TIPS

Using systems to record information and track progress help young people to plan and act more effectively over the long term. Adult allies can play important roles in helping youth create and use tools and systems to keep track of their progress in carrying out their work. The following are different methods that youth groups are currently using.

**Chart your progress:** Place your workplan on butcher paper in a visible area and establish regular times to go back and look at it. Use note cards to designate activities, and move the cards around when you need to modify the plan. Show progress by crossing out activities that you have accomplished.

**Write down everything you do.** Take lots of meeting notes and create formal times for your group to review these notes at every meeting. Capture in writing—even if it's a sentence or two—the activities, trainings or actions your group led or participated in, to create a record of what you've done.

**Use a master binder:** This is the official record of everything the group has done in the past. Designate a binder that keeps all the work you have done on your project. Use it to remember what you have accomplished, what's left unfinished, and what you hoped you were going to accomplish.

**Appoint a group historian:** Have someone assume responsibility for the project's history since its inception. Establish formal ways for the historian to share past accomplishments, offer insights about the group's past activities and decisions, and pass down the history to new members.

**Make reflection automatic.** Be deliberate about doing at least a brief reflection for all meetings, activities and events, and assign someone to record these notes. Use formal checkout forms, or a basic go-around. Remind youth to include reflection in every activity, so that it becomes a standard agenda item.

## LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES: THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

Without a deliberate plan for leadership of a project, default leadership often falls to an adult. If leadership is inconsistent or ill defined, information and knowledge about the project can become concentrated in the hands of the adult ally. Leadership skills—like ones we have covered in Chapter 3 are essential—but structures should also be considered. There are lots of options out there, each with their strengths and challenges.

**Rotating facilitators:** In this option, group members take turns planning regular meetings and facilitating those meetings. The strength of this option lies in the number of opportunities it provides to individual board members to practice leadership skills. Because leadership rotates, however, facilitators don't often have the context and history they need to be effective, and staff generally have more involvement in operations.

**Chair(s):** Designating one or more youth as chair helps ensure consistency of leadership and balance adult presence. However, other members miss out on opportunities to gain skills, and may become dependent on the chairs for overall direction and decision-making. Creating other leadership roles--like secretary--and creating chairs of specific committees helps offset a concentration of power.

**Leadership Committees:** Creating a subgroup of youth for a leadership committee distributes group ownership and helps more members take on leadership responsibilities. Leadership committees can rotate over the course of a project, so that newer members can take on leadership roles after a certain time as regular members.



### *CASE IN POINT PROBLEMS OF SUCCESS*

Youth-led groups can become so successful that they threaten existing power structures, prompting their host organization to withdraw its support. This happened with one powerful Bay Area student-led group in the late 1990s and into 2001. The group's achievements included publishing an educational comic book for youth, organizing a student-led conference, and coordinating a campaign to change school district policies on student violence. The group—which was supported by an organization linked closely with the school district—was so successful that they got the attention of local officials and school administrators, who felt threatened by the changes the group was proposing. In the end, the school district forced the host organization to reduce the group's funding. The youth managed to keep alive for a time on their own with some funding from YLI, but ultimately dissolved—the work of carrying out the project without a supportive host proved too difficult.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RITUALS AND VISION

Tojil is a Bay Area Latino youth organizing group that started out as the Student Empowerment Project (or STEP) in the early 1990s, and evolved into Voices of Struggle, Olin, and now into TOJIL. Over the years, the group has achieved major victories, most notably establishing ethnic studies programs in public high schools in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. The group has never had a paid staff, but is led by a highly committed group of adult allies and youth leaders who volunteer their time.

The group has gone through many changes in the past decade, but has consistently stayed true to its vision as an entirely youth-led organizing project, with adult allies providing crucial support, training and a historical framework to inspire young people and keep the work moving forward.

The group's success at staying youth-led can be traced back to a number of factors, including ambitious actions from staging ambitious actions like school walkouts. Hernandez highlights the role of documenting and historical framing in the group's success. "Documentation of your work is really key. Create a historical record of what you have done through photo albums and stories. If you don't tell the story [of your work] you are going to miss things and the story will be lost or distorted. This is especially important for youth coming into the work after its been started." TOJIL's documentation of their work has helped new youth get more quickly oriented into the continuum of movement-building and youth leadership development that the group has achieved over the years.

In addition to documentation, Hernandez also encourages adult allies of youth-led groups to institute regular gatherings and celebrations as rituals to honor young people's work, assess their group's strengths and weaknesses, and revitalize youth for long-term campaigns. TOJIL holds annual "advances" (instead of "retreats") where youth lead trainings, evaluate their organizing work, and plan for the future.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUTH-LED PROJECTS.

### WHAT SHOULD ADULT ALLIES AND ORGANIZATION LEADERS BE AWARE OF?

In most cases, a youth-led group and its project exists within a traditional adult-led organization. In this context, adult organizations provide a wide variety of roles, including providing space, equipment and administrative support, holding the group's money, and paying for staff. In many cases, adult leaders of the organization are the ones initiating the ongoing work of the youth-led group. Even under ideal circumstances organizational environments can still be challenging places for youth led groups and their projects and programs.

Conflict, like what was described above, should be treated as a healthy sign of growth and positive youth leadership development. Expect that these tensions will arise as young people assert themselves more and take up more leadership. As an adult ally, you should see this period as an opportunity for growth, change and improvement of your project. This is a way to really validate young people's abilities and power as leaders, and an opportunity to create a real space for youth responsibility and leadership within your organization.

Below we provide factors that adult allies need to consider when supporting youth led projects housed within adult-led youth serving organizations. Along with case studies that illustrate some of these factors, we have also included a short role-playing exercise that helps illustrate one method to engage effective support by adult organizations.



### *CASE IN POINT PROBLEMS OF SUCCESS*

A few years ago, YLI provided a grant to youth from a neighborhood community center for a Music Studio, where youth could learn to mix and record their own music and gain skills in operating sophisticated equipment. Prior to this project, few teenage youth would come to the center—mostly younger children and adults used it. In the words of one young leader, the Music Studio “put [the community center] on the map.” Despite initial successes, there were important conflicts. Although the adult ally directly associated with the project was adept at supporting youth leadership, the Center's director was uncomfortable giving youth much real autonomy. Power struggles emerged between the youth and its host organization about how to manage the program. From the young people's perspective, the adult organization leaders were eager to take control of a program they felt could really benefit the center, despite the fact that this program was the original idea of the youth and had emerged from their hard work. The ally understood the youth perspective, but conceded that the Directors had legitimate concerns about liability. The youth began looking for other organizations to house their project, and the adult ally worried about how to manage the conflict. YLI was able to get the youth and the adult ally to meet formally with the organization's director to resolve the conflict and reach an agreement that could continue youth ownership, while allowing the organization to have greater oversight over an increasingly popular program that did need more organizational oversight.

## TIPS AND TOOLS FOR ADULT ALLIES

Help the group to secure an agreement with management of parent organization about access to equipment and space and other supports. It's best to get these agreements in writing.

Arrange for at least one meeting between adult organizational leaders and the youth group.

Clearly communicate any organizational values, policies or practices that must be heeded by youth-led groups in order to retain support from the host organization.

Provide regular written status reports to adult organizational leaders about successes and challenges of the group and its project

Keep organizational leaders closely updated about any fund development efforts on the part of the youth-led project. Funds of this size have organization implications, requiring the buy-in of leadership.

## SUGGESTED ELEMENTS OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN A YOUTH-LED GROUP AND ITS HOST ORGANIZATION:

Potential problems that could arise between parties and how it could be resolved

Specific roles of youth leaders, adult allies and organizational leaders in the operation of the youth-led project

Actions the group would take if the project became more adult-driven in order to avoid any future conflicts that may arise from misunderstanding or miscommunication about this.



## ACTIVITY: WORKING IT OUT

45-60 minutes

This role-play explores how your group might effectively manage a relationship with a sponsoring organization or other adult-led institution. This activity illustrates for youth that organizational problems are not uncommon, and that being prepared is key to dealing with and transcending the difficulties that may arise.

**Directions for Facilitator:** Break your group into three smaller groups. One group will play the role of TROUT youth leaders, one will play adults from BASS, and the third will play adult allies to TROUT. Give each group a scenario sheet and a role sheet (you can photocopy the two pages that follow: cut the page with the roles descriptions in thirds) and have the role-play go on for 10-15 minutes. Debrief the activity by discussing people's experiences and learnings, and what steps they could take to work more effectively with the adult leadership of the organization. The Facilitator should conclude the workshop by identifying a time for participants to begin the actual preparation for meeting adult leaders of the sponsor organization to create this type of agreement.

### Basic Scenario for the "Working It Out" Role Play

The idea sounded good, but everyone was unprepared for the huge level of interest by youth. The media even caught wind of it. Here's what's been happening. TROUT\*, as the youth group calls themselves, got together about six months ago to deal with the abundance of liquor stores in their community. Their adult ally (an employee of BASS\*\*) first had to sweet-talk youth into participating, but soon enough, TROUT youth began to see what was going on because of the availability of alcohol in their neighborhood. Then the tidal wave hit—in the process of research and outreach, they found a neighborhood business owner who had some storefront space that he would lease to them essentially for free. TROUT worked hard with the storeowner and their adult ally to come up with a plan for a youth-led space and managed to get a grant to buy some equipment and stipends for youth. BASS' leadership was happy, but kept some distance until the doors on the space (called CRAB\*\*\*) opened and the place started getting overrun. TROUT was pumped, but started getting fishy vibes from the Top Tunas at BASS. The adult ally decided that it was time to get some clarity about how things were going to work between TROUT and BASS.

\*TROUT (Towards Rights of Underrepresented Teens)

\*\*BASS (Building Alternative Support Services)

\*\*\*CRAB (Creating real alternatives in the Bay Area)

## Assignment for Youth Leaders

You are playing the roles of youth leaders of CRAB—the youth-run space that TROUT created. You are worried that adult leaders of BASS will try to take control of your project but you don't know why. You feel like you need adult support but want to make sure you continue to lead CRAB. Your goal: help educate adults about what you need from them in order for the project to continue to be youth-led. Some of the things you need include: 1) clarity from adults about the places where the adults need to make the decisions, because you don't know now; and 2) a commitment from the adults that TROUT can decide activities they want at CRAB.

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## Assignment for Adult Organization Representatives

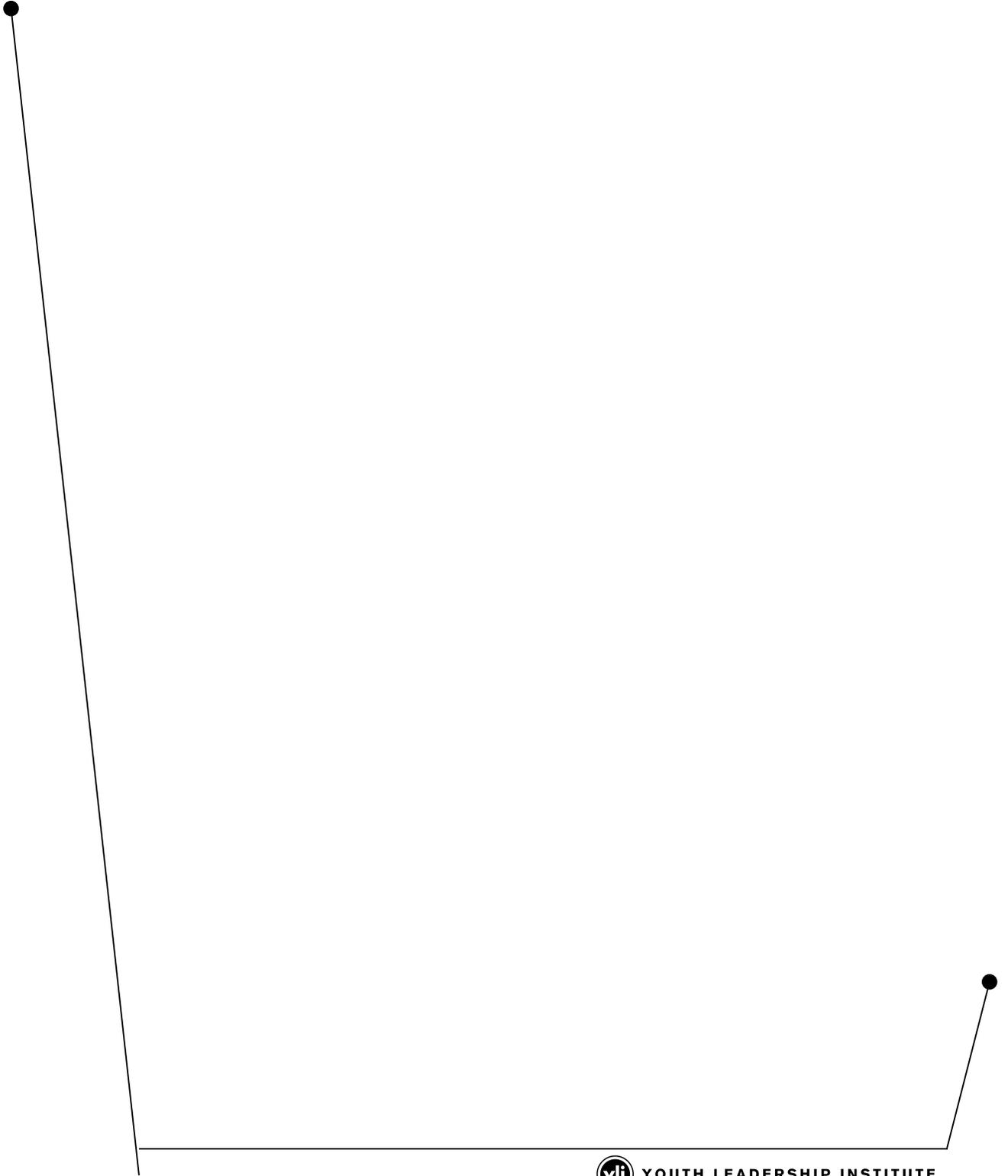
You are on the executive Team of BASS, a mid-size organization with a lot of programs, including TROUT. You are starting to get concerned that things will be out of control at CRAB, and feel strongly there are some areas where BASS adults have to have the final say. BASS wants to have a say on the hours that CRAB is open. It also is worried that this project will overwhelm the adult ally and that the organization doesn't have enough resources for the Adult ally to be the staff to the project and do all the other things that she needs to do as a part of her responsibilities at BASS. You are also a little freaked by the kinds of activities youth are proposing—someone heard a rumor about airbrush classes. Your goal: be clear with youth the constraints we face, what BASS concerns are, and what TROUT needs to be aware of.

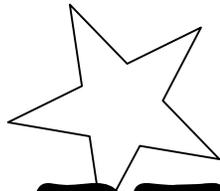
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## Assignment for Adult Allies of Youth Leaders

You are the adult ally to TROUT, but you work for BASS and are supervised by a member of the BASS executive team who's at the meeting today. You are excited about the TROUT project, but are personally worried about the time and attention that you can give to it, given your other job responsibilities at TROUT. You see your role in this meeting to help TROUT youth and adult execs from BASS to get clear about their individual needs, and reach some agreement about how they can work together. You know that everything can't be dealt with right now; however, you want to at least find agreement for both sides to continue to meet and talk about this.

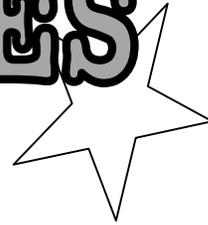




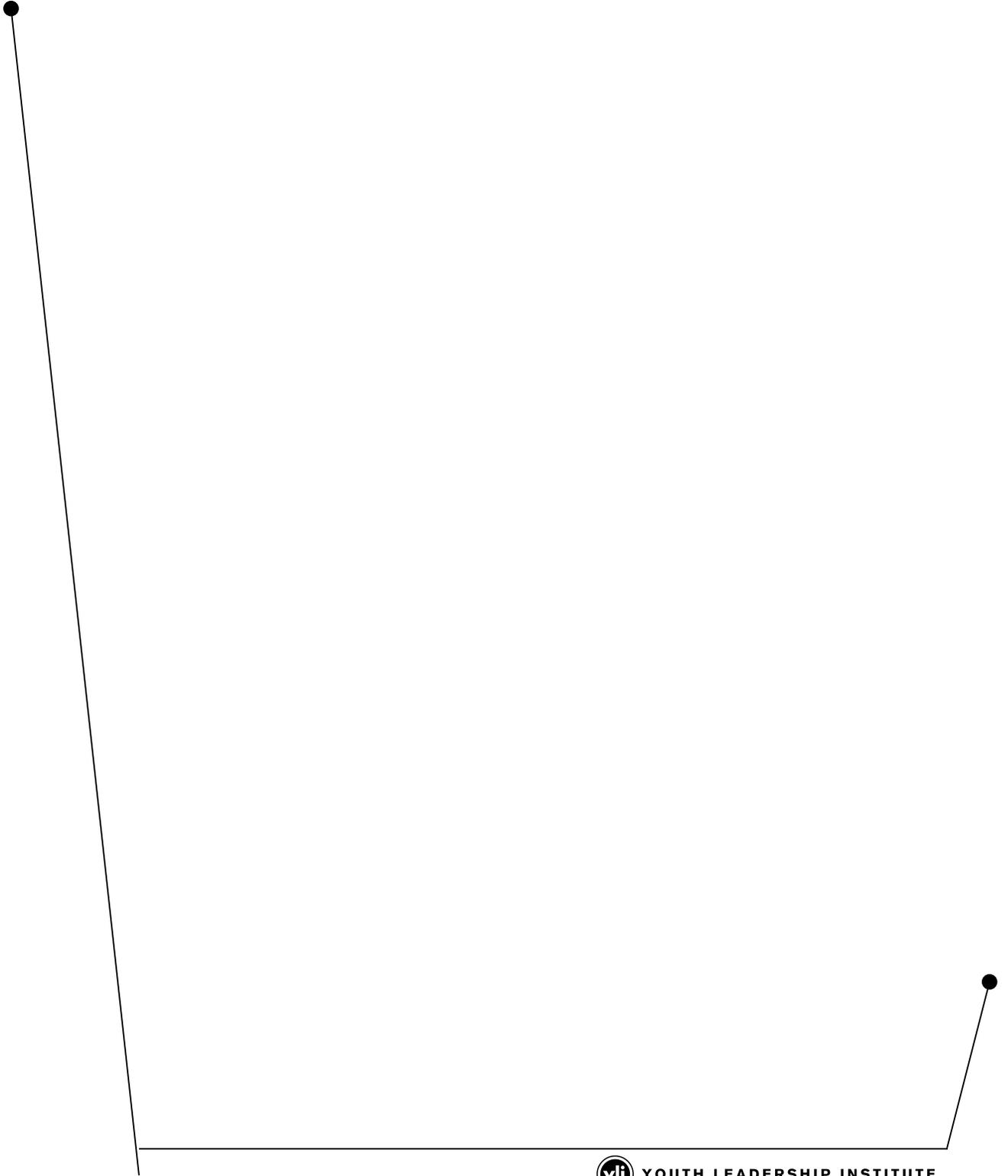


**chapter seven:**

# **RESOURCES**



**YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**



# RESOURCES

## **Planning for Action: Youth Initiated Project Manual**

By Youth Leadership Institute

[www.yli.org](http://www.yli.org)

An interactive workbook designed to help youth and adults strengthen group process skills in order to successfully plan and implement community projects. Includes: Creating a sense of group purpose, the role of adult allies, identifying and researching an issue, and developing an action plan. The second half of the workbook is devoted to helping groups apply for project support through YLI's youth philanthropy programs.

## **Youth Adult Partnerships: Training Manual**

By The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, National 4-H Council, National Network for Youth, and Youth Leadership Institute

[www.yli.org](http://www.yli.org)

This 266-page manual offers many training exercises, tools, and support materials to build on and develop the capacity of youth and adults working in partnership. The engaging and challenging materials were created by a group of skilled youth and adults, piloted by younger and older members of diverse communities from across the country, and have been found to be very useful to a variety of community-based organizations practicing youth-adult partnerships.

## **Young Active Citizens Curriculum: Youth and Adults at the Decision-Making Table**

By Youth Leadership Institute

[www.yli.org](http://www.yli.org)

This comprehensive curriculum offers a "grab bag" of materials for organizations considering youth inclusion in public policy and civic engagement. A nonprofit considering recruiting young people for its board of directors; a grassroots organization wanting a youth advisory board to inform its programmatic decisions; and, a school board or statewide league of cities working to involve young people in public policy will all benefit from this curriculum. This publication is free to all San Francisco Bay Area organizations.

## **[www.freechild.org](http://www.freechild.org)**

This website, maintained by the Freechild Project, organizes links and free downloads in a wide variety of tools, curricula, and literature around student and youth-led action.

## **The Co/Motion Guide to Youth-led Social Change**

By Alliance for Justice

[www.allianceforjustice.org](http://www.allianceforjustice.org)

This manual helps young activists and their adult allies to identify, plan for, and carry out actions and campaigns that address important community issues and concerns.



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