

We asked our Young Adult Advisors these questions about youth participation (here is a sample from three young adult advisors)

We are in a coalition of organizations that focus, in part, on how to involve youth/young adults in collaboration. The coalition is doing a survey of the members that work with youth/young adults. These are four questions that we wanted your input in answering.

How would you answer these questions?

1. *Why should organizations focusing on health, education, welfare of adolescents/young adults include youth/young adults in planning and carrying out the work?*
 - A. "Organizations that focus on adolescents and youth should incorporate them into the operation to receive input on how the program is viewed in the eyes of the people it's trying to aid and target. It is an easy way to check how attractive and effective the program is.
 - B. "I think it's important to include youth/young adults because they are the greatest resources in understanding what is necessary for their well-being. By collaborating with youth/young adults, organizations can become well-rounded as it takes in both perspectives of youth/young adults and the adults advising them.
 - C. Because getting primary information from the source you are going to help will make their experience and the advisors' experiences more enjoyable and able to reach its full potential. Communication is key, especially in situations such as these and feedback will only help when carrying out this type of work. It might also provide new and creative ideas the organization may not have thought of without the help of the people they are working with.
2. *What is the best method for collecting feedback from youth/young adults?*
 - A. I think emails and online surveys that are relatively short and offer some sort of incentive would be nice. For example the survey may say applicants emails will be put in a drawing to win a gift certificate or sorts. In addition putting it online can allow you to reach more people faster and people may be more likely to be able to answer on their own time and convenience rather than having to make appointments and things of the sort. Also if it s a touchy subject online data collection can provide a shield of anonymity.
 - B. In our day and age, technology has become a very big thing among my generation. I feel that the best method to collect any information would be via internet. The use of social networking websites has sky-rocketed and many young adults are actively using it. Sites like Facebook or Twitter would probably a good way to outreach to young adults.
 - C. Simply asking them for suggestions, written anonymous feedback, have them collaborate ideas and develop new methods, etc.

3. *What is the best way to keep youth/young adults engaged in advising adults?*

- A. Although youth and young adults would probably benefit greatly from such programs sometimes I think we don't go because we don't really think it will help. For example in community college I was in a few programs that were aimed at helping me transfer. In all honesty in the beginning I showed up to the events that provided instant gratification or incentive such as flash drives, food, etc. However these events I was able to meet counselors and build bonds with faculty which became the real reasons I continued to attend the events. So basically we accept bribes
- B. I think the best way to keep them engaged is to get them involved. Let youth/young adults be in the mix of everything. Maybe have workshops for the youth/young adults or let them work on projects with the adults. I think it would be good to also allow other youth/young adults interact and work with each other.
- C. Interaction between the youth/young adults and advising adults, small amount of lecturing type conversation, focus on having their voice heard, group involvement among the youth/young adults with advising adults simply guiding discussion or participating just as much as the youth, new and fun activities (have the youth/young adults suggest activities or positive ways to interact)

4. *What do youth/young adults gain from participating?*

- A. By participating in the programs finding out more about themselves, learn information which is probably rather useful, networking and potential references for the future. Probably attractive things that can help people choose where they want to go in life and how to get there.
- B. By allowing youth/young adults to participate, it helps them to become more mindful about their everyday situations. In addition, it helps them to better understand their own needs. As a result, by knowing what they need, they can then better express to advising adults what they need to do to help them.
- C. Learn more about themselves and others and that they may relate to others more than they previously thought, the youth/young adults gain awareness of others' situations, making them more understanding and less judgmental on certain topics, participation increases self-confidence and may help get over fears of public speaking, etc.