The Leading Edge

Exploring Youth Engagement Innovation

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55% of young people are confident that they can personally make a difference in solving community problems.

(2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation, CIRCLE)
Community change occurs through youth engagement.
Youth Service

Youth service includes...

- Volunteerism;
- Community service;
and,
- Service-learning.
Youth Leadership

Youth lead others to action. This leadership can be...

- Individual;
- Shared; or,
- Collective.
Youth in Decision-Making

Youth are “at the table” wherever and whenever decisions are made.
Youth Philanthropy

Young people give their time, talents, and treasures for the common good.
Youth Civic and Political Engagement

Youth influence community leadership, electoral activities, and political voice.
Youth Organizing

Youth organizing addresses community issues and creates institutional change.
Youth imagine, produce, and distribute their own media.
Youth gather and analyze information. They apply this information to their own work, the work of others, and the knowledge in the field.
Youth engagement for what?
Table Group Activity

Take a minute and introduce yourself to the others sitting at your table.

Answer the question, “What is the *for what* in my work?”
Impacts of Youth Engagement

Youth engagement offers meaningful participation, responsibility, and leadership for youth within their communities. The impacts of youth engagement play out at three levels:

- Societal
- Organizational
- Individual
Impacts of Youth Engagement on Individuals

For the individual, the positive outcomes of youth engagement are...

- Cognitive;
- Academic;
- Social; and,
- Civic.
Impact of Youth Engagement on Organizations

Youth enhance organizational effectiveness with their:

- Energy;
- Fresh perspectives;
- Knowledge of young people; and,
- Sense of community.
Impact of Youth Engagement on Society

At the societal level, youth engagement has the potential to build momentum for broad-based social change.

Danny Lyon, Two SNCC Workers, Selma, 1963.
55% of young people are confident that they can personally make a difference in solving community problems.

(2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation, CIRCLE)
44% of young people believe working together can make a great deal of difference in solving community problems.

(2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation, CIRCLE)
Collective leadership is the *leading edge* of youth engagement.

What are the *characteristics* of collective leadership?

How is collective leadership *pushing the boundaries* of youth engagement?

How does collective leadership *reshape traditional notions* of youth engagement?

How does collective leadership foster *innovation*?
Collective Leadership

Collective leadership occurs when people – youth and adults – cross boundaries to come together and commit to mutual learning and leading. These people share responsibility and accountability.
Collective leadership is multi-faceted.

- Transformational
- Relational
- Fluid
Collective leadership is a transformational force at individual, organizational, and societal levels.
Table Group Activity

Choose a quote from the envelope on your table and read it aloud to your table-mates.

Why is this quote inspirational to you?
How is it transformative?

Think about the questions and share your answers with your table-mates.
Facets of Collective Leadership: A RELATIONAL Approach

Multiple individuals assume leadership roles while the entire group provides leadership to the wider community.
Facets of Collective Leadership: A FLUID Approach

Collective leadership evolves in response to specific situations and settings.
Practices of Collective Leadership

Collective leadership is organized around a set of guiding principles of practice:

- Foster youth-adult partnerships;
- Mobilize community assets;
- Tap into individual gifts;
- Build teamwork; and,
- Reflect and learn.
Building Blocks and Busting Out: Youth-Adult Partnerships

**Building Blocks**

- YAPs are a core practice of youth engagement.
- Adults mentor youth; youth develop leadership skills.

**Busting Out**

- YAPs are a core practice of leadership development.
- Youths and adults work together to foster leadership skills within themselves and each other.
Building Blocks and Busting Out: Community Assets

**Building Blocks**
- Utilize a community’s assets for an isolated purpose.
- Individuals use what the community has to offer in their own work.

**Busting Out**
- Utilize a community’s assets for the common wellbeing.
- Diverse groups come together in the context of their community’s assets to affect change that is beyond the individual.
Building Blocks and Busting Out: Individual Gifts

**Building Blocks**
- Develop an individual’s gifts for their personal goals.
- Give young people an outlet for their gifts.

**Busting Out**
- Incorporate an individual’s gifts into a collective purpose.
- Unleash the potential of an individual’s gifts.
# Building Blocks and Busting Out: Teamwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Building Blocks</strong></th>
<th><strong>Busting Out</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team members work individually to achieve a common goal.</td>
<td>Team members work collectively to achieve a common goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team members are responsible for separate aspects of that goal.</td>
<td>The entire group assumes responsibility for the results of their work.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Building Blocks and Busting Out: Reflect and Learn

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<td>• Individuals reflect on and learn from their own work.</td>
<td>• Youth and adults reflect on and learn from their work and from each other’s contributions to the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learning from reflection occurs at the end of a project.</td>
<td>• Mutual reflecting and learning is an ongoing process that never ends.</td>
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Collective leadership is a game changer.

What are the game changing questions?
Collective leadership, in principle and in action, simultaneously calls for and fosters...

- Inspiration;
- Intentionality;
- Inquisitiveness; and,
- Innovation.
Inspiration

Collective leadership is fueled by the hopes and dreams of individuals who bring their best selves and *inspire* themselves and others.
Intentionality

Collective leadership answers the question “For what?” so that efforts to involve young people are *intentional* and aligned with a broader purpose.
Inquisitiveness

*Inquisitive* thinking questions assumptions, pushes boundaries of current thought and practice, and promotes ongoing reflection and learning.
Innovation

The combination of inspiration, intentionality, and inquisitiveness forge the leading edge of youth engagement.

This leading edge is a springboard for an entirely new level of possibilities. It is the heart of collective leadership – it’s innovation.
Connecting People and Ideas to Create Change

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Virtual “Envelope”

- We all have the extraordinary coded within us, waiting to be released. – Jane Houston
- Most people see what is and never see what can be. – Albert Einstein
- Caring is a powerful business advantage. – Scott Johnson
- Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. – Helen Keller
- It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us. – Lisa Willow
- If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it. – Mahatma Gandhi