



ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Based on Youth on Board's publication

14 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making

This checklist is to be used as a guide to help give direction, uncover hidden issues, help understand tasks, and guide commitment to this initiative. Use this checklist as a tool with your board, your staff, young people, or other concerned parties.

- YES = We do this already, and don't need assistance
- NO = We don't do this yet, and want to develop next steps to move forward in this area
- N/A = This is not applicable to us / We don't plan to do this

Please note that we are not suggesting that every organization meet all of these criteria

1) Know Why You Want to Involve Young People

Has your group thought about why you are involving young people in decision making?

Yes	No	N/A
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Have you articulated these thoughts to others verbally, or in writing (such as in a mission statement)?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps _____

2) Assess Your Readiness

Have you talked to and assessed the commitment of:

- 1) The Board
- 2) Staff members
- 3) Young people
- 4) Other parties involved

Yes	No	N/A
Yes	No	N/A
Yes	No	N/A
Yes	No	N/A

Next steps: _____



3) Determine Your Model for Youth Involvement

Have you considered involving young people directly in an existing adult governing body, such as a board or directors or community task force?

Yes	No	N/A
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Have you considered creating an all-youth body such as a youth advisory board, youth planning committee, or peer mediation group?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you considered putting young people on your staff (e.g. peer leaders or program staff)?

Yes	No	N/A
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Next steps: _____

4) Identify Organizational Barriers

Have you created policies or amended bylaws stating that young people will be a permanent part of governing your organization, advising on curriculum, or developing programs?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Has your organization taken the time to address the budget and staff considerations involving young people?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Are young people's terms of office and voting rights similar or equal to those of adults?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there a replacement system if a young person's term ends early (e.g. due to relocation or other life changes)?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do young people have access to the resources needed to participate in your group's work, and are expenses paid for in advance as opposed to reimbursed?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there some leeway for a young person's participation in school activities? (Work meetings are often acceptable reasons for adults to miss meetings--is a big basketball game given the same consideration?)

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----



Have you developed a conflict of interest policy if young people are advising in a program in which they are involved?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

5a) Overcome Attitudinal Barriers - Adults

Are young people involved in *all* issues, not just those affecting youth?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Does the group understand that youth members do not represent the voice of all young people?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you continually ask young people how you can assist them better, and do you take their recommendations seriously?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you considered your own negative assumptions and stereotypes about young people in order to learn about sharing real authority with them?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you considered adjusting your professional "adult" language to ideas that young people can better understand?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

5b) Overcome Attitudinal Barriers - Young People

Have you recognized the value of having your voice heard?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you take leadership roles whenever possible (e.g. asking to be on committees?)

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you share your thoughts even when you are not comfortable?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----



Do you push for policies that promote young people's power (e.g. youth on committees?)

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

6) Address Legal Issues

Are board members aware of their obligations, including the duty of care and duty of loyalty?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Have you researched the specific laws concerning youth governance in your state, and contract laws relating to your governing body?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

7) Recruit Young People

Have you thought out your recruitment criteria?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

When recruiting members, do you recruit in ways that will attract a diverse group of young people?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you use your recruitment process to educate your constituency about the project they are involved in, as well as the importance of involving young people?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If an all-adult group, do you select at least two young people to participate so they do not feel alone or isolated?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____



8) Create a Strong Orientation Process

Is an orientation system in place?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is an adult of authority available to explain commitments to concerned parents?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you have a letter of agreement or contract that describes the responsibilities of the program and the role you are asking the young person to take in the organization?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

9) Train Young People for Their Roles

Is there a system for youth members to train new youth members?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there training for young people on presenting to groups (noting that giving a presentation to all-adult groups may be especially difficult)?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there skill-training for young people on topics such as team building, presentation skills, facilitating meetings, and reading budgets?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

10) Conduct Intergenerational Trainings

Is there training for adults on understanding young people and being strong allies?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Are you innovative in your trainings? Are they experimental and fun?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there room for everyone to listen to each other and laugh at meetings?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____



11) Make Meetings Work

Do you start meetings with warm-up exercises or frequently split up into small groups?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there time for all members to speak at meetings?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you use appreciations during meetings?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

12) Develop a Mentoring Plan

Is a mentor or "buddy" system in place?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there staff to support youth members? (e.g. preparation, transportation for meetings, etc.)

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there regular contact between youth members and adult leaders? (e.g. Executive Directors, Board Chairs, Principals, CEOs, etc.)

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do mentors make certain that new members attend meetings, have the support they need, and become well-oriented to the organization?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

13) Strengthen Youth/Adult Relationships

Does everyone understand that strong relationships are key to successful programs and social change movements?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----



Is there informal time for young people and adults to build close relationships with each other?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you keep your commitment to young people consistent, not letting them be overshadowed by "more important" meetings and commitments?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Do you make sure young people are given the opportunity to speak on every issue, not just programmatic issues?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

If young people seem not to have an opinion, do you attempt to elicit an opinion by providing more information or further discussion?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is equal weight given to the opinions of young people?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Does the organization involve parents from the start?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Does the organization let the young person know it will be speaking with their parents but not breaking confidentiality?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Next steps: _____

14) Create Support Networks

Do young people keep in touch with their peers about their leadership roles and their program?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there specific time for young people to network with other youth leaders doing similar work?

Yes	No	N/A
-----	----	-----

Is there time set aside for adults to network with other adults doing similar work?

Yes	No	N/A
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Next steps: _____

