



# Social Change And Skill Development In Youths

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## **Abstract**

Youth participation habits change constantly. Effort to keep us with new form of political participation is seen in international organization, national government and the academic community. How do young people themselves regarding their participation in these new forms. One alternative form of political participation is youth organization. Youth participation has never been as high on the agenda as it is today. Amongst national states civic organization and companies, one finds initiatives in involving youth for decision making processes in building projects or to tackle challenging issues. This isn't that surprising. Developed democracies and increasingly met with demands or better democracy while less democratized countries are faced with an increasing youth population during a time where technological innovations and globalism constantly challenges the condition for the future democracies it is more than the relevant to focus on young people, the citizen of tomorrow.

**Keywords** – Youth leadership, social changes, organization, innovation, skill development.

## **Introduction**

The field of social work has been widely recognized for its commitment to social justice and improving the lives of marginalized communities. Social work is a profession that requires a diverse range of skills, including communication, empathy, problem-solving, and leadership. The involvement of youth in social work has been increasingly emphasized, as their unique perspectives and experiences can bring about fresh ideas and innovative solutions. In this paper, we will explore the relationship between social work and youth leadership, with a particular focus on how social work can develop critical skills among young people.

Youth development is a process that prepares a young person to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and achieve his or her full potential. Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences that help youth develop social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive competencies. Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports the young person in developing: (a) the ability

to analyse his or her own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to carry them out (including the ability to establish support networks in order to fully participate in community life and effect positive social change); and (b) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviours of others, and serve as a role model. (*Youth Skills Development: Preparing Young People for the Future*, n.d.)

Conditions that promote healthy youth development are supported through programs and activities in schools and communities. Youth development researchers and practitioners emphasize that effective programs and interventions recognize youths' strengths and seek to promote positive development rather than addressing risks in isolation. Youth who are constructively involved in learning and doing and who are connected to positive adults and peers are less likely to engage in risky or self-defeating behaviours.

Providing the conditions for positive youth development is a responsibility shared by families, schools, and communities.

#### **Families promote healthy youth development when they:**

- provide support;
- have positive family communication;
- are involved in their adolescent's school;
- have clear rules and consequences and monitor their adolescent's whereabouts;
- provide positive, responsible role models for other adults, adolescents, and siblings;
- expect their adolescent to do well; and
- spend time together.

#### **Schools promote healthy youth development when they:**

- expect commitment from youth;
- have a caring school climate;
- have clear rules and consequences;
- provide positive, responsible adult role models; and
- expect youth to do well.

#### **Communities promote healthy youth development when:**

- adults advocate for youth;
- neighbours monitor youths' behaviour;
- adult model positive, responsible, and healthy behaviour;
- youth model positive, responsible, and healthy behaviour; and
- youth programs are available. It is unusual for all these positive influences to be present at the same time; unfortunately, too many youths grow up in circumstances that provide limited support for healthy development. (Fletcher Joseph Varvus, 2006)

Well-designed and well-run youth development programs promote youth leadership by involving youth in needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. A growing number of organizations include youth on their boards of directors. Effective programs engage all participating youth in constructive action through activities such as service learning, arts, and athletics; and emphasize common values such as friendship, citizenship, and learning. Research on factors promoting resilience in youth at risk has shown that the consistent presence of a single caring adult can have a significant positive impact on a young person's growth and development.

## Related studies

- **Ho et al (2015).**

The researcher studies youth-led social change topics, engagement types, organizational types, strategies and impacts this paper. Provides a framework form for evaluating Youth led social change. The framework considers: seven topics (e.g., environment, human health and safety and education); nine engagement defined young people 15 -24 years of age. The finding has implications for youth leaders and those who advocate for work with support and educate them for those interested in evaluating social change efforts. (Ho et al., 2015)

- **Karagianni & Montgomery (2017).** *“Developing. Leadership skills among adolescents and young adults: A review of leadership programmes”*

According to studies there is a gap in the literature with regards to the experience of leadership among school children and young adults. The President review identified studies on leadership development programmes for young adults from 2003 to 2015 Via electronic databases: Scopus, PubMed and Science direct, nine studies met all the inclusion criteria and were analysed with regards to selection content, outcomes and theoretical background considerable heterogeneity in the methods used was observed. The review presents key research quality questions that need to be addressed in future studies. (Karagianni & Jude Montgomery, 2017)

- **Buzinde et al (2018).**

The Researcher studies Youth Leadership Programme for community development and social action ‘Pedagogical approach’, a review of these conceptual paper explores pedagogical intervention that can be applied to social change centred Youth Leadership Programs. It specifically focuses on two interventions image Theatre and autonomy promotion the former is a pedagogical tool while the latter is a pedagogical approach. This paper presents a description of image that Theatre and autonomy support as well as a discussion of how facilitators can apply these interventions to youth leadership programmes. The theoretical tenets that inform the information and pedagogical Interventions theory of self-determination and critical Consequences respectively are presented.

## Youth Leadership in Social Work

Youth leadership refers to the ability of young people to take charge of their lives and participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Youth leadership involves developing skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. These skills are essential in promoting social change and addressing social issues such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Youth leadership is important because young people have a unique perspective on social issues, and they have the energy and enthusiasm to drive change. (*C h a n g e Social Young People and CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS*, n.d.)

Youth leadership refers to the active participation of young people in decision-making processes and leadership roles in various settings, including social work. The involvement of youth in social work can bring about numerous benefits, such as promoting inclusivity and diversity, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions, and creating a more sustainable impact. Youth-led initiatives have been instrumental in addressing various social issues, including mental health, substance abuse, homelessness, and poverty.

Youth leadership in social work can also provide young people with a platform to develop essential skills that are transferable to different contexts. These skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, and empathy. By engaging in social work, young people can develop a deeper understanding of complex social issues, learn to navigate diverse perspectives, and build their capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue.

One of the key benefits of youth leadership is that it empowers young people to take ownership of their futures and become agents of change. By providing young people with opportunities to lead and make a difference in their communities, we are helping to build a more just and equitable society.

## Social Work and Skill Development Among Youth

In addition to community service and advocacy work, youth are also involved in social entrepreneurship. They are starting their own businesses and non-profit organizations to address social issues such as poverty, homelessness, and access to education. These initiatives not only provide solutions to important problems, but also create opportunities for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills and make a positive impact in their communities

### Role of Social Work in promoting Youth Leadership and Skill Development

Social work has a critical role to play in promoting youth leadership and skill development. Social workers are trained professionals who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to promote social change and address social issues. Social workers can promote youth leadership and skill development in several ways, including:

1. **Advocacy:** Social workers can advocate for policies and programs that promote youth leadership and skill development. Social workers can work with policymakers and community leaders to develop policies and programs that empower young people and promote their participation in decision-making processes.
2. **Capacity Building:** Social workers can work with young people to develop their skills and knowledge. Social workers can provide training and support to young people to develop the skills they need to take charge of their lives and participate in decision-making processes.
3. **Mentoring:** Social workers can act as mentors to young people. Social workers can provide guidance and support to young people as they develop their skills and knowledge. Mentoring is an effective way of promoting youth leadership because it enables young people to learn from experienced professionals.
4. **Community Organizing:** Social workers can work with young people to organize community events and activities. Community organizing is an effective way of promoting youth leadership because it enables young people to take charge of their lives and make a positive impact in their communities.
5. **Research:** Social workers can conduct research on youth leadership and skill development. Research is important in promoting youth leadership because it enables policymakers and community leaders to develop evidence-based policies and programs.

Social work can be a catalyst for developing skills among young people that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Social work interventions can provide opportunities for young people to engage in activities that promote skill development. For example, social work interventions that focus on community organizing and advocacy can help young people develop leadership skills, such as public speaking, coalition building, and strategic planning.

Social work interventions that focus on counselling and therapy can help young people develop interpersonal and communication skills, such as active listening, empathy, and non-judgmental attitude. These skills are essential for building meaningful relationships and connecting with others, which can help young people build their support networks and increase their social capital.

Social work interventions that focus on skill-building can also help young people acquire practical skills that are relevant to their career aspirations. For example, social work interventions that offer job training, vocational education, and entrepreneurship programs can help young people develop specific skills that are essential for succeeding in their desired professions. (Karagianni & Jude Montgomery, 2017)

In addition to the practical skills, social work interventions can help young people develop soft skills, such as emotional intelligence, cultural competence, and adaptability. These skills are critical for navigating the complexities of the modern workplace, which requires individuals to work collaboratively with diverse teams and adapt to rapidly changing contexts.

Youth involvement in social work has become increasingly common and important in recent years. Social work is a field that focuses on promoting social change, improving the lives of individuals and communities, and ensuring social justice for all.

Young people have a unique perspective and energy that can be harnessed to create positive social change. They are often passionate about causes such as environmentalism, human rights, and social justice, and are willing to take action to make a difference.

One area where youth have been particularly active is in community service projects. Many young people volunteer their time to help out in their local communities, whether it be through food banks, homeless shelters, or community clean-up events. These activities not only benefit the community, but also provide opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, build relationships with others, and gain a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

Another area where youth have been making an impact is in advocacy work. Many young people are passionate about issues such as climate change, LGBTQ+ rights, and racial justice, and are using their voices to speak out on these issues. They are organizing rallies, protests, and marches to raise awareness and demand change. In addition to community service and advocacy work, youth are also involved in social entrepreneurship. They are starting their own businesses and non-profit organizations to address social issues such as poverty, homelessness, and access to education. These initiatives not only provide solutions to important problems, but also create opportunities for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills and make a positive impact in their communities (Ho et al., 2015)

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Social Work and Skill Development Among Youth**

Despite the potential benefits of social work in developing critical skills among youth, there are also several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of resources and funding for social work interventions that focus on youth development. Many social work interventions are underfunded, which limits their scope and effectiveness in addressing the complex needs of young people. (Czibere & Paczári, 2021)

Some of them are:

- **Lack of access to education and job opportunities:** Many young people face challenges in accessing education and finding suitable job opportunities. This can be due to various reasons such as poverty, discrimination, and limited resources.
- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and trauma are prevalent among young people. These issues can impact their ability to learn, work, and socialize, making it challenging for them to succeed in life.
- **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse is a significant problem among young people, and it can have a devastating impact on their health and well-being.
- **Social exclusion and discrimination:** young people from marginalized communities face social exclusion and discrimination, which can limit their opportunities and affect their self-esteem.
- **Another challenge is the lack of opportunities for young people to participate in leadership roles within social work organizations.** Many social work organizations are led by older professionals, which can limit the opportunities for young people to engage in decision-making processes and leadership roles. (Naeem et al., 2021)

Despite these challenges, there are also numerous opportunities for social work to develop critical skills among young people. One opportunity is to leverage the power of technology to engage young people in social work interventions. Social media, online platforms, and mobile apps can provide opportunities for young people to connect with others, share their experiences, and access resources and support.



One of the Project Free Child, has found a cycle of empowering youth that includes the set of 5 main objectives:

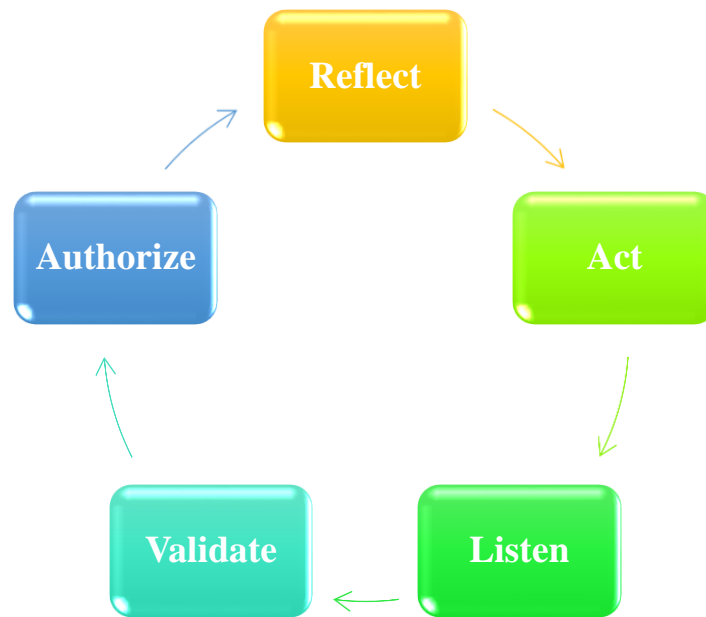


Figure 1: Youth Empowerment rules

1. Step 1: Listen to Young People Successfully engaging young people in social change inherently requires listening to children and youth. Personal assumptions, organizational barriers, and cultural expectations are often barriers to listening to young people. One-to-one conversations, group discussions, youth action research, youth-created media, or artistic expression can be successful avenues.

“The greatest lessons in life, if we would but stoop and humble ourselves, we would learn not from grown-up learned men, but from the so-called ignorant children.” -*Mahatma Gandhi*

2. Step 2: Validate Young People When children and youth speak, it is not enough to just nod your head. However, validating young people does not mean automatically agreeing with what is said, either. It is important to offer young people sincere comments, criticism, and feedback. Disagreeing with children and youth lets young people to know that you actually heard what was said, thought about it, and that you have your own knowledge or opinion which you think is important to share with them, and which you feel they are entitled to because they shared their perspectives. Young people must know that democracy is not about autonomous authority, and that a chorus of people, including young people but not exclusive to young people, is responsible for what happens throughout our communities.

“I don't believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is vertical, so it's humiliating. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other and learns from the other. I have a lot to learn from other people.” -*Eduardo Galeano*

3. Step 3: Authorize Young People Young people are repeatedly condemned, denied, or abandoned every day because of the identities they possess. Democracy inherently requires ability, which comes in the form of experience and knowledge. Authorizing young people means going beyond historical expectations for children and youth by actively providing the training, creating the positions, and allowing the space they need in order to affect change.

“The freedom and human capacities of individuals must be developed to their maximum but individual powers must be linked to democracy. Social betterment must be the necessary consequence of individual flourishing.” -*Henry Giroux*

4. Step 4: Mobilize Young People Transitioning from passive participants to active change agents and leaders requires young people actually taking action to create change. Mobilizing children and youth with authority allows them to affect cultural, systemic, and personal transformation in their own lives and the lives of others. It also encourages adults to actively acknowledge young people as partners throughout society.

“Our youth are not failing the system; the system is failing our youth. Ironically, the very youth who are being treated the worst are the young people who are going to lead us out of this nightmare.” -Rachel Jackson

5. Step 5: Reflection about Young People Social change led by and with young people is not and cannot be a vacuous event that affects only young people or the immediate situation. Children, youth, and adults should take responsibility for learning from social change by engaging in conscious critical reflection that examines assumptions, reactions, outcomes, and change. Young people and adults can also work together to identify how to sustain and expand the Cycle of Youth Engagement by applying what is learned through reflection to the first step of the Cycle. The leaders [should not] treat the oppressed as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting, whereas in fact they would continue to be manipulated.(Naeem et al., 2021)

These are the issues young people are addressing through their actions focused on social change. This is not an exhaustive list; rather, a scan of the most progressive interests being served by children and youth today.

### Conclusion:

Our Youth has a lot of potential to be take out and given the right direction, it can be used in empowering them and leading them to their successful life. Social work and leadership programs develop the morality and basic of the human skills that are required for the betterment of the society. One needs to have the acknowledgment of the togetherness and how to be a part of society with their leadership skills and social work.

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