

Introduction

The Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service: Youth Engagement Strategy builds on the [Social Mission Lived Experience and Participation Resource](#) to define its application for young people engaged in YOS programs.

YOS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

YOS is committed to youth engagement because:

1. participation is a human right! The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all young people are entitled to have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and,
2. underlying the YOS Independence Framework is an understanding that to be independent a young person needs to be engaged and equipped to make the decisions about the matters impacting them.

A commitment to youth consultation and participation as an integral part of operations ensures young people are engaged and able to achieve their identified outcomes and that YOS programming is meeting real needs. Engaged young people can fulfill YOS vision statement of “building independence.”

This Youth Engagement Strategy seeks to increase the participation of young people across the spectrum of engagement and throughout the Domains of Independence. YOS will provide feedback on that participation both to young people and wider networks via reports, articles, Facebook page etc.

THE MODEL OF ENGAGEMENT ¹



PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	IMPLEMENT
WHAT				
Provide young people with information that is accurate, appropriate, easy to access and understand.	Obtain young people’s feedback, ideas and views on issues directly affecting them.	Promote and support working directly with young people throughout planning and	Partner with young people in each aspect of planning and decision making,	Place final decision making in young people hands.

¹ Model adapted from International Association for Public Participation Australasia, Public Participation Spectrum, www.iap2.org.au.



		case management to ensure that issues or concerns are understood and considered.	including development of alternatives and identifying preferred solutions.	INDEPENDENCE
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	IMPLEMENT
HOW				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email SMS Social Media e.g. facebook Newsletters Posters/Flyers Presentations Develop partnerships with relevant agencies Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys Social Media Ideas discussion board Graffiti wall Suggestion box Focus groups SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case management plan Outcome Star Survey on specific topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Focus groups Peer interviews Discussion forums Youth reference groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth leadership

WHY ² INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

BENEFITS

TO YOUNG PEOPLE	TO YOS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people are better informed about YOS programs and services Having a say in decisions that affect them Development of skills Increased self confidence Connection to YOS community / networks Sense of value and respect from YOS community Being part of the solution Sense of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective programs and services that represent diversity of young people Relevant programs Inclusive policy Diverse and engaged community Connectedness

BARRIERS: young people’s engagement is not the sole determinant in a decision making process. There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration. Some are listed below:

YOUNG PEOPLE	FOR YOS

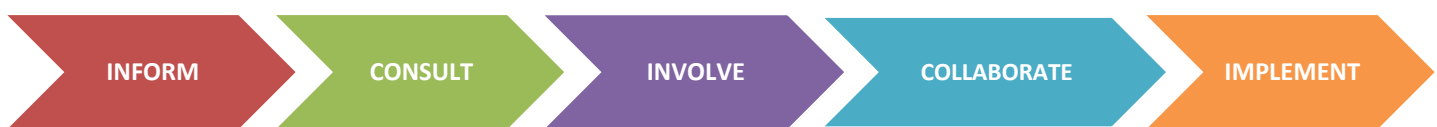
² www.wodonga.vic.gov.au

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Unrealistic goals • Negative experience • Personal limitations • Lack of Confidence • Indifference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Existing policy • Timeframes • Resources • Legislation
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CRITICAL FACTORS

- Young people should have clarity about the goals of seeking feedback
- The method of delivery must be appropriate for issue and audience
- There should be clarity about roles and responsibilities of both young people and youth workers
- There should be clear mechanisms for feedback /complaints
- There must be clarity about the extent to which young people’s input will be taken into account in final decisions (i.e. what other input is being considered e.g.budget.)

In all stages/aspects of youth work and case management, YOS staff should consider the level of participation of the young people they are working with and staff should seek to increase that participation where appropriate and possible. It is essential to remember that participation can take many forms for different reasons but engagement can be considered in summary as **FOR YOUTH, WITH YOUTH and BY YOUTH³**.



³ www.ourkidsnetwork.ca