

Nova Scotia can be a place where youth are engaged citizens of their communities; their passions are supported and their voices and perspectives are heard and valued. You can help build this Nova Scotia.

WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

Youth engagement is the meaningful involvement of young people in the planning, decision making and program delivery of all important parts of our society - our governments, our organizations, and our communities. Youth aren't just "leaders of tomorrow". They are leaders today.

Youth engagement can take many different forms and will look a little different in every workplace or organization. It can range from youth participation in programs to youth in full leadership roles. Here are some examples of different forms of youth engagement:

- Youth participation in programs and services
- Assist with program delivery
- Informal influence in department and program development
- Formal roles for youth in policy and decision making
- Youth/Adult partnerships
- Youth-led initiatives

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Youth engagement benefits young people, the adults and organizations that work with them, and the community at large.

Youth

- Learn they can play an effective and important role in community and organizational development
- Gain confidence in working with adults to solve problems
- Develop leadership and employment skills
- Are encouraged to engage and participate in other areas, helping them become more resourceful in their communities and broader society

Organizations and Adults

- Gain new perspectives on youth and their importance in community development
- Have access to new and creative perspectives on a range of issues
- Develop improved youth services and initiatives
- Build credibility with youth, helping ensure the relevance and longevity of the organization and its objectives.

Communities

- Benefit from more effective community development strategies when youth's strengths, abilities and perspectives are added to those of adults
- Will have more engaged adults in the future because youth that are active in their community now, are likely to stay active as they age

Adapted from: *Youth Making a Difference. Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat and HeartWood Centre of Community Youth Development.*