



Youth Participation and Community Change

Barry Checkoway

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Empowered youth CAN and DO make a difference!

Young people become empowered by their participation in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives—which in turn can lead to real positive change in the community. *Youth Participation and Community Change* presents leading authorities providing the latest research and effective approaches on how young people can be drawn to participate in organizations and communities. The diverse perspectives discuss youth participation in today's society, the models and methods of its practice, the roles of youth and adults, and the future of youth participation and community in a diverse democracy. Approaches include those which promote participatory community-based research and evaluation, and involve youth groups in poor and racially segregated areas.

The mainstream view of much of today's youth is that of being victims of society rather than a being a possible positive influence on society as a whole. *Youth Participation and Community Change* seeks to shift the viewpoint from youth as being problems to empowering them to enact positive social change. The book explores community agency efforts to involve young people, and the process by which youth civic engagement promotes empowerment. Social work and public health approaches are examined, with cogent discussions on conceptual and theoretical issues. Empirically based case studies illustrate best practices and interdisciplinary work that draws upon psychology, sociology, social work, public health, education, and related academic disciplines and professional fields.

Topics in *Youth Participation and Community Change* include:

- key dimensions of critical youth empowerment
- a case study of youth leadership development in Hawaii—the Sariling Gawa Youth Council
- the Lexington Youth Leadership Academy—a leadership development and community change program
- a new model for youth civic engagement in Hampton, Virginia
- three projects that engage urban youth in community change through participatory research
- youth engagement strategies and the benefits of youth participation in health research
- ten projects which used photovoice to represent, advocate, and enhance community health
- a participatory action research process with youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- the Growing Up in Cities project of UNESCO
- training students as facilitators for the Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) project
- four characteristics of engagement in the research literature and a school-community-university project
- differences in developmental outcomes among youth organizing, identity-support, and traditional youth development agencies

Youth Participation and Community Change is thought-provoking, enlightening reading that is perfect for organizers, planners, policymakers, advocates, youth service workers, agency administrators, educators, students, and professionals in psychology, sociology, social work, urban planning, public policy, and public health.

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