The Youth Engagement Continuum

The youth engagement continuum helps situate youth-led social change relative to other prevailing approaches to youth work.

Each of the five strategies described in the continuum offers services and programs to young people and plays an important role in supporting their healthy growth and development as individuals. Communities benefit most, however, when young people also have meaningful opportunities to engage in civic leadership and youth organizing. The development of strong and vibrant cities, communities, and states requires the intentional cultivation of organizations at each level of the continuum.

ΓEGY	INDIVIDUAL				SYSTEMIC CHAN
STRATEGY	YOUTH Services	YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	YOUTH ORGANIZING
ROLE OF YOUTH	1	11			
ROLE	Client	Participants and interns/staff	Participants, leaders, interns/staff, and board members	Leaders, interns/staff, and board members	Members, leaders, organizers, interns/staff, and board members
	Provide services to address individual problems and behaviors	Provide supports and safe spaces Foster caring relationships	Incorporate youth development AND Offer leadership opportunities	Incorporate youth development, leadership development AND	Incorporate youth development, leadership development, youth civic engagement,
	Define programming around treatment, prevention, and basic needs	between youth and adults; support youth-adult partnerships	within the program and organization	Promote political education and awareness	AND Offer opportunities to serve
S N		Develop talents and assets	Deepen historical and cultural understanding of shared experiences and	Build skills and capacity for identification and analysis of	as core staff and governing body
T 0		Provide opportunities for growth, development, and new roles	community issues Build skills and capacities for	issues and for action around issues	Build a membership base to which youth leaders are accountable
A G		Build individual competencies	making decisions and solving problems	Cultivate build collective identity as agents of social change	Develop campaigns and utilizes tactics— including
			Provide opportunities to participate in community projects	Engage in advocacy efforts	direct action—to effect systemic change
			Support youth-adult partnerships		Take active roles in alliances and coalitions

