



# Engaging Young People in Social Change: Insights from Community Psychology

Shepherd Zeldin

University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

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# WELCOME!

Üdvözöljük

Bemvind o  
Bemvinda

Bienvenido



Willkommen

ยินดีต้อนรับ

ברוכים הבאים



**We All Want To Be Part Of Something Larger Than Ourselves**

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# Youth Participation in Social Change: Interventions and Strategies



# Youth Participation is a Social Innovation

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Society does not create roles for youth to contribute to community governance or organizing

- Stereotypes (youth as student, style setter, potential problem; not citizen)
- Isolation (youth are “allowed” to engage with themselves)

The status quo is changing around the world, slowly.

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# Research Findings

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Youth participation promotes:

- Positive youth development
- Competent and committed adults
- Powerful communities

Design and implementation is a challenge:

- Values
  - Structures
  - Leadership
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# A Big Question

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How can community psychology inform the design and implementation of effective youth participation interventions and strategies?

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# Community Psychology at It's Best : Orienting Concepts

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Values

Collective  
Action



Intergenerational  
Partnership

Power

The Non-Profit  
Sector

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# Values

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## Community Psychology

- Values are a strength, not a lack of objectivity
- “Value neutral” interventions are a myth
- Value justice and rights over comfort

## Youth Participation Strategies

- United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child
  - Youth have a right to pursue their own interests and causes
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# The Non-Profit/Third Sector

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## Community Psychology

- The sector is about positive development
- The sector guards against injustice
- Holds government accountable

## Youth Participation Strategies

- Involve disenfranchised youth and the places they live
  - Focus on preparation and skill building
  - Focus on collaborations within the sector
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# Inter-Generational Partnership

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## Community Psychology

- Isolation makes people crazy, creates negative stereotypes
- Everybody is needed
- Everybody has a role (interest, skill, availability)

## Youth-Participation Strategies

- Build on strengths of different groups
    - Elders: Keepers/reminders of values
    - Adults: Institutional power
    - Youth: Instigators for change
  - Trust and relationships
  - Reciprocity in teaching and learning
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# Collective Action

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## Community Psychology

- Voice without action = death
- Movement, movements, and critical mass

## Youth Participation Strategies

- Build community networks, grow youth networks
  - Action has to address concerns shared by youth and adults
  - Action has to be visible to the public (governance, organizing, media)
  - Action has to model youth-adult partnerships
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# Power

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## Community Psychology

- Empowerment
- Information is power
- Power can be “given” and “taken”

## Youth Participation Strategies

- Partnership can magnify power
  - Youth need full access to institutional power
  - Youth need to be engaged in creating and disseminating public information
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# Personal and Organizational Change Can Be Risky

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- “Observe the turtle – He progresses only with his neck out.”
  - Sign outside the office of Diane Denish, Lieut. Governor of New Mexico
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# Youth Participation Strategies Design Principles

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- Embrace a value on youth rights to be heard on all matters affecting them
- Engage the nonprofit sector/NGOs
- Engage in collective, visible action, modeling to the community
- Create important roles for youth and adults
- Allow time for youth and adult reflection
- Create power through youth dissemination of critical information

## AND MOST IMPORTANT:

- Create power through youth-adult partnerships and networks
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**Clap! Clap!**  
**For Community  
Developers Here In  
Lisboa, Portugal!**

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