

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS: NURTURING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Health & Human Services

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Background

- According to the United Nations (UN), youth refers to people ages 15-24.¹
- More than 2/3 of youth believe political systems would benefit from more youth involvement in shaping policy.¹
- There is a need for multifaceted strategies to actively engage youth in civic, educational and community activities.
- Youth engagement intentionally and meaningfully includes youth in civic, political, educational and community affairs.²
- In North Dakota, children and youth ages <18 make up 24% of the population.³

Youth Engagement in ND

ND HHS CE Unit aims to create space for youth voices, gather feedback for improved service and provide education on desired topics.

- Youth Advisory Board established in 2021.
- Recruitment targeted ND youth ages 15-21 via social media, ND HOSA groups and media advertisements.
- Current membership consists of 13 youth, meeting virtually every other month except over the summer.

Benefits to Youth and Society

Youth Benefits

- Fostering identity formation
- Cultivating knowledge and skills
- Exercising rights
- Enhancing social integration and inclusion
- Promoting youth agency (decision making and driving change)

Societal Benefits

- Fortifying communities
- Advancing youth initiatives, bringing concerns to leaders
- Introducing new perspectives on issues
- Advocating for recognition and respect of youth rights

Projects Led By ND Youth

Youth Advisory Board:⁵

- 2023 - Current:** Helping to develop a health literacy questionnaire and a public health toolkit.
- 2023 - Recurring:** "Gateway to Health" event in Bismarck-Mandan with free access to ND's Gateway to Science exhibits, featuring interactive booths exploring topics on the holistic well-being of individuals.
- 2022 - 2023:** "Campaign for ND Youth" to raise awareness and educate on a youth-identified health topic. This included script approval and participation in film production for a social media campaign on Financial Health.

Health Equity Ambassadors Program:⁶

- University of North Dakota, 2022-2026
- United Tribes Technical College, 2022
- Minot State University, 2021-2022

Conclusion

Youth engagement has been effective in:

- Peer influence,
- Promoting collaborations,
- Empowering youth,
- Implementing projects, and
- Providing feedback to HHS.

References

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- Isaiah, Y., Kuperburg, C., Jassan, C., Skinner, M., Barlow, M. & Evans-Whipp, T. (2016). *Measuring Positive Youth Development: Tools & Guide for Implementation of Youth Programs*. Washington, DC: YouthPower Learning, Making Cents International.
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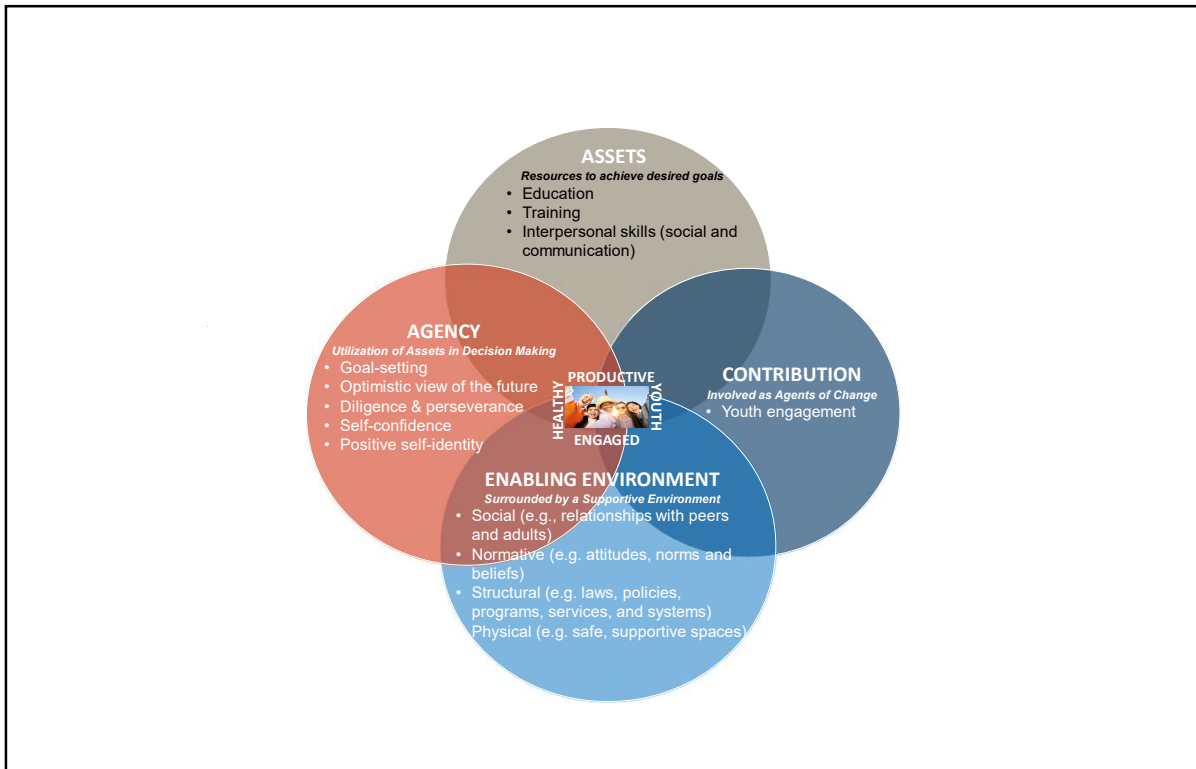
Theory of Change⁴

If these inputs and activities are provided	Then we expect these outputs	By achieving the outputs, we then will realize these outcomes		These outcomes will then lead to achieving the following impacts
Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for youth to practice skills (youth engagement and contribution) Resources (financial and staff time) 	Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of youth who engage in youth projects (contribution) 	Short-Term Outcomes: Youth-Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced interpersonal skills in participating youth (i.e., assets) Elevated positive outlook regarding their own future Strengthened connections with community members 	Long-Term Outcomes: Community-Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased prosocial norms (enabling environment) Community members' strengthened beliefs that youth have ability to develop solutions 	Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowered youth and adults in communities promote sustainable development and a culture of responsibility and equity within their communities and beyond

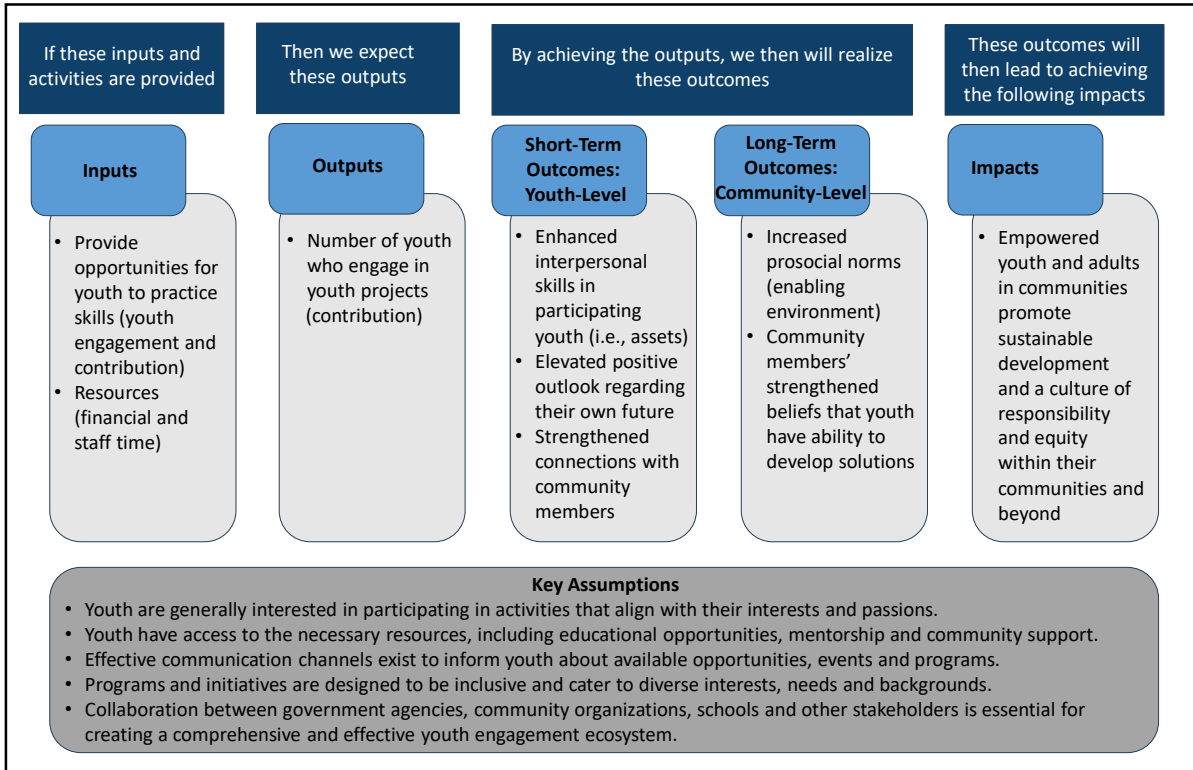
Key Assumptions

- Youth are generally interested in participating in activities that align with their interests and passions.
- Youth have access to the necessary resources, including educational opportunities, mentorship and community support.
- Effective communication channels exist to inform youth about available opportunities, events and programs.
- Programs and initiatives are designed to be inclusive and cater to diverse interests, needs and backgrounds.
- Collaboration between government agencies, community organizations, schools and other stakeholders is essential for creating a comprehensive and effective youth engagement ecosystem.

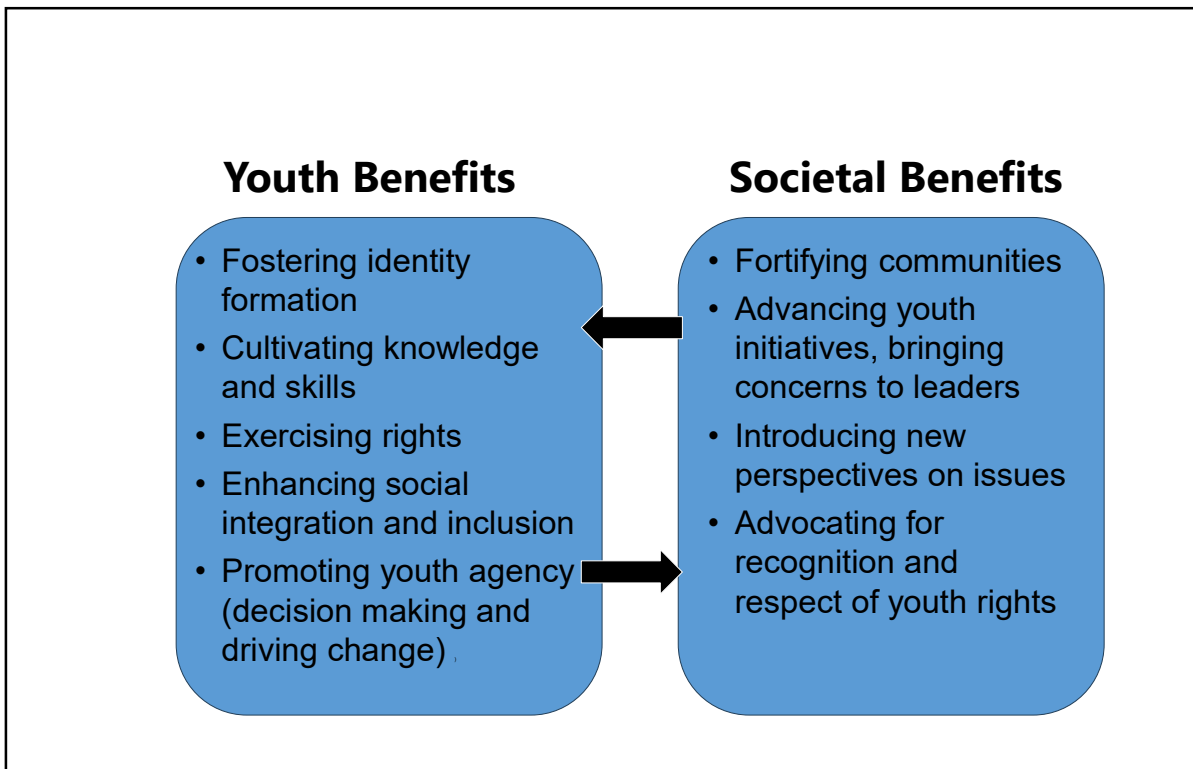
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