



Community Change through Youth Filmmaking

Give Youth the Tools to Tell Their Story

Giving youth the tools to tell their story through film sends a powerful message. By encouraging young people to share their own realities, the community is better informed about what the world looks like from the perspective of youth. This is community awareness at its best. Help youth express their passions, hopes and ideas for change to improve our world.

Allow Freedom of Choice

Adults sometimes feel the need to determine the topic of youth films. Instead, hold a brainstorming session to discuss what really matters to them. Give them prompts such as “What is your everyday reality? What helps you to be successful in life? What challenges exist for a young person in this community? What works well but needs additional support? Why do you feel strongly about your topic?” Guide youth through the discovery process and allow them to identify the topic for their filmmaking projects.

Work with Community Partners

Bring community partners into your project at the beginning. Collaborate with local organizations and businesses.. Engage them by asking them to provide mentors, content experts, space, and/or funding. By engaging them at the beginning, you will increase the likelihood that they will be engaged over the life of your program.

Identify Key Decision Makers

Work with the youth to identify key decision makers to assist in the change that they are trying to accomplish. Some questions to consider: Why does it matter? And why should it matter to them? Keep an open mind in terms of who the decision makers are. Sometimes your targeted decision maker is the city council or the school superintendent. But, sometimes the decision makers are parents or your general community.

Plan a Showcase Event

Work with the youth to plan a large event or reception to showcase the films to the community: Remind youth that the program participants, volunteers, and community decision makers are the heart of the community. The planning will assist the youth in developing critical life skills such as time management and public speaking.

- Work with community partners to donate space, refreshments and advertising space.
- Invite key decision makers to attend the event.
- Assist youth in developing media smart skills such as writing press releases and conducting interviews.
- Brainstorm other ways to get the word out: maybe through the internet, local message boards, PSAs, friends, and parents.
- Practice the youth-led presentations and discussions.

Give Youth the Spot Light

Truly give youth the spot light. This is their time to shine and to find their voice. Allow them to take the lead in developing and presenting their films, planning the showcase event, and conducting interviews. Be there to support, encourage, and guide.

Follow up

Plan follow up activities. If a new idea, issue, or concern came about as a result of the youth films, use this as a reminder that we can all do better, participate more, change what needs changing, and continue evolving healthier collective and personal realities.

Visit the 4-H Filmmaking Studio & Workshop at: www.4-H.org/curriculum/filmmaking