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Nothing About Us Without Us: DC Youth Advisory Committee

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**Why are there so many sexual health
education programs implemented
youth without youth input?**

Youth Sexual Health Project (2009)

Goal of developing youth-inspired sexual health programming strategies

Focus groups, key informant interviews, youth surveys and media assessments

Five guiding principles developed to drive sexual health programming for youth in DC



Youth Advisory Committee

- **Mission:** to develop a cadre of young leaders with critical-thinking skills who will share their knowledge and expertise around adolescent health issues



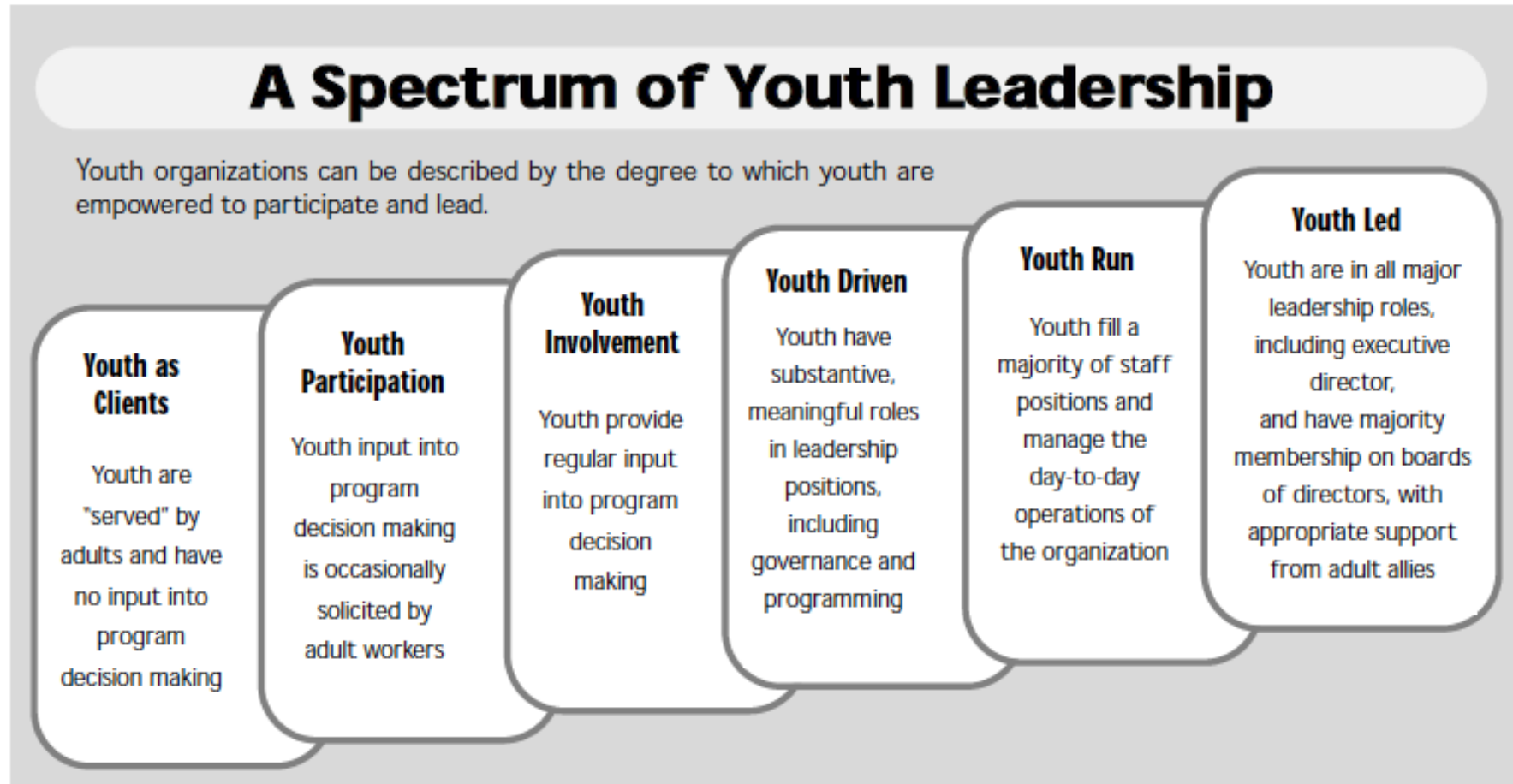
Youth Advisory Committee Structure



Youth Advisory Committee Structure, *cont.*



Youth Leadership



Source: Making-Space, Making Change- Profiles of Youth-Led & Youth Driven Organization, Young Wisdom Project 2004 p. 16

http://movementbuilding.movementstrategy.org/media/docs/1892_MSMC.pdf

Key Program Components

- **POLICY** to initiate the program
- **FUNDING** for stipends, materials, sponsorships
- **PARTNERSHIPS** for training and outreach opportunities
- **AGENCY** buy-in to ensure sustainability
- **YOUTH** to participate and recruit additional members



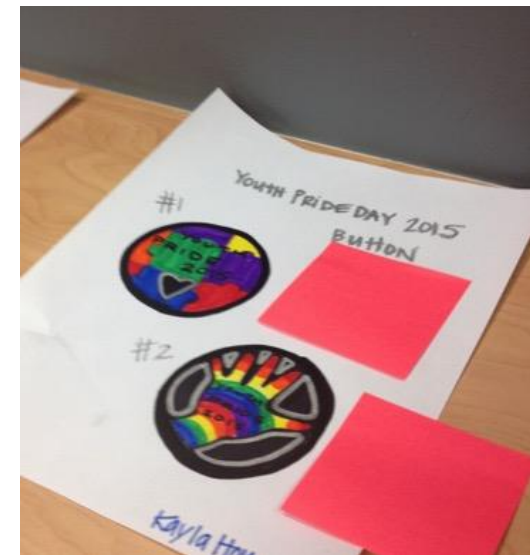
YAC Recruitment Process



Health Outreach- Making Packets



Youth Pride Day!



Student Condom Availability Program



Other YAC Projects



Incorporation of Youth Voice

- Topics addressed
- Outreach locations
- Activities and partnerships
- Recruitment of new members
- Our team/agency programming
- Partner programming, initiatives and legislation



Example of YAC Input



Best Practices

- Interactive trainings and activities
- Incorporating youth voice- all around
 - Brainstorm, plan then implement!
- Boundaries and rule-setting
 - Emphasize real-world application
- Youth voice at EVERY level
- Have fun!



Challenges Faced

- New agency policy regarding communication
- Processing of youth stipends
- Limitations around usage of funds
- Youth retention / outside life experiences



Concluding statements



*We cannot always build the future for our youth.
But we can always build our youth for the future.*

Franklin D. Roosevelt



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