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What's Youth Act all about?

- Aims and benefits of Youth Act
- Political literacy
- Community action
- Youth Act knowledge and skills
- The supportive adult
- Community resources
- National policy context
- Youth Act and the curriculum



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Building your Youth Act group or project

- Learning styles
- Relationships and group cohesion
- The stages of group development
- Keeping notes and portfolios
- Essential steps to running a good campaign
- Frequently Asked Questions



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Youth Act training sessions with handouts



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References

- Youth Act glossary
- Useful resources and reading
- Useful websites



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Appendices





Purpose of the manual

This manual provides everything you need to get a Youth Act project or campaign up and running successfully in your community. It will help you understand what Youth Act is all about and prepare your training sessions. Thirteen training sessions, for up to twenty people, are described in detail, complete with handouts, **in Section four**. They build on a vast amount of ideas and learning by previous Youth Act participants, including young people, adults, trainers and Youth Act and other Citizenship Foundation staff. This manual is also informed by an independent evaluation of Youth Act conducted by 3Consultancy.

“Such work is needed now more than ever. The Youth Act pilot has had a marked effect on young people’s confidence and motivation to participate. It has succeeded in enabling them to engage in social and political action in their communities and demonstrates that this is a scheme which warrants attention and resources.” (3Consultancy, 2005)

Who is the manual for?

This manual is for anyone preparing to be a Youth Act trainer who works with young people aged 11-18. Some of you will have years of experience, and for others Youth Act could be a new approach. You are encouraged to draw on your own style and knowledge, whether based in youth work, teaching, drama or human rights training for example.

The manual is a live document and we intend to add to it as trainers like you share your experience and knowledge of how to deliver Youth Act.



Understanding Youth Act

What you will get out of it. Sharing your expectations

Find out what they know already about Youth Act

Youth Act supports groups of young people and adults who want to achieve political or social change in their school, youth group or community.

What will be covered over the next few weeks

Give examples of what other Youth Act groups have done in their communities – see case studies in the manual and www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/youthact

Check in with their expectations from polaroid profile – is there anything that you do not think will be met? Is there anything you can add to the 'What will you get out of it?' section – based on their expectations. Make sure their expectations are addressed.

20mins

How do we want to work together? Group contract

This enables everyone to think about and agree what they want and do not want for their Youth Act sessions and to make their commitment to creating a positive experience for everyone. This is also an important first step in the group's decision-making.

The aim is to end up with about five things that we all are happy with and able to stick to as our group contract.

Draw a big circle on flipchart paper on the floor and invite everyone to put:

1. **What they want in the group** on post-it notes (e.g. Have fun, respect for each other's opinions) and put them inside the circle (max five things).
2. **What they don't want in the group** on post-it notes (e.g. No swearing, no fighting) outside the circle (max five things). You can get everyone to draw round their hand inside the circle and write things they want inside their hand and sign and do the same for outside the circle using their hands.

Ask each person to read out the statements in their hands, find out the ones that are similar

– do not dismiss suggestions – try and incorporate. Group similar post-its together e.g. all those which refer to 'no name-calling/no racism' etc and decide on a general ground rule that describes this group of post-its.

Now – can we come up with five agreements? Give everyone five dots/stars to put against the most important ones – add up and find the top five. They can put all their dots on one if that is the most important rule for them. The rules with the most dots form the group's contract. Is everyone happy? This is important to get right.

The ground rules most often agreed on are around: respect; no abuse; listening to each other; punctuality; turning off mobile phones. You might want to laminate copies once agreed.

20mins



Skills – Where are you at now?

Go through the **skills evaluation handout** (p. 45). We advise you to collect them after they have been completed and to make sure names are written on them.

You will need them again at the end of the Youth Act training.

10mins

Tools and journals

Give out one portfolio for the group to keep all their paperwork in, and ask the group to agree a nominated person to look after the portfolio for the group. Perhaps switch to a different person each week so that everyone gets a chance. Keep any flipcharts from sessions, letters, minutes from meetings, research information etc. in the portfolio so

that a complete record of your campaign is recorded throughout. Some participants might need them as part of their accreditation.

Individuals can keep their own handouts – but a complete set should be kept in the portfolio.

10mins

End of session evaluation – see Appendix 8 for ideas

5mins

Alternative ideas for this session:

If you get through the above activities quickly, you may get on to actually deciding and agreeing on what you want to change in your community.

about why these problems/issues exist. It's always interesting to get a variety of perspectives and to talk about what can account for those different perspectives.

One piece of work to do before the next session is finding out other people's views

You could then decide on your issue/ community problem during the next session.

10mins

80+10mins

Polaroid profile: This is me

MY NAME IS	
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ABOUT ME	This is what I hope to get out of Youth Act (my expectations)	Three things that I'm good at or I like to do... 1. 2. 3.	Three things that describe me (could be physical attribute or aspect of personality)... 1. 2. 3.
		Three things I would like to have done by the time I am 50... 1. 2. 3.	One issue I feel strongly about is...



'Where are you at now?'

Skills evaluation

Give yourself a score of 1-10

1 = not very good 10 = fully confident

Skills	Beginning of Youth Act date	End of Youth Act date
Working effectively in a team		
Working out your strengths and weaknesses		
Looking for information and advice		
Making decisions		
Planning your time and energy		
Carrying out your responsibilities		
Negotiation skills		
Dealing with people in power		
Solving problems		
Resolving conflict		
Coping with stress and tension		
Evaluating your own performance		
Communication and listening skills		
Presentation skills		