

## Community Leadership

This Community Leadership website is the result of a partnership project between the Education and Research Unit of [Volunteering Queensland](#) and the School of Learning and Professional Studies (within the Faculty of Education) [Queensland University of Technology](#).

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### **TIP SHEETS**

#### **Working with young people**

- 1 **Don't underestimate young people** – Their contribution to community groups, activities and events is vital and necessary. Young people have a lot to give and have the capacity to provide insights that are not always valued by others. Yet, young people are entitled to their opinions and should be given a fair go.
- 2 **Break the communication and language barrier** – Make sure you are reaching young people by communicating in terms they understand. Use language they are comfortable with; this doesn't necessarily mean 'slang' but achieving a level where everyone understands and is comfortable.
- 3 **Set goals, aims and guidelines** – Actively involve young people in setting goals, aims and guidelines for the project; this creates ownership, direction and passion from all members, while also creating responsibility.
- 4 **Create an accessible, comfortable and safe space** – The environment in which young people are situated is vital for their involvement, learning, development and achievement. Creating or choosing a space where young people feel safe, positive, creative and confident while also being accessible helps maintain passionate and dedicated youth with the freedom to express themselves.
- 5 **Have fun, diversity is the key** – Provide fun activities that assist in achieving the goals or aims set by the group. Keeping the meeting or session fun, alive, enjoyable and interesting will provide a chance for you and others to get to know each other more, while still working to attain the desired outcomes.
- 6 **Use young people's connections in the community** – Young people have an amazing amount of networks, connections, friends and knowledge about what is going on in the local and wider community. Encouraging young people to pursue their connections and networks will certainly pay off.
- 7 **Ask what they can do well, what are their passions?** Young people bring with them an array of talent anywhere from technology to art, gardening to singing. Asking them what they do well provides a base to work with, so that you don't underestimate or overestimate what can be achieved. Also, just because they might be excellent at stage management,

doesn't necessarily mean that is what they want to be doing; they might want to learn something totally different like graffiti art.

- 8 **Active involvement** – As mentioned above, the key is to actively involve young people in every aspect of the group, organisation or activity. Working with young people is exciting as they are open and willing to try new things; they have a real 'give it a go' attitude. They are also very honest in their opinions and ideas, which creates an environment of openness and truth.
- 9 **Understand the difficulties of being a young person** – Youth today are faced with so many different issues, problems, difficulties and influences. Their lives and their choices should be respected. For this reason, it is important to try not to judge or criticise them just because you don't agree.
- 10 **Don't stereotype** – Most people hate being stereotyped. No one comes from the same mould; no one is exactly the same. Put your prejudices aside and work cohesively and productively with young people, because at the end of the day you should all be working for the same thing.