



Starting your own project

Youth Participation Kit: Young people

Resource 4

Making a difference on an issue that really matters to you is incredibly rewarding. If you've found a cause that you are passionate about, you can do something about it.

Turning your passion into action

Step 1 — Set your goal

What do you want to achieve? Write down your mission and describe exactly what you want to get out of pursuing your cause. Be specific and identify practical, achievable goals.

Some examples of suitable goals are:

- fundraise for cancer research
- have your local skate park upgraded
- help people understand mental health issues better.

Step 2 — Get informed

Once you know what you're aiming for, you need to learn as much as you can about your cause. This will help you to choose the right actions to achieve your goal and will also help you to understand what is achievable and what other people are already doing. You might change your goal after you learn this information, and that's perfectly okay.

It would be a good idea for you to:

- do some research, including searching online, checking your local newspaper for any relevant stories, and talking to people who have done similar things
- see what other people and organisations are doing for the cause



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- look at what strategies other countries, states and towns are using that could work in your community
- identify the challenges you might face in addressing your issue.

Being informed means you will make better decisions, approach your issue more responsibly, and execute it in the best way possible. You will learn something new and be able to answer any question someone may challenge you with.

Step 3 — Make a plan

Now you are informed and know what you want to do, it is time to make a plan that will set out your objectives, strategies and resources. When it's complete, you can refer back to your plan to keep you focused, tell you your next step, and remind you what you're doing all of this hard work for.

Objectives: 'Goals' are broad and can sometimes be a little daunting. It will be easier to reach your goal if you have specific objectives to help focus your efforts. Your 'objectives' should be things you can measure and are a key way of evaluating your success. For example, some objectives related to the example goals from Step 1:

- raise \$500 to donate to the Cancer Council WA
- lobby the local Council to do a survey about satisfaction with the skate park
- increase 100 people's knowledge of mental illness.

Strategies: These identify the actual activities you are going to do to meet your objectives. It is also a good idea to identify your stakeholders (anyone who will be affected by or interested in your project) so you know who you will have to talk to, or who you may need to keep informed, and create strategies for how you deal with them. Example strategies include:

- hold a fundraiser free-dress day and flash mob
- hold a meeting with Local Councillors at the skate park
- host a mental health forum for parents with guest speakers.

There are some tips for strategies in Resource Sheet 5.

Resources: These are the things you will need to achieve your goals. They will always depend on the size of your project, what strategies you use and what you have access to. The resources you require may determine what you can actually afford to do. Consider



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what you might need for your project, if you can get it, or if you can ask for help (see Resource sheet 7 for tips). Remember that people can be resources too - if you'll need other people to help you out, make sure you include them in your plan.

Example of a plan

Goal

- To help protect the environment and encourage recycling.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of environmental issues in the community.
- To increase the amount of recycling done in the community.

Strategies

- Write a letter to the local mayor to ask for recycling bins to be put in the local parks.
- Start a petition at school for action to be taken on cleaning up the environment and recycling:
 - design a petition and identify the action needed
 - find out whom to send the petition to
 - collect signatures
 - send to nominated person.
- Have an environmental awareness event for everyone at school:
 - seek support from administration and student council school
 - schedule a date
 - book a venue
 - send out invitations
 - announce the event at a school assembly or over the PA
 - get food and drinks, cups, plates and serviettes
 - organise compost bins and recycling bins for the day
 - create posters about environmental issues to display at the party
 - make thank you certificates to recognise sponsors.
- Evaluate the project by checking final outcomes against objectives. Share feedback with stakeholders.
- Stakeholders will include residents near the venue, local council, students and teachers at school, young people in the community, local businesses supporting the event.



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Resources

- access to a computer and a printer
- paper for letters, petitions, invitations, certificates and posters
- access to a venue with tables for food
- food and drinks
- cups, plates, serviettes, rubbish bags, compost bins, blu-tack
- music to play at the party and a sound system to play it on.

Case study: YACtivate!

YACtivate! is an original initiative of the Mosman Park Youth Advisory Council (MPYAC) with an inaugural conference event held in 2015 to bring Youth Advisory Councils (YAC's) together to network, learn and share. The event has since grown with subsequent events held in 2016, 2018 and 2019 with increasing YAC participation and attendance from regional areas. The initiative is supported by the Department of Communities Youth Activities Grant.

In 2019, the two-day conference hosted in the beautiful regional area of Busselton brought together young people and coordinators of YACs from all over Western Australia, to network, learn from each other, share ideas, celebrate their work, and develop leadership skills.

The 2019 youth led steering committee consisted of Busselton SHIFT, Albany YAC, South Perth Youth Network and the Kwinana Youth Advisory Council. This committee met via telephone conferencing and decided early that the event needed to be hosted regionally and then they took charge of organising all aspects of event planning and event delivery.

Some critical learning and youth development occurred throughout this process with South Perth Youth Network leading the funding application process and applying for the grant, whilst the SHIFT Youth Crew and Albany YAC led the development of the conference program and campaigned for sponsorship and in kind materials to support the event. Kwinana Youth Advisory Council were responsible for contacting every local government in WA to create an invite list for the event and leading the marketing and promotion of the event through social media and email software. The committee came together and created the program for each day with a range of dynamic guest speakers who they felt would inspire themselves and the other young people attending.



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“Overall, YACtivate! 2019 was a great success with improved regional attendance with YACs attending from as far as the Shire of Dandaragan, Kalgoorlie and Albany and several YACs attending for the first time. New friends and relationships were established and the event received some really positive feedback and content ideas for future conferences.” - Arbie Pattiselanno, Community Development Officer - Youth, City of Kwinana.

"The people I met and the experiences I was fortunate enough to have were the biggest highlight of my time at YACtivate! 2019. Being able to connect with other YAC's from around WA and creating those networks of contacts. Not only was the location absolutely spectacular, the atmosphere was so welcoming. Everyone was so eager to make friends and connect with everyone, and to get off the bus. Overall YACtivate! 2019 is the most successful YACtivate! I have attended." - Keaton Harrington-Sinclair, Chairperson, Kwinana Youth Advisory Council.

www.facebook.com/yactivate

