

Leading Social Change

How can you make a difference?

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- This slide contains a few lists, websites and email addresses. Don't bother copying them down: these slides will be made available online.
- I am happy to be asked points of clarification throughout my presentation, but would prefer if questions were held until the end.
- There will be a focus on Australian youth affairs, but I am also involved in some UN activity with UNEP and UNESCO, so would be happy to talk about that in questions. I would also be happy to address any questions specific to any of my involvements.

- Bill Moyer's four archetypes of social activists:
 - Citizens who organise local action groups in their community to tackle problems at the grassroots level.
 - Rebels who reject, loudly and clearly, social conditions and public policies that violate these society's core values.
 - Social change agents who work to educate and involve the general public to oppose present policies and seek positive, constructive solutions.
 - Reformers work with the official political and judicial structures to get solutions incorporated into laws and government policies and accepted as the conventional wisdom of society. I will be talking mainly about the reformer role.

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- Youth participation
- Getting involved
- Experience and expertise to develop
- Lessons

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- Youth participation is based on the very simple idea that the most comprehensive, relevant and fairest decisions are made when those who are affected are involved.
- Democracy entails more than the formal voting process; it's a continuing conversation between constituents.
- Young people, as members of society who make unique and valuable contributions to society, have a democratic right to participation, especially in issues that effect them or their communities.
- However, sometimes youth participation is overlooked or undervalued, resulting in young people having fewer opportunities to be involved or to influence decisions. In addition, there are specific issues that may impact on young people's ability to participate, such as limited transport, restricted time or a lack of professional networks.
- Successful youth participation, however, is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all involved.

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Ladder of Youth Participation

1. Young people are manipulated to communicate adults' messages.
2. Young people are used as decorations for the decision.
3. Young people are tokenistically involved.
4. Young people are assigned specific roles.
5. Young people are consulted and informed.
6. Adult-initiated decisions are shared with young people.
7. Young people initiate and direct decisions.
8. Youth-initiated and directed decisions are supported by adults.

UNICEF: Children's Participation: The Theory And Practice Of Involving Young Citizens In Community Development And Environmental Care, 1997.

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Youth Participation Advantages

- Obtain a **better understanding of young people's issues and needs** to ensure that services, events or decisions are more relevant and appropriate.
- **Increase diversity of membership** and provide **representative decision making**, particularly if the decision affects young people. Acknowledge that participation is a fundamental right for all people.
- **Build partnerships** between young people and other community members.
- **Harness the specific knowledge** or fresh perspectives held by young people.
- **Provide opportunities to young people** to share in decision-making, develop new skills, generate new friendships, and have the satisfaction of using their skills to influence positive change in the community.

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World Programme of Action for Youth

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Hunger and poverty
4. Health
5. Environment
6. Drug abuse
7. Juvenile delinquency
8. Leisure-time activities
9. Girls and young women
10. Full and effective participation
11. Globalization
12. Information and communication technologies
13. HIV / AIDS
14. Youth and conflict prevention
15. Intergenerational relations

These include ten priority areas identified by the UN World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) adopted by the General Assembly in 1995 and five newer issues that were later identified as additional priorities and adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2003.

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I will be talking about large youth organisations (especially those large and prominent enough to warrant government attention), how youth affairs is structured and managed by state federal governments, and websites, directories and mailing lists where you can find opportunities.

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Australian Forum of Youth Organisations

Big Seven

- Australian Red Cross
- The Foundation for Young Australians
 - International Youth Foundation
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia
 - International Award Association
- The Scout Association of Australia
- Guides Australia
- Australian Council of YMCA
- YWCA of Australia

•Big Seven are internationally recognised and internationally active, have a large role at multilateral organisations like the UN. All are leadership-oriented.

•Many are traditional and conservative, and some have only recently introduced youth participation mechanisms in the administration of their programmes. Red Cross, FYA, YMCA and YWCA all have reserved positions for young people.

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Australian Forum of Youth Organisations

Other Members

- The Boys Brigade Australia
- The Girls Brigade Australia
- St John Ambulance Australia
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- Rural Youth
- Lions Club of Australia

AFOYO was a grouping of youth leadership organisations with which the Australian Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (when the position existed) consulted on a regular basis. They represent the largest and best-resourced youth leadership organisations.

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Other Major National Youth Organisations

- Oxfam International Youth Partnerships
(formerly Oxfam International Youth Parliament)
- International Young Professionals Foundation
- National Union of Students

- Entrepreneurship: Enterprise Network for Young Australians
- UN Issues: United Nations Youth Association of Australia
- Online Initiatives: Inspire Foundation
- Youth Media: Vibewire

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Government Engagement with Young People

Federal

- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC)
- Youth Steering Committee, Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)
- Youth Bureau, Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs

- Changing and Contributing:
www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11932

- National Youth Roundtable
- National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group

•A peak is a representative organisation that disseminates information, coordinates, advocates and represents the sector, and conducts research and policy development for its members. The peak role does not generally involve direct service delivery.

•Peaks are often useful places to start looking for opportunities as they interact with a large number of organisations and young people and can point you in the right direction.

•Australian Youth Policy and Action Committee: 1991 - 1999

•Australian Youth Affairs Network & National Youth Affairs Coalition: 1999 - 2002.

•Australian Youth Affairs Coalition: 2002 - present

•Larry Anthony: Minister for Children and Youth Affairs between November 2001 and October 2004.

•Sussan Ley: Parliamentary Secretary for Children and Youth Affairs between October 2004 and January 2006.

•John Cobb: Minister for Community Services from January 2006 - present.

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Government Engagement with Young People State

- Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic)
- Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI)
- Office for Youth, Department for Victorian Communities

- Changing and Contributing:
www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11932
- Future Directions: www.youth.vic.gov.au/

Current Victorian Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs is Jacinta Allan.

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Directories and Mailing Lists

- Living Choices: www.thesource.gov.au/livingchoices/
- the source: www.thesource.gov.au/
- The Wellspring: www.alanwu.org/

- YouthGAS
youthgas-subscribe@elistas.com
- Australian Youth Information Network
AYIN-on@mail-list.com

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Experience and expertise to develop

- There is no secret formula
- Know your stuff
 - Communication and negotiation skills
 - Knowledge of machinery of government advocacy, advocacy, policy development and reform
 - Strategic planning, project development, management and evaluation
 - Fundraising
 - Media strategy
 - Collaboration, networking and partnerships

Decide on what interests you, get informed, get active.

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Experience and expertise to develop

- Be very clear and specific about what you can offer the organisation, rather than why you are qualified in a general sense
- **Just ask!**

My UN WSSD Experience.

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Lessons

- Keep an ear to the ground
- Know what makes you special
- Find others who share your passion
- Leverage your youthfulness
- Nothing and no one is as inaccessible as you think

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Contact Me

This presentation is available via www.alanwu.org/

