



FUTURE PROOF
PARKS



Empowering young people

AN INTRODUCTION



Empowering Young People: A How-To Guide



About Future Proof Parks

Future Proof Parks is a programme run in a partnership between **Groundwork, Fields in Trust** and **National Youth Agency**. This National Lottery Heritage Funded programme – part of the £10m 'Kick the Dust' initiative – aims to get more young people interested and involved in preserving their local park and greenspace heritage.

As a result of the programme young people across the UK will learn more about their local historic park heritage and be encouraged to join their local 'friends of' park groups and volunteer to preserve the local spaces that matter to the communities they live in.

The project is also working with 'friends of' park groups to give them the tools, encouragement, and support to get more local young people involved in their work and to see the benefits of cross-generational working.

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Empowering Young Volunteers: How to Guide

Bringing together all of your planning, partnership work, outreach and consultations, you should be on your way to finding an approach to actively involving young people in your organisations. Making the leap from engagement to empowerment will require working with young people as partners, to run your organisation or change a local service for the benefit of young people, as well as encouraging young leaders to come forward to lead projects. Providing young people with the information, skills and experience of making a vital change will support them to become active citizens and to see the benefits of community development for their future.

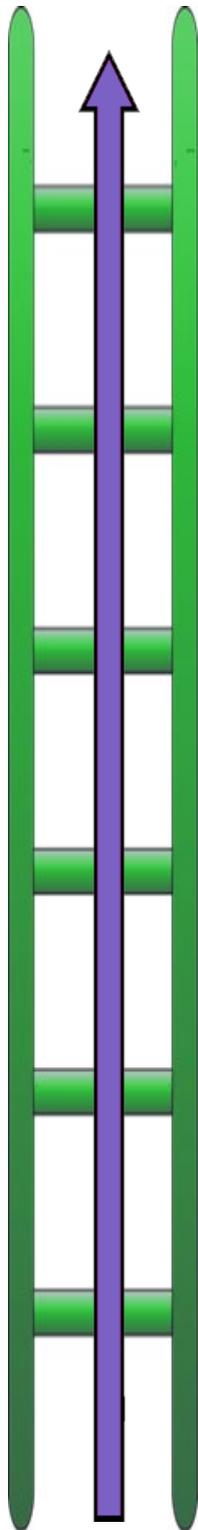
This guide provides further information on how to deepen participation and tips on building the capacity of young people to have a say in your activities and in your wider community.

Feel free to get in touch further to discuss: communities@groundwork.org.uk



The Ladder of Participation

Ladders, steps or stages of participation – it doesn't really matter what you call it as long as you recognise that the process of empowerment can occur at different levels and that the higher you climb the 'deeper' and more effective participation becomes.



Community Control - Power and control over service delivery, budgets and assets are handed over to community-based organisations. To give an example, Groundwork helped to set-up the first youth-led mutual in the UK, with young people in the North East having responsibility every element of their youth club.

Co-Governance - Citizens and service-users work jointly and share power with service providers and public bodies to govern projects and activities. Examples of this could include young people be represented in City Deals or having access to Police & Crime Commission budgets or Health & Wellbeing Boards.

Co-Production - Service providers involve users and communities as partners in service delivery. For example, young people getting involved in running a neighbourhood watch or peer mentoring scheme.

Delegated Power - Public bodies delegate limited powers to individual citizens or community-based groups. In the case of your organisation, you may approach the wider community to help you make decisions on spending or project work.

Deliberative Engagement - Ongoing, periodic or one-off dialogue to influence decisions and inform decision-making. This is a great step to reach! You would be you providing a variety of opportunities for young people and your next step would be to ask young people to take more responsibility within your group.

Capacity Building – Providing people with the skills and support to enable them to be more active citizens. For example, providing volunteering opportunities for people to share the skills of your group, but also raising awareness of the benefits of volunteering to a young audience!

Consultation - Formal mechanisms for gaining insight into public views enabling people to comment on proposals and voice concerns. This can take the form of an open meeting, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups.

Information Provision – Giving people information to help inform choice leading to increased transparency and accountability. This may be as simple as raising awareness of the benefits your community group has produced for young people.

Empowering Volunteers

Review your volunteer recruitment cycle, to make sure you are focussing on all aspects of volunteer management, providing an induction, training and recognition for each volunteer, whether they have come for a one-off session or have a role on your committee.

For some young people, this may be their first-time volunteering in the community – it is vital to make activities enjoyable and rewarding, as any activity that leaves a young person **feeling** more empowered may lead to their participating in an activity where they are **actually** empowered.

Working with Young People to Campaign for Change

If you are aiming to deepen youth engagement, you will be looking to change either your own organisation or another local service to suit the needs of young people more.

First, consider how effectively your own organisation is empowering young people:

- Have you built the confidence and skill young volunteers need to contribute?
- Have you tried different ways of giving responsibility to young volunteers?
- Are young people partners in different projects and able to put forward ideas for new projects?
- Do young people have effective representation at various levels in the organisation?

Next, research potential issues affecting young people and the wider community. Define with young people the parameters you are willing to work within around campaigning. Also, identify who will support young people to lead the project and partners who may be interested in campaigning on the same issue.

Identify individuals who are showing leadership potential and spark conversations with them on the skills they are developing, their aspirations for the future, and whether they are interested in taking on 'a cause', 'making a change', which will involve further responsibilities and more work.

You will need engaging sessions to support young people to campaign for changes they would like to see. The activities below for campaigning can be developed into a session for each outline.



Session Outline – Campaigns for Community Action

Activities developed from: Act by Right for Community Action - www.actbyright.org.uk

Getting to know each other- Identity card (ID): ask people to fill in an individual identity card/grid, which includes the following criteria: name; age; my local area; how long I have lived in the area; groups I belong to in the area; my interests and hobbies; things I've done in the community; my special skills and talents; my emblem or symbol (a picture that says something about me).

Pin up all the cards on the wall, then work together as a group to create a group identity or charter, to include facts about the group and general ground rules/information. For example:

- We care about our local area - collectively, we have x number of years living here!
- We welcome members of all ages and backgrounds - our oldest member is x years old, our youngest x years old. We have x number of nationalities in the group.
- We value the contribution of everyone – we share our skills with others, we know people who can (provide list of skills and talents).
- Define what the group is about and what it does.
- Include an emblem or logo that symbolises the local area and skill of the group.

Other ice breakers:

- Two truths, one lie – tell the group three interesting things about yourself (two are true, one is a lie) they must identify which one is false.
- Talent charades – mime out your talent for your team to guess against the clock.
- Line up – in order of age, how long you have lived in the area, alphabetical order (variation - without talking to each other!)

What is a Campaign? Discuss the definition of a campaign – organised actions around a specific issue that develop the influence you need to bring about change – and whether your campaign will focus on: Individual awareness/behaviour; Lobbying another organisation; Fundraising.

Priority pyramid: draw a triangle on some large paper or with masking tape on a table. Ask everyone to research and write down what problems/issues they think the campaign should focus on, on separate post-it notes, and place what they think is the most important at the top of the pyramid, and least important as the bottom. Talk, share and move the topics around as a group, then agree the final topics your campaign will focus on (up to three linked topics, but preferably just one clear issue).

Things to discuss:

- Campaign vision – one sentence that encompasses the aim of the campaign and goal you are going to achieve
- Slogan, messages, hashtag – develop sound bites for your campaign that can go in a communications plan.
- Research tasks – find out what is happening on the issue in the local area and if anyone has campaigned locally or nationally on the same issue.

Getting to know the community -mapping power and interests Network of connections: using a ball of wool or string, each person tells the group how they heard about the organisation or why they joined (e.g., 'from my teacher' or 'to learn about teamwork'). They unravel the wool a little and throw or roll it to someone else in the group that they know, explaining why they have a connection with them (e.g., 'my friend', 'we share an interest in gardening', 'they introduced me to the group'). Everyone keeps hold of their bit of wool before passing it, creating a web of connection within the group.

Mapping community connections: Create a map together of as many bits of your community as you know about, and who you think would be interested in your campaign. Find out about aspects you may not know about through a bit of research by using the internet. Add groups, organisations and other connections you may need for the campaign e.g., MPs, local media.

Mapping power and interest: on a grid with axes of 'influence' and 'interest' map which organisations or individuals have a lot of interest and influence in your campaign issue and those who do not have as much but would still be good to work with.

Things to discuss:

- Who do you need to influence to gain support for your campaign?
- Which groups will increase your influence to make the change you want to achieve?
- Who would be best placed to meet with and present your case to decision makers?
- Who is going to reach out to partners and consult with the wider community?

Presenting yourself and representing others – preparing to meet with decision makers: A chance to review your progress with partners, how you are building your campaign, and practice presenting your case to those who you need to influence. You are going to speak about things other group members feel strongly about. Decide first whether you want this to be light-hearted, serious, or either. Each write down on a piece of card an issue or topic you are passionate about. Put them face down in the middle of the group. Each now chooses a card you didn't write or draw.

Take a short time to prepare a one-minute speech supporting the issue. In planning, you might want to note three key points you want to make, think of a personal story of how this issue has affected you or research the change that needs to happen. Then put forward your case as if it were incredibly important to you, with the rest of the group being the audience.

Things to discuss:

- How did it feel speaking about something that may be important to someone else?
- What was it like listening to someone else putting forward your case?
- What learning does the group want to hold onto that will help you best represent other people's points of view?
- How will you prepare some of the potential responses you might get from decision makers – show understanding of their view and try to connect this with your view?

Action Planning Based upon the meetings and activities you have held so far; develop a view of what actions and tactics you will need to take for your campaign.

Force Field: You will need a big drawing of a target, with your goal in the middle and horizontal line through the middle. Above the line, add in the forces that may help you toward achieving it e.g., events, timely issues, people or organisations. Below the line add in the forces that may get in your way e.g., things that are going wrong. The closer to the centre the stronger the force is. The farther out the less powerful its impact is likely to be.

Things to discuss:

- How can you increase of forces above the line and reduce the forces below the line?
- What tactics will you use to increase your influence as you launch your campaign?
- Action plan - who is doing what, by when?
- Communications plan – who will be responsible for social media?
- Monitoring plan – how will you record the reach and impact of your actions?

Evaluation Collect and discuss information according to your monitoring plan as the campaign progresses e.g., numbers of likes on social media; people attending your events; views of people joining the campaign; whether people feel the campaign changed anything. It also important to evaluate how well the group did in planning the campaign and what lesson you have learnt.

Bull's eye: Draw a target on a large piece of paper, spilt into four segments a one of the following questions above each segment:

1. How enjoyable and interesting was our campaign?
2. How well did everyone work together?
3. How useful was it for you personally?
4. How useful was it for the group?

Stick it up for everyone to complete each section, showing their response to each question, with post-its or dots. The nearer the centre the better it was for you.

Things to discuss:

- What is next for the group?
- Will you take a stand on this issue again or choose other issues to work on?

Useful Links

For a range of exercises and details for running each session see Act by Right for Community Action - www.actbyright.org.uk

FUTURE PROOF PARKS



Engaging young people through
volunteering to preserve and celebrate
their local heritage parks and green spaces

OTHER RESOURCES IN THIS SERIES

[Working with young people](#)

[Including young people in your organisation](#)

[Working with other youth organisations](#)

[Recruiting young volunteers](#)

[Safeguarding young people](#)

[Crowdfunding Toolkit](#)

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Find out more at www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks