Youth as CHANGE AGENTS

The Impact--Youth Development²

**Results of Youth Organizing** (Christens, Holden, Kim, Kirchner, et. al.)

*Youth organizing uses a “youth empowerment” approach in which youth are seen not as a source of community problems but as a vital resource to communities with the potential to act as catalysts for and agents of change on a variety of issues*

* Development of key civic competencies: decision making, social trust, and tolerance, sense of self- and collective efficacy, understanding of systems
* Development of strategic thinking, such as how to locate information, frame messages with policymakers, and respond to unexpected contingencies.
* Increased intergroup understanding.
* Improved interpersonal capacities.
* Most effective approach to developing leadership skills, community involvement and decision making (Gambone).
* Improved community policies, programs and attitudes towards youth and community.
* Better School Attendance.
* Stronger Social Relationships.
* Self-perception as change agents, with the ability to motivate people to implement solutions.

**Social Justice and Youth Organizing Research** ((Ginwright), (Erbstein, 2009))

*Social Justice Youth Organizing develops youth by seeing them not only as assets but also as actors capable of transforming* ***their own environments****, especially repressive aspects of their environment, and not simply developing resiliency & resistance to it.*

* Emphasizes the importance of fostering young people’s ability to understand and act upon the larger social forces that affect their lives and their communities
* Youth transform relationships in the community by sharing power with adults.
* Development of pride in self-identity/life-purpose; ability to identify with others with similar interests.
* Development of sense of belonging to something bigger than self.
* Refraining from behaviors that contribute to oppression of others (from use of slurs to buying sweatshop shoes).
* Capacity to change and involve oneself in transformation of self and community.
* Development of recruitment, strategic planning and communication skills.
* Enhanced awareness of and ability to cultivate personal safety.
* Increased access to the networks, ideas and experiences that build individual and collective capacity to pursue social justice

What do YOU think????