



Spectrum Activity for Youth Educators

Is your program/organization considering working with youth on a community food systems project? If so, take the time to first complete this exercise as a group. This activity will help to foster discussion and reflection on how different people in your program/organization view the role of youth in helping to achieve its mission.

Advance Preparation:

- Find a room that has a big open space and is cleared of tables and chairs so that people can move around freely.
- Prepare 2 posters, one saying "I agree" and the other saying "I disagree", and stick them on the wall at opposite ends of the room, so that the people can form a straight line between them.

Activity Instructions:

- Explain that you are going to read out a series of statements that people may agree or disagree with to a greater or lesser extent.
- Point out the two extreme positions and explain that people may occupy any point along the spectrum between these positions.
- Read out the statements in turn.
- Prompt discussion after each statement. Ask those at the extreme sides to explain why they are standing in those positions and then ask for those in the middle to comment.
- Allow people to change their own positions as they listen to each other's comments.
- When you have gone through all the statements, bring the group back together to debrief.

Debriefing:

- Begin by reviewing the activity itself and then discuss what people took away from it. Ask prompting questions such as:
 - Were there any statements that people found impossible to choose a side?
 - Why did people change positions during the discussion?
 - Were people surprised by the extent of agreement or disagreement?
 - How does the difference of opinion reflect our organizational culture as a whole?
 - How does this impact our approach to working with youth?
 - Are there mindsets that we need to shift as an organization before can work effectively with youth?



Statements

Yes/ I strongly agree ----- **No/ I strongly disagree**

- Working with youth is a messy process.
- Working with youth is a lengthy process but well-worth the time.
- Youth-adult partnerships are mutually beneficial.
- Youth are an important part of the food movement.
- On a national level, youth and adults in the food movement are collaborating to the best of their ability.
- Our program/organization would benefit from working with youth.
Our program/organization knows how to establish a working relationship with youth.
Our program/organization knows how to effectively work with youth to achieve common goals.
- The idea of engaging youth in decision-making excites me.
- The idea of engaging youth in decision-making makes me nervous.
- Our program/organization regularly solicits the input of youth.
- Engaging youth in decision making will positively impact our program/ organization.
- Our program/organization is prepared to include young people in decision making processes.

The above are just some examples of statements. Feel free to come up with additional statements that apply directly to the context of your program/organization.