



Youth-Centered Coalitions: It's All About Perspective

Coalition building is not just about problems, but also about solutions and strategies. An important question to ask is: Is our coalition formed to solve a problem and/or to create a direction for building new opportunities? By emphasizing opportunities for change, we give the coalition's work an entirely different tone. We can begin this thinking when deciding who needs to be involved in the coalition. Karen Pittman, Director of Programs for the International Youth Foundation and formerly Executive Director of the President's Commission on Crime Prevention, talks about youth as "assets" rather than as "problem." Consider who might be invited to a community wide coalition based on the two different ways of thinking about young people.

"Youth as Assets"

Principals/Teachers

Local business recruiters

Public sector recruiters

Youth

College presidents

City recreation departments

Bank presidents

Local foundations

Parents

Local faith community leaders

"The Youth Issue"

Principals/Teachers

Juvenile detention workers

Police

Youth and Family Services

Faith community leaders

Emergency services

Crime watch

Foster care