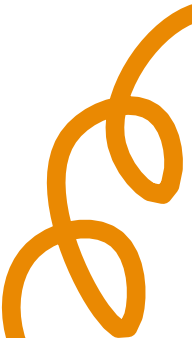


Developing an Ethical Youth Voice and Participation Strategy



From local community-driven Changemakers
to Youth Advisory Groups

YMCA Robin Hood Group





The Context

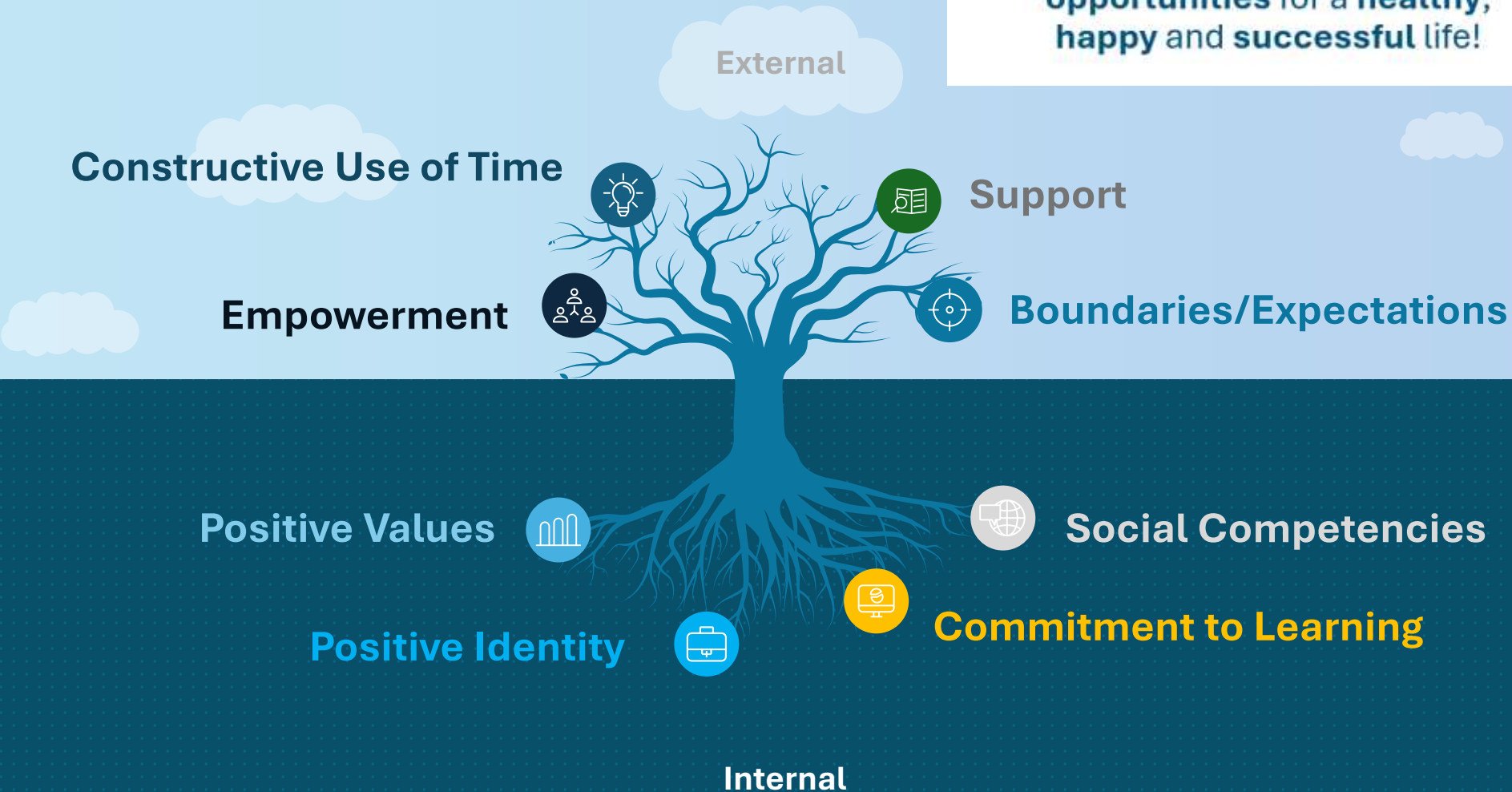
Developmental Assets

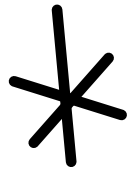
Changemakers



Developmental Assets

Critical **Ingredients** for children that dramatically **increase** their **opportunities** for a **healthy, happy** and **successful** life!





How has DA helped us shape our work?

- In Newark -Baseline data in 2023 compared to recent data in 2025 – allowing us to identify gaps and assess distance travelled (over 900 YP surveyed across both).
- In 2023, YP reported an average of **17 assets** putting them in the **vulnerable category**.
- Key Findings in 2023:
 - Only **31% of YP felt valued** in their community
 - Only **23% felt resourceful** in their community
 - Only **19% of girls feel safe** in their community compared to **41% of boys**
- Key Findings in 2025:
 - There has been **29% increase** in girls feeling valued in their community and **20% increase in people feeling resourceful**
 - A **27% increase in girls feeling safe**, although remains lower than boys
 - A **10% decrease in boys feeling safe** highlighting emerging gender-specific challenges...



* Working Collaboratively

● SCHOOLS/EDUCATION

● FAMILY

● NEIGHBOURS /
COMMUNITY

● VOLUNTARY GROUPS



● HEALTH CARE

● SPORTS / CREATIVE GROUPS

● FAITH GROUPS

● BUSINESSES



* Our ChangeMakers

In 2025, our young Changemakers groups led several youth-led social action projects...

Projects varied in social-action themes, from responsible pet ownership, park conservation and tackling loneliness in the community.



Meet Archie & Alice from our first ever ChangeMakers that started in February 2025.



* Our ChangeMakers

ChangeMakers are now being **connected** with people and places that broaden their horizons.




WOODLAND
TRUST

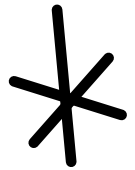

Manchester
Metropolitan
University

— Nottinghamshire's Community Forest bringing Sherwood Forest to your doorstep  Greenwood —



The Current Picture
*More meaningful and
ethical engagement*





Understanding Youth Voice

There was a desire to take this learning from ChangeMakers and explore our current and future practices across all our departments...

Supported
Housing

Children's
Residential
Services

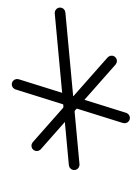
Therapeutic
Services

Youth
Programmes

Marketing



... and further!



Cross-Departmental Youth Voice Working Group

Core Purpose

The Youth Voice Working Group will look to further **develop and enhance** the Developmental Assets across services, by promoting best Youth Voice and co-production practices, to ensure service users have the space, audience, voice and influence to implement changes within our services ([Lundy's Model of Child Participation](#)).

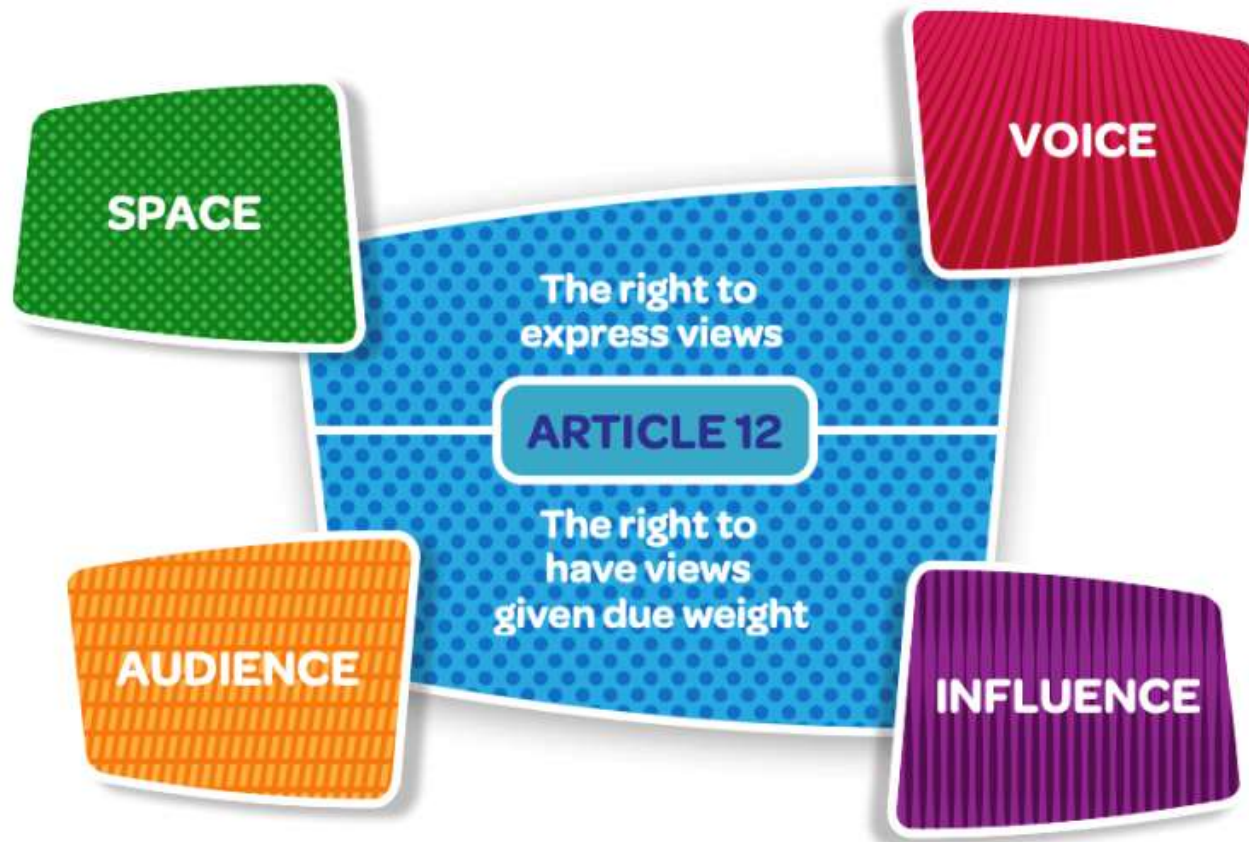
The Working Group will do this by developing and implementing a unifying Youth Voice Strategy for the YMCA Robin Hood Group.

IMPORTANT!

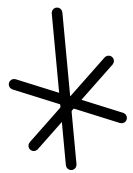
The strategy will be co-designed with young people, reviewed by young participants across each service to ensure it is relevant, meaningful and valuable.



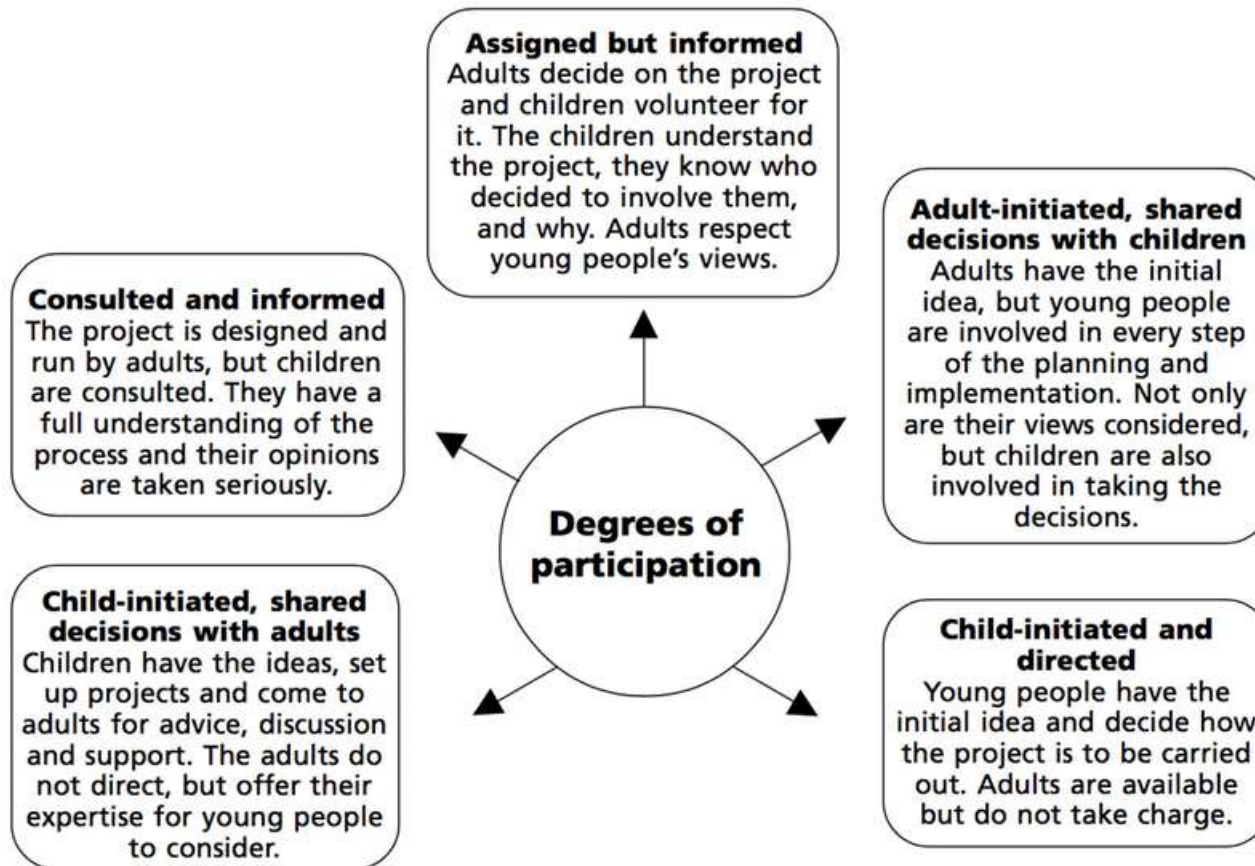
* Youth Voice Models & Mapping



Lundy's Model of Participation, as included in Ireland's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015-2020

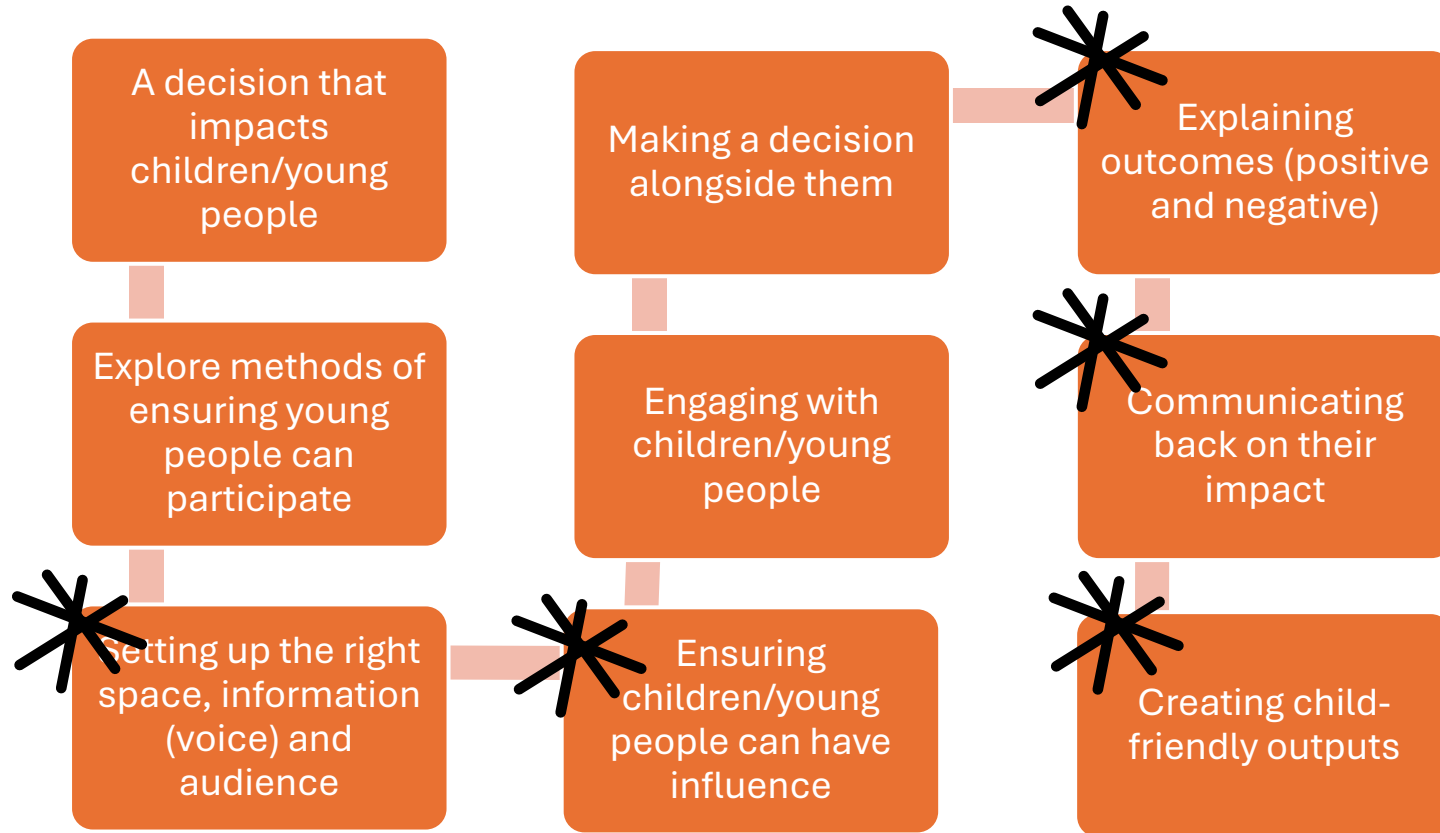


Youth Voice Models & Mapping



Treseder's (1997) Degrees of Participation (Save the Children)

Closing the Decision-Making Process





What's Next?

Youth Advisory Groups

Youth Podcasting



* Outputs of the Strategy



Youth participation groups relevant to services



Youth-led podcast – social-action focused

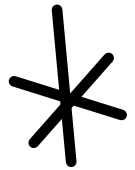


Staff training, guidelines and principles

Avoiding...

- Tokenism – asking for the sake of it or to tick a box
- Extracting – only taking, not giving back to the young people
- Performative – changing views to say what we want





Sharing Best Practice

We recognise Youth Voice is not NEW! It takes time, and good practice...

We'd be keen to hear how other YMCAs are embedding Youth Voice practices in their work, whether that be...

Youth advisory groups, resident groups, podcasting, young leaders or otherwise...



Thank you!

Emily.York@ymcarhg.org

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

