

Clarify Vision, Mission and Roles: Questions to Consider



Understand the context of the organization

- What initially brought people together?
- What were they discussing?
- Who was at the table? Who was not at the table?
- Who are the organizations that serve young people (and at what ages or developmental stages) in the community?
- Who sets youth development policies in the community?
- Who funds youth-serving organizations and institutions?
- Who else supports the youth development system?
- What sectors already have youth development training and technical assistance support/representation and what do they do?

Identify the needs and gaps

- In what ways are youth development organizations struggling to move forward? How are the struggles similar or different according to the age-range they focus on?
- Where are the greatest needs? Is it training staff, and if so, which level of staff?, winning funding awards, knowing about best practices, understanding the youth development field or convincing others about a youth development approach?
- Where are the gaps in meeting needs?

Determine the benefits

- In what ways would local youth workers benefit from sharing across organizational lines?
- How do the policies of government entities that fund and regulate children and youth services reflect an asset-based approach?

Identify the possibilities

- How are benefits being articulated? Do they state the outcomes of efforts clearly and succinctly?
- What is the soundbite that will mobilize the community around youth issues? (See Benefits of Training and Technical Assistance Resource Centers)
- Is there clarity around who the organization serves? (See Tools: Sample Mission Statements)
- Where do the organization's capabilities best intersect with the needs?
- What is getting in the way of the organization reaching its vision - the roadblocks that are controllable and can be addressed?
- What are the "big issues – big questions" that need attention?
- Is the organization's primary role to provide training and technical assistance, be an advocate; a policy setting body, a practice incubator or something else? (See Tools and Resources: Roles and Services Checklist)
- What programs and initiatives can be launched?
- What needs can be met immediately with little start-up time and resources?
- Where is the interface with other intermediaries that are broader or narrower in geographic scope (i.e. national, regional, state, local)?
- What framework will be used to articulate youth development within the determined focus area? (See Tools and Resources: Tools for Establishing Vision and Mission)