

Theory of Change: Co-Creating Our City

Assumptions

If..

- Young people care about their communities and want to participate.
- Local decision-makers are willing to engage in open dialogue and see youth as valuable partners.
- Decision-makers are willing and able to meaningfully engage young people, not just consult them after decisions are made.

Input

Given...

- Skilled coordinator/project team with experience in youth engagement, facilitation, research, and participatory methods.
- Funding & resources for workshops and to share findings.
- Safe, accessible physical/digital spaces for co-production.
- Commitment and participation from local government officials.
- Support from gatekeepers/youth groups to recruit different youths.

Activities

Through...

- Five or more Citizen Science workshops where young people and local decision-makers collaborate to explore and conduct research on a local issue.
- A team of youth and local officials who actively collaborate to co-design and carry out their research project (with some support from the project team).
- Joint analysis of research findings and preparation of outputs to share outcomes and inform future policy and practice.

Outputs

Produces

- Research-based insights into what young people want and what is feasible to implement in their communities.
- Jointly developed recommendations, policy proposals or initiatives informed by young people's lived experiences.
- New or improved solutions to a local governance challenge shaped by youth input and ready to be piloted or adopted.

Outcomes

Leading to...

- An increase in young people's democratic and research skills, confidence in local institutions, and understanding of civic processes.
- A deeper understanding of youth perspectives and needs among local decision-makers and officials.
- A culture of open dialogue and mutual respect between young people and local decision-makers.
- Trust increases between young people and city institutions.

Impact

To achieve in the long-term...

- Responsive, equitable local policies reflecting youth experiences.
- Inclusive and participatory local democracy recognizing youth as valued and legitimate stakeholders.
- Sustained youth participation in local governance processes.
- A shift from tokenistic consultation to ongoing, genuine partnership.