

# The Rationale for Youth Engagement



There are many important reasons to support youth engagement – from positive outcomes for young people, to better programs and policies. However these three rationales emerge as the most prevalent: <sup>12</sup>

**The Right to Participate:** This rationale is concerned with ensuring social justice and young people's right (under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) to participate in decisions that affect them and have their views represented.

**Positive Youth Development:** Meaningful engagement in decision-making, program development and policy leads to positive outcomes for young people including increased self-esteem, lowered risk-behaviours and improved academic performance.

**Building Civil Society:** Communities work better with diverse stakeholders who contribute various perspectives and competencies. Young people bring valuable new skills and insights to the table and will be more inclined to actively participate in civil society if they are welcomed into the process early on.