

Y-EMPOWER | a model for youth activism and empowerment

Summary version



The Y-Empower model is an evidence-based practice that transforms youth, both boys and girls, into active and empowered citizens of their communities and society. The results of the Y-Empower model demonstrate that building the capacity of local youth for civic activism also transforms adults' perception of them, further empowering youth and transforming adult-youth relations into trustworthy and reliable partnerships. The model represents good value for money.

This report represents a summary of the key issues and evidence that was generated as part of the development of the Y-Empower model. This summary is extracted from Y-Empower Evidence 4 Change series, which contains the evidence-based practices by World Vision and its partners in the Middle East, Eastern Europe region (MEER) that successfully contribute to changes in the well-being of children. The longer version of this document includes links to practical, tangible tools and resources and can be accessed on wvie.org.

Based on the validation of Y-Empower model contained in this publication, World Vision MEER encourages adoption of the model as a way to shift practices and priorities of vulnerable households and improve the well-being of children and youth.

THE ISSUE

A widespread perception exists that youth are incapable of engaging in productive, democratic efforts to improve their communities. Even in those institutions created to 'develop' youth, young people often face ambivalence from adults regarding their ability to participate in real world decision-making and action.

Vulnerable youth are further marginalised from the public realm by rising poverty and inequality, increased isolation, and decreasing support from communities, families, and schools that limit their opportunities and power to influence the world around them.

Governments around the world also grow increasingly concerned about the instability that can come from disillusioned and disenfranchised youth. Societies where young boys and girls cannot find their place and purpose become very fragile and malfunctioning. Youth as a primary force driving positive change no longer believe that they can make a difference.

While it is not claimed that poor youth representation directly leads to instability, a correlation can be seen between the fragility of societies and the maltreatment of youth.

THE SOLUTION

The Y-Empower model is a practice that builds the capacity of local youth for civic activism as well as contributes to the transformation of adults' perception of youth, transforming adult-youth relations into trustworthy and reliable partnerships. It includes three key, interlinked components – activism, adultism and empowerment – that build on one another.

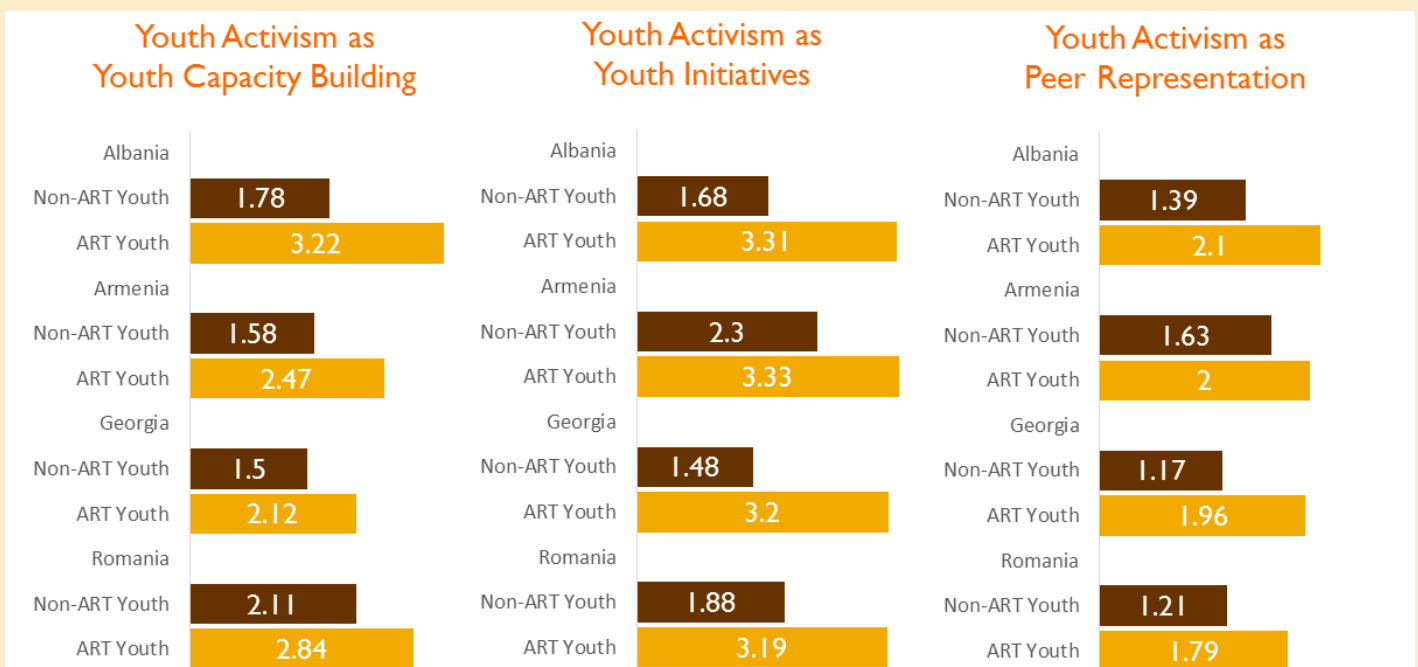
The Y-Empower model is based on the pathway to change developed on the basis of the findings of the quasi-experimental study conducted during 2014-2015

in four different countries: Albania, Armenia, Georgia and Romania. World Vision conducted the study in the context of a multi-year, regional project, 'be Aware, Raise your voice, Take action' (ART). The logic behind the pathway explored and validated is the following: transformation of youth into active citizens influences their sense of adultism reflected in adults' behavior and attitude towards youth, which altogether influences youth sense of empowerment and the adult-youth relationship.

THE RESULTS

The Y-Empower model turned out to be very effective, contributing to youth becoming active citizens in their communities. Statistical analysis that tested the relationship between activism, adultism and empowerment revealed the following findings:

- The more youth are actively engaged in community transformation through various initiatives (activism), the more they are valued and acknowledged as partners by adults, which reduces adultism. This value and the reduced adultism, in turn, contributes to youth's increased sense of empowerment.
- In all four countries, a statistically significant relationship was found between adults' attitude towards youth and youth's sense of empowerment. The more open adults are towards partnerships with youth, valuing their actions and opinions, the more empowered young boys and girls feel themselves.
- In all four countries, the ART youth were found to be far more active than the non-ART youth. While both groups resided in the same environments and experienced the same impediments and challenges, the youth enrolled in the Y-Empower model reacted to those challenges with action, taking the initiative to transform their communities into better places to live and develop.



LACK OF COMMITMENT

DISILLUSIONED

LOW SOCIAL TRUST

NO PARTICIPATION



Y-EMPOWER MODEL

EMPOWERMENT

trust, respect,
belief in being able to
make a difference

90% of the ART youth
believe they can advocate
for community
change.



MORE
EMPOWERMENT

ADULTISM

Partnership with
adults, joint
decision-making.

80% of the ART youth
reported transformation
in adults' perception
of youth.



REDUCED
ADULTISM

ACTIVISM

Skills building in
leadership, advocacy,
child/youth rights.
Youth initiative.

94% of the ART youth
stressed their commitment
to the continuation of
civic activism.



INCREASED
ACTIVISM

2 YOUTH
NGOs
established



COST-EFFECTIVE
1 youth/1 year
US\$21 **US\$69**
in Armenia in Georgia



	Georgia	Armenia
Number of Activities	22	57
Two-year Cost	US\$29,365	US\$38,260
Retention Rate	15%	5%
Number of Participants	250	938
Number of Unique Participants	213	891
Cost per Unique Participant per Year	US\$69	US\$21
Cost per Person per Activity	US\$6	US\$1

Cost-effectiveness of the Y-Empower Model

In Georgia and Armenia, MEER conducted a cost-effectiveness analysis of the Y-Empower model to analyse the financial implications of the changes in youth activism, their sense of adulthood and empowerment. The cost was US\$69 for an individual young boy or girl per year in Georgia and US\$21 in Armenia.

As the data shows, the higher the number of young boys and girls directly engaged in the Y-Empower model (250 participants in Georgia vis-a-vis 938 participants in Armenia), the more cost-effective the model becomes.

Scalability of the Y-Empower Model

The scalability of the Y-Empower model was verified by the creation of two youth-led non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Georgia and Armenia: Youth2Georgia (Georgia) and the ART Youth NGO (Armenia). Both organisations used the young leaders of ART as their foundation, replicating the values and approaches of the Y-Empower model of the ART programme. Youth managed to continue practising key components of the model within the framework of their NGOs without the need for extra preparation for their application. This further demonstrates the ease with which the model can be implemented.

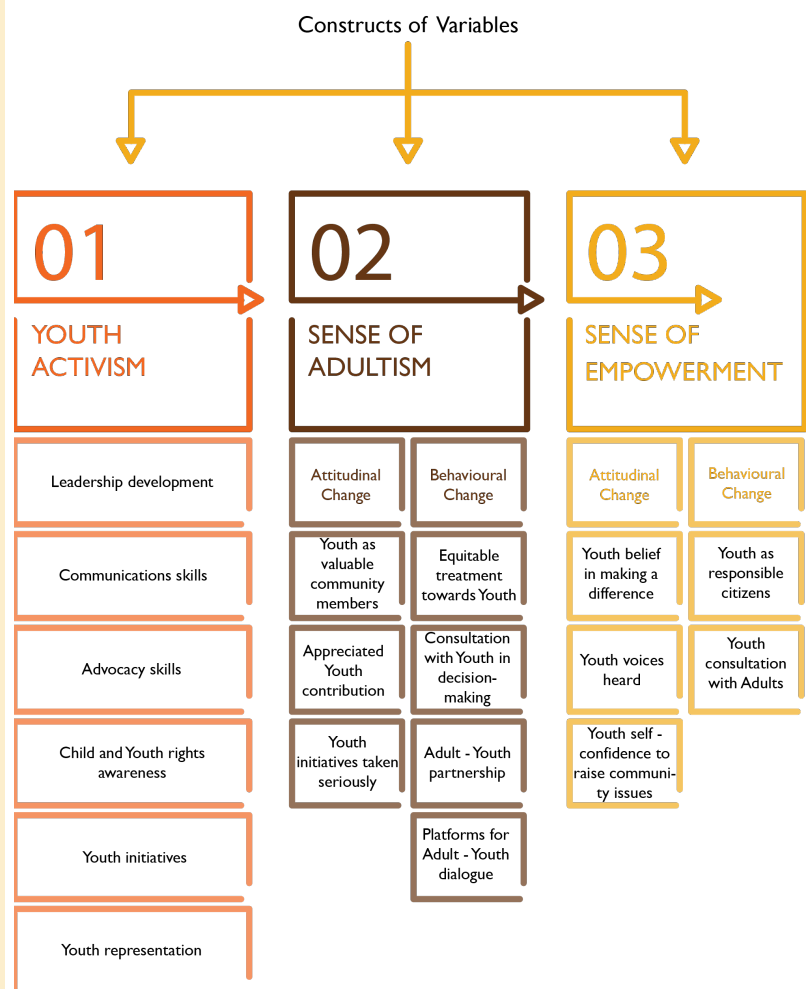
Other benefits and unexpected outcomes

In Pakistan, where the cultural context limits girls' and women's participation in decision-making, girls and women were encouraged to take part in the discussions and in the decisions of working groups as part of the youth empowerment under the Y-Empower model.

While in most rural settings of Pakistan, important meetings are conducted separately among men and women, in the area where the ART project was implemented with the Y-Empower elements, those meetings were conducted with the participation of both males and females. There was also a case where one of those meetings had a woman presenter.

Based on the evidence of contribution to change collected in countries with transitional economies, the Y-Empower is a model recommended for transforming young boys and girls into activists who effectively partner with adults for community development.

Y-EMPOWER THEORY OF ACTION



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