



What is Y-PLAN?

Overview

Y-PLAN (Youth – Plan, Learn, Act, Now!) is the UC Berkeley Center for Cities + Schools’ (CC+S) educational strategy that uses the community as a context for core learning and engages young people in authentic city planning and policy-making. Over a decade of action-research demonstrates that the Y-PLAN 5-Step methodology produces a “double bottom line” of positive outcomes for students and communities:

- Students: Y-PLAN builds the capacity of young people to effectively contribute youth-driven data and insight to the planning and policy making process; develops college, career, and community readiness skills.
- Communities: Y-PLAN builds the capacity of civic leaders to value and use youth insight to create better plans, policies, and more healthy, sustainable, and joyful places for everyone.



Y-PLAN National Initiative

Since 2000, Y-PLAN has developed into a national model of civic-led work-based learning that has involved over 5,500 students, educators and civic partners in finding solutions to community challenges. In September 2012, CC+S received generous grants from the Capital One Foundation’s Schools Transforming Communities initiative and local foundations to bring Y-PLAN to civic and educational leaders in targeted urban centers and to build a national community of practice around Y-PLAN. There are two goals for this exciting expansion:

- Create a publicly available, Y-PLAN Digital Toolkit – this website is designed to build on existing know-how and resources, and build the capacity of educational and civic leaders to collaborate and implement rigorous real-world action projects that support academic outcomes and community development goals.
- Launch a multi-site action research initiative – working closely with teachers, community leaders and students, CC+S aims to build capacity and track outcomes for local Y-PLAN initiatives in nine cities across the country to understand the affect of Y-PLAN on students, adult allies, and communities. CC+S also takes a lead of convening Y-PLAN participants to actively share best practices and learn from one another.

What Makes Y-PLAN Different?

There are two core features of a Y-PLAN project that distinguish Y-PLAN from other forms of civic education, or project based learning more broadly, and lead to the “double bottom line” of outcomes:

1. An Authentic Civic Client: Students are commissioned by a civic leader or community partner to work on a real/ongoing community development problem. The civic client demonstrates a real need for student insight, voice, and leadership, and has the power to implement youth ideas.
2. Methodology: Students engage in a 5-step methodology of critical inquiry, modeled on the professional participatory planning process and scientific method. As students move through the five-step “Y-PLAN Roadmap,” students learn civics by doing civics. They engage in real community research and generate evidence-based solutions for change. While growing from initial work with College and Career Academies, Y-PLAN fits into a broad range of academic courses, career-technical courses, interdisciplinary programs of study, and school organizational structures.

Visit y-plan.berkeley.edu to learn more about the Y-PLAN Double Bottom Line and Action Research Initiative