




Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Secrétariat aux relations
avec les Québécois
d'expression anglaise

Québec 



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT GUIDE & TOOLKIT



HONLEE ETHERIDGE

Manager of Marketing
and Communications

KAYLA KIPPEN

Senior Manager
of Operations

PRODUCED BY

Coasters
Association Inc.

DEDICATION

TO THE YOUNG LEADERS OF THE
LOWER NORTH SHORE, WE SEE YOU,
WE HEAR YOU, AND WE COMMIT
OURSELVES TO CONTINUING THE
CONVERSATION TO DEVELOP A
REGION THAT ENCOURAGES YOUR
IDEAS, DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



4 ■ INTRODUCTION

How did we get here?

5 ■ ENGAGING TODAY'S YOUTH

What is Youth Engagement?
Who Benefits
Models of Youth Engagement
How to (Actually) Engage Youth
Where Can You Get Involved?
What NOT To Do
Rural & Remote Engagement



23 ■ WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT

Youth Engagement Framework
Youth Engagement Survey Results
Youth Forum 2021 Results



30 ■ CONCLUSION

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Community engagement has been at the heart of the Coasters Association since its inception. When the region began to experience extreme declines in its total population predominantly over the last twenty years, engaging the citizens and communities through town halls and consultation sessions became increasingly imperative. The most notable decline in population was found in the youth sector. Several communities and municipalities were facing a migration rate of over 50% in that demographic alone.

Though it was always a priority of the organization to engage and mobilize youth in the region, it quickly became clear that the Coasters Association would need to further their efforts in supporting the youth population. The organization committed itself to becoming a catalyst to ignite the youth engagement process within its own development, and to encourage other organizations throughout the region.

The Coasters Association Youth Engagement Guide & Toolkit was developed to encourage young people to become active participants in local consultation on subjects that ultimately address the concerning decline in the youth population on the Lower North Shore. This document guides regional organizations, including the Coasters Association, to commit themselves to best practices in the coming years as further consultation and evaluation are completed with the youth population.





ARE WE LISTENING?

ENGAGING TODAY'S YOUTH

WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

Youth engagement is the inclusion of young people into decision making institutions and organizations. It is the consideration of their opinions and experiences when creating policy. It is giving them a safe space for their voices to be heard and to contribute to their communities.

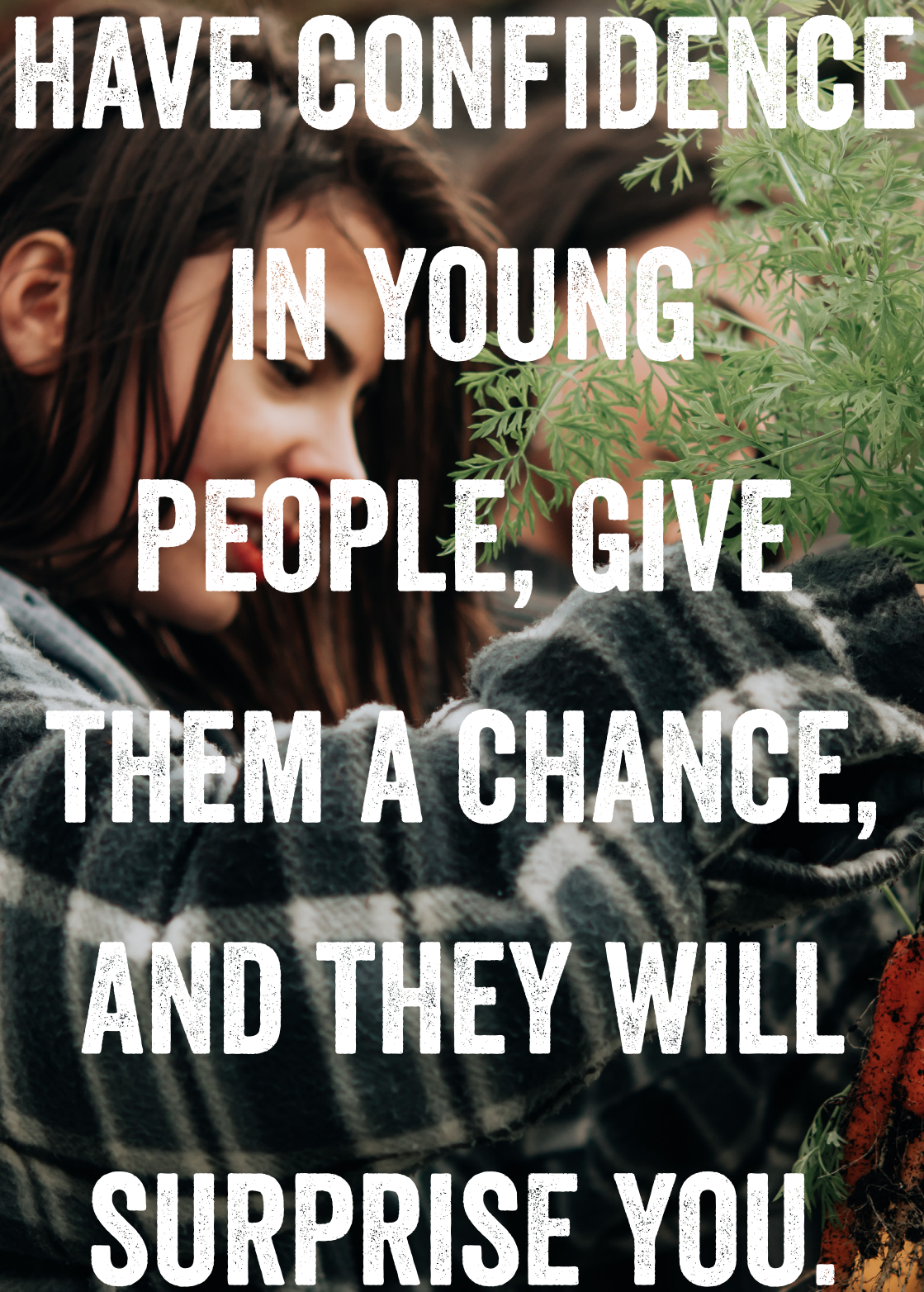
Our young leaders play an integral role in the current development of our communities. Typically, governance policies, legislation, community development and programming has been implemented before consulting the demographic that it impacts. Through engagement, youth are given an equal opportunity to have their voices heard in dialogue with adults, to influence the world around them.

Youth engagement is not just about having young people attend events, or participate in community activities. It is a platform, a voice, that gives light and value to their insights and opinions. **Simply put, to engage**

youth, is to empower them. When youth are involved in the decision-making process, they feel heard and take more responsibility in the implementation of change in their communities and environments.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The process of youth engagement recognizes young people's rights to participate in the decision-making process and reinforces that young people are assets with great skills and strengths that add value to the community and organizations that work with them. It further acknowledges that young people are valued stakeholders in the development of effective and inclusive policies, programs and environments.



**HAVE CONFIDENCE
IN YOUNG
PEOPLE, GIVE
THEM A CHANCE,
AND THEY WILL
SURPRISE YOU.**

– KOFI ATTA ANNA

WHO BENEFITS

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

01

YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES

Healthy communication is a source of empowerment. Giving young people a positive platform and opportunity for their voice to be heard increases their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

It also nourishes the development of new skills. Young people acquire important skills when engaged in decision making processes. For one, when working with adults, they develop leadership and problem-solving skills. When promoting youth leadership development, positive life skills learning is encouraged.

02

YOUTH & ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

We have all heard it once in our lives ***'we know what is best for you'***. Perhaps you heard it from a parent, a teacher, maybe even a politician. Research shows that this mentality is contradictory to the value of involving young people in the conversation to share their perspective. Better yet, it has been proven that positive interactions with young people can build stronger relationships between youth and adults, further breaking down the stigmatization that youth do not know what is best for them. When all stakeholders work together, with all voices heard, solutions are identified that would have never been discussed if others were left out of the conversation.





WHO BENEFITS

WHAT IS IN IT FOR THEM?

03

ORGANIZATIONS, AGENCIES, COMMUNITIES, ETC.

According to the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, when young people have a voice and active role in the services planning phase, there is an increase in access to programs and services. Organizations or agencies are alternatively more responsive to community needs, community development is reinforced and young people are encouraged to be more civic-minded.

When young people are engaged, there are obvious benefits to the services or communities they are influencing. They promote the importance of mental health, cultural inclusion and diversity, and have the ability to reach out to the population in unique and creative ways. This leads to greater civic involvement, programs and services that are responsive to the needs of young people, and new creative policies and governance.

WHEN ALL STAKEHOLDERS WORK TOGETHER, WITH ALL VOICES HEARD, SOLUTIONS ARE IDENTIFIED THAT WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN DISCUSSED IF OTHERS WERE LEFT OUT OF THE CONVERSATION.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth are recognized as having value and respect for their opinions

Builds self-esteem, resilience, and a sense of pride and accountability

Encourages leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving skill development

Increased social awareness and connection to other youth and their community

Break down generational barriers between youth and adults

INDIVIDUAL

ADULTS

Better understanding of young people's concerns

Changed perspectives and stereotypes of young people

Enhanced commitment and energy

Develop honest and reflective assessments

Improved understanding between young people and adults, leading to positive working relationships

ORGANIZATIONS

Larger variety of skills, information and imagination when planning and decision-making

Programs, policies and services are of better quality and more effective

Increased insight on the needs of youth and children, therefore improving their quality of life through better informed decisions

Youth perceive organizations as more transparent and accountable

SYSTEM

COMMUNITIES

Building a group of informed youth who are active in their community and gain experience in facing challenges through partnerships with adults

Decrease in generational biases through intergenerational collaboration

Increased knowledge of neighbours and other community members

The opportunity to question prejudices around different groups and individuals (ages, genders, religions, ethnicities, etc.)

Promoting democratic practices and social responsibility

SOCIAL

MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

There are several ways to practice youth engagement within an organization, community, or system. There may be young people participating in social programming, designed by adults, and at the same time, the organization may have in place a youth committee to develop future programming. This can be happening simultaneously within the organization.

01

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

First developed by the HeartWood Centre, the youth engagement spectrum is a model that is neither completely right nor completely wrong. Each form of engagement on the spectrum will generate a different outcome for the organization, youth, or system.

Participation
in Programs
or Services

Program or
Organizational
Assistance

Informal
Influence

Formal Roles in
Policy-Making &
Decision Making

Youth/Adult
Partnerships

Youth-Led

Source: HeartWood Centre's Young Engagement Spectrum



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

POINTS ON THE SPECTRUM

1 PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Young people are participating in programs offered by adult-led organizations. For whatever personal reasons, youth are showing up and accessing the services offered.

Example: Youth participating in an exchange program

2 PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATIONAL ASSISTANCE:

Youth are assigned specific tasks on behalf of the organization. This may be in the form of research, programming, fundraising, etc. They are involved, however, with no input into the tasks they are completing.

Example: Setting up for a community event

3 INFORMAL INFLUENCE:

Youth have informal roles in developing and implementing programs, and are not yet included in the formal planning process. Despite this, they are still the advocates, the advisors, the influencers.

Example: Young people participating in focus groups, surveys, forums

4 FORMAL ROLES IN POLICY- MAKING & DECISION MAKING:

Youth participation is valued by the individual and the organization. Youth may have positions on formal decision-making bodies, such as boards and committees. They may even hold staff positions with a high level of authority. Either way, their input is respected and valued.

Example: Municipal youth councils

5 YOUTH/ADULT PARTNERSHIPS:

Young people are integrated into existing organizational structures and have equal status in its decision-making processes. Adults also take this partnership very seriously and share with youth responsibility and accountability for the development and implementation of the organization's programs and services.

Example: An education program for children, designed and implemented by older youth

6 YOUTH-LED:

Young people control the governance and decision-making of their own organization, or initiative. All of the organizational responsibilities i.e., program creation, financial management, program facilitation, and service provision, are carried out by youth.

Example: Youth governed drop-in center

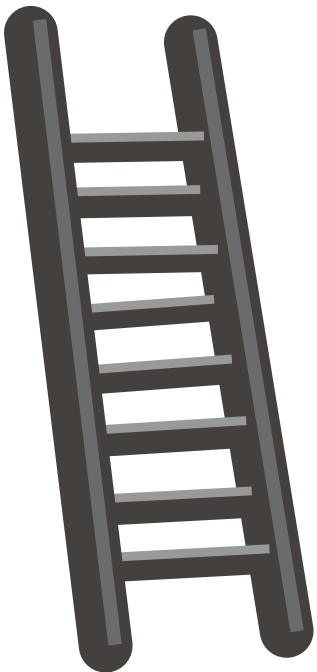
MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

02

ROGER HART'S LADDER OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

When adults struggle with how youth involvement can work, there is a tendency to practice on the first three rungs of the ladder, referred to as non-participation. When adults see value, meaning, and strength in youth participation and engagement, their work is reflective of the higher steps on the ladder.

Maximum Youth Involvement
Youth as Partners



Minimum Youth Involvement
Youth as Objects

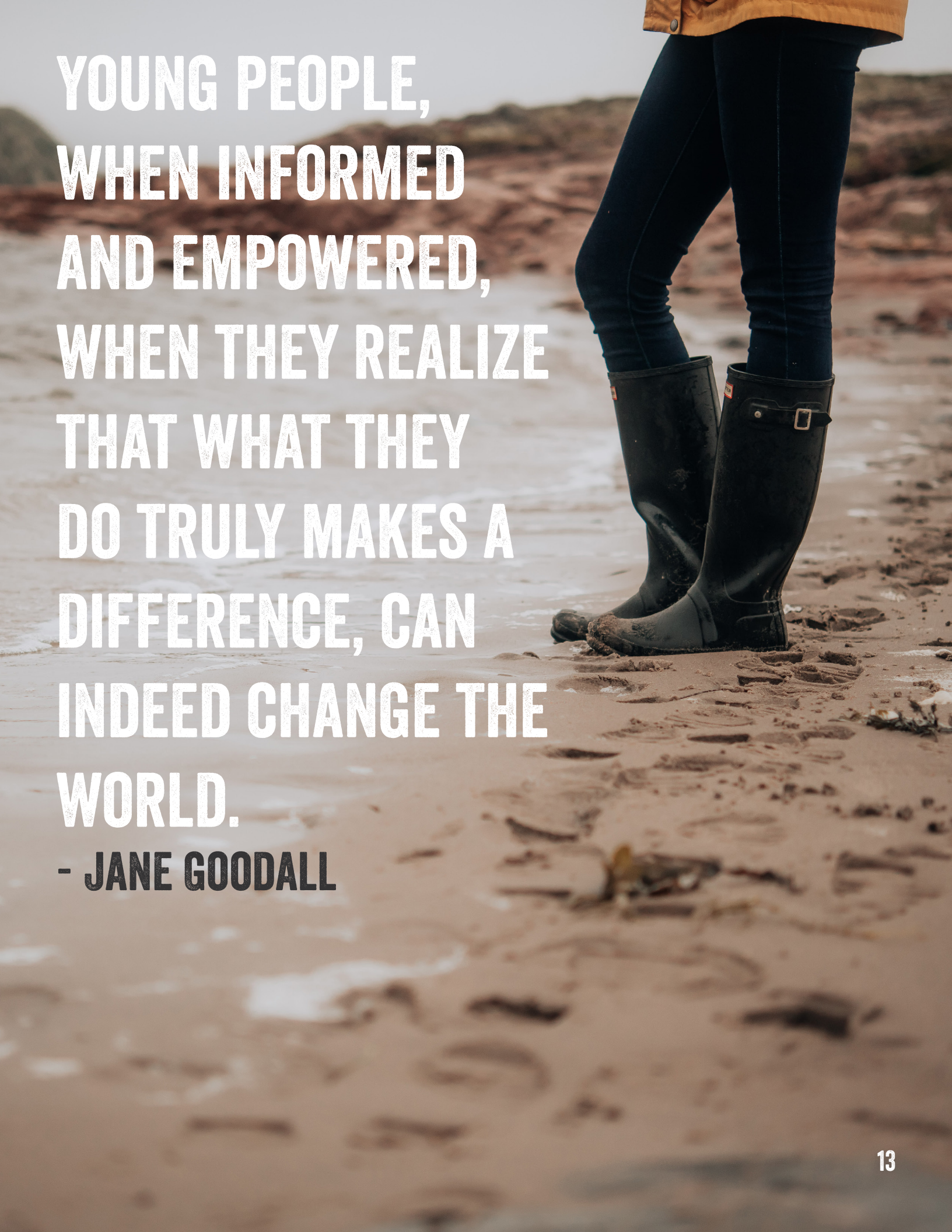
Participation

- Youth initiate and direct actions
- Youth initiate, decisions shared with adults
- Adults initiate, decisions shared with youth
- Youth are consulted and informed
- Youth are assigned tasks and informed

Non-Participation

- Youth are tokenized
- Youth are used for show and decoration
- Youth are manipulated to communicate adults' messages

Source: Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



**YOUNG PEOPLE,
WHEN INFORMED
AND EMPOWERED,
WHEN THEY REALIZE
THAT WHAT THEY
DO TRULY MAKES A
DIFFERENCE, CAN
INDEED CHANGE THE
WORLD.**

- JANE GOODALL

WHAT NOW...?

HOW TO (ACTUALLY) ENGAGE YOUTH

TREAT YOUTH AS YOUR EQUAL, NOT YOUR INFERIOR

Take all beliefs you have of young people and toss them to the side! Allow them to show their true capabilities by giving them the same level of support you would give another adult. There are endless stories of youth rising to the occasion and leading successful projects.

TIP: Have discussions and conversations with young people. Ask for their thoughts and opinions to show that you truly care what they have to say.

INCORPORATE YOUTH WITH DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS & DIVERSE SKILLS

Typical youth leaders tend to participate whenever they can. Their thoughts and perspectives are highly valuable. However, you may find a passionate and dedicated partner in a young person you would least expect. It is important to include a variety of youth.

TIP: Reach out to schools, youth-led groups, etc. in your area to recruit young people of all backgrounds.

MAKE IT LONG-TERM

If your plan is to involve youth for a short period of time because everyone else is doing it, they will see right through it. Young people need to know they are being taken seriously. If previous youth speak negatively about their experience with an organization, recruiting more will be very difficult. It's important to embrace partnerships with youth and to increase these partnerships within the organization.

TIP: Allow youth to hold positions of influence within your organization, such as consultants, interns, etc.

TIP: Have a staff person whose job is to create youth partnerships through recruitment, training and support.

INCLUDE YOUTH FROM START TO FINISH

When creating a new program, initiative, etc., get youth involved from the very beginning to provide their input. This also promotes an ongoing participation in the program once it's launched.

TIP: Listen to their thoughts and concerns about community issues and design new programs that address them.



MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

If a young person is only included to fit a demographic requirement, or as a token, they will lose trust and respect. Their involvement needs to be meaningful; it must have a purpose and an end goal.

TIP: Research ways youth can have meaningful roles in their everyday lives and throughout their community then provide them with those opportunities.

BE POSITIVE

A bad attitude and a lack of patience is a recipe for disaster. Youth will not want to continue working with adults if they feel they are unwanted. Positive engagement begins with a positive attitude.

TIP: Spend time with the young people in your partnership outside of work. Show them that you value their ideas and opinions.

BE AN ADVOCATE

If there is a lack of youth within organizations, committees, etc., voice concerns and push for more engagement of young people. Make it known how important it is to include them.

TIP: Refuse to hold meetings without youth present, especially on topics that affect them directly.

INVOLVE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

For youth in the younger age cohort, their ability to engage may come down to accessibility. By inviting their parents and/or guardians to participate, it encourages a stronger commitment from all participants.

TIP: Create a support group for parents to share ways to better communicate and listen to their children's needs, thoughts and concerns.

THE MORE THE MERRIER

It's only natural that youth feel intimidated by adults. They may not feel comfortable being the only young person in the room. By engaging at least two youths to work with adults, they can rely on one another to share their thoughts and ideas. It is also important to remember that more youth engaged means better representation of young people as a whole.

TIP: Do not expect an individual or a small group to represent youth as a whole. Treat them as individuals that are knowledgeable of their generation but not a spokesperson for everyone.

**I SEE THE ENERGY OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS A
REAL FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE.**

- ROSA PARKS





ARE YOU READY?

WHERE CAN YOU GO TO BE MORE INVOLVED...

YOUTH COUNCIL

A youth council is its own entity with its own roles, responsibilities, policies, etc. Members are chosen through a specific and clear process, for example, democratic voting. The youth council needs dedicated human resources to help provide structure and assistance.

Example: Student council at your local secondary school.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

A youth committee takes part of a larger committee/group. They are either a section of an organization as a whole or a department within said organization. They require less resources than a youth council and are not as structured.

Example: Member committee at your local youth centre that provides input to the Board.

YOUTH ADVISORY

A youth advisory can hold frequent, regularly scheduled meetings or hold gatherings as needed. They can be a group of the same individuals that meet each time, or a group of different individuals. The youth advisory comes together occasionally to cover specific topics and provide their opinions and feedback for an organization.

Example: An advisory committee comprised of young people for the MRC that consults on policies that affect youth throughout the region.



YOUTH PARTICIPANT

A youth participant is a young person who takes part in an initiative, as either a volunteer or a patron. They could also be a member of a board or an advisor for different initiatives. They do not answer to a larger group or superior, their participation is voluntary and for themselves.

Example: A member of your local Sports and Recreation/Leisure Committee, Volunteering at local events such as hockey tournaments, carnivals, holiday celebrations.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

A youth representative has the role to represent their age cohort to the organization in which they sit. They gather information from their respective group (i.e. youth council, youth advisory, etc.) and present it to the larger entity.

Example: A secondary student from the Student Council on their school's Governing Board, a youth representative for the MRC.

YOUTH ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIP

A youth organization partnership consists of collaborating with another youth body to use their expertise to work towards a specific goal.

Example: Inviting Student Council members to a Sports and Recreation/Leisure meeting to brainstorm ideas for activities that will attract secondary students.

WHAT NOT TO DO...

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

NEGATIVE ATTITUDES & OPINIONS

Don't we all just want to be taken seriously? Young people need to feel like their participation and input are valuable and effective. If you aren't going to take them seriously and ignore their true opinions, don't be surprised when they will not show up for you. **And leave the negative Nancy's at home!** Another reason young people stop showing up or avoid it all together, is if they feel like a partnership is negative or not going to provide the positive experience that they had hoped for.

GENERATION GAP

It is hard to ignore the generation gap between youth and adults. For one, **young people feel that adults forget what it is like to be young** and cannot relate to them anymore. Young people assume that this is the reason adults do not engage with them, and are more interested in the ideas and opinions of other adults. Conversely, adults believe that youth wish to be more independent and have other priorities that occupy their time. These misconceptions between the generations need to be addressed for engagement to take place.

LACK OF INFORMATION & EXPERIENCE

Intimidation, or the fear created from a lack of knowledge, tends to diverge young people from involving themselves in the political sector in their communities. Even though they may have important perspectives to share, they will avoid these situations out of fear. It is important to keep young people informed about potential opportunities in their communities, how they can get involved, and why it is important to hear from them.

UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Confusing tasks, deadlines, end goals, etc., create a negative experience from the beginning. **If a young person is unsure of what is expected of them, it is difficult for them to fulfill their end of the partnership** and is unlikely to collaborate again. Set solid, concrete expectations and go through them together so everyone is on the same page.





RURAL & REMOTE

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

By now, we understand what it means to engage young people, the benefits of doing so, and overall barriers of youth engagement.

The Lower North Shore faces significant challenges in terms of language barriers, geographical and social isolation. In cases of rural and remote communities, it is especially important to get young people involved and talk about their ideas, concerns and situations. Our communities rely heavily on locals to organize activities, events, and participate in decision-making, therefore, involving all stakeholders is even more important.

Let's take a closer look at the barriers unique to rural and remote communities, and solutions to overcome them!

01 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE

02 EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

03 POPULATION SIZE

04 WELL-BEING

01 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE

The communities of the Lower North Shore are not all connected to one another by road. But that isn't to say they do not share some of the same struggles. And conversely, they all are unique in their own realities as well. When we think about getting all of the youth in the region together, it isn't as simple as it sounds. Though the distance is a factor, with the use of online platforms today, it isn't impossible to overcome.

Ways Around It:

Host small focus groups in each community with the local youth, then connect everyone into a larger group online or through social media

Get connected online through platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. This allows all youth from all over the region to get connected to share their input.

02 EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Young people from the Lower North Shore leave their home at such a young age to attend post-secondary education or employment opportunities. Young people leaving the region have found it increasingly difficult to return to their communities. Some communities have such low numbers of youth, so engagement is highly difficult in these villages.

Ways Around It:

Keep in mind the local dynamics of each community. Some seasons the communities are busier than others and it may be difficult to get anyone involved.

When trying to engage youth or developing strategies for the region, remember that long-term strategies may need transition plans. Some of the youth involved in the planning or implementation process may relocate throughout the project.

03 POPULATION SIZE

Social contact and activities can be limited on the Lower North Shore. Not all communities have the most stimulating social structures. Often young people can feel excluded from their community. There is also the implication of family dynamics and small town mentality. We all know someone that will pick up the phone in a minute to call around about the local 'news'. The lack of privacy often associated with rural areas contributes to the fear of judgement and being stigmatized for what they discuss. This can result in less access to medical services, involvement in community consultations (fear of speaking up), and fear of outing themselves.

Ways Around It:

Be conscious that privacy may be very important for youth, so find unique ways to engage them that is more open or reassures their privacy.

Remember that the engagement process itself encourages social contact and investment into the community. This further signifies the importance of the process.

04 WELL-BEING

Earlier we highlighted the individual benefits of being involved or heard in your community. Rural communities statistically experience greater risk factors related to their well-being than youth in urban areas, and the Lower North Shore is no exception. Young people living in rural areas also may experience a greater risk for mental health problems.

Ways Around It:

Given the impact youth engagement can have on supporting the wellbeing of youth, these benefits should be extended to youth living in rural and remote communities. This is especially important when you consider the increased risk factors noted above.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

FOR THE RURAL & REMOTE POPULATION

PROJECTS WITHOUT PURPOSE

Engaging youth on projects that have no true purpose or goals in sight are pointless. The ideas and concepts are great, but the inability to see the project actually get off the ground results in disinterest. Boredom sets in quickly if there is no sense that a mutual benefit would be accomplished.

AVOIDING THE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

Not all concerns are easy to discuss, especially in small communities, and many adults often shield youth from the uncomfortable subjects. By sugar-coating, or making things seem better than they really are, youth feel deceived and underminded, and you risk losing credibility. So, stop downplaying the hard truths, young people deal with difficult things on a daily basis, they can deal with this too.

USING YOUTH FOR SHOW

A common mistake is using youth as a prop. This means, implying that youth are involved, or having them at the forefront of the project or initiative, but not truly letting them share or engage. As mentioned earlier, if their opinions, thoughts, and concerns are not taken into consideration, you will lose youth commitment altogether.

LACK OF SUPPORT

It is important that youth are given the opportunity to be involved, learn and grow on their own. But it is also just as important to make sure you are there to help guide them along the way. It is all about being present and providing just the right amount of support along the way.

RECRUITING TO TYPE

When recruiting youth to engage or participate with your organization it is important that you don't stick with a specific 'type' of young person. For instance, always engaging the academics or athletic types may result in missing really useful information. Diversifying the population also encourages working with and understanding different points of views, which you would otherwise never experience.

DO THE WORK FOR THEM

Ever heard of the saying, "Give man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, you feed him for life"? Well, this concept works here too. If we truly want youth to be involved and have a greater impact, it's better for them to do their own research, create their own perspective. We already know our own, we want them to uncover their own thoughts and ideas.

YOUTH-LED, ADULT-GUIDED

We see this when adults set the agenda, structure, organize meetings and recruit members. At no stage were youth involved in the process. For the most impact, it's best to have youth actively involved in the planning process from the early onset.

COASTERS ASSOCIATION

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

All of these tips, tricks, and insights may make youth engagement seem challenging. It is only normal to have hiccups along the way. Regardless, the benefits of youth engagement far outweigh the challenges.

This is why the Coasters Association commits itself to working on our own internal goals and finding new innovative ways to 'AICE' youth engagement on the Lower North Shore!

Let's take a look at how we plan to do that.

■ Youth Engagement Framework

Coastal Youth Summit 2021 ■

■ LNS Youth Survey Results

Where to go from here... ■





‘AICE’ YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

ACCESSIBILITY

The first step to Youth Engagement is to break down the barriers between young people and the opportunities to be included. There are a variety of speed bumps on the road to youth engagement; from cultural to physical and everything in between. It is important to identify those barriers and to address them when reaching out to youth.

INCLUSION

Young people need to be a part of the conversation. There is no better consultant for youth than the youth themselves. Once barriers are broken down, young people will feel more comfortable to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. Their input is highly valuable in policy and decision-making. However, it is important to remember that a few young people do not speak for their age cohort as a whole. The more diverse the group of young people, the more voices are being represented.

COMMITMENT

Youth engagement is not a one and done occurrence. It is a long-term commitment to giving young people the opportunity to participate in discussions and decision making. Youth can see right through attempts of using them just for show. They know when their voice is truly respected and considered. Invest in young people and their potential.

EMPOWER

What better way to ensure the future is in good hands than to provide youth with the tools and resources they need to be great leaders. Support them throughout their engagement to make their experience as positive as possible. By giving them the support they need to succeed, they are encouraged to continue to include youth when they are in positions of power later in life. Their experiences will help to shape the leaders they will become.



YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

As part of a project with Canadian Heritage, the Coasters Association sought out to engage youth in the development of the Lower North Shore. Through this survey, the organization gained an understanding of what makes up the youth population, what is most important to them, what critical issues they face, and what their attitudes/perspectives are. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2020.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WE HEARD FROM THE YOUTH POPULATION...

YOUTH AGED 12-17

Education

Popular Activities

Sports & after school activities

What Youth Want to See More Of

Trips, practical & career courses, etc.

Career Support

Outreach/information activities needed

More diversity in information provided (include trade schools, entrepreneurship, etc.)

Increase in showcasing opportunities for career development on the LNS



YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

YOUTH AGED 12-17

Community

Increased Social Events & Programs (Age specific)

More sporting events, outdoor activities, and dances

Increase in sharing the Lower North Shore heritage

Increase opportunities for leadership & decision-making

Student council is the number one source of youth volunteerism

More volunteer opportunities, more involvement at municipal, institution and non-profit levels, mentorship opportunities

YOUTH AGED 18-35

Education & Employment

Need for increased employment opportunities

Through our Youth Engagement Surveys, it was shown that employment is the strongest factor in youth's long-term perception of their living environment.



Diverse educational backgrounds

Lower North Shore youth pursuing post-secondary education or training (University, CEGEP, trades)

Entrepreneurship

Need for education/training opportunities

Need for employment projects

Top 3 Barriers to Employment on the LNS

Limited variety of work

Not enough jobs

Limited housing

YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

YOUTH AGED 18–35

Community

Important attributes

Employment is number one

Affordability

Close to family

Safety, housing, quality of social life

Need for more accessibility (travel, cell service, etc.)

Number one attribute youth living away enjoy is the accessibility where they currently live

Increased housing needs

Increased Social Events & Programs

Volunteer Work

Community events serve as the main method for youth volunteerism, followed by sport & leisure committees

Increased participation in community/municipal meetings

Youth state they would be interested in getting involved in discussions about their communities' future

Methods of Communication

Social media & email

Overall, youth have a high rate of pride in the Lower North Shore, with the sense of community being the number one reason for it



COASTAL YOUTH SUMMIT

During the 2020 Coastal Summit Series, the Coasters Association conducted consultations with nine (9) communities/municipalities on the Lower North Shore. During these consultations, a SWOT analysis was utilized to identify areas of the communities that were essential to strengthen, or address, to ensure the sustainability of the region. This method proved to be highly useful and was essential in highlighting regional concerns, and how to potentially move forward.

Given the success of this framework, it was again utilized during the Youth Forum in March 2021.



WHAT IS A SWOT ANALYSIS?

A SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a framework used to evaluate internal or external challenges and determine the best ways to move forward. It is an assessment tool that is designed to facilitate a realistic, fact-based, data-driven perspective of an organization, or in this case, the community to create fresh perspectives and new ideas in strategic planning.

THIS IS WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE LOWER NORTH SHORE

STRENGTHS

Our community
 Willingness to help others
 Mobility
 Determination
 The nature (water, land, trails)
 Freedom to do what you want
 Recreational activities like boating & ski-dooing
 Close communities
 We're unique culturally
 The people (resilient, hardworking, independent, diverse skillsets)
 Sense of belonging

WEAKNESSES

Needs more social activities for youth.
 Lacking in vital services (health, mental health, etc)
 Needs more bilingualism
 Too traditionalist sometimes
 Improve mentality towards what we can do
 Encouragement of healthy lifestyles
 Social perceptions towards social drinking, especially underage.
 Dependence on unemployment benefits

OPPORTUNITIES

Freedom
 Natural resources
 Trust
 Tourism
 Nature – Beautiful surroundings
 Large amounts of land – lot of area for development
 Build strong networks in the communities
 Know people who can help you start up businesses
 Abundance of skilled trade people
 Explore new ideas and innovate
 Take advantage of tourism (especially in Kegaska)
 Huge potential in agriculture, aquaculture, natural products.
 Working on transportation and logistical issues.
 Creating infrastructure for tourism.

THREATS

Population decline
 Lack of services (restaurants, stores, etc.) social settings
 Cold weather
 Cost of travel/transportation
 Lack of education opportunities
 Lack of employment opportunities
 Lack of access to social services
 Over fishing – over exploiting our resources




MOVING FORWARD

The youth of the Lower North Shore are ambitious, persistent, and imaginative in ways that are truly inspiring. The challenge is that services are increasingly sparse and the skills and experiences they possess are not supported to encourage the exploration of their full potential. The consequences of this reality affects the entire region, and how we approach this challenge will significantly alter our future.

For far too long, policy-makers and organizations have looked from the outside-in at the youth population; making decisions on issues and services that directly affect them. Young people are a valuable resource that is underutilized. They are the real experts on their experiences, needs and interactions with organizations.

The retention of our youth is the key to the future of the Lower North Shore. The process of providing a safe and positive environment for youth to exchange and engage in dialogue has undeniable benefits to future socio-economic and business development. Most importantly, it is their right to be heard in the development of responsive and appropriate policies, programs, and services to best meet their needs and support their interests.



**WE CANNOT
ALWAYS BUILD
THE FUTURE FOR
OUR YOUTH, BUT
WE CAN BUILD
OUR YOUTH FOR
THE FUTURE.**

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

RESOURCES

Alderman, J. et al. (2011). Guidelines for Ethical Engagement of Young People. <https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/ethical-youth-engagement/Guidelines-Ethical-Youth-Engagement.pdf>

British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care. (2013). Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/data-monitoring-quality-assurance/information-for-service-providers/youth_engagement_toolkit_resource_guide.pdf

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2007). Engaging Youth in Community Decision Making. <https://youthrex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/engaging-youth-in-community-decision-making.pdf>

Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. (n.d.) What is Youth Engagement. https://archives.studentscommission.ca/pdf/Whatis_WEB_e.pdf

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America. (2020). Rural Youth Engagement Toolkit. https://www.cadca.org/sites/default/files/rural_youth_engagement_toolkit_0.pdf

Crooks, C. et al. (2010). Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A Toolkit for Service Providers. <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0317/3099/1242/files/eayt-toolkit-english.pdf?v=1597099111>

Government of the United Kingdom. (2019) Youth Engagement Toolkit. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896841/Youth-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf

Handel, S. (n.d.). The Power of Being Heard: How Listening to Others Helps Empower Them. <https://www.theemotionmachine.com/the-power-of-being-heard/#:~:text=Being%20heard%20is%20important%20for,an%20open%20and%20honest%20way%3F>

Health Canada. (2003). Community Capacity Building and Mobilization in Youth Mental Health Promotion. <https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/mhp-psm/pub/community-communautaires/pdf/comm-cap-build-mobil-youth.pdf>

ICPD25. (2019). Youth Engagement Toolkit. <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org/sites/default/files/files/ICPD25%20Youth%20Engagement%20Toolkit%281%29.pdf>

Justinianno, J., Scherer, C. (2001). Youth Voice: A Guide for Engaging Youth in Leadership and Decision-Making in Service-Learning Programs. <https://med-fom-learningcircle.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2010/09/Youth-Voice.pdf>

Kenton, W. (2021). Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/swot.asp>

RESOURCES

McCart, S., Khanna, N. (n.d.). A Model for Engaging Youth in Evidence-Informed Policy and Program Development. https://www.commissiondesetudiants.ca/assets/pdf/HBSC_Report.pdf

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development. (2007). 2007 CFSR ToolKit for Youth Involvement: Engaging Youth in the Child and Family Services Review. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/CFSRtoolkit.pdf>

National Democratic Institute. (2004). The Youth: Friendly Guide to Intergenerational Decision Making Partnerships. https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/2061_citpart_youth_010104_5.pdf

National Resource Center for Youth Development. (2012). Youth Leadership Toolkit. <https://safealaskans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Youth-Leadership-Toolkit-National-Resource-Center-for-Youth-Development.pdf>

Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. (n.d.). Walking the talk: A toolkit for engaging youth in mental health. <http://www.yetoolkit.ca/content/definition>

Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. (n.d.). Youth Engagement. <https://www.cymh.ca/en/projects/youth-engagement.aspx>

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. (2018). Youth Engagement Toolkit. http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/eeed_YETOOL_E.pdf

Schultz, M. (2014). Benefits of Youth-Adult Partnerships: Working together at the table. https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/benefits_of_youth_adult_partnerships_working_together_at_the_table

Texas Network of Youth Services. (2002). Making It Work: A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships. <http://4h.ucanr.edu/files/2423.pdf>

The Students Commission, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. (2013). Exploring Roles of Government, Organizations and Institutions in Keeping Kids Safe and Connected. https://archives.studentscommission.ca/pdf/VancouverSummit_SC2013_e.pdf

Ure, J. (n.d.). The Youth Engagement Spectrum. <https://heartwood.ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/YouthEngagementSpectrum.pdf>

US Department of Youth. (n.d.). Positive Youth Development. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

Women Deliver. (2019). Meaningful Youth Engagement: Sharing Power, Advancing Progress, Driving Change. https://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/WD_YouthPositionPaper.pdf

NOTES

NOTES



CONTACT OUR HEAD OFFICE:

313 Boulevard Bonne Espérance

St. Paul's River, Québec

418-379-2006

info@coastersassociation.com

WWW.COASTERSASSOCIATION.COM



*Photography by
MayWell Photography*

