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Latest Y4Y Québec Research Outlines What Makes Québec's English-Speaking Youth (ESY) a Unique Set of Civic Actors.

Québec's ESY Speak on the Driving Forces Behind their Civic Engagement.

Montréal, Québec. September 12, 2022—Y4Y's latest qualitative research, led by Brock Nykoluk, calls the perceived lack of civic engagement among Canadian youth into question. With a focus on Québec's under-studied English-speaking youth (ESY) communities, Y4Y uncovers the barriers and motivating factors behind ESY's civic engagement in Québec.

Based on in-depth interviews of youth aged 17 to 28, Y4Y determined the principal factors that motivate them to become civic actors. These factors included the desire for personal and professional development, external influences like parents and teachers, belief in a given cause, and the pursuit of community. By contrast, reported barriers to civic engagement were either systemic in nature (lack of time, energy, skills, etc.), or based on a personal decision to opt out.

The pursuit and maintenance of a sense of community, as a motivating factor, is a distinctive feature of Québec's civically-engaged ESY. Adam, for example, sought out civic engagement as a means to "be surrounded by English-speakers as well as people who are bilingual." Mark, likewise, sought civic engagement "to integrate [himself] with the [English-speaking] community".

While certain ESY seek civic engagement as a tool for community-building, some consider their lack of fluency in French to be a hindrance to civic engagement in Québec. Many expressed feeling "disempowered because they are young and because they are English-speakers." One interviewee, Maya, stated that being "the youngest person in the room" often causes her to feel like an inexperienced, and thus ineffective, civic agent. Others are concerned that their engagement in public life "would prove ineffectual since they are not proficient enough in French."

The desire for community is a distinguishing feature among ESY when it comes to civic engagement. The primary goal of Y4Y's grassroots organizing has always been to mobilize ESY to take leadership roles in their communities, in order to strengthen bonds among English-speakers across Québec. Contact Y4Y today to find out how youth in your community can get involved.

Y4Y Québec is a non-profit organization committed to addressing the issues facing English-speaking youth (ages 16-30) across Québec.

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