

PAN-CANADIAN JOINT CONSORTIUM FOR SCHOOL HEALTH

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

MODULE 5: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION: SUSTAINING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



**Pan-Canadian
Joint Consortium for School Health**
Governments Working Across the Health and Education Sectors

The Students
Commission
Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement



**La commission
des étudiants**
Le centre d'excellence pour
l'engagement des jeunes



CONTENTS

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION: SUSTAINING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT 51

Sustaining Steps for Policy and Decision Makers 52

Sustaining Steps for Practitioners 53

An Indicator Framework 56

VIEWING ADDITIONAL MODULES

This module of the JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit is one among eight. The modules were developed as a single, comprehensive toolkit so we encourage you to explore them in sequence for the best experience. To view the other modules, return to the main JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit page to access links to all eight. Enjoy!



Youth Engagement in Action: Sustaining Youth Engagement



Steps for Policy & Decision Makers

1. Report Back to Young People
2. Seek Out Future Engagement Opportunities
3. Share Success Stories

Steps for Practitioners

1. Create Follow-Up Activities
2. Maintain the Relationships
3. Link Youth to Organizations and Opportunities

Depending on their experience, young people may be motivated to stay engaged with a project or initiative or disengage from the opportunity. Sustaining factors involve practices and spaces to maintain relationships, connections, motivation and action. When planning for a youth engagement initiative, think beyond the initial event, meeting or project, to establish mechanisms that will sustain involvement.



Click above to see the “Sustaining Youth Engagement” video.

SUSTAINING
YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT



“I am inspired to share the findings of this study to my peers.”

—
Youth Participant

SUSTAINING STEPS FOR POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS

1. Report Back to Young People

If you have asked youth to give input on a policy or program, it is important to report back to them on how their ideas were used. Seeing and hearing about the impact of their contribution motivates young people to stay engaged and get involved in future opportunities (e.g. civic engagement). Young people are also in a key position to share information with their peers. If they have been involved in developing a policy or program, youth will likely have a greater interest in and ability to support implementation.

2. Seek out Future Youth Engagement Opportunities

If you have involved young people in decision-making, policy development or program design, you will be in a unique position

to identify other projects that would benefit from youth voice. Look for new and existing opportunities to sustain the engagement of young people or innovative projects to engage new youth.

3. Share Success Stories

Help facilitate a culture shift by sharing the benefits and experiences of youth engagement with those who are less familiar or sceptical. Share recommendations, reports, pictures and videos or do presentations on the outcomes of a project. Be an advocate for youth voice within your ministry, school board or district or organization.

SUSTAINING STEPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Create Follow-Up Activities

If an initiative has concluded, or funding has run out, consider involving interested young people in developing proposals for future funding, or in follow-up activities that require less support. These could be small research inquiry projects, taking action on recommendations from the project, or assisting with elements

INQUIRY BASED LEARNING

Darren Haley, Coordinator of Student Services with the South Shore Regional School Board, NS describes the benefits of engaging young people in designing their own learning environment. "At the middle-school level – we're experimenting with inquiry-based learning. Youth are facilitating their own learning, which has changed how we view best practices. We've seen increased attendance, lower office referrals, and better report cards"



“I will take this information back to my community and remain focused on what needs to be done in order to continue/ implement the projects we have started here. I also look forward to regularly reconnecting with the people I have met.”

—
Youth Participant

of project reporting. Most youth engagement activities foster great motivation and commitment for community change so it's important to keep the momentum going rather than letting it fizzle out. Some additional follow-up activities include:

- Establishing local youth groups to discuss/take action on a certain issue
- Creating “youth messages” (videos, posters, blogs, skits, etc.) to share information from the project
- Delivering presentation to adults and youth about the project outcomes, recommendations, and/or next steps
- Fundraising for next steps and/or future events
- Holding weekly/monthly conference calls
- Developing planning committees or advisory committees to provide ongoing input
- Conducting follow-up evaluations 3– 6 months later which ask young people to reflect on the experience and how it impacted them
- Connecting youth to other opportunities and organizations that further their goals and match their interests

“The people (leaders and youth and adults) are amazing! Very easy to talk to and get along with! Made some great new friends this weekend.”

—
Youth Participant

“The highlight was meeting new people :) and seeing everybody I met last year”

—
Youth Participant

YOUTH AND DECISION MAKING



“We engage youth in a number of ways and for a variety of reasons. As a Government Agency, our legacy has been the ability to coordinate groups of youth through a consultative workshop type process and then line them up with an opportunity to speak with decision makers (Ministers, committees, etc). When decision makers hear directly from youth, support is there, policies are created, and change happens.” – Mellissa Wood, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, NT

Maintain the Relationships

The friendships and supportive relationships that young people develop through youth engagement activities are often what they value and learn from the most. Create mechanisms and spaces to help maintain these relationships. Establish a Facebook page; find a meeting space for young people to connect in person; host follow-up events, social gatherings or calls; and check-in with young people even after the project has wrapped up. Thank you letters or cards, certificates and volunteer-hour accreditation are other ways to maintain connections and recognize contributions.

Link Youth to Organizations and Opportunities

If there are not any resources or activities to support ongoing engagement, seek out other opportunities for young people. Link them to different community organizations – do a resource tour, visit organizations in person and introduce them to staff and youth members. If a young person showed interest in a specific issue or

MORE EVALUATION TOOLS

SHARING THE STORIES

Youth Adult Survey

Click the "Reset" button only if you are entering a series of paper surveys, and have clicked "Submit" to enter your data below and then returned to this page. [Reset](#)

Please enter your user code, organization and program (event/activity) here.

User code:

Name of your organization:

Name of your Program (Event/Activity):

Select your activity/event/program:

This survey will take you about 30 minutes to fill out. It has 39 questions.

This survey helps us go deeper in exploring youth-adult partnerships in our organizations and programs.

Below are a series of contrasting statements representing how youth and adults are working together in your program and organization. Each pair of statements is presented on a 5-point scale. Please choose one of the five points that most clearly reflects your opinions.

For each scale below, numbers 1 and 5 indicate opposite points of views. Numbers 2 and 4 indicate more moderate opinions. Number 3 indicates you are undecided. Click "No Answer" if you do not wish to answer.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Youth Involvement:	1	2	3	4	5	No Answer
1. Youth take lots of initiative in working on projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Youth are sitting around with nothing to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Youth arrive to meetings/commitments on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Youth take little initiative in working on projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Youth are busy with several tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Youth arrive to meetings/commitments late.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For further evaluation tools, please visit the Students Commission's, **Sharing the Stories platform**. This online evaluation platform includes academically validated tools to evaluate youth engagement. Check out these tools related to sustaining youth engagement: **Organizational Readiness**, **Youth Adult Survey**

"I will take what I have learned (especially about the influence of support networks) back to work to see how we can use these networks to share information with youth"

—
Adult Participant

activity, connect them with community organizations or projects working in this area. A young person's support network should expand, not shrink, following a youth engagement activity.

AN INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

First, review the indicators for Sustaining Youth Engagement. Then as an individual or organizational team, think about your current practices. How do you currently sustain young people's engagement? Do you report back to young people? What could you do differently? Use the Assessment Tool to record your discussions and set goals for improving engagement practices.

ASSESS YOUR PRACTICE SUSTAINING

Indicator Framework

Assessment Tool

Remember, some of these indicators may not be relevant to your context, or may be better understood as a goal your organization is working towards. Don't be afraid to start small or prioritize the areas you'd like to work on.