



Children and Youth Planning Table Meeting Minutes for April 8, 2021

Theme: Walking the Talk: Youth/Adult Partnerships in Practice

3:00pm to 5:30pm

To view the PowerPoint presentation slides for this meeting, please click [here](#).

Welcome

Barb Cardow and Goranka Vukelich, Co-Chairs of the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT), welcomed everyone and provided a Territorial Acknowledgement (the acknowledgement was created by the Wellbeing Waterloo Region [WWR] First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle).

As a standard practice, all those that took the CYPT virtual "stage" situated their identity by sharing a few details about their identity (e.g., preferred pronouns, racial identity, gender identity, Indigenous or settler identity, etc.). This is practiced so that:

- The audience has a better appreciation for the lens in which content is being delivered through.
- The stakeholders can be reflective on which voices are on the CYPT stage (or not).

Smart Waterloo Region Relaunch

With Matthew Chandy and Grayson Bass

Enclosed in the PowerPoint presentation linked above, you'll find a video recording message from Matthew Chandy speaking on the Smart Waterloo Region Relaunch. As well, you'll find slides that summarize and outline Grayson Bass' presentation, detailing the projected plan of Smart Waterloo Region going forward.

Grayson encouraged all to contact him at gbass@regionofwaterloo.ca with any questions they may have about the work.

Lacing up: Working in Partnership with Young People

Joana Lincho, Youth Engagement in Systems Lead with CYPT, began this segment with an icebreaker. She noted the importance of play and fun as a tool to build relationships with young people. This is especially important because when adults engage with youth in decision-making spaces, there is a stark and inevitable power imbalance. Bringing an element of playfulness to the space helps shift some power imbalances. The attendees then participated in a word cloud activity in which they provided one-word answers to two questions, the results are included in the PowerPoint presentation slides.



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Joana relayed key reminders to working with youth. These reminders were provided by youth who had participated in a sense-making session the day before:

- Don't brush youth off—validate their experiences and contributions
- Be excited to engage with them and show this in your tone and body language
- Don't underestimate youth's capabilities or desire to act by reinforcing the youth/adult power paradox
- Create a space for engagement by being welcoming to youth with various identities
- Don't put anyone on the spot—give youth the space to speak up on their own time
- A youth providing their experience or perspective doesn't represent all youth

Hitting the Pavement: Working Together with Disaggregated Data from Youth Impact Survey

Youth joined the meeting at 4:00pm. To welcome them, attendees engaged in an icebreaker.

Silviu Konda, Social Planning Associate with CYPT, gave a brief overview of what it means to work with disaggregated data. It's important because it can reveal 'blind spots' in the data we collect to provide a better understanding of the needs of diverse communities and differences in experiences. Ultimately, disaggregated data can help us re-evaluate programs, services, and policies.

The attendees, both youth and adults, later broke off into breakout rooms to discuss the following 4 questions:

1. What do you notice about the Youth Impact Survey data? Anything that surprised you?

The discussion highlighted that some Voting Members and Youth were surprised at the racial disparities related to mental health, geographic disparities related to belonging, and lack of disparities between male and female experiences with gender discrimination. Individuals were surprised that racialized categories (notably South Asian) had more positive self-reported mental health than those identifying as White and that Cambridge reported a weaker sense of belonging than larger cities like Waterloo. Furthermore, individuals were surprised that female survey participants did not experience higher levels of gender discrimination and noted that those "Identifying as Neither" gender reported poorer outcomes across all categories of interest.

2. In what ways have you used/engaged the Youth Impact Survey data so far?

Some Voting Members shared that they did not review the YIS data briefs and cited the COVID-19 pandemic as a major barrier to engaging with the data. Those who had not engaged noted they now felt inspired to use the data within their own organizations/neighbourhoods and were interested in further sharing and discussing the YIS data with others. Furthermore, some Voting Members highlighted that the YIS/ data was not applicable to the population of youth and families that they were working with (i.e. families with special needs children).

Discussion with those who had engaged with YIS data centred around using it toward funding opportunities, program planning, and to inform decision-making. For ex., some members mentioned that the data briefs



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have helped them with decision-making in grant proposals. Others have noted that it informed their internal practices as well as their strategic planning—specifically noting areas in which young people are struggling.

Youth felt the YIS data should be brought to the attention of the school board and be used toward better understanding and planning for student needs.

3. How might we best use disaggregated data from the 2021 survey?

Disaggregated data from the 2021 survey could be used to further engage in meaningful conversations and identify diverse population needs across the region. It was noted that YIS data can serve as a baseline measure to compare future progress, inspire new research, and guide program planning.

Potential barriers to completing the YIS were discussed and concerns focused on how to obtain data/ involve younger children in the survey. It was noted that collaborating with organizations who work directly with diverse groups of youth could help with identifying, addressing, and supporting youth needs.

4. Is there a way you can help share/promote this survey?

Discussions highlighted YIS promotion strategies that were aimed at schools, Voting Member organizations, local community areas, social media, and direct in-person sharing. Youth highlighted that they are more likely to engage in surveys when they are contacted directly (i.e. direct message) vs. broadly (i.e. general post).

It was noted that providing context to Voting Members and Youth is important when disseminating the YIS. Voting Members want to receive content from the CYPT that is simple and clear (i.e. who, what, when, where, why). Incentives for youth were identified as being volunteer hours and gift cards however most importantly, youth are interested in knowing what real change(s) will come from their participation in the survey.

Discussions on accessibility of the YIS highlighted that not all youth use social media and that we need to consider younger youth, the wording of survey questions, and include support tools.

Closing and Updates

With the YIS launching on April 30th, Goranka and Barb presented all Voting Member organizations with a goal: **Connect 25 youth to the survey.** Please click [here](#) to view more information on how best to do this.

Barb also reminded all that the next meeting will be the all-member meeting on June 8th. She thanked presenters, and all participants for their commitment to ensuring all children and youth in the Region are happy and healthy.