Children and Youth Planning Table
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Timely child and youth well-being data released by the Children and Youth Planning Table

Disaggregated Geography Snapshot from the 2021 Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey is now available.

Waterloo Region, March 2022 – Disaggregated geographical data from the Youth Impact Survey (YIS) provides a much-needed snapshot of the lives of many children and youth in our community over the last year.

The Children and Youth Planning Table's (CYPT) vision of happy, healthy children and youth— today and tomorrow, applies to all children and youth in our community. Given the importance of centering equity, social inclusion, and anti-discrimination in our belonging-related work, the CYPT is disaggregating the 2021 Youth Impact Survey across a variety of demographic and identity-based dimensions.

Our first Snapshot focuses on **geography** and data has been disaggregated into four different categories. Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, and the Townships. (The sample size in the individual Townships was too small to disaggregate individually.)

The CYPT, in partnership UNICEF Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), KW Community Foundation and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) at the University of Waterloo ran the Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey for young people in our community through the Spring of 2021. The survey was an opportunity for young people in our community to speak to their own well-being. Data from the 1074 young people in Waterloo Region who participated completed the survey was published in December of 2021.

The YIS asked questions across 9 dimensions of well-being based on the Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being including belonging, mental and emotional health, connection to the environment and more. The ultimate goal of the disaggregated YIS Snapshot Briefs is to provide members of our community with equity-focused insights that take into account the needs and interests of different groups of children and youth.

Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region

Fast Facts:

- 1074 youth from diverse backgrounds completed the Waterloo Region Waterloo Region Youth Impact Survey between April 30 and June 5, 2021.
- Almost nine in 10 respondents (88.6%) said they lived in one of the three cities making up Waterloo Region, while 11.4% lived in one of the four townships
- Aggregate data suggests that 64.1% of all YIS respondents said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their community. After disaggregating our data, we see a 19.3 percentage point difference between respondents from the Townships, who appear to have the highest sense of community belonging (73.8%), compared to respondents from Cambridge, who appear to have the lowest levels of community belonging (54.5%).
- UNICEF Canada defines belonging as "feeling loved and supported and having mutually caring and respectful relationships."9 This love and support can come from many sources including friends, family, teachers, pets, and people in the community. Locally, when we think about belonging for children and youth, we recognize the importance of equity, relationships and attachment, and feeling valued, heard and included.
- Respondents from the Townships were 15 percentage points more likely to express that they had a more positive perception of their mental health compared to respondents from Kitchener.
- Waterloo respondents were 22.2 percentage points more likely to report having access to recreation and culture facilities that are easy to get to compared to Cambridge respondents.

Next Steps:

- The CYPT's next steps include disaggregating the data along eight other subpopulations of young people including: age, gender identity, racial identity, those with special needs and more. We are also working directly with young people in the community in co-creating meaningful actions to support the needs raised from the Youth Impact Survey.

Quotes from Respondents:

"I feel like in Waterloo Region, the sense of community [seems] very surface-level. We have events and things like that but I feel like there isn't a real bond within the city and there are huge cliques within the 'community' that cause separation."
-Youth Respondent from Waterloo

"In my opinion, the most valuable things that the Region could do in order to help the community is take measures to control gentrification and build more affordable housing. There are vulnerable people whose lives have been impacted by the pandemic and housing is only becoming more expensive. In my area, there are two affordable housing projects in process while condos continue to pop up all over the place. This city needs to do better."
-Youth Respondent from Kitchener

"I feel that there should be more virtual community events to keep everyone engaged."
-Youth Respondent from Cambridge

"More support groups or local youth therapists to talk to. Also, things like a community garden, foraging or clean-up activities to get people outside and seeing one another."
-Youth Respondent from Wilmot

About the CYPT:

The Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) is a member-driven partnership with over 60 Voting Member Organizations across Waterloo Region. The CYPT works to improve the wellbeing of children and youth through a system of coordinated and effective services that are supported by capacity building initiatives. Recognizing the complex challenges and issues related to the well-being of children and youth, the CYPT operates through a collective impact model seeking to promote the shared vision of: Happy, healthy children and youth—today and tomorrow.

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