

YOUNG
Decision Makers

YOUTH

YOUNG ADULTS ADULT ALLIES



SUPPORTING YOUNG DECISION MAKERS



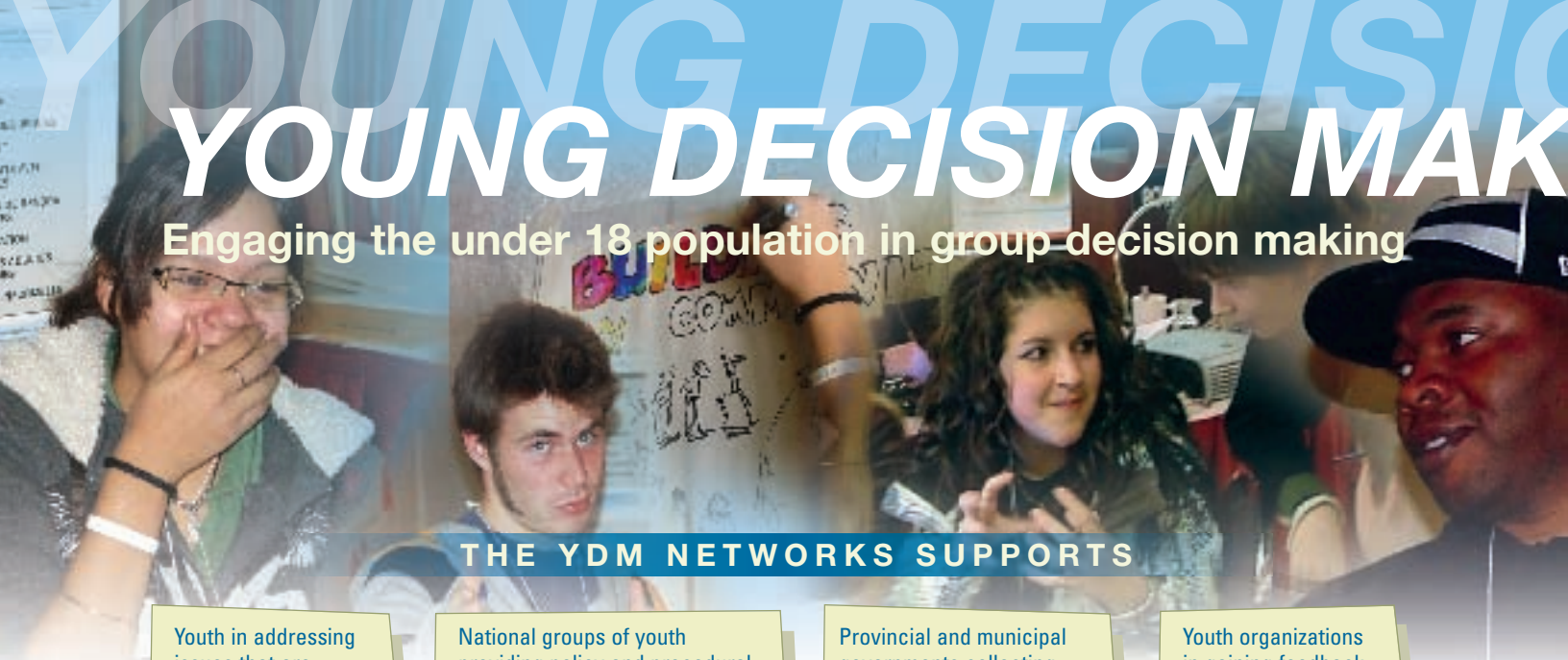
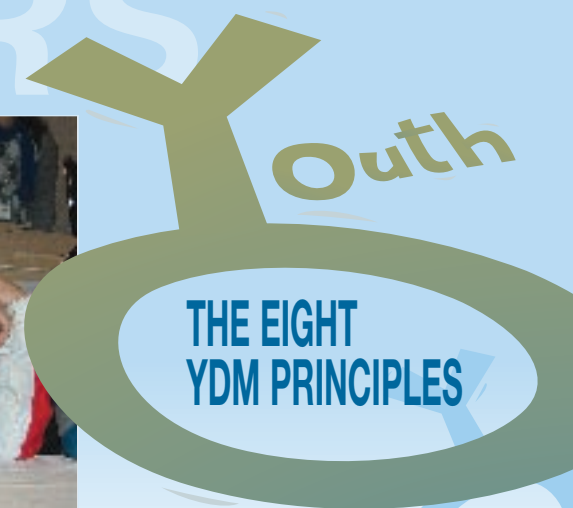
CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Youth Engagement

Funding for the Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being is provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors/researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Public Health Agency of Canada. Additional funding for this project provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

YOUNG DECISION MAKERS

Engaging the under 18 population in group decision making



THE YDM NETWORKS SUPPORTS

- Youth in addressing issues that are important to them
- National groups of youth providing policy and procedural advice to the federal government on programs and services
- Provincial and municipal governments collecting feedback and gaining the insight of youth when making policy recommendations
- Youth organizations in gaining feedback on programs and services

What is the Young Decision Makers (YDM) about?

Young Decision Makers (YDM) is a body of youth, young adults and adult allies from across the country working collaboratively to ensure that youth voice is heard in formal and informal decision making bodies (government, systems and organizations). As a group of Canadians diverse in age, race, life experiences and skills we believe that the lack of youth input when decisions are made about them in Canada needs to be addressed. If youth are consulted, they are more often than not included in the process at the last minute or as a formality and not as stakeholders capable of meaningful contribution. YDM is working to ensure youth get the opportunity to contribute by connecting policymakers, decision makers and youth.

Supported by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, YDM provides support to young people to

- identify and learn about issues that are important to them
- discuss and decide how and what they, as youth in Canada, think about issues, and
- share their findings with policy and decision makers through all levels of government, organizations and systems.

With the YDM Network, organizations get the chance to work with young people in our country to better understand what young people are saying. The YDM has established eight principles and a working model that guide our work. See page 3.

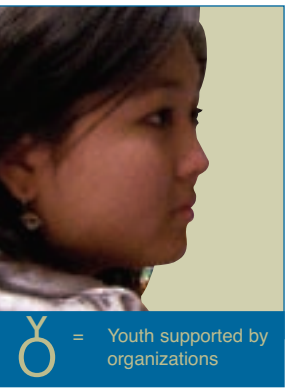
How Can the YDM Network Help You?

Governments, organizations and systems want to know how young people feel and what they are thinking on current issues facing children and youth. Having young people assist in decision-making as programs, policies, and legislation are developed, reviewed, and implemented is being increasingly recognized as an important component of youth engagement; furthermore, it can help ensure that your work is relevant, effective, and meets the needs of children and youth in Canada.

At municipal, regional, provincial or national levels the YDM Network has interested Canadians who are ready to come together to address issues as they arise. You can call on the YDM Network of youth, young adults and adult allies to study an issue, have meaningful discussions and dialogue and make decisions that can help shape your programs while increasing the relevance of policies and procedures. We can help organize workshops and conferences, hold online consultations, conduct surveys or develop

YDM SERVICES

- Organize workshops and conferences
- Hold online and face-to-face consultations
- Conduct surveys



other interactive tools to have the YDM Network members involved and engaged, helping you ensure that youth decision makers are meaningfully consulted in your process. If you are committed to respectfully engaging children and youth, contact the YDM Network and we can help move your work forward!

Want to connect and support youth involvement?

For up-to-date information regarding the Young Decision Makers, you can visit our website at <http://ydm.engagementcentre.ca>, email us at ydm@tgmag.ca or give us a call at The Students Commission of Canada's office at 416.597.8297.

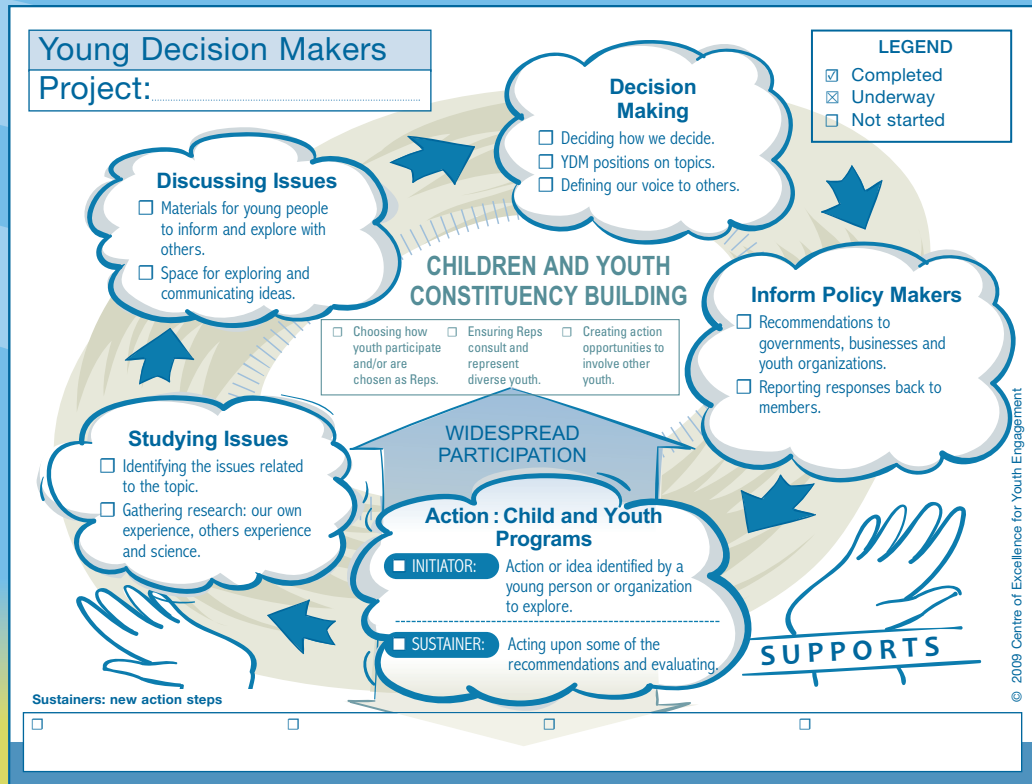
What YDM has been doing to connect youth and decision makers

- Held Canada-wide survey and discussions surrounding youth decision-making involving over a 1000 young people.
 - Held national and regional meetings in 2007 and 2008 to brainstorm our guiding principles, structure and process while testing the YDM model on a variety of issues.
 - YDM surveyed approximately 1500 young Canadians in a National Child Rights Monitoring initiative to let Canada and the United Nations know what young people think about their rights.
 - 500 young people were consulted in May and June of 2008 to help create an international youth engagement strategy led by the Canadian government and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).
 - The YDM network elected two YDM representatives to sit at the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse's (CCSA's) National Advisory Group to ensure youth voice and ideas are present at the table.
 - We met with more than 110 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 from cities and towns in both northern and southern Ontario. These youth helped us show the Ministry what some of the current attitudes around poverty are. These ideas helped influence a new strategy released by the Government of Ontario that can be found at <http://www.growingstronger.ca/>.
 - Supported a consultation and delegation to the XX Pan American Child Congress in Lima, Peru 2009.
 - We held five discussion groups across the province and worked with approximately 50 youth to come up with concrete ideas to help youth transition out of care. A final report based on the young peoples' input was written and submitted to the government.
- For a complete list of the work YDM is doing across Canada and internationally, please visit our website at ydm.engagementcentre.ca

In order to develop an infrastructure to support youth in decision-making, eight principles were identified through discussion groups and online surveys. These eight principles guide each project and issue. They are a mini-checklist when we make a decision to remind us to ask ourselves important questions such as are we including everybody? Are we respecting everybody? What role are adult allies playing?

- Inclusive
- Participatory
- Youth-led
- Adult Partnerships
- Young Adult Support
- Accountability
- Representative
- Informal Structure

The Young Decision Makers Project Model



The Young Decision Makers network has established a working model that guides discussions when issues are undertaken by groups. The model explores the journey from a group initially forming around a topic of interest or need, to studying and discussing the key issues behind it. These can lead to informed decisions and recommendations that help inform, improve and initiate child and youth programs wherever implemented!

For more on how the model and how it works, please consult our How To Use The YDM Model publication.

OTHER YDM RESOURCES

YDM Summary Reports

These reports summarize the key events and learnings at our past national meetings.

How to Use the YDM Model

This booklet is designed for groups and organizations to help them walk through the various steps of the model.

The YDM Brochure

Interested in connecting those around you to this growing national network of decision makers? These brochures can help.

To join the YDM network or to learn more please contact us.

Website: <http://ydm.engagementcentre.ca>

Phone: (416) 597-8297

Email: ydm@tgmag.ca

The Students Commission, 23 Isabella St., Toronto, ON M4Y 1M7

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement leads the Young Decision Makers (YDM) project.

Key partners to date: The Students Commission, TakingITGlobal, Brock University, Youth Launch, YouCAN, the McCreary Centre Society and the City of Vancouver.