

# Young Decision Makers Summary Report 2



DECISION  
MAKING



DISCUSSING  
ISSUES

ACTION: CHILD  
AND YOUTH  
PROGRAMS  
WHICH IDENTIFY AND  
ADDRESS ISSUES

SUPPORTS



# THE YOUNG DECISION MAKING JOURNEY SINCE THE MEETING...

## PAST YDM PROJECTS

The YDM team believes in finding its structure through working on issues that currently require young people's attention and voice. The following is the YDM journey, starting from the first YDM meeting to Summer 2008.

### Deerhurst Conference (Meeting #1) (November 2007)



- Developed the YDM principles.
- Explored youth models from around the world.
- Brainstormed possible Canadian youth decision-making models.

### National Child Day Surveys (February 2008)

- Through the YDM, over 150 young people weighed their opinions to the federal government on what theme should be this year on November 19th for National Child Day.



### YDM Delegates at the World Fit For Children +5 Conference at the United Nations (December 2007)

- Democratically elected two young people from the YDM meeting to attend the conference.
- The delegates reported back to the YDM group on their findings that young people are not respected, rather tokenized, at the policy-making level.



### Saskatoon Conference (Meeting #2) (APRIL 2008)

- A regional YDM meeting aimed at including and engaging young people from across the country.
- Youth discussed important issues and learned facilitation skills to enhance participation in peer-support groups.



## YDM PROJECTS ON THE HORIZON

The YDM needs the opinions and leadership of young people from across the country on the following projects we have currently undertaken.

### PAHO Strategy (started May 2007)

- The federal government has asked the Centre and the YDM team to help them create an international youth engagement strategy involving North and South American countries.
- YDM has created youth-friendly materials of existing Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) documents.
- YDM aims to contact over 500 young people from across the country in this exciting international initiative.

### The Mosquito Project (started May 2007)

- YDM will be involved in reviewing and commenting on the Mosquito product, an audio device used by store owners that emits annoying high frequencies that only young people can hear, thus driving them away.
- YDM will specifically explore if this product is a violation of child rights in accordance with the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.

These frequencies are 16.5 to 17 kHz at 85 decibels. Continuous exposure to this frequency can lead to deafness

## YDM'S EIGHT FOUNDING PRINCIPLES:

**INCLUSIVE  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
PARTICIPATORY  
REPRESENTATIVE  
YOUTH-LED  
YOUNG ADULT SUPPORT  
INFORMAL STRUCTURE  
ADULT PARTNERSHIP**

## EVEN MORE YDM OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP

YDM is looking at providing young people across the nation with as many opportunities as possible. The following are some of the projects that are on YDM's horizon.

### The UN Youth Assembly 2008 (August 6th to 15th, 2008)

- An international conference for young decision makers (ages 16-24) revolving around leadership and how it pertains to the Millennium Development Goals. The conference will take place at the United Nations in New York City.

### Young Decision Makers Meeting #3 (August 25th to 28th, 2008)

- A national meeting of youth, young adults, adult allies and organizations interested in delivering a strong and united youth voice hosted by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement.
- The meeting will be taking place at Horseshoe Resort in Central Ontario.
- For all individuals and organizations interested in participating, please visit the YDM website for up-to-date information.

All organizations interested in sending youth delegates, please see the YDM contact information found at the end of this booklet.

# PARTICIPANT IDEAS

The following are ideas put forth by adult and youth participants who attended the first Young Decision Makers (YDM) conference in Deerhurst, Ontario. The attendees of the three-day conference (from November 30, 2007 to December 2, 2007) gathered to discuss the details and the importance of a national youth voice. Some ideas were models of what this young decision making body should be structured as; others were possible directions in which YDM could go.

For more information on their findings, please see *Young Decision Makers: Summary Report #1* (available at [www.tgmag.ca](http://www.tgmag.ca)).

## 1) National Youth Newspaper

The idea is simple: a youth-led newspaper which promotes individual, local, provincial and national issues facing young people today. Its advantages are numerous. Young people from all across Canada would be working collaboratively and creatively to influence other young people, adults and formal decision makers. When news makes headlines, there is no real place in the Canadian mass media where young people can express their opinions and be taken seriously. This newspaper envisions correcting this. Furthermore, it could possibly even be the medium through which rights violations, event promotions, and young people's talents could be brought to the forefront. The newspaper could also be used to spark meaningful discussions on racism, ageism, sexism and prejudice (just to name a few).



This newspaper would be firmly rooted in the principles of the YDM. It would be highly inclusive by bringing together diverse voices of young people and it would be primarily youth-led.

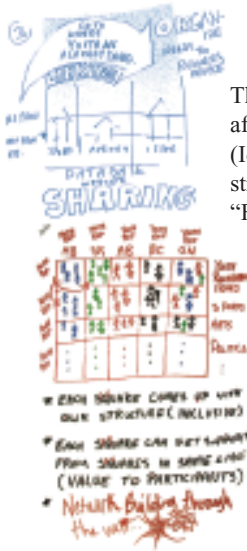
## 2) A Natural Youth Network

The YDM recognizes the importance of Canadian individuals and organizations already serving young people's needs. This idea suggests that YDM need not be a fresh new start at the idea of youth voice, rather a "connector" of sorts, bringing the diverse youth decision making bodies, adult support groups, youth-led initiatives, and the young adults together from across the country. All organizations would be asked to participate and contribute in this national body, ensuring that the "Participatory" principle is met. Those who wish to contribute to this cause would be mapped geographically, and a local network would be established naturally. The local networks would produce a provincial, and finally a national body of individuals and organizations ensuring a proper youth voice. The idea is a natural hierarchy of dedicated members with



experience. Another advantage might be the cost-efficiency of this idea compared to forming a fresh new organization from the grassroots.

If mapped geographically, it would be rather easy to tell which areas need help engaging young people.



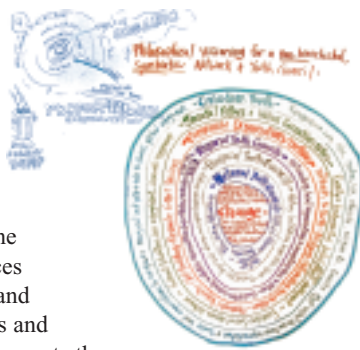
### 3) National Online Youth Network

This idea can be compared to the aforementioned Natural Youth Network (Idea #2). Some conference members strongly believed in the principles of “Formal Structure” and “Representation” as this idea has youth representatives from the different provinces. What makes this idea exciting and innovative is the fact that youth representatives would not be chosen only from their geography (ridings, etc) but also for youth interest areas such as sports, social justice issues, arts, and politics.

Behind this idea is the belief that this structure should be built from the ground up, and not the other way around. This means youth representatives can choose the structure they wish best serves the needs of their constituents. This idea also encourages incorporating existing youth-serving organizations such as TakingITGlobal in this process.

### 4) The National Youth Council

The concentric circles represent layers and fluidity of people and support. Canadian youth are the constituents of this model and they make up the Societal Pillars layer. (Places like schools and families, and fundamental belief systems and institutions.) This layer represents the starting place for recruitment and is an opportunity for us to tap into places often overlooked in traditional council structures. The next layer is where we can expand our outreach and foster community buy-in and support, by involving core community organizations in the process. From here regional representatives are chosen with a strong understanding of constituency and how to appropriately represent the views of their peers. Provincial reps are chosen from these regional groups, and carry forth ideas at the provincial and territorial levels, which then leads into a national youth council. Change is in the centre. We are all working together for positive change.



This idea includes many YDM principles, including “Participatory” (at the Societal Pillars layer) and “Formal Structure”.

Something to think about:

What role do adults and young adults play in this Council?

### 5) A Youth Adult Support Network

One of the teams at the YDM firmly believed in a strong partnership between adult allies and young people. They envisioned a network of adult allies and youth working together. Traditionally, young people and adult allies are bound by physical boundaries; this team wished to change that. Imagine an online forum where adults would invite as many young people to input their opinions on a matter, or a young person asking for an adult ally’s expertise on a subject (such as possible workshop questions or where to get funding).

Again, the possibilities are endless!



### 6) A Youth Symposium

Imagine a place where diverse young people from all across the country could come and share their experiences with politicians and other formal decision makers. This space would hold both youth and adults “accountable” to youth issues, as it would be held annually or semi-annually.

Ideally, these meetings would be the vehicle through which young people get access and answers



from those who make political decisions.

Something to think about:

What would be the process for selecting the young people who get to go to this symposium? Who decides?

The YDM Conference was truly an inspiring event for all involved, as the true potential of the project was unleashed. As more and more questions were answered, new questions emerged. With the outpour of excellent ideas, the major questions for the YDM team to answer became which ideas should we pursue? And how? How do we best promote these ideas to engage as many young people as possible? And, how do we fit all these ideas together?

The next YDM conference team will be responsible for answering these questions, and furthering this ambitious event.