

## Our Eight Principles

### Inclusive

Each YDM project should involve a variety of ages, life experiences and backgrounds with members of varying organizations. This is to ensure that different perspectives, skills and experiences are brought to the table to help us make informed decisions. °

### Participatory

Space for studying and discussing specific issues should exist and be promoted so those who want to participate in decision-making can actually do so.

### Youth-Led

Youth involved with the Young Decision Makers should be supported to speak their minds. Youth are encouraged to take on leadership roles, facilitating workshops, creating materials for other youth, and reporting back to the Network.

### Adult Partnerships

Adults should be equal participants in supporting youth and helping them move their ideas into action.

### Young Adult Support

Young adults are those over the age of 18 who identify themselves as being able to play a mentoring and supporting role to youth.

### Accountable

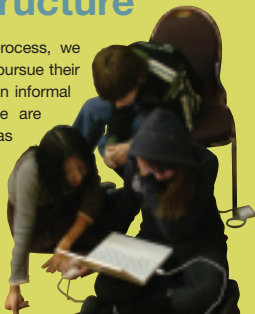
YDM continually strives to be the "connector" between formal decision-makers and youth. Too many times young people are consulted on a topic and never reported back to. YDM members are also accountable to each other on projects they are involved in.

### Representative

When youth participate at events, consultations and meetings as a YDM representative, they are supported to do the research they need to do to speak on behalf of the network and various experiences of diverse youth. Thus, they carry with them a voice much larger than their own.

### Informal Structure

To truly engage youth in a process, we believe they should be free to pursue their own ideas. For this to occur, an informal structure exists to ensure we are flexible to accommodate as many participants and thoughts as possible.



## Our Highlights

- More than 1000 young Canadians told us through surveys and discussions that they wanted more youth voice in decision-making.
- Held national and regional meetings in 2007 and 2008 to brainstorm our guiding principles, structure and process while testing the YDM model.
- YDM representatives attended the World Fit For Children +5 Special Session at the United Nations in New York City. We were also present at the Third World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- Over 650 YDM members helped the federal government figure out what the theme and official poster should be for National Child Day 2008.
- YDM worked with the Ontario government to develop a poverty reduction strategy and create concrete ideas to help youth transition out of government care.
- 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.
- YDM representatives will sit on the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse's (CCSA's) national advisory group on Youth Substance Abuse Prevention (YSAP) starting 2009. YDM members will also sit on other advisory groups throughout Canada for government and organizations.

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

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

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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.



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Youth Engagement

## YOUNG Decision Makers

# WHERE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE?



### What is YDM?

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).



# YDM IS OPEN TO EVERYONE

Don't let our name misguide you. YDM encourages every Canadian who believes in the idea that youth need to be involved when decisions are made that affect them to join our network. This means youth (ages 17 and under), young adults, and adult allies can be and are a part of YDM!

## What YDM Members Are Saying

"One opinion, one vision can start a revolution."

"I've learned new methods of dealing with group issues/discussions and decision making as a group."

"There is a lot of support."

"I learned about the power of group dialogue to build innovative ideas and expand structures."

## Eight Great Reasons to Join the YDM

"...there is a strong and positive push for giving youth a voice in decision making."

"I will take all the work we did and show it to others because I'm proud of it."

"I've learned a lot about how a group works together to make important decisions. Also, I've learned a lot about how other places in Canada are different than PEI, where I'm from"

"[I feel] Empowered. Excited. Reinvigorated. Optimistic."

"I realized... I truly have inexplicable potential."

"I plan on incorporating YDM principles into other groups I participate in!"

"I feel that arguments and debates of opinions and view points bring the team closer and allow to bring the 4 pillars\* into our team. Even though it might be a roller coaster—we are all on the same ride."

"Like I've been saying, I will take what I've learned back to my community and use it in the group coming up to help the kids in my community."

"Although we are all different – I learned that although discussion may be heated and stressful – having various people from different walks of life is beneficial to learning."

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You can join the YDM by registering online at <http://ydm.engagementcentre.ca> or you can ask for registration forms by phone at (416) 597-8297.

\* The Students Commission's Four Pillars are Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™.

