

Youth Engagement and Development (YED) **PRINCIPLES IN ACTION**



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Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Principles in Action

Acknowledgements:

Algoma Public Health Management for their leadership and commitment to integrating sustainable YED practices throughout the agency.

Algoma Public Health Staff for their years of experience in role modelling a youth-led approach to health promotion.

The Algoma Youth Action Alliance members whose honesty and insights over the years helped contribute to a better understanding of youth engagement and development principles and practices.

Algoma Youth Engagement Network members for their contributions and recognition of the value of a collaborative YED approach amongst diverse organizations.

Health Resources in Action (formerly known as the Medical Foundation) and the Youth Advocacy Training Institute staff for their expert guidance, resources and inspiration.

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July 2012

If adapting any of the resources or tools, please include a reference line "adapted with permission from Algoma Public Health." All tools in the manual will be available on the Algoma Public Health website www.algomapublichealth.com/yed

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Table of Contents

What is the purpose of this manual?	5
Who is this manual designed for?	5
How does this manual work?	6
Defining Key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Concepts	
Youth Engagement + Youth Development = Positive Youth Outcomes	7
Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation	8
Youth Friendly Environments versus Youth Development: What's the Difference?	9
YED in Practice: What Youth Engagement IS and What Youth Engagement IS NOT	9
Fostering Resiliency through YED Practices	10
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Youth Engagement Principles	12
Strategies for Integrating YED Principles into Organizational Practices	
Conduct or Find a Current Literature Review	15
Assess the YED Practices of the Organization	15
Assess the YED Practices of Community Partners	16
Foster YED as a Priority within the Organization	16
Create Organizational Strategies to Support YED Practices	17
Identify Organizational Support for YED From Larger Systems	18
Strategies for Involving Youth on Agency Committees	
Determine the Committee's Suitability for Youth Membership	21
Assess the Committee's Readiness for Youth Membership	21
Committee Preparation for Youth Membership	22
Youth Recruitment, Orientation, and Recognition Tips	22
Monitoring and Evaluating the YED Experience	23
Strategies for Establishing and Sustaining Youth-Led Committees	
The Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA) Experience: How It Got Started	25
Committee Operational Practices	25
Youth Recruitment and Orientation	26
Positive Youth Development	27
Monitoring and Evaluation	28

Strategies for Building a YED Community of Practice	
The Value of a YED Community of Practice	29
Strategies	29
Initiating a Youth Engagement Community of Practice	29
Operational Practices	30
Expanding a Community of Practice	31
Building Organizational and Community YED Capacity	31
Monitoring and Evaluating Outcomes	33
Table of Contents for YED Tools	35
Recommended YED Resource List	139
References	141

What is the purpose of this manual?

Many organizations and programs can benefit from creating higher level youth engagement and development (YED) opportunities. This manual provides adaptable YED strategies and tools to help identify and capitalize on such opportunities. They are based on the successes and lessons learned from one organization's journey to integrate YED principles into its fabric. Steps for building organizational and community capacity, facilitating social norm changes, and addressing common barriers are shared, along with the identification of useful resources. Since YED journeys are on-going, the strategies and tools are shared simply as a starting point.

"The engagement of young people in social movements and organizations, and their increased influence in public policy, proves that they can be part of the solution... The question is not how to transform youth but how youth can help transform society."

-W.K. Kellogg Foundation From Vision to Innovative Impact Seminar Series and Latin America and the Caribbean Program, May 2005

Who is this manual designed for?

This manual is designed for use by professionals across all sectors, including healthcare, education, government, business and non-governmental organizations. It can be used by people interested in using YED principles to enhance their current work, as well as those interested in building organizational and community capacity more broadly.



How does this manual work?

This manual starts by defining key YED concepts. Next, the manual is divided into 4 sections that share strategies for fostering YED practices at different levels. The sections are designed so they can be used independently, however it is advised to first review the key concepts prior to each section. The table below outlines the different sections and their purpose. Tools that accompany different strategies can be found in the tool section. Recommended resources are also provided at the end of the manual.

An electronic version of this manual is available at www.algomapublichealth.com/YED

Section	Purpose
Integrating YED Principles into Organizational Practices	To support the development of unique organizational strategies that can facilitate the integration of YED principles and practices into an organization's structure.
Involving Youth on Agency Committees	To aid in the identification and preparation of agency committees that would benefit from the inclusion of youth membership at higher participatory levels.
Establishing and Sustaining Youth-Led Committees	To support the creation of a sustainable youth-led, adult-supported committee.
Building a YED Community of Practice	To assist in the establishment of a YED Community of Practice.



Defining Key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Concepts



Defining Key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Concepts

Since youth engagement often means different things to different people, key YED concepts have been defined as they have been applied throughout the manual to ensure a shared understanding.

Youth Engagement + Youth Development = Positive Youth Outcomes

Youth Engagement and Development (YED) are interrelated concepts that when deliberately used together result in powerful Positive Youth Outcomes. Health Resources in Action has identified these outcomes as follows:

Problem Free/Prevention Outcomes refer to the mitigation/prevention of harmful behaviours (e.g., smoking, drug use, school related problems, violence, gambling, unplanned pregnancies, preventable injuries, etc.).

Achievement Outcomes refer to the accomplishments youth need to attain (e.g., graduate from high school, get a job, go to post secondary, etc.).

Developmental Outcomes refer to enhanced aspects of **identity** (e.g., sense of personal wellbeing, commitment to others, etc.) and **ability** (e.g., increased knowledge and skills, such as employability, health, etc.) during adolescent developmental processes.⁴

Too often developmental outcomes are overlooked. It is necessary to go beyond focusing on problems to developing skills and competencies, confidence, character, connections to family, peers, community, and opportunities to contribute. All youth require access to services, supports and opportunities to solve and prevent problems, develop fully, and engage in community life. However too often, the options given are based on our sense of whether the young person is a problem or is problem-free.⁵

Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself.¹

Youth development can be defined as a process by which youth gain the competencies necessary for adolescence and adult life based on their strengths and formative needs.² The youth development process is facilitated through:

- Services (i.e., resources, knowledge or goods done **to/for** youth);
- Opportunities (i.e., activities, roles, responsibilities taken on **by** youth); and
- Supports (i.e., interpersonal, emotional, and strategic supports **with** youth).³

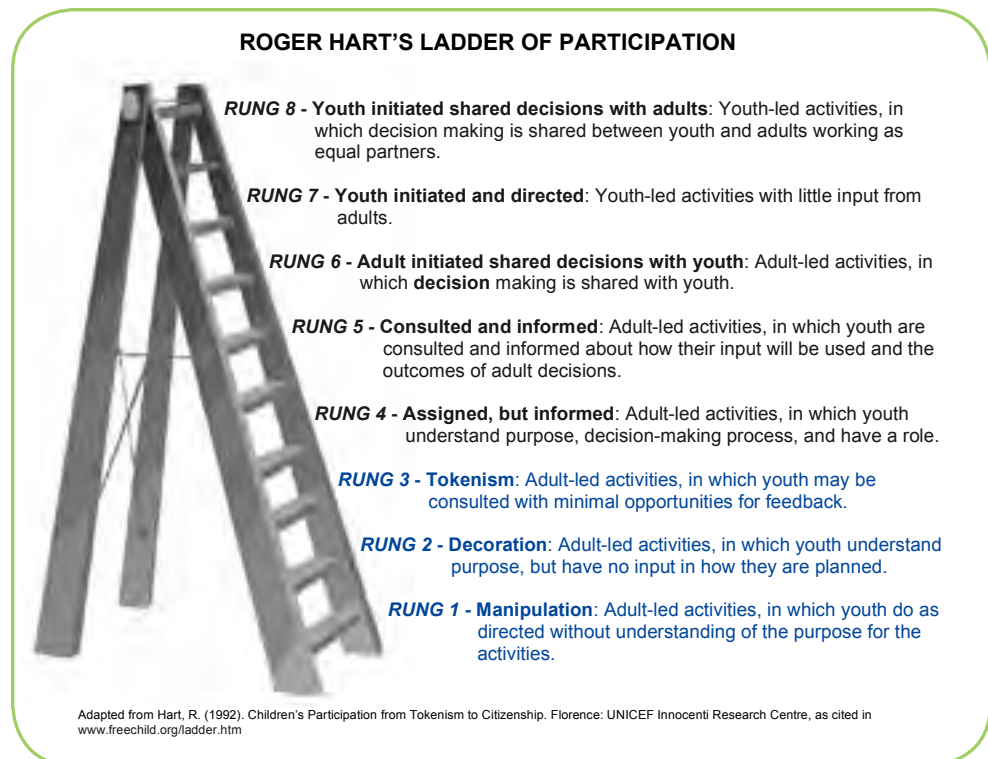
1. Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. (2012). *What is youth engagement?*, www.engagementcentre.ca/files/Whatis_WEB_e.pdf, p.1.
 2. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). *Day 1 Youth Development Training: Involving Youth as Partners*. Massachusetts, Boston, pp. 3-6.
 3. Ibid, pp. 10
 4. Ibid, pp. 5-6.
 5. Jonson Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (March 2003). *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement competing priorities or inseparable goals?* Washington: The Forum For Youth Investment Moving Ideas to Impact, pp. 25-26.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation has been adapted throughout this manual to serve as a reflection tool to assess levels of engagement and identify ways for increasing higher level YED opportunities for young people.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation has identified eight levels of youth participation based on the interactions of power between adults and youth. Rungs below four are non-participatory and should be avoided. Rungs above rung three are participatory. Some services, supports and opportunities are conducive to immediate youth participation at the higher levels, while others may require training and preparation. It may not always be possible to operate at the highest levels of participation; however, it is possible for authentic youth participation above three, as long as youth have a clear understanding about their role and the level of participation that can be supported.⁶

It is a common assumption that the ultimate goal of youth engagement must be rung seven, whereby youth initiate and lead work independently of adults. However, in Hart's model, the top rung is achieved when adults and youth share decision making as partners and work in synergy.



When using Hart's Ladder as a reflection tool, it is important to recognize that youth engagement experiences can be at different levels at different points in time. Furthermore, not every young person will be engaged to the same degree. Harts Ladder can help flag non-participatory experiences, and identify the need for the development of strategies to ensure participation is at least above rung three.

6. Ridgley, A., Lombardo, C., Morrison, M., Poland B., & Skinner, H. (2004). *Youth voices: A guide for youth expression and action*. Toronto: Wellesley Central Health, pp. 28

Youth-Friendly Environments versus Youth Development: What's the Difference?

Youth-friendly environments refer to places in which caring professionals keenly aware of youth culture provide services and supports that attempt to counteract barriers experienced by young people in our society (e.g., cost, transportation, stigma, fear, embarrassment, uncertainty, confidentiality concerns, discomfort with traditional settings, adultism, etc.).

Caring adults and youth-friendly environments help build the foundation necessary for effective YED practices, but they do not constitute authentic youth development in their own right. YED principles challenge organizations and professionals to create real opportunities for youth to contribute to the identification of priorities and be involved in decision making.

YED in Practice: What Youth Engagement IS and What Youth Engagement IS NOT

Pereira (2007) provided the following practical examples to clarify common misunderstandings associated with youth engagement in practice.

What Youth Engagement IS:	What Youth Engagement IS NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth-adult partnerships, working relationships ✓ Shared decision making ✓ Youth perspectives being valued and regarded as credible ✓ Involvement of youth in the design, planning and implementation of programs ✓ Youth and adults assuming the dual role of teacher and learner ✓ A way of operating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Adults asking youth to offer a vote of approval on decisions that have already been made ✗ Service provider/client relationship (treatment) ✗ Youth attendance in a program that was planned solely by adults ✗ Youth perspectives, knowledge and experience filtered through adult interpretation ✗ Adults mentoring youth ✗ Tokenism, Decoration, Manipulation?

Fostering Resiliency through Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Practices

Youth Engagement and Development (YED) principles and practices support resiliency at individual and environmental levels. They foster the development of individual resiliency attributes and help build the protective environmental factors needed to support resiliency within families, schools, and communities.

Individual Level: YED Practices Foster the Attributes of Resilient Youth

In the article "Prevention Should Emphasize Protective Factors" Bonnie Bernard highlighted the following attributes of resilient youth that have been consistently discussed in the literature.⁸

Attributes of Resilient Youth	Brief Description
Social Competence	Possesses qualities such as flexibility, empathy and caring, communication skills, a sense of humour, pro-social behaviour, and positive relationships with others.
Problem Solving Skills	Thinks in a reflective, flexible, abstract manner and attempts different solutions for cognitive and social problems.
Autonomy/ Self-Efficacy	Maintains a clear sense of one's own identity and ability to separate from others, particularly when in an unhealthy situation.
Sense of Purpose/ Future	Upholds a belief that one has some degree of control over one's environment.



The attributes of resilient youth can be gained through meaningful YED experiences.

8. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. pp. 35-37. Massachusetts, Boston.

Environmental Level: YED Practices Build Protection into the Lives of All Young People

Beyond individual characteristics, Bernard identified three categories of **protective environmental characteristics** that facilitate the development of youth resiliency:

1. Caring and supportive adults, friends and peers
2. High expectations
3. Opportunities for meaningful participation⁹

Research demonstrates that young people with strong protective factors are able to make healthier choices when coping with difficult life experiences. Furthermore, young people who lack protective factors are more vulnerable to risky behaviours (e.g., substance misuse, mental illness, challenges with student success, etc.).¹⁰ **Rather than focusing on individual risk factors, effective prevention strategies must focus on strengthening protective factors for young people in their families, schools and community.**¹¹



Effective YED practices help build protective factors into the lives of young people by fostering **caring and supportive networks** with **high expectations** and **opportunities for meaningful participation** in their family, school and community life. Furthermore, YED principles promote strong cross-sectoral collaboration, which helps to build protective networks between individuals, families, schools and community.

9. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. pp. 37. Massachusetts, Boston

10. Ibid p. 34

11. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. p. 34. Massachusetts, Boston.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Youth Engagement Principles

Inclusiveness: Acceptance and embracing of diversity including opinion, religion, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, image, ability, age, geography and mental health. This includes the removal of barriers, including economic barriers, to enable youth engagement.

Positive youth development: Alignment with a positive youth development approach.

Accountability: Developing standards of practice and accountability for youth engagement/development work, including responsibility for reporting back to youth. Include evaluation and monitoring as appropriate.

Operational practices: Commitment to operational practices that sustain youth engagement and enable youth development workers – including approaches to meet the needs of youth. These may include:

- Adults as allies/partners with youth
- Youth-led and/or peer-to-peer initiatives
- Approaches that provide opportunities to youth for meaningful action
- Recognition of mutual benefit for adults and youth
- Demonstration that youth contribution is valued.

Strengths-based approach: A commitment to working with youth to identify needs and build upon youth assets. This includes skill development and capacity building i.e. education, training, on-going professional development, opportunities for group knowledge, skills and networks. Also includes a commitment to facilitate/provide opportunities for ongoing feedback, peer-review and self-reflection.

Flexibility and Innovation: Commitment of youth and adults working with youth to be open to new ideas, and have a willingness to take risks and challenge existing established processes and structures. Includes flexibility to hear and respond to youth-initiated ideas.

Space for youth: Ensuring caring and supportive environments where youth feel safe. Includes both policies and practices that make space available to youth and enable youth to feel safe in that space.

Transparency: Being clear about the purpose of engaging youth, using youth friendly-approaches when interacting with youth and ensuring youth understand outcomes and products of their engagement.

Sustainability of resources: Sustainability of financial resources for best-practice youth engagement initiatives can help to ensure youth engagement initiatives are not limited.

Cross-sector alignment: Youth engagement has been embraced across agencies of government at all levels (i.e. federal, provincial and municipal) and many non-governmental organizations. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is committed to working with other ministry partners and stakeholders to ensure alignment where possible of its youth engagement approach.

Collaboration: A commitment to working with others doing similar work to share knowledge and facilitate action while fostering development of strong and lasting relationships. An example could include a youth engagement community of practice.

Source: Youth Engagement Principles were developed in December 2010 by the Youth Engagement Advisory Group for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (formerly the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport).

**Strategies for
Integrating Youth
Engagement and
Development (YED)
Principles into
Organizational
Practices**



Strategies for Integrating YED Principles into Organizational Practices

This section provides strategies to support the integration of YED principles and practices into an organizational structure to more effectively achieve strategic directions and mandates.

Conduct or Find a Current Literature Review

Results from a literature review can help to inform recommendations for a YED strategy that builds on best or better practices. There are many different literature reviews conducted on youth engagement.

Assess the YED Practices of the Organization

Conduct an internal scan to learn more about how the organization presently works with youth and staff member's perceptions of YED principles. This feedback can help inform recommendations for the future agency direction in working with youth.

Step 1: Identify the varying roles and capacities in which the organization interacts with young people. Think broader than just service provision, such as working with youth as employees, students, volunteers and of course, clients. This information will help identify appropriate youth and adult key informants for interviews.

Step 2 (a): Conduct interviews with adult staff key informants. Consider staff members who have expertise and are involved with youth in the agency (e.g., administrative staff, clerical support, media and volunteer coordinators, public health nurses, etc.). Remember to include professionals beyond those directly carrying out youth programming. (See page 84 for *Organizational YED Assessment Tool*).

Step 2 (b): Conduct exit interviews with youth key informants (i.e., youth employees, students and volunteers). This information provides valuable feedback on the experiences and learning opportunities young people have experienced through their involvement with the organization. (See page 90 for *Organizational Youth Exit YED Interview Template*)

Step 3: Analyze key informant responses. This will help to identify themes around present practices and highlight organizational YED strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers.

Assess the YED Practices of Community Partners

Conduct an external scan to learn more about how community partners use YED principles. This information will help identify youth-related services, supports, opportunities available, strong community leaders, and possibilities for partnership.

Step 1: Identify youth-related organizations in the community. Compile a comprehensive list including organizations, such as YMCA, public libraries, youth councils, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, leadership award programs, cadets, Indian Friendship Centres, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, businesses, school boards, public health units/departments, etc.

***Step 2: Conduct key informant interviews with representatives from youth related organizations.** As the list may be extensive and time may be limited, it may be helpful to establish selection criteria to prioritize which organizations to interview. (See page 84 for *Organizational YED Assessment Tool*)

***Step 3: Analyse key informant responses.** Identify themes around present practices highlighting organizational YED strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers. Information from the interviews can be used to explore possibilities for future partnerships and collaboration, such as the sharing of resources, youth recruitment, message promotion, working together on mutually beneficial initiatives.

*Note:

In cases where a current youth engagement coalition or community of practice already exists, community organizations may prefer to conduct their own interviews and discuss findings together at a meeting.

Foster YED as a Priority within the Organization

Organizational leadership committed to YED principles is essential to the integration of YED practices into an organization. To gain such support, it is helpful to align YED principles with the organization's goal, strategic directions and mandates. Evidence from the internal and external scans, literature review and best practices can be used to help formulate YED recommendations that reflect the organization's unique strengths, challenges, and promote the exploration of new possibilities to reach and involve young people.

One example of how to align YED principles with organizational mandates in public health is the creation of an agency adopted YED model that integrates youth development concepts with those of public health, such as the social determinants of health. A YED model adopted in a public health setting offers useful approaches to help meet the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS). The OPHS Foundational Standards include the assessment of current health behaviours, trends, identifying priority groups and tailoring programs to meet local needs by the board of health. Youth involvement in the identification of priority issues, emerging trends and delivery of messaging across all public health programming can have the much desired impact on behaviour changes and positive health outcomes.

Create Organizational Strategies to Support YED Practices

Seecharran, Mokwena, Sumita, and Pahwa (1999) identified elements for sound organizational practices that include capacity building, ensuring sustainability and developing a system for monitoring/evaluation.¹²

Building Organizational Capacity

Staff members require key organizational structures, supports and resources to effectively integrate YED principles into their practices. Internal/external scans combined with findings from a literature review can help identify what is required to build organizational YED capacity.

For example, key informant interviews with staff revealed strong themes in Algoma, such as the need for staff development around YED practices, clearly defined roles and a shared understanding of the agency's YED vision. In response, an agency wide YED framework was created to foster a shared organizational vision and commitment to YED with clearly defined roles and expectations. (See page 78 for *Algoma Public Health's Agency YED Framework*).

YED presentations were provided during staff day, as well as individual program/department training sessions. Consultations with different departments were provided to help staff determine for themselves whether a program or service can benefit from increasing opportunities for young people using YED principles and practices. Tools were created to assist in consultations. (See page 58 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value*, and page 60 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Assessing Services, Opportunities and Supports Using Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation*).

Fostering Sustainability

It is vital to recognize that youth development does not take place in a vacuum, and continues despite cuts to funding or programs. There are experiences that can either undermine or enhance positive youth outcomes. It is our challenge to foster investment in long term, sustained YED strategies. In doing so, the chance that short term, targeted strategies are needed is reduced. In cases when they are needed, it increases the chances that they will work.¹³

12. Seecharran, A., Mokwena, S., & Sumita, Pahwa (1999). *Making youth programs work: Framework for effective programming*. Canada: International Youth Foundation), pp. 40-58.

13. Jonson Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (March 2003). *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement competing priorities or inseparable goals?* Washington: The Forum For Youth Investment Moving Ideas to Impact, pp. 25-26.

By integrating YED principles into daily organizational practices, organizations can foster sustained YED strategies much more effectively than assigning youth engagement as a specific program or targeting specific issues.

Seecharran et al identified useful strategies to foster sustainability, such as:

- Long term planning and securing a diverse resource base
- Building and **maintaining** capacity (i.e., take actions necessary to avoid high turnover, which helps to ensure a balance between experienced and new staff members and loss of knowledge transfer)
- Aligning efforts with appropriate community partners
- Demonstrating effectiveness in being able to contribute to the positive development of young people in a visible and measurable way¹⁴

Monitoring and Evaluating the Outcomes

An efficient monitoring and evaluation plan is necessary to assess efforts, gather data to demonstrate long term positive youth outcomes and contribute to knowledge transfer. Here are some examples of YED monitoring and evaluation:

- Linking monitoring and evaluation with program planning. For example, include YED as a standing item on the organizational planning logic model.
- Evaluating the degree to which the organization integrates YED practices into different services, supports and opportunities. Examples include pilot projects, youth on committees, student placements and summer employment.
- Developing YED indicators to measure how YED principles and practices have been integrated into the organization and assess the effectiveness of this approach.
- Promoting knowledge transfer through a local community of practice or conducting research to contribute to YED literature.

Identify Organizational Support for YED From Larger Systems

As staff members require concrete supports from management to implement YED practices, organizations require support from the larger systems within which they operate in order to facilitate positive youth outcomes.¹⁵

14. Seecharran, A., Mokwena, S., & Sumita, Pahwa (1999). Making youth programs work: Framework for effective programming. Canada: International Youth Foundation), pp. 40-58.

15. Community Network for Youth Development: Putting youth development theory into practice. San Francisco, CA

At the provincial level in Ontario, efforts are being made to break down silos pertaining to YED and support organizations in meeting mandates through YED principles and practices. In particular, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (formerly the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport), Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Children and Youth Services continue to support YED through funding opportunities and fostering YED practices.

Examples include:

- The Health Promotion Division of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been promoting youth engagement as an approach for delivering the youth tobacco prevention component of the Smoke Free Ontario Strategy.
- The Ministry of Education has facilitated student engagement and opportunities for students' input through the Minister's Student Advisory Council, Student Forums and Speak Up Projects.
- As its number one strategic goal, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' strategic framework for 2008-12 includes ensuring that every child and young person has a voice.

These three ministries have also formed an Inter-Ministerial committee together that recognizes the importance of working collaboratively and establishing a provincial YED framework.

Strategies for Involving Youth on Agency Committees



Strategies for Involving Youth on Agency Committees

This section provides strategies for those interested in creating opportunities for authentic youth participation as part of an agency committee membership.

Determine the Committee's Suitability for Youth Membership

When exploring whether a committee can benefit from increased youth involvement, there are different factors that are useful to consider. (See page 58 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value*).

Assess the Committee's Readiness for Youth Membership

Discuss preliminary considerations for including young people on the committee in order to avoid tokenism and promote maximum participation.

Step 1: Find out if the current membership would like to include youth representatives. Generate dialogue amongst committee members to identify how YED principles can support the committee's goals and objectives, as well as what the committee can offer young people.

Step 2: If the committee would like to include youth representatives, complete a YED assessment with the current membership and arrange for follow up discussion (See page 62 for *Involving Youth on an Agency Committee: Readiness Assessment* tool).



Step 4: Summarize the committee's responses. Provide YED recommendations for next steps based on the direction and needs of the committee identified through the Readiness Assessment tool.

Step 5: Follow up with the committee to share the report. Ensure the appropriate resources are available.

The Stages of Change can be valuable when used in conjunction with Roger Hart's Ladder to identify the changes necessary for creating higher level participatory opportunities. (See page 74 for *Involving Youth on an Agency Committee – YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change*)

Committee Preparation for Youth Membership

Tips for fostering high level participatory experiences:

- Ensure **all** adults are supportive of YED practices and contribute to an inclusive, youth friendly environment. That being recognized, it is helpful to designate a lead adult support to provide youth friendly orientation, support, recognition, and check-ins. (See page 108 for *YED Tips for Adult Supports*)
- Modify the terms of reference using clear language to define youth membership.
- Create longer term opportunities for youth which gives time to build relationships.
- Involve youth in determining the role, responsibilities and expectations when possible.
- Make sure youth committee members have responsibilities that are meaningful to them and of value to the committee so they want to keep coming to meetings.

Youth Recruitment, Orientation, and Recognition Tips

Recruitment: There are different ways to go about recruiting suitable youth representatives. Some committees start by informally hand picking youth who have been identified as a good fit, and then progress to a more formal selection process, like voting. Other committees prefer to start with a more formal process from the beginning. (See page 104 for *YED Recruitment and Retention Tips*)

Youth Friendly Orientation:

- Introduce youth members to the committee. Use clear language, provide information about the committee, their role, responsibilities and expectations. It is helpful to include examples of committee activities or issues the committee is addressing.

- Find out about the expectations youth members have for their involvement on the committee. It is important to learn more about the interests, skills, talents, and developmental needs of youth members to maximize positive youth outcomes. (See page 94 for *YED Youth Committee Member Information Form*)

Recognition: Showcase the accomplishments and contributions of youth members to people who matter to them and the committee, such as organizational leaders, parents, peers, principal. For example, send a report outlining youth achievements to school boards, host a celebration for youth and invite their parent/guardians. Generate earned media when appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluating the YED Experience

Once youth are actively participating on the committee, it is important to monitor and evaluate the quality of the YED experience to demonstrate the effectiveness of involving youth and/or identify areas for growth.

Check-in with youth member(s) after each meeting to see how they are doing and discuss how they can follow up from meetings and activities. Check-ins are also a good time to discuss strengths, challenges and any resources and supports required. It is important to ensure youth can articulate the knowledge and skills gained and identify how they apply to other aspects of their life. In some cases, youth members focus on the food and fun without identifying the other benefits, such as transferable skills, employability, and the impact they are having in the community.

Track the roles assumed by youth, time committed, and development opportunities for reports and reference requests. (See page 96 for *YED Youth Member Involvement Tracking Form*)

Conduct exit interviews or questionnaires with both adult supports and youth member(s) at the end of the membership term to identify what is working well and lessons learned. Document the ways in which higher level youth participatory opportunities have benefited the committee in meeting mandates and enhanced youth development. (See page 68 for *Involving Youth on an Agency Committee – YED Adult Support Evaluation* and page 98 for *YED Evaluation Tool for Youth on Committees*)

Strategies for Establishing and Sustaining Youth-Led Committees



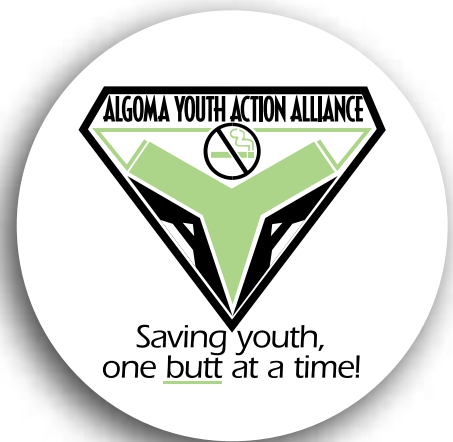
Strategies for Establishing and Sustaining Youth-Led Committees

This section provides strategies for establishing and sustaining youth-led, adult-supported committees based on the experiences of a volunteer health promotion model.

The Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA) Experience: How It Got Started

The first youth-led volunteer committee with Algoma Public Health was initiated in March 2001 in response to issues around smoke free school properties and to strategize how to be good neighbours to surrounding areas.

From there, youth members found a passion for tobacco control work and tackled a variety of issues (e.g., smoke free indoor spaces, power walls, smoking in the movies, etc.). Committee activities involved presentations to city council, working with the media, bringing in guest speakers, organizing concerts and competitions. For example, youth members had a significant impact in helping to get a controversial Smoke Free Indoor Spaces bylaw passed with their "Hands Across the North" Campaign.



When the provincial government implemented the Smoke Free Ontario Strategy's Youth Action Alliance program, the volunteer model was expanded to include an employment model. A youth advisor and peer leaders were hired to establish additional volunteer youth-led committees throughout the Algoma district.

When the Youth Action Alliance program was discontinued five years later, Algoma Public Health recognized the value of youth-led committees and sustained the volunteer portion of the Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA). Currently, the AYAA consists of four volunteer health promotion committees, including one in Sault Ste Marie and three in the rural communities of Wawa, Elliot Lake, and Blind River.

Committee Operational Practices

Identify accessible meeting dates, time and location.

The AYAA committees operate during the school year. Meetings are held monthly after school. They are located either at a school, community club or in-house. If necessary,

youth meet more frequently in working groups. If transportation is a barrier, taxis are arranged. Snacks and refreshments are provided. Youth members chair meetings, and record minutes.

Determine youth identified priorities and develop a campaign.

At the beginning of each school year (usually October), youth identify committee priorities and develop a campaign for the year. The committee builds on the successes and lessons learned from the previous year's campaign. Youth are supported in the use of effective health promotion strategies, such as avoiding one shot awareness activities in favour of developing campaigns that foster environmental and policy changes. For each initiative, youth identify key stakeholders to build appropriate community partnerships. Sustained community partnerships are encouraged. Media is used as a communications strategy; emphasis is placed on earned media where youth write a media advisory and invite the media to cover their initiative. Training is offered throughout the year based on the needs, interests and activities of youth members. (See page 112 for *Youth Led Committee Annual Health Promotion Campaign Planning Template* and page 116 for *Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation Template*)

Recognize and celebrate youth leaders and their accomplishments.

At the end of each year, a report is sent to each school board identifying youth leaders, their school and committee accomplishments. Celebrations are organized to showcase each committee's accomplishments. Parents, organizational leaders, dignitaries, community partners and school staff are invited. Committee alumni are invited as guest speakers to share how their experience on the committee has benefited their current work. Certificates of appreciation signed by the medical officer of health are presented to members. Graduating members are also presented with a token gift of appreciation.

Youth Recruitment and Orientation

Engage diverse youth membership in sustained opportunities.

Youth membership consists of young people starting in grade seven and up. Although the level of commitment and participation varies among youth and can be inconsistent, it is ideal for members to stay with the committee until they graduate from high school. It is often possible to increase engagement as time goes on and connections deepen. For example, as youth become more comfortable, they tend to assume greater initiative and leadership roles, which often leads to further YED opportunities.

Although recruitment is an on-going process, efforts are focussed at the beginning of each year. Also, when youth leave the committee, they often pass the torch by inviting a new member to the committee. Some youth alumni participate in committee initiatives when they are home from post-secondary school.

Recruitment pamphlets, banner ups, flyers are distributed through colleagues, community partners, youth, parents/guardians. (See page 104 for *YED Recruitment and Retention Tips*, page 124 for *Youth Led Committee Sample Banner Up* and page 132 for *Youth Led Committee Sample Recruitment Pamphlet*)

Ensure new members are orientated to the committee.

New members are introduced to the committee and provided with an orientation package that outlines the purpose of the committee, how it works and their role. (See page 126 for *Youth Led Committee Sample Orientation Package*)

Youth members complete an information form, which helps adult supports to understand the expectations the new member has for the committee and to learn about their interests, skills, talents, and developmental needs. This form is completed annually. (See page 94 for *Sample Youth Committee Member Information Form*)

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development takes place through intentional learning, such as formal training, campaign planning, implementation, and evaluation. Relational experiences with adult supports, peers, community partners and interactions with community and organizational leaders are also integral aspects of producing positive youth development outcomes.

Identify empowering adult supports. (See page 108 for *YED Tips for Adult Supports*)

Youth committees are supported locally by public health professionals (e.g., youth engagement coordinator, public health nurse, clerical support). During winter months when travel can be a challenge, teleconferencing and videoconferencing is used. Youth committees are also supported by an adult ally, which is a community partner whose role is related to their campaign initiatives (e.g., school guidance counsellor, Canadian Cancer Society volunteer, etc.). Adult supports also share different resources, supports and opportunities available at local, regional, provincial and national levels for youth leaders in conjunction with their campaign priorities.

Create capacity building opportunities for adult supports.

YED training and resources are provided for adult supports. Capacity building needs are identified in consultation with the youth engagement coordinator.

Identify training opportunities for youth.

Workshops are offered to youth members based on the priorities and capacity building needs of the committee. Youth gain knowledge and skills that not only apply to their current work with the committee, but are also valuable to other aspects of their lives.

Share on-going opportunities with youth alumni.

Communication with youth alumni is maintained to the degree they are interested. Graduating members are connected with relevant opportunities in their new communities. Often there are provincial initiatives or opportunities relevant to youth interests and goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation**Check-in with youth members.**

Check-ins are informal. They involve connecting with youth members to find out how they are doing, and how they can follow up from meetings and activities. Check-ins help ensure youth can articulate the knowledge and skills gained, and identify how they can apply to other aspects of their life. In some cases, youth members focus on the food and fun to the exclusion of the other benefits, such as transferable skills, employability, and the impact they are having in the community.

Track youth participation.

Record the roles undertaken by youth, time committed, and development opportunities. This information is useful for youth who would like to include their involvement on their resume or applications for post-secondary school and scholarships. Tracking this information is helpful when writing reports, providing references, or nominating youth for awards. (See page 96 for *YED Committee Member Involvement Tracker Form*)

Complete exit interviews or questionnaires with youth members.

At the end of each year, it is useful to get feedback from youth members to identify what is working well and lessons learned. (See page 98 for *YED Evaluation Tool for Youth on Committees*)

Evaluate campaign initiatives.

Evaluation should be incorporated into the project planning process from the beginning. Data can be collected throughout the campaign planning, implementation and evaluation. (See page 116 for *Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation Template* and page 122 for *Youth Led Committee Event Tracking Form*)

Evaluate capacity building efforts.

It is helpful to get feedback from participants about the quality of the training opportunities and identify how it can be applied to their current and future endeavours. (See page 136 for *Youth Led Committee Training Feedback Form*)

Strategies for Building a YED Community of Practice



Strategies for Building a YED Community of Practice

This section will provide strategies useful for building a YED Community of Practice based on the experiences of the Algoma Youth Engagement Network.

THE VALUE OF A YED COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

A community of practice refers to a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly¹⁶. Building a community of practice is of particular value for YED as the application of its principles can be challenging, yet rewarding for a wide-range of organizations, including non-governmental organizations, businesses, schools, and government. Aligning efforts, sharing initiatives and resources with community, regional, and provincial partners can promote sustainability and positive youth outcomes on a greater scale.

For example, the Algoma Youth Engagement Network consists of a diverse membership of organizations interested in building organizational and community capacity for the integration of YED principles and practices. It is not a working group, but rather functions to complement **existing** work within the membership and foster a collaborative approach to YED in Algoma. The network is designed to identify membership needs, assist in knowledge transfer, and facilitate the development of partnerships.

STRATEGIES

Initiating a Youth Engagement Community of Practice

Step 1: Identify organizations in the community that would be interested in enhancing YED capacity.

Consider organizations, such as YMCA, public libraries, youth councils, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, leadership award program, group homes, cadets, Indian Friendship Centres, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, businesses, spiritual organizations, school boards, public health units/ departments, etc.

When exploring whether an organization can benefit from increased youth involvement, there are different factors that are useful to consider. (See page 58 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value*).

16. Wenger, E. (2006). Communities of practice a brief introduction. Grass Valley, CA www.ewenger.com/theory/

Step 2: Conduct key informant interviews with representatives from the identified organizations. (See page 84 for *Organizational YED Assessment Tool*).

Step 3: Analyse key informant responses to identify themes around present practices highlighting organizational YED strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers. Information from the interviews can be used to explore possibilities for future partnerships and collaboration, such as the sharing of resources, youth recruitment, message promotion, working together on mutually beneficial initiatives – all of which would be of value to diverse organizations.

Step 4: Host a meeting, workshop or event to create an opportunity for key informants to discuss findings from the interviews that are of value to respective organizational mandates. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to share their interests, successes and challenges. Find out if there is an interest in creating a Community of Practice.

In Algoma, an inspiring guest speaker from Health Resources in Action was brought in to support internal capacity building efforts during Staff Day. To ensure efficient use of resources, a YED workshop for school staff was organized in partnership with local school boards. The workshop was followed up with a "meet and greet" for additional youth based organizations as identified through the external scan. During this meet and greet, participants had the opportunity to share their interests, successes, and identify challenges. By the end of the session, organizations demonstrated an interest in forming a YED Community of Practice and a date was set for the first meeting.

Operational Practices

Identify convenient meeting dates, time and location.

Members are best positioned as a group to determine how the community of practice should operate along with the frequency, duration and time of meetings.

Develop an agenda that reflects the needs of respective members.

The first part of Algoma Youth Engagement Network meetings involve presentations and discussions to support organizational capacity building needs and strategies, opportunities available for youth, resources, and potential partnerships. The end of the meeting is open for those who wish to follow up on networking opportunities. (See page 40 for *Community of Practice Sample Agenda*)

Develop a Terms of Reference.

A terms of reference developed by membership is helpful to ensure that everyone is on the same page and the purpose and direction are clear. Reviewing the terms of reference annually is useful to identify any changes necessary. (See page 56 for *Community of Practice Sample Terms of Reference*)

The operational practices of the Algoma Youth Engagement Network have been relatively informal to ensure it is inviting for diverse membership organizations. In the beginning, the public health youth engagement coordinator assumed role of chair and recorder. As the community of practice became more established, a terms of reference was developed, and the role of chair was assumed by other members and rotated annually.

Expanding a Community of Practice

Identify and recruit missing stakeholders.

As the community of practice becomes more established, it is possible to expand membership to include missing stakeholders. Current members are well positioned to identify and invite community partners who are missing from the table (See page 58 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value*). Training and professional development sessions are also excellent opportunities to generate awareness about the community of practice and invite new members whose mandates fit within the terms of reference. (See page 42 for *Community of Practice Sample Banner Up*).

In the case of the Algoma Youth Engagement Network, a newspaper insert was used as a recruitment strategy that also generated awareness of YED principles by showcasing YED accomplishments and highlighting opportunities for young people. (See page 44 for *Community of Practice Sample Newspaper Insert*).

Orientate new members to the committee.

New members are provided with the Terms of Reference and introduced to current membership. In a round table format, current members can share what they have gained through their involvement. New members can share what they would like to gain through their participation.

Building Organizational and Community YED Capacity

Identify mandates and YED capacity of membership organizations.

Organizations come to a community of practice with different mandates, strengths, challenges and opportunities. Yet, this diversity is precisely what strengthens a community of practice. Some organizations work closely with youth over sustained periods, while other organizations interact with higher numbers of young people over brief time periods. One organization's challenge is often another's strength. Organizations that interact with youth in different capacities are well positioned to fill gaps and align together to maximize positive youth outcomes.

When YED principles are not practiced, not only are there missed opportunities and less efficient use of resources, but there can also be an underlying sense of competition for youth amongst youth-based organizations. When diverse organizations have a shared understanding and vision of youth engagement, this fosters a collaborative approach and it facilitates stronger partnerships and more opportunities for youth in the community. (See page 60 for *Increasing YED Opportunities – Assessing Services, Opportunities and Supports Using Roger Hart's Ladder*)

Some brief testimonials from Algoma Youth Engagement Network (AYEN) members:

"The AYEN has been really valuable for networking and learning about other opportunities for youth engagement in the community." *Colleen Crowley, Wellness Coordinator, Garden River First Nation*

"The AYEN provides the ability to connect with other youth organizations." *Julie Ringrose, Ranger Leader, Girl Guides of Canada*

"It is nice to work cooperatively, not competitively. I feel supported and can relate to challenges and help identify strategies. It has allowed access to workshops and resources. There is lots of expertise around the table." *Steffanie Date, Executive Director, Sault Youth Association*

"AYEN provides feedback from organizations on how to improve your own services." *Jennifer Graham-Thompson, Reference Technician, Sault Ste Marie Public Library*

"AYEN membership offers an opportunity to share best practices, stay current with youth trends and to access resources." *Carly Smith, YMCA, Youth Gambling Awareness Program*

"AYEN offers organizations an avenue to begin exploring youth engagement and development opportunities." *Kerrie De Poli, Manager, Bon Soo*



Identify when YED opportunities shared among the community of practice can compliment different programs and departments throughout the entire organization.

In addition to building capacity through sharing better practices, resources, and workshops, members of a Community of Practice are also well positioned to identify opportunities that can be of value to different departments within their respective organizations.

Coordinate efforts between youth-led committees and the YED community of practice

A Community of Practice and youth-led committees compliment each other and support sustainable practices. For example, in addition to building capacity of adult supports to enhance their YED practices, opportunities shared by community partners from the community of practice can be shared with youth-led committees. This benefits youth committee members while enhancing the success of community partner initiatives. Similarly, youth-led initiatives can be brought to community partners on the community of practice to identify collaborative opportunities with other interested organizations and/or youth networks from the membership.

Monitoring and Evaluating Outcomes

The social capital gained through a community of practice can be challenging to capture since much networking and partnership building takes place during informal aspects of the meetings.

Develop process and outcome objectives.

Process and outcome objectives can help monitor the effectiveness of the community of practice. (See page 54 for *Community of Practice Sample SMART Process and Outcome Objectives*)

Ensure new members complete a YED Organizational YED Assessment

A YED organizational assessment can help to identify the YED strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers. (See page 84 for *Organizational YED Assessment Tool*)

Complete an annual evaluation of the Community of Practice.

An evaluation completed by members prior to the last meeting of the term can be a useful way to identify how membership organizations benefits and lessons learned for improvement. (See page 36 for *Community of Practice Annual Evaluation*)

Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Tools



Table of Contents for YED Tools

Community of Practice Annual Evaluation Template	36
Community of Practice Sample Agenda	40
Community of Practice Sample Banner Up	42
Community of Practice Sample Newspaper Insert	44
Community of Practice Sample S.M.A.R.T Process and Outcome Objectives	54
Community of Practice Sample Terms of Reference	56
Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value	58
Increasing YED Opportunities - Assessing Services	60
Involving Youth on an Agency Committee - Assessing Readiness	62
Involving Youth on an Agency Committee- YED Adult Support Evaluation	68
Involving Youth on an Agency Committee- YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change	74
Organizational Sample of an Agency-Wide YED Model	78
Organizational YED Assessment Tool	84
Organizational Youth Exit YED Interview Template	90
YED Committee Member Information Form	94
YED Committee Member Involvement Tracking Form	96
YED Evaluation Tool for Youth on Committees	98
YED Recruitment and Retention Tips	104
YED Tips for Adult Supports	108
Youth Led Committee Annual Health Promotion Campaign Planning Template	112
Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation Template	116
Youth Led Committee Event Information Tracking Form	122
Youth Led Committee Sample Banner Up	124
Youth Led Committee Sample Orientation Package	126
Youth Led Committee Sample Recruitment Pamphlet	132
Youth Led Committee Training Feedback Form	136

Community of Practice Annual Evaluation Template

An evaluation tool designed to be completed by YED community of practice members at the end of each term. The purpose is to identify what is working well and lessons learned to ensure terms of reference objectives and member needs are effectively being met. (Referred to on page 33)

Community of Practice Annual Evaluation Template

In order to ensure that our Youth Engagement and Development Community of Practice (YED CoP) membership needs are being effectively met, a short survey has been developed. As a YED CoP member, your feedback on your experiences would be really helpful to identify what is working well, lessons learned and in what ways your membership has served to benefit your organization. It will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and would be greatly appreciated. The information collected is confidential and will be used anonymously in a report, which will be shared with members and other key stakeholders.

1. How long have you been a member of the YED CoP?

- Less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-12 months
- More than 12 months

2. In what ways do you participate as a member of the YED CoP? Check all that apply.

- Attend meetings regularly
- Attend meetings sometimes
- Review minutes
- Review email updates
- Attend trainings and workshops
- Access resources
- Collaborate with other members
- Other (please specify)

3. Please identify the degree to which the following statements reflect your experience on the YED CoP:

	Always	To a Considerable Degree	Occasionally	Seldom
Members problem-solve together.				
Members create new knowledge and insights together.				
The decision-making process works well.				
Meetings are well run.				
Email updates are timely and informative.				
The Algoma Youth Engagement Network helps to support your organizations' mandates.				

Comments: _____

4. Please identify the degree to which the following statements reflect how membership on the YED CoP has served to benefit your work.

	To a Great Extent	Somewhat	Very Little	Not At All
Increased access to resources.				
Offered worthwhile workshops and training.				
Shared effective strategies to overcome youth engagement challenges.				
Enhanced awareness of youth engagement opportunities in our community.				
Facilitated new or enhanced community partnerships.				
Increased meaningful opportunities for young people within your organization.				

Comments: _____

5. Identify the degree to which you see the following key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) components reflected in your organization:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My organization's leadership is committed to YED principals.				
My organization has youth friendly policies and procedures.				
My organization offers youth friendly hours.				
There is a shared organizational YED vision among most staff in my organization.				
Barriers commonly experienced by young people are considered in my organization's practices.				
Youth input and perspectives are valued by staff in my organization.				

Comments: _____

6. Has your membership on the YED CoP influenced your organization's capacity for youth engagement and development?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give 2 or 3 of your best examples: _____

7. Does your organization have a youth engagement and development model or framework?

- Yes
- Not yet, but our organization is in the progress of creating one
- No

If you answered "yes" or "not yet", please comment if membership on the YED CoP has been helpful in the development of the model or framework? _____

8. How effective is your organization at:

	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not At All
Engaging young people to help identify priorities and make meaningful decisions.				
Enhancing young people's opportunities for development.				

Comments: _____

9. Did your experience as a member of the YED CoP meet your expectations?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

10. What suggestions do you have for improving the YED CoP? _____

Community of Practice Sample Agenda

An example of a meeting agenda for a YED community of practice. (Referred to on page 30)

Community of Practice Sample Agenda

Date
Time
Location
Address
Room

A*G*E*N*D*A

CHAIRPERSON:

RECORDER:

Start Time:

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Round Table

Organizational Youth Engagement and Development Updates

- Better or Best Practices - “Tricks of the Trade”
- Opportunities
- Challenges
- Strategies
- Resources

5. Next Meeting
6. Meeting Adjourned

Time:

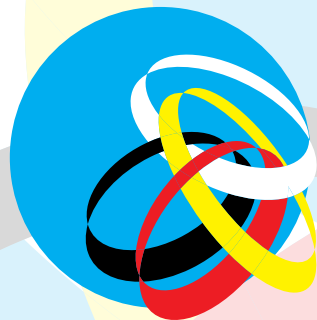


Community of Practice Sample Banner Up

An example of a promotional banner up used as a recruitment tool during YED events and initiatives. (Referred to on page 31)

"The question is not how to transform youth but how youth can help transform society."

~WK Kellogg Foundation



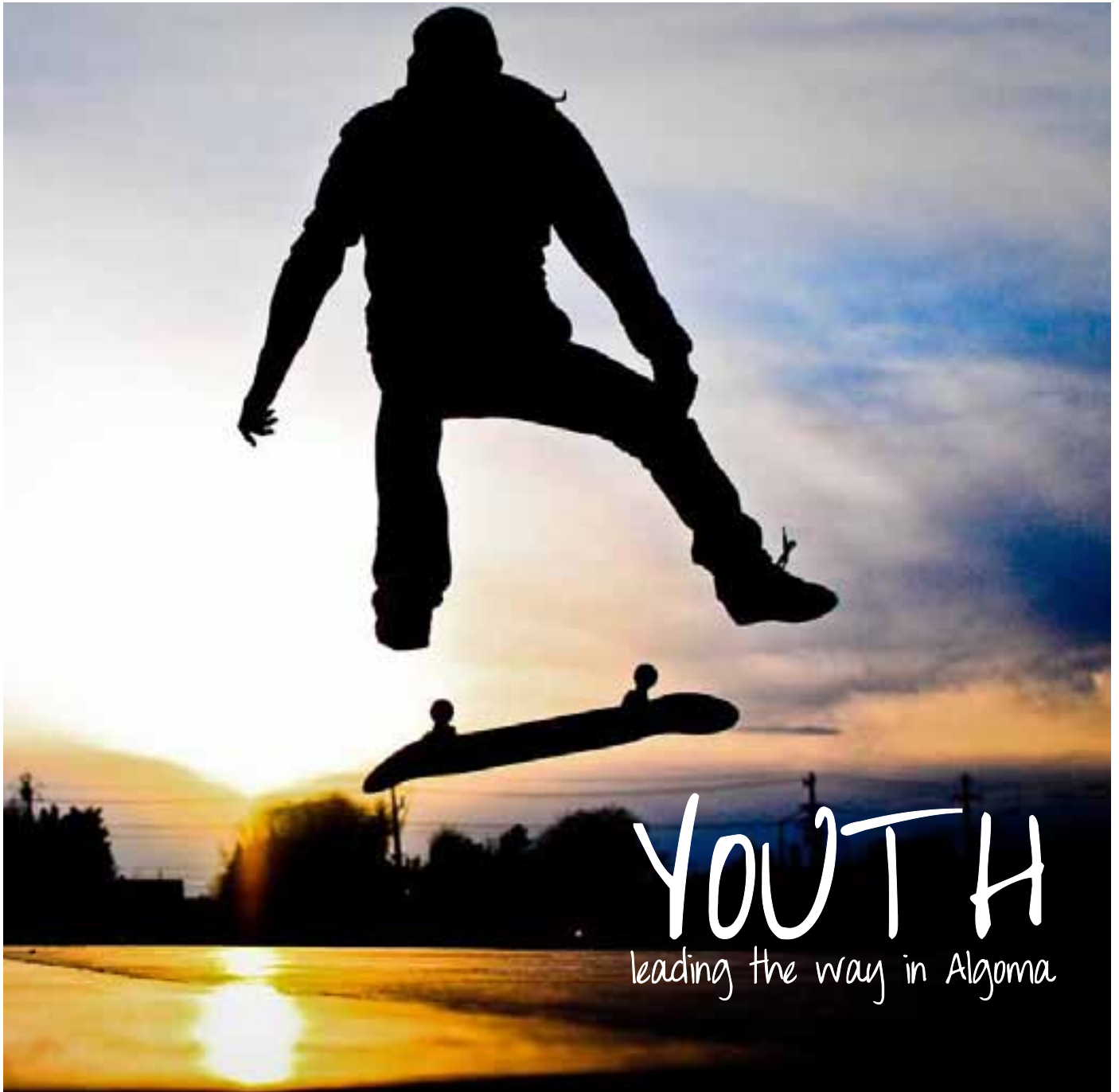
Algoma Youth Engagement Network

*For Organizations Interested In Developing
Youth & Adult Partnerships*



Community of Practice Sample Newspaper Insert

An example of an insert for local newspapers that was designed to educate community about the value of YED practices, highlight successful YED initiatives, and identify additional YED opportunities for young people. The insert also served as a recruitment tool for youth and YED community of practice members. (Referred to on page 31)



YOUTH

leading the way in Algoma

Photo Credit: Mike Trudeau
Skateboarding is a big recreational sport. The skatepark in Sault Ste. Marie is a success story showing what can be accomplished when youth are given the opportunity to lead the way.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

"The question is not how to transform youth but how youth can help transform society."

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Historically, organizations have planned and delivered programming to youth with hit and miss results of reaching this audience. Today, across Algoma these same organizations are embracing a new model of youth engagement and development that's producing much more rewarding and successful youth outcomes. By providing opportunities for young people to use their talents to help set priorities and develop strategies for reaching their peers they are making a difference in their communities.

A message from Dr. Northan, Medical Officer of Health

Algoma Public Health has always recognized the invaluable contributions of the youth of Algoma in helping us to promote health. The volunteer services of our many young people at their schools and in the community have helped successfully reach their peers. In many instances, youth actions have had the adult world take notice of emerging health issues impacting society today.

Over the last 5 years the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport has also recognized the opportunity to reach youth with healthy lifestyle messages through their peers. The funding of Youth Action Alliances (YAA) across Ontario provided youth with opportunities for skill development through advocacy, media work and community involvement. In Algoma, our YAA youth committees have supported smoke-free parks and recreation bylaws, identified the increased use of chew tobacco among teenage males, and challenged the unscrupulous practices of the tobacco industry targeting youth.

Today Algoma Public Health has moved to further embrace the concepts of Youth Engagement and Development through the implementation of an agency-wide model. With revised and renewed Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport funding, we look forward to working further with our community partners to provide youth with more opportunities to learn and make a positive impact now and for the future.



Dr. Northan presents Kyrana Yun with a certificate of appreciation for working with schools without borders

A message from David Oraziotti, MPP, Sault Ste. Marie

Our government's funding for programs under the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy continues to support youth engagement and development strategies in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma. I applaud the work of those in our community who mentor young people so they can achieve their fullest potential.

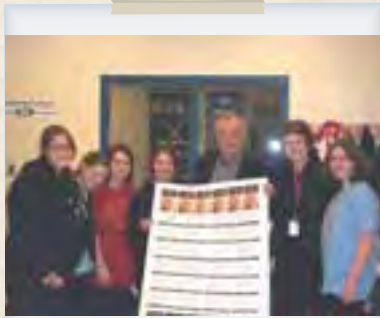
Having worked with youth representatives in our community, their dedication and commitment is exceptional and I greatly appreciated their support on Bill 11, a private member's bill I introduced to protect children from second hand smoke in automobiles, which was adopted by the government and amended the Smoke Free Ontario Act 2009.



AYAA reps thank MPP David Oraziotti for his leadership in protecting youth from second hand smoke in cars

ALGOMA PUBLIC HEALTH: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO LEAD THE WAY

Algoma Public Health is integrating youth engagement and development (YED) into its agency's fabric. A YED model will help enhance staff capacity for working with youth, expand community partnerships, and identify meaningful opportunities for young people within the organization and our communities.



AYAA youth in Wawa present campaign postcards to MPP, Mike Brown, Algoma Manitowin

Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA)

The AYAA is made up of youth-led, adult supported health promotion committees in Wawa, Sault Ste Marie, Blind River and Elliot Lake.

With the support of Algoma Public Health staff and caring community partners, students aged 12-24 get together once a month after school to identify health related issues that are important to them and their peers. The youth then come up with creative events and activities to make positive changes. In addition to being a fun way to earn high school community hours, the AYAA offers youth valuable experiences and skills to include on job, university or scholarship applications.

For more information on meetings and upcoming events, contact the Youth Engagement Coordinator at 705-759-6390 or cartuso@algomapublichealth.com. You can also visit www.algomapublichealth.com/ayaa.

Stephanie Kwolek, From the Sault to Legislation

"Commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, allows vision, and gives us the "right stuff" to turn our dreams into reality." James Womack

Algoma Public Health and the Schools Without Borders Committee (Algoma Youth Action Alliance) have provided me with wonderful opportunities in my professional and academic career. The commitment of Algoma Public Health staff toward youth engagement and empowerment allowed me to become a committed advocate for tobacco-free living. With the support of my adult mentors, I was able to advocate for smoke-free communities at our municipal council, present at a Legislative Committee at the provincial level, and present at a national conference in Edmonton, Alberta. With their guidance, our youth committee planned initiatives to discourage thousands of students in the Algoma region from using tobacco products. I learned how to lead, how to advocate and how to promote health at the community level.

My passion for health issues has inspired me in my academic career. Furthermore, my experience volunteering at Algoma Public Health has motivated me to continue my anti-tobacco crusade at the university level.

An Algoma Youth Action Alliance volunteer experience was anything but typical. My committee membership enabled me to chair subcommittees, organize awareness events, and act as a media spokesperson. My involvement as a Schools Without Borders Committee member provided me with an exceptional opportunity to make a difference in our community and endowed me with the tools necessary to succeed in my future career.



Stephanie Kwolek and George Smitherman (former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care)

ALGOMA YOUTH ACTION ALLIANCE: UNITING YOUTH ACROSS ALGOMA



Vanessa Gastaldo, Central Algoma

Working with the Algoma Youth Action Alliance was an experience that continues to impact my career choices, education and advocacy work. I have been able to transfer the skills I learned, including teamwork, event planning and advocacy strategies into many environments, taking leadership roles in local and regional levels promoting the issues of my peers.

I always wanted to get involved with my community and having the opportunity to learn strategies to engage more youth has transformed the way I work and live. Working with the AYAA was the opportunity that I needed to transform my passion into action.



Carley Ingles, Elliot Lake

From 2004 until 2007, I had the opportunity to work with the Algoma Youth Action Alliance in developing a youth-led coalition focused on promoting health awareness, mainly tobacco advocacy. It was my job to plan, develop and initiate events within my community and on occasion within the region. I have always said that becoming a part of the AYAA was always my stepping stone to success in my current career path and my future goals. Currently in school for accounting, I have extended my knowledge and leadership abilities in numerous youth-led coalitions such as the Cambrian Accounting Club and the Sudbury Youth Council. My experience with the AYAA has shown me the strength youth engagement brings to the development of a community and I hope to continue promoting these benefits through my future endeavors.

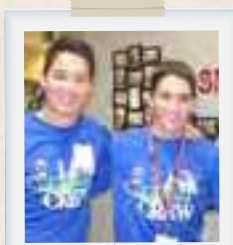
"Never think that a small group of committed people can't change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead



Katherine Dubreuil, Sault Ste. Marie

Working with Algoma Public Health has allowed me many different opportunities to promote healthy living. I was able to travel to Sudbury to participate in a district-wide smoke-free movies event and network with other youth representatives while informing the public about the Tobacco Industry's tactics. I have also had the opportunity to facilitate displays and presentations in front of a wide variety of audiences ranging from school board representatives, elementary, high school and post secondary students, as well as important community members. Each of these presentations has helped me discover my voice, build communications skills and form an impressive resume.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT + (EDUCATION + PARTNERSHIP) = SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES



Link crew creating a lasting bond

Huron Superior Catholic District School Board

"Link Crew" at St. Mary's College (SMC) and St. Basil Secondary (SBSS) is a resounding success in welcoming grade 9 students. We're proud of our senior students who mentor our incoming grade 9 students and build community in our schools.

"It has helped me feel welcome, that I belong." Erica Brescacin - Grade 9 SBSS

"It has provided a chance for me to be a role model and it has created a bond." Molly Harper, Grade 12, SBSS

"Link Crew made you very feel welcome and part of the St. Mary's family." Jayme Ricard, Grade 9 SMC

"You see grade 9s going up to grade 12s asking questions, having a talk, having some laughs. It's great to see that," Matt Sicolj, Grade 12, SMC



Youth Leadership Character Conference, May 2010

Algoma District School Board

Congratulations to the students of the Algoma District School Board who are taking on leadership roles in their schools and getting involved in their community through character. Our students are encouraged to make a difference through action-based initiatives and many students are participating in school and community based activities.

Students lead and participate in service learning activities at school through student-led committees, and community partnerships. At a School Board level, students participate in the Student Senate and can serve as a Student Trustee. Students across ADSB also apply for and participate in Speak Up grants which are provincially funded action-based student-led activities.

Our young leaders of today continue to make a positive contribution and a difference in our schools and in our community.



sault college students helping seniors

Sault College

Sault College and United Way SSM partnered in a project to help seniors reduce their energy/or utility costs. Clients were chosen on the basis of their need of lower energy costs. Community businesses were asked for their support and Sault College students spent the day working on designated homes throughout the city.

In total, seven households were assisted. 14 Sault College trades students and 5 Sault College faculty participated, accompanied by Leo Tiberi, Vice President, Academic and Corey Meunier, Chair, Skilled Trades and Board of Governors member, Bob Wilding. Students began their day at 8:30a.m. with projects that included caulking windows, raking and bagging leaves, and showing homeowners how to properly set programmable thermostats. Students and faculty were commended on their efficiency, politeness, cleanliness and compassion with the seniors they assisted during the project. Congratulations to Sam Spadafora and his team for their achievements and commitment to community.



Jennifer Perron, BBA, Class of 2010

Algoma University

Algoma University dedicates itself to opening the minds of its students to infinite possibility. It is a university that sees learning as a cooperative effort, where professors and students share ideas and together advance into new territories. Our students are not just participants in their education; they are viewed as partners in both their personal and our organizational success. We are building, with the cooperation of our students, a strong University that promotes and nurtures youth engagement and empowerment.

In the past three years, I've held positions with the Algoma University Students' Union and the Shingvauk Anishinaabe Students' Association and it has changed my perspective. I used to be apathetic and say I'm just one person I can't make change but now that I've seen the power a little time and money can do for clubs in the university, in addition to attending conferences organized by the Canadian Federation of Students proved to me that advocacy works.

My volunteer work was challenging, it wasn't that much different from the working world and definitely a valuable experience. Not only is volunteering good on a resume it made me eligible for numerous scholarships and bursaries. Bursaries have allowed me concentrate on my classes and graduate with honour. Jennifer Perron, BBA

YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS = GREATER IMPACT. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN ALGOMA

Sault Youth Association

Sault Youth Association is an advocate for youth that publishes young talent in Fresh magazine, hosts Buskerfest annually, and provides support for youth-led ventures like Clusterfolk, Youth Shout Out, Battle of the Bands: Downtown Show-down and the Action Riot Guild.

We provide free art workshops via the Fresh Art Project and are currently conducting a massive research study and series of focus groups that will operate as the city's Youth Strategy and possibly stem the tide of youth out-migrating from our city.

Youth can visit our website at www.saultyouthassociation.com for full details on how to volunteer, information about our projects, or to give feedback. Also, add us on Facebook for the latest up-to-the minutes news.



emma Piirtoniemi 'shouts out' on behalf of SYA

Community Living Ontario

Passport Mentoring is an initiative offered through the provincial non-profit advocacy organization, Community Living Ontario.

Mentoring is offered to students in high school between the ages of 14-21 who have an intellectual disability.

Through Mentoring, students are encouraged to gain insights and develop skills into potential opportunities for their future. By making community connections, students can enhance their learning and become engaged in a variety of roles. Passport Mentoring facilitates exploration into a particular area of interest that a student holds for their future. It is about harnessing the power of a dream, and translating that into a pathway for a successful future.

If you are a student, or know of a student who would benefit from Passport Mentoring, or if you are an individual who is interested in Mentoring a student, call or e-mail Lynne Brown at lbrown@communitylivingontario.ca or 705-254-9340.



Lynne Brown, Passport Mentoring

United Way Youth Empowerment Council

The United Way of Sault Ste Marie's Youth Empowerment Council (YEC) is a membership of youth aged 14-29 who want to empower their peers to take change into their own futures and create an environment where youth volunteerism is the norm.

The YEC includes members from all local high schools, both post-secondary institutes, as well as young professionals in Sault Ste Marie. Members can choose to sit on the Communications or Special Events committees, or only attend monthly meetings and volunteering at events. To date, the YEC's first year included the highly successful Community Carwash for Charity, a soon-to-be annual event.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Maureen Dodd, United Way, 705-254-7476 x 216.



st. mary's knights were all smiles during the community car wash for charity

John Howard Society

"Work—It—Out..." is the slogan that Korah's Peer Mediation group developed to describe their role in the school. The group was trained by the John Howard Society to understand the underlying causes of conflict and how to facilitate peer mediations. The program is supervised by staff of the John Howard Society and funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Peer Mediation and social skills training is currently available at Korah and Superior Heights. The John Howard Society is hoping to expand the program to all high schools over the next year. Students interested in becoming Peer Mediators at Korah or Superior Heights can sign up in the guidance office at their school. Volunteers interested in becoming peer mentors can contact the John Howard Society at 705-759-1703.



Peer Mediation Group

YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS = GREATER IMPACT. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN ALGOMA

Blind River Youth Council



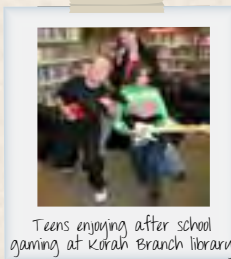
Kids having fun at the beach during one of Blind River's Youth excursions

By engaging our youth, we can encourage them to expand recreation in our area and to leave their legacy in our community. The Blind River Youth Council has been promoting the Blind River Community Centre as the recreational hub in our community for youth to their peers!

In the fall and winter, youth can play hockey, figure skate, public skate, toboggan and cross country ski on the trails located within 3 km of the Community Centre. In the spring and summer months, youth can play tennis, utilize the basketball courts, and enjoy the skateboard park close by. They can also rollerblade and play baseball. The Marine Park is another option for fishing enthusiasts. Blind River youth can also enjoy the biking and hiking trails located within 3 km on the Boom Camp Trails. All recreational areas will be promoted as smoke free zones. This is all part of Youth Council's achievement to contributing to the recreational goals of our community so far.

Currently, there are opportunities for youth to get involved in the building of our extreme bike path and outdoor rink. Youth who are interested in joining the Blind River Youth Council can contact sally.hagman@blindriver.ca or **705-356-2251**.

Sault Ste. Marie Public Library



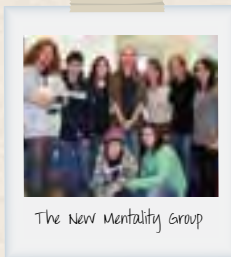
Teens enjoying after school gaming at Korah Branch library

Youth involvement is an important component of the Sault Ste Marie Public Library. Recently libraries have empowered youth to improve library services and programs. Through employment and volunteer opportunities, teens and young adults have the chance to make a difference in their community, develop their leadership and team-building skills, and gain valuable experience.

Community service hours can be earned by volunteering with the Bestsellers Café, the Friends' of the Library bookstore and used book sales, by assisting library staff with programs, and by joining the Teen Advisory Group.

To volunteer, please visit the library's website: www.ssmpl.ca or call **705-759-5236**.

Algoma Family Services



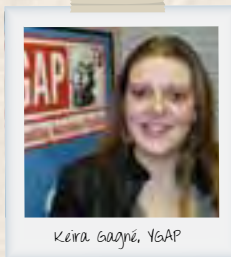
The New Mentality Group

We know youth have a powerful role in helping to create positive changes in our community. As such, Algoma Family Services has hired a client and youth engagement intern, Megan Petingalo, to help create a client and youth engagement framework for our agency. Currently, we have a youth-driven, volunteer group called "The New Mentality Algoma," in which members seek to help reduce the stigma surrounding youth mental health. The group is led by youth facilitators Hilary and Lizz. The group is currently working on an awareness campaign and planning a mental health carnival for children's mental health week in May 2011, which will be both fun and educational. Here are some thoughts from our youth group:

"As a high school student I have seen the stigma in the hallways and in the classrooms. I have seen the effects it has on each individual and I am hoping that by joining the New Mentality Algoma group I can help to prevent the stigma that surrounds mental health."
Hilary Lorenzo

Contact: youth@algomafamilyservices.org or call **705-945-5050**.

YMCA



Keira Gagné, YGAP

My involvement with YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program (YGAP) began when the Outreach Worker, Carly, came to my grade 11 class as part of Youth Engagement workshops to discuss youth gambling. The sessions guided my class to create videos portraying the consequences of the issue. We presented the videos to parents and professionals at the Shadows of the Mind Film Festival. This venture gave me the opportunity to attend a Youth Gambling and Co-addictions Conference. After the conference, I began volunteering with Carly and we have since worked with community partners to create a YGAP sculpture entry for a local parade. My YGAP experience has improved my leadership, communication, and presenting skills, as well as my self-confidence. These experiences have given me a feeling of connection to the community.

If you are interested in a youth engagement opportunity, please contact Carly Smith at **705-943-3500** or csmith@sault.ymca.ca.

Gone are the days of youth participating in activities that they don't have a significant role to play. Across Algoma organizations are starting to generate opportunities for young people to take on important roles in which they can develop skills, share their talents and make meaningful decisions.

The results of these efforts demonstrate that when given the opportunity and support, young people want to make a difference in their communities and have the power to make positive changes.

Attention businesses and community organizations!

Are you interested in building partnerships with youth?

This publication has highlighted some examples of organizations leading the way, but there are certainly many others out there. If your business or community organization is interested in youth engagement and development, connect with the Youth Engagement Network.

The Youth Engagement Network of Algoma brings together community organizations involved with or interested in youth engagement and development. The network helps members share information, resources, and training opportunities and identify collaborative initiatives. For more information on joining the network, contact Corina Artuso, Algoma Public Health at 705-759-6390 or cartuso@algotmapublichealth.com.

Things all adults can do to make a big difference for young people:

- * Smile at young people
- * Learn the names of young people
- * Greet them when you see them
- * Ask young people about themselves and their interests. Listen to them.
- * Attend a school function for a young person (e.g. a play, game, recital, concert, etc.). Make sure they know you are there.
- * Teach young people how to solve problems with the values they have.
- * Notice when young people have stood up for themselves, resisted a dangerous situation, or asked something they needed. Tell them how you admire their actions.
- * Invite young people to share their gifts and talents.
- * Walk the talk. Be a good role model.

www.search-institute.org



Community of Practice Sample S.M.A.R.T Process and Outcome Objectives

An example of S.M.A.R.T process and outcome objectives that were used by a community of practice. (Referred to on page 33)

Sample of S.M.A.R.T. Process and Outcome Objectives for a Youth Engagement Community of Practice (CoP)

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

1. 100% of the CoP membership will be able to identify better practices for YED in 2011.
2. To increase the awareness of YED initiatives of CoP members by identifying 10 opportunities and challenges throughout the monthly meetings in 2011.
3. To increase awareness of YED resources by CoP members by highlighting/ identifying new resources at each meeting and facilitating a resource sharing meeting in 2011.
4. Increase the diversity of the CoP membership by 2 individuals from the Algoma District by the end of 2011.
5. 25% of the residents of Algoma will become more aware of youth engagement success stories and opportunities throughout 2011.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

1. The CoP will host 1 meeting per month for members to exchange knowledge about YED practices and principles and identify opportunities.
2. Distribute 1 print media insert related to YED successes and opportunities to the District of Algoma by December 2011.
3. 100% of the CoP membership will distribute the YED insert to their respective organizations and key stake holders within a 2 month period after the release.
4. Invite 2 new diverse organizations/ community groups, identified by the CoP to a meeting in 2011.
5. Identify 3 opportunities for collaboration among members within the CoP in 2011.

Community of Practice Sample Terms of Reference

An example of a terms of reference for a YED community of practice. (Referred to on page 30)

Name:	Algoma Youth Engagement and Development Network
Purpose/Goal:	To foster a collaborative and synergistic approach to YED in Algoma to maximize positive youth outcomes
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To facilitate information sharing of youth engagement and development practices and resources amongst network members• To Identify membership needs in employing effective youth engagement and development practices• To develop membership capacity in youth engagement and development practices• To build community capacity for youth engagement and development practices• To assist in the development of partnerships amongst the diverse disciplines of network members on local youth engagement and development initiatives
Chair:	Appointed by the membership for a 1 year term. Role is to run an effective meeting. Algoma Public Health's Youth Engagement Coordinator will draft agenda, book room.
Recorder:	Youth Engagement Coordinator - Algoma Public Health
Membership:	Community organizations involved with or interested in youth engagement and development practices
Reporting to:	Membership will report within their individual agencies.
Frequency:	Monthly
Term:	Reviewed annually
Decision-making Format:	Consensus is preferred, where possible.
Distribution of Minutes:	Distribute to members.



Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value

Reflective questions that can help determine whether an organization, committee, program or service can benefit from increased YED opportunities (i.e., creating meaningful roles for youth beyond that of service recipient or participant of activities planned by adults). (Referred to on pages 17, 21, 29, and 31)

Increasing YED Opportunities – Exploring the Value

Questions to Consider

The following reflection questions can help determine whether an organization, committee, program or service can benefit from exploring increased YED opportunities, while contributing to positive youth outcomes. When considering the questions, it is important to think broadly in terms of how the program, service or class interacts with young people (e.g., youth as employees, volunteers, students, clients).

- Are young people a target or impacted by the work of the organization, committee, program or service?
- Are young people impacted by decisions made by the organization, committee, program or service?
- What are the processes for making decisions? Are there opportunities for young people to be involved?
- Are there young people who are interested in issues related to activities, goals, objectives, or mandates? If so, what are some ways they can be involved?
- Are there difficulties in reaching youth population?
- Is there a need to increase relevancy of the organization, committee, program or service among young people?
- Are there challenges experienced, in which youth involvement may foster innovative solutions or approaches?
- Could youth involvement inspire future career choices? Engaging young people can be a useful long term human resource strategy.
- Could any of the Social Determinants of Health be positively impacted through youth involvement?
- Are their staff or volunteers who understand and apply YED practices? If not, is there interest in doing so?
- Is there mentorship capacity within the organization, committee, program or service that can facilitate youth development?
- Is it possible to create opportunities for young people who need something to call their own or who do not normally get involved?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, it may be beneficial to consider creating higher level youth participatory opportunities.

There are many different ways to create opportunities for youth, such as creating a youth-led committee, involving youth as part of agency committee membership, creating paid or volunteer participatory roles for youth, offering high school or post secondary student placements, establish a teen task force, parallel board, etc.

Increasing YED Opportunities - Assessing Services, Opportunities and Supports Using Roger Hart's Ladder

A handout adapted from Hart's Ladder designed to help assess the level of youth participation in the services, opportunities and supports offered. It can be used for professional YED reflective practice and helps identify suitable opportunities for increased youth involvement. (Referred to on pages 17 and 32)

Increasing YED Opportunities: Assessing Services, Opportunities and Supports Using Roger Hart’s Ladder of Participation

1. Identify which statement generally reflects the overall participatory experience youth have in the context of the services, opportunities or supports provided.

Level of Participation	Defining Participatory Characteristics Related to Decision Making Power (adapted from Hart’s Ladder)	Examples and YED Considerations
Rungs 1-3	Youth are assigned tasks or asked for their ideas/feedback. Youth are <u>not</u> informed about how their contributions will be used or how decisions are made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth are used as a visual presence for messaging of a campaign created by adults that targets youth. These are non-participatory levels to be avoided. Even experienced professionals who are knowledgeable and skilled in working with young people may find themselves operating at Non-Participatory rungs at times. It is important to recognize when it is happening so that strategies for increased participation can be established.
Rungs 4-5	Youth are assigned tasks or asked for their ideas/feedback. Youth <u>are</u> informed about how their contributions will be used and how decisions are made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups, in which youth are informed how their input will be used with the chance to follow up if they wish. These are participatory levels, but there are often possibilities to increase participation (e.g., youth may be able to coordinate/facilitate the focus groups).
Rung 6	Activities are adult-initiated. Decision-making and direction is shared with youth as partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults identify an activity or issue and partner with youth in the planning, implementation and evaluation process.
Rung 7	Youth initiate and direct activities with minimal support from adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth independently carry out an activity or initiative. Semi formals and proms are independently organized by youth in some schools.
Rung 8	Activities are youth-initiated. Decision making and direction is shared with adults as partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth identify an activity or issue and partner with adults in the planning, implementation and evaluation process.

In Hart’s Model, the level of participation reflects the degree to which youth are involved, as well the level of decision making power with a shared responsibility for their outcomes. **Rungs 1-3 reflect non-participation and should be avoided.** Rungs 4-8 are considered true participation. Essential elements to high levels of participation include youth making change, directing their own activity, and taking responsibility. It is possible to be at different levels during different phases in a particular project.

The value in Hart’s Model is that it allows us to reflect on YED experiences to identify ways to increase participation and/or develop strategies for addressing barriers for increasing participatory levels in future experiences. For example, if the goal is rung 7 or 8, but there are barriers or lack of capacity, there is a risk of operating at non-participatory level. In this case, capacity building efforts are needed. In the meantime, it is more effective to intentionally operate at rung 4-6.

2. Questions to Consider:

- Is the level of participation you identified, the level that is wanted and/or needed? Why or why not?
- If not, what are the barriers (e.g., accessibility, transportation, bureaucracy, confidentiality, adultism, lack of youth interest/availability, etc.)?
- How can the barriers be overcome?
- Is it possible to increase participation?

Involving Youth on an Agency Committee - Readiness Assessment

A tool designed to assess the readiness of agency committees interested in including youth membership to identify the resources and supports necessary to ensure maximum participation and avoid tokenism. Information from the tool can be shared with youth during recruitment and orientation, as appropriate. (Referred to on page 21)

Involving Youth on an Agency Committee: Readiness Assessment

This assessment will take about 5-10. It is designed to be completed by committee members to help define what the committee will look like with youth membership. The information provided will be helpful for the identification of resources and supports to avoid tokenism and ensure high level youth participation on the committee. It will be used as a starting point for discussion at a committee meeting.

1. Committee Name: _____

2. What is the purpose of the committee?

3. The following statements are based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation.¹ Please identify the statement that most accurately reflects the overall level of youth participation the committee is seeking. Check only one:

- Youth will be asked to participate or help out with activities planned by adults.
- Youth will be given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth will be informed about how their input will be used and how decisions are made.
- Activities will be adult-initiated. Decision making will be shared with youth as partners.
- Youth will initiate and direct activities. Adults will play only a minimal role.
- Activities will be youth-initiated. Decision making will be shared with adults as partners.

4. How do you think young people can contribute to the committee? Check all that apply:

- Share their own views as a young person and insights about peers.
- Provide consultation on how to make the committee's work more relevant to young people.
- Assist in the identification of priorities.
- Help problem solve through challenges.
- Take on supervisory roles.
- Serve as a mentor or instructor.
- Assist with budgeting.
- Help coordinate the planning and implementation of committee initiatives.
- Write news releases, media advisories, conduct media interviews.
- Assist with research, monitoring and/or evaluation.
- None of the above: Youth will participate or help out with activities planned by adult members.
- Other (please specify)

5. What would be the time commitment for youth members (e.g., term of membership, frequency and duration of meetings, preparation time, etc.)?

6. Will there be an adult member designated to orientate and support youth member(s) during their time on the committee?

- Yes
 No

If yes, who and what will their role look like?

7. Does the committee have information about its goals and objectives that could be shared with new youth members?

- Yes
 No

Comments:

8. Would the committee consider modifying the terms of reference to include youth membership?

- Yes
 No

Comments:

9. Please identify the following Developmental Youth Outcomes² that youth member(s) could gain through their involvement on the committee. Check all that apply:

- Ability to identify satisfying accomplishments from their involvement with the committee.
- Benefits associated with regular contributions to community and organizations.
- Developed or enhanced conflict resolution skills.
- Developed or enhanced coping skills.
- Knowledge and confidence to access helping resources and supports.
- Capacity to work effectively within systems (e.g., understand how agency policies work).
- Increased professional networks and contacts.

Comments:

10. What else can youth committee member(s) gain from being involved on the committee? Check all that apply:

- High school community hours.
- Personal enjoyment.
- References for university, scholarship applications or resume.
- Other (please specify) _____

11. a) Identify any barriers that could make it challenging to include youth on the committee. Check all that apply:

- Transportation barriers.
- Organizational policies and procedures that are not youth-friendly.
- Inadequate resources (e.g., space, limited funds, staff shortages).
- Lack of understanding of youth engagement and development practices among adults.
- Some adults do not see the value of the authentic participation of young people.
- Confidentiality concerns.
- Tight timelines making it difficult to involve youth at a higher level.
- Timing of meetings or initiatives.
- Location of meetings or initiatives are difficult for youth to access.
- Unable to find young people who are interested and/or available.
- Other (please specify) _____

b) Please identify strategies that the committee can use to address barriers to authentic youth membership?

12. In what ways could the committee consider recognizing the contributions of youth member(s)? Check all that apply:

- Showcase youth accomplishments to people who are important to them (e.g., friends, parents, school staff, community leaders, etc.).
- Provide certificate of recognition.
- Provide letter of reference.
- Nominate youth member(s) for applicable awards.
- Offer a token gift of appreciation.

Comments: _____

14. Identify the degree to which you see the following key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) components reflected in the committee's practices:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Adult Committee members have a shared commitment to YED practices.				
Youth perspectives are valued by adult committee members.				

Comments: _____

15. How effective do you feel your committee will be at:

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Not At All Effective
Engaging young people to help identify priorities and make meaningful decisions.				
Enhancing young people's opportunities for development.				

Comments: _____

16. In what ways do you feel the committee can benefit from involving youth representation? Check all that apply:

- Enhance the committee's opportunities to meet its mandates.
- Generate innovative ideas.
- Enhance the well being and development of young people to help strengthen community.
- More effectively meet the needs of young people, who are a key stakeholder.
- Improve reach to youth as a target audience.
- Expand social networks.
- Adult committee members can enhance their own skills through experience.
- Increase job/volunteer satisfaction among adult members.
- Other (please specify) _____

17. Are there any other considerations that need to be discussed to ensure the authentic inclusion of youth membership?

1. Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

2. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. pp. 7, 17-20. Massachusetts, Boston.

Involving Youth on an Agency Committee - YED Adult Support Evaluation

An evaluation tool designed to be completed at the end of the term of youth membership by adult support(s) to assess the quality of YED experience and identify lessons learned. (Referred to on page 23)

Involving Youth on an Agency Committee: YED Adult Support Evaluation

As an adult support, your feedback is helpful to identify what has worked well and lessons learned when including youth as part of an agency committee's membership. Participation is voluntary and would be greatly appreciated. It will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The information you provide is confidential. It will be used to identify strategies and useful resources/supports necessary for increasing opportunities that produce positive youth outcomes and enhance the committee's ability to meet its mandates.

1. How long has the committee had youth representation?

- Less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-12 months
- More than 12 months

If more than 12 months, please specify:

2. Will the committee continue with youth representation as part of its membership next term?

- Yes, representation will be maintained without any changes.
- Yes, but with some changes.
- No, the term of membership was successfully completed.
- No, there are barriers to youth participation.

If you responded "Yes, but with some changes" or "No", please comment:

3. Identify the degree to which you see the following key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) components reflected in the committee's practices:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Adult committee members have a shared commitment to YED practices.				
Youth perspectives are valued by adult committee members.				
Barriers commonly experienced by young people are considered.				

Comments: _____

4. How effective was the committee at:

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Not At All Effective
Engaging young people to help identify priorities and make meaningful decisions.				
Enhancing young people's opportunities for development.				

5. Identify any challenges that were experienced when including youth on the committee. Check all that apply:

- Transportation barriers.
- Organizational policies and procedures that are not youth-friendly.
- Inadequate resources (e.g., space, limited funds, staff shortages).
- Lack of understanding of youth engagement and development practices among adults.
- Some adults do not see the value of the authentic participation of young people.
- Confidentiality concerns.
- Tight timelines making it difficult to involve youth at a higher level.
- Timing of meetings or initiatives.
- Location of meetings or initiatives are difficult for youth to access.
- Unable to find young people who are interested and/or available.
- Other (please specify) _____

6. Were youth member(s) orientated to the committee?

- Yes
- No

Comments: _____

7. a) The following statements are based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation.¹ Please identify the statement that most accurately reflects the overall level of youth participation on the committee.

Check only one:

- Youth were given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth were not informed about how their input would be used or how decisions were made.
- Youth were given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth were informed about how their input was used and how decisions were made.
- Activities were adult-initiated. Decision making was shared with youth as partners.
- Youth initiated and directed activities. Adults played a minimal role.
- Activities were youth-initiated. Decision making was shared with adults as partners.

b) For the level of youth development you identified in the above question, is this the desired level?

- Yes
- No

Please comment: _____

9. What kinds of meaningful decision making roles have young people had as part of committee membership?

Note: This does not include youth performing tasks planned by adults. If this is the case, please check "Not applicable." Otherwise, please check all that apply:

- Not applicable.*
- Shared their own views as a young person and insights about peers.
- Provided consultation on how to make the committee's work more relevant to young people.
- Assisted in the identification of priorities.
- Helped problem solve through challenges.
- Took on supervisory roles.
- Served as a mentor or instructor.
- Assisted with budgeting.
- Helped coordinate the planning and implementation of committee initiatives.
- Wrote news releases, media advisories, conducted media interviews.
- Assisted with research, monitoring and/or evaluation.
- Other (please specify) _____

10. In what ways were the contributions of youth member(s) recognized? Check all that apply:

- Youth member accomplishments were showcased to people who were important to them (e.g., friends, parents, school staff, community leaders, etc.).
- Provided certificate of recognition.
- Provided letter of reference.
- Nominated youth member(s) for applicable awards
- Offered a token gift of thanks.

Comments: _____

11. Please identify the following Developmental Youth Outcomes² that youth member(s) gained from their involvement on the committee. Check all that apply:

- Ability to identify satisfying accomplishments from their involvement with the committee.
- Contributed regularly to an organization.
- Developed or enhanced conflict resolution skills.
- Developed or enhanced coping skills.
- Knowledge and confidence to access helping resources and supports.
- Capacity to work effectively within systems (e.g., understand how agency policies work).
- Increased professional networks and contacts.

Comments: _____

12. What else did youth committee member(s) gain from being involved on the committee? Check all that apply:

- High school community hours.
- Personal enjoyment.
- References for university, scholarship applications or resume.
- Other (please specify) _____

13. Did the experience of involving youth representative(s) as part of committee membership meet your expectations?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

Comments: _____

14. What suggestions do you have for improving the quality of the Youth Engagement and Development experience for the committee and young people?

15. In what ways did the committee benefit from involving youth membership? Check all that apply:

- Enhanced the committee's opportunities to meet its mandates.
- Generated innovative ideas.
- Enhanced the well being and development of young people to help strengthen community.
- The committee was more effectively able to meet the needs of young people, who were a key stakeholder.
- Improved reach to youth as a target audience.
- Expanded social networks.
- Adult committee members enhanced thier own skills through experience.
- Increased job/volunteer satisfaction among adult members.
- Other (please specify) _____

1. Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
2. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. pp. 7, 17-20. Massachusetts, Boston.

Involving Youth on an Agency Committee - YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change

A tool designed to assist in the identification of actions to help committees create higher level participatory opportunities. This tool is based on an adaptation of the Stages of Change in conjunction with Hart's Ladder. See page 8 for Hart's Ladder. (Referred to on page 22)

Involving Youth on Agency Committees: YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change

Based on Stages of Change Theory and Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Stage of Change	Level of Participation on Hart's Ladder	Defining YED Characteristics of a Committee in this Stage of Change	Activities to Support YED Movement Along the Stages of Change
P R E - C O N T E M P L A T I O N	<p>Committee does not have youth membership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee has not considered or is not interested in involving youth as part of its membership. • The committee is not aware of YED practices. • The committee does not see value of youth participation. • The committee does not distinguish between youth as service recipients and youth as partners. • Barriers to youth involvement are not identified. If they are, no strategies are considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Arrange for YED discussion at a committee meeting to discuss the possibility of involving youth as part of membership or increasing participation above Rung 3 using YED principles and practices. Sample discussion items include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining YED Concepts (see pages 7-13). ○ Value of YED practices in relation to the committee's mandates. ○ Common misunderstandings of YED principles (see page 9). ○ Offer examples of other committees who successfully involve youth. <p>Other tools that may be helpful include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Increasing YED opportunities- Exploring the value</u> (see page 58). ○ <u>Increasing YED opportunities- Assessing Services, Opportunities and Supports</u> (see page 60). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ If the committee is not interested or ready to move forward, validate where the committee is at, keeping future possibilities open. □ Recheck when timing and/or circumstances may have changed to support youth participation.
<p>Youth participation on the committee is below Rung 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are involved; however, the committee does not apply YED principles and practices. • Strategies to address barriers to youth involvement above Rung 3 are not considered. • Youth are not provided with the appropriate level of support, information, or resources to participate meaningfully. • Youth contributions are not recognized. 		

Involving Youth on Agency Committees: YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change

Based on Stages of Change Theory and Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Stage of Change	Level Participation on Hart's Ladder	Defining YED Characteristics of a Committee in this Stage of Change	Activities to Support YED Movement Along the Stages of Change
<p>C O N T E M P L A T I O N</p>	<p>Committee does not have youth membership or Youth participation on the committee is below Rung 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee is interested in exploring the possibility of applying YED practices for the participation of youth above Rung 3. • Committee is aware of considerations needed to operate above Rung 3. • Committee is aware of the difference between participatory and non-participatory roles for youth. • Barriers to youth involvement and accompanying strategies may be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for YED discussion at a committee meeting to discuss the possibility of youth participation as part of membership using YED principles and practices. Sample discussion items include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Distinguish between participatory and non-participatory roles ○ Identify capacity building opportunities and resources available ○ Identify next steps <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the <u>Involving Youth on an Agency Committee: Assessing Readiness</u> tool (see page 62) with the current membership and arrange for follow up discussion of the results to identify next steps.
<p>P R E P A R A T I O N</p>	<p>Committee does not have youth membership or Youth participation on the committee is below Rung 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee has decided to use YED principles and include youth membership. • Committee identifies preparations necessary to ensure youth participation is above Rung 3. • Committee has identified the level of youth participation on Hart's Ladder that would be most appropriate. • Participatory roles for youth member(s) in the decision making process have been determined. • Barriers to youth involvement and accompanying strategies are identified. • Key adult support(s) are identified for youth member(s). • Plan is developed and next steps identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assist the committee in addressing key considerations and next steps identified by committee members using the <u>Involving Youth on an Agency Committee: Assessing Readiness</u> tool (see page 62). <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the possibility of modifying the terms of reference to include youth representation, their role and how decisions are made at the committee. <input type="checkbox"/> Designate an experienced member of the committee to take a lead role in supporting youth. <input type="checkbox"/> Share <u>YED Tips for Adult Supports</u> (see page 108). <input type="checkbox"/> Offer YED training, presentations, in-servicing, resources and supports for committee members. <input type="checkbox"/> Recheck with committee to assist in moving forward in the Stages of Change.

Involving Youth on Agency Committees: YED Guidelines for the Stages of Change

Based on Stages of Change Theory and Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation

Stage of Change	Level on Hart's Ladder	Defining YED Characteristics of a Committee in this Stage of Change	Activities to Support YED Movement Along the Stages of Change
A C T I O N	Youth participation on the committee is moving above Rung 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee follows through with their plan and modifies their practices in order to foster youth participation above Rung 3. • Barriers to youth involvement are identified and strategies are put in place. • Key adult support(s) are put in place for youth members • Youth recruitment and orientation takes place. • Evaluation and monitoring is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with recruitment and orientation. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide on-going resources/support as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Share the following tools as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Committee Member Application</u> (see page 94) ○ <u>Youth Involvement Tracking Tool</u> (see page 96) ○ <u>YED Recruitment and Retention Tips</u> (see page 104) <input type="checkbox"/> At the end of the term, conduct exit evaluation with youth rep(s) to assess YED experience (see page 98) <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct evaluation <u>with adult support</u> at the end of term (see page 68)
M A I N T E N A N C E	Youth participation on the committee is above Rung 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee uses YED principles and practices. • Committee continues with monitoring and evaluating the quality of the YED experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide on-going YED resources/support as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Share successful experiences with others who may benefit.

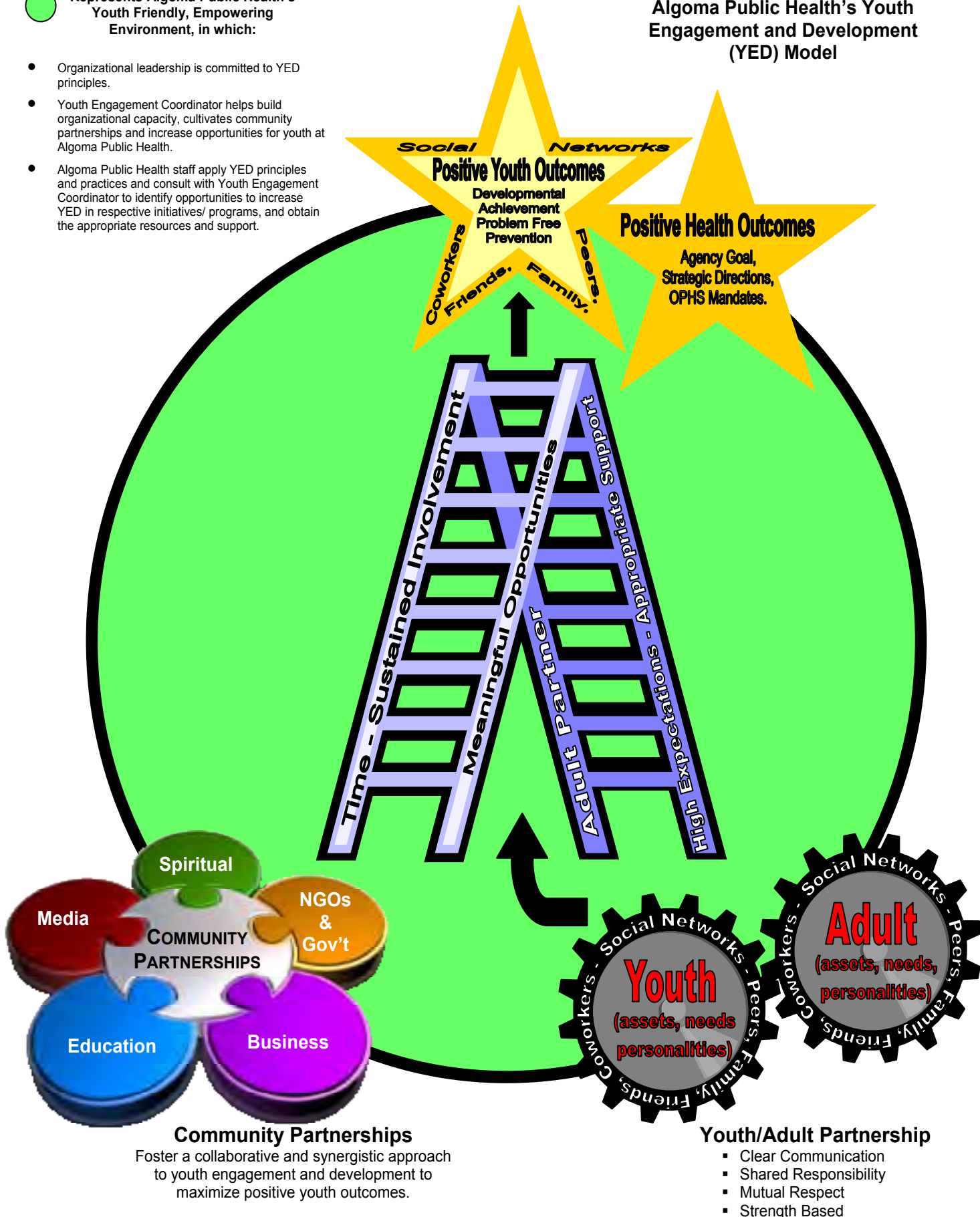
Organizational Sample of an Agency - Wide YED Model

An example of an organizational YED framework that includes agency model, description of components, role clarification, principles and practices. (Referred to on page 17)

 Represents Algoma Public Health's Youth Friendly, Empowering Environment, in which:

- Organizational leadership is committed to YED principles.
- Youth Engagement Coordinator helps build organizational capacity, cultivates community partnerships and increase opportunities for youth at Algoma Public Health.
- Algoma Public Health staff apply YED principles and practices and consult with Youth Engagement Coordinator to identify opportunities to increase YED in respective initiatives/ programs, and obtain the appropriate resources and support.

Algoma Public Health's Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Model



Community Partnerships

Foster a collaborative and synergistic approach to youth engagement and development to maximize positive youth outcomes.

Youth/Adult Partnership

- Clear Communication
- Shared Responsibility
- Mutual Respect
- Strength Based

Adapted from

Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. (2007). *Youth engagement a conceptual model*. p. 23.
 Khanna, N., & McCart, S. (2007). *Adult allies in action*. Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing
 Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). *BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program*. Massachusetts, Boston.
 Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010). *What makes Canadians healthy or unhealthy?* From www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/determinants/determinants-eng.php

Algoma Public Health's Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Model

The creation of an agency adopted Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Model demonstrates Algoma Public Health's (APH) commitment to incorporate YED as a strategy to achieve our strategic directions and Ontario Public Health Standard goals.

Goal: To maximize positive youth outcomes by creating meaningful opportunities for youth to contribute to their community in a manner that facilitates the development of competencies, confidence, character, and connections to family, peers, and the community.

Youth Age Range Defined: The agency's YED model includes young people between the ages of 10-24. Exceptions to expand the age range beyond 24 can be made as needed to support other funding or program guidelines for young people.

Youth Engagement and Development Model: KEY COMPONENTS

YOUTH FRIENDLY, EMPOWERING PHYSICAL/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

A key element for successful YED is the provision of a youth friendly, empowering physical/social environment, which requires:

- APH organizational leadership committed to YED principles and practices;
- APH staff have a shared understanding of YED and apply the principles and practices;
- Youth engagement coordinator dedicated to building organizational capacity, cultivating community partnerships, increasing opportunities for meaningful youth participation;
- Opportunities for APH staff to consult with youth engagement coordinator to discuss, review and reflect on YED in respective disciplines to identify or enhance possibilities for young people, as well as obtain the appropriate resources and support.

Youth friendly, empowering environments create the foundation from which meaningful YED opportunities can be identified to maximize positive youth outcomes.

YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Authentic YED involves building equitable relationships with youth based on mutual respect as well as ensuring opportunities for youth to take on meaningful roles with shared decision making and responsibility for the outcomes. Youth and adults work in a mutually beneficial partnership by teaching and learning from each other.¹ To this partnership, adults and youth alike bring their respective personalities, needs, assets and social networks. Adults play a pivotal role between young people and organizations. Positive relationships between youth and adults can expand social networks and increase social capital to meet goals and objectives more efficiently.² Conversely, ineffective YED practices can lead to frustration and disengagement.³ Establishing caring relationships between young people and APH staff with clearly defined expectations, roles and responsibilities are the fundamental building blocks to successful YED experiences.

¹ Khanna, N., & McCart, S. (2007). Adult allies in action. Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing. p.2

² Ibid, p.3

³ Centers of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing. (2007). Youth engagement a conceptual model. p.23

Algoma Public Health's Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Model

MEANINGFUL YED OPPORTUNITIES (COMMITTEES, INITIATIVES, ETC.)



YED experiences vary widely in scope, value and outcome. Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation highlights different levels of youth participation and decision making power. It is a useful tool that challenges us to reflect on the level of participation that is wanted, needed, and possible, as well as to identify barriers to meaningful participation and how they can be overcome.⁴

Algoma Public Health strives to provide opportunities with high levels of participation and decision making power so youth can make change, direct their own activities, and assume shared responsibility with appropriate levels of support. ***When working with young people, it is important to involve them as partners as early as possible in the decision making process for an issue, activity or initiative.***

★ POSITIVE YOUTH OUTCOMES



- **Problem Free/Prevention Outcomes** refer to the mitigation/prevention of harmful behaviours (e.g., smoking, drug use, school related problems, violence, teen pregnancy, etc.).
- **Achievement Outcomes** refer to accomplishments we want young people to attain (e.g., graduate from high school, get a job, go to post secondary school, etc.).
- **★ Developmental Outcomes** refer to the degree to which youth are confident and connected to others with a positive attitude and identity, and have competencies in community settings.

★ The value of developmental outcomes tends to be underestimated compared to achievement and prevention outcomes, but research shows developmental outcomes are what allow a young person to succeed and avoid negative behaviours. Developmental outcomes are the strongest predictors of adolescent well being.⁵ By moving beyond problem solving and prevention toward helping young people become fully prepared for adolescence and adulthood, YED serves to enhance the overall health, wellness and resilience of young people as they go through life stages.⁶

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Community Partnerships that are designed to foster a collaborative approach to YED can increase opportunities for young people and enhance capacity within respective organizations to maximize positive youth outcomes in Algoma. Sharing initiatives and resources with community, regional, and provincial partners can serve to promote sustainability and positive youth outcomes on a greater scale.

A community of practice (CoP) is an informal networking group with a shared interest. A local YED CoP has been established to foster a synergistic approach for YED in Algoma. This CoP helps build organizational and community capacity, and assist in the development of partnerships amongst the diverse disciplines of members on local YED initiatives. It is also a means by which the Youth Engagement Coordinator can meet with other organizations in various stages of YED to identify appropriate opportunities for different Algoma Public Health programs and initiatives.

⁴ Ridgley, A., Lombardo, C., Morrison, M., Poland B., & Skinner, H. (2004). Youth voices: A guide for youth expression and action. p. 28. Toronto, CA: Wellesley Central Health.

⁵ Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. pp. 12-13. Massachusetts, Boston.

⁶ Jonson Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (March 2003). Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement competing priorities or inseparable goals? pp. 25-26. Washington: The Forum For Youth Investment Moving Ideas to Impact.

Algoma Public Health's Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Model

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

1. Adolescence offers a limited window of opportunity to maximize the capacity for positive youth outcomes through YED practices.⁷
2. Fostering youth friendly, empowering environments requires all adults (whether working directly with young people or not) to be aware and responsive to adolescent development, youth culture, and barriers that youth may experience.
3. Young people are more than the sum of their problems and their status achievements. Prevention and achievement outcomes in of themselves are not enough to ensure young people are fully prepared for adolescence and adulthood. Youth need to “fully develop social skills, civic and cultural competencies, positive attitudes toward community and a strong sense of identity.”⁸
4. Young people are valued community stakeholders who need to be actively involved in processes and decisions that affect them and/or their community.
5. Youth involvement in the identification of priority issues, emerging trends and delivery of messaging can have the much desired impact on positive health outcomes.
6. When involving young people in a YED opportunity, it is most effective to involve youth from the onset of discussions and early planning stages of an initiative.
7. The relationship between youth and adult support(s) is critical for positive YED experiences. Adult staff members are the connecting force between young people and our organization and as such have a significant role to play in fostering collaborative relationships. To develop successful partnerships, adults must:
 - Be self aware⁹
 - Identify and challenge adultism¹⁰
 - Understand adolescent development in conjunction with the personal needs and assets of the young people with whom they are working¹¹
 - Maintain high expectations with the appropriate level of support¹²
 - Foster development opportunities ensuring open communication, mutual respect, and clear boundaries with clearly defined high expectations, meaningful roles and responsibilities¹³

⁷ Gini-Newman, G. (September 2008). Adolescent Cognitive Development. Workshop. Sudbury, CA

⁸ Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. p. 12. Massachusetts, Boston

⁹ Khanna, N., & McCart, S. (2007). Adult allies in action. Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing. p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 6

¹¹ Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program. p. 43. Massachusetts, Boston.

¹² Ibid, p. 42

¹³ Khanna, N., & McCart, S. (2007). Adult allies in action. Centres of Excellence for Children's Wellbeing. p. 5.

Organizational YED Assessment Tool

An interview or survey tool for staff and/or community partners to assess the strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers for effective YED organizational practices. The purpose is to learn about the YED taking place in an organization's present work with youth to help inform YED recommendations and identify potential opportunities for collaboration. (Referred to on pages 15, 16, 30, and 33)

Organizational YED Assessment Tool

This assessment is designed to learn more about your organization's present work with youth and is also helpful to identify potential opportunities for collaboration. The information you share is confidential and voluntary. It will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Your participation is highly valued.

1. Name: _____

2. Position Title: _____

3. Program: _____

4. Organization: _____

5. Contact information: _____

6. In what ways do you currently work with young people? Check all that apply:

- Volunteers
- Employees
- Clients/Customers
- Advisory Council Member
- Organizational Board Member
- Other (please specify)

7. a) The following statements are based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation.¹ Please identify the statement that most accurately reflects the overall level of youth participation. Check only one:

- Youth are given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth are not informed about how their input may be used or how decisions are made.
- Youth are given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth are informed about how their input may be used and how decisions are made.
- Activities are adult-initiated. Decision making is shared with youth as partners.
- Youth initiate and direct activities. Adults play a minimal role.
- Activities are youth-initiated. Decision making is shared with adults as partners.

b) Please comment about whether the statement you identified in the above question is the desired level of youth engagement for your organization?

9. What kinds of meaningful decision making roles young people have when working with you that influence the direction of services, programs or initiatives. Check all that apply.

Note: This does not include youth performing tasks planned by adults. If this is the case, please check "Not applicable."

- Not applicable.
- Share their own views as a young person and insights about peers.
- Consult on how to make the committee's work more relevant to young people.
- Assist in the identification of priorities.
- Help problem solve through challenges.
- Assume supervisory roles.
- Serve as a mentor or instructor.
- Assist with budgeting.
- Help coordinate the planning and implementation of activities.
- Create news releases, media advisories, conduct media interviews.
- Assist with research, monitoring and/or evaluation.
- Other (please specify): _____

10. Please identify the following Developmental Youth Outcomes² that youth typically gain from their involvement. Check all that apply:

- Ability to identify satisfying accomplishments from their involvement with the organization.
- Contributed regularly to other individuals and organizations.
- Developed or enhanced conflict resolution skills.
- Developed or enhanced coping skills.
- Knowledge and confidence to access helping resources and supports.
- Capacity to work effectively within systems (e.g., understand how agency policies work).
- Increased professional networks and contacts.

Comments: _____

11. What else do youth typically gain from being involved with your work? Check all that apply:

- High school community hours.
- Personal enjoyment.
- References for university, scholarship applications or resume.
- Other (please specify): _____

12. Identify any challenges to creating youth engagement and development opportunities for youth. Check all that apply:

- Transportation barriers.
- Organizational policies and procedures that are not youth-friendly.
- Inadequate resources (e.g., space, limited funds, staff shortages).
- Lack of staff training around youth engagement and development practices.
- Some staff do not see the value of the authentic participation of young people.
- Confidentiality concerns.
- Tight timelines making it difficult to involve youth at a higher level.
- Timing of meetings or initiatives
- Location of meetings or initiatives are difficult for youth to access.
- Unable to find young people who are interested and/or available.
- Other (please specify)

13. What do you think would be valuable resources or supports to increase possibilities for engaging young people and providing them with opportunities for development?

- Workshops
- Tool Kits on a youth engagement and development topic
- Backgrounder information on a youth engagement and development topic
- Lunch and learns
- Staff in-servicing
- Consultation with youth engagement support staff
- Other (please specify) _____

14. Identify the degree to which you see the following key Youth Engagement and Development (YED) components reflected in your organization:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My organization's leadership is committed to YED principals.				
My organization has youth friendly policies and procedures.				
My organization offers youth friendly hours.				
There is a shared organizational YED vision among most staff in my organization.				
Barriers commonly experienced by young people are considered in my organization's practices.				
Youth input and perspectives are valued by staff in my organization.				

Comments: _____

15. How effective is your organization at:

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Not At All Effective
Engaging young people to help identify priorities and make meaningful decisions.				
Enhancing young people's opportunities for development.				

Comments: _____

16. In what ways do you see the potential to use youth engagement and development as a strategy to help benefit your organization? Check all that apply:

- Help enhance organization's opportunities to meet its mandates.
- Generate innovative ideas.
- Enhance the well being and development of young people to help strengthen community.
- More effectively meet the needs of young people, who are a key stakeholder.
- Assist in better reaching young people as a target of a program or service.
- Expand social networks.
- Strengthen community partnerships.
- Enhance skills of adult staff.
- Increase job/volunteer satisfaction.
- Other (please specify) _____

17. Please identify the degree to which you believe increasing young people's direct involvement in decision making can help enhance your organization's ability to meet mandates:

- To a Great Extent
- Somewhat
- Very Little
- Not At All
- Other (please specify): _____

18. Are you aware of other good examples of programs or services that create youth engagement opportunities for young people in our community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe: _____

19. Final comments or suggestions?

1. Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

2. Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation). (2005). *BEST initiative training institute youth worker certificate program*. pp. 7, 17-20. Massachusetts, Boston.

Organizational Youth Exit YED Interview Template

An interview tool that can be conducted with youth employees, students or volunteers upon completion of their position to assess the YED experiences of young people with the organization. (Referred to on page 15)

Organizational Youth Engagement and Development Exit Interview Tool (for Youth Employees, Volunteers, Students)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Male Female

What was your position/role? _____

What community were you involved with? _____

Was it a paid position or voluntary?

Paid Voluntary Student

What is your current education level?

Elementary High School University/ College

DEVELOPMENT

1. What did you enjoy most about your experience as a young person in our agency? What did you least enjoy?

2. What skills did you develop during this experience and how do you see using them in the future?

ENGAGEMENT

3. Were there any challenges that made being a young person in this agency difficult?
 - Yes
 - No (Please specify the challenges)

4. Did you feel you were prepared by the agency for your role?
 - Yes No

- a. What was most beneficial in preparing you?

- b. What was least beneficial in preparing you?

- c. What resources and support were particularly useful in your role?

MENTORING

5. Did you feel that you received enough feedback and support to help you develop professionally and/or personally?

RESPECT

6. Did you feel that your efforts and input were adequately recognized and taken seriously by the agency? Why or why not?

CULTURE AND STAFF

7. Did you feel like a welcomed member of the agency? Yes No Why or why not?

8. What is the one thing that you are taking away with you from this experience?

9. Additional Comments or Suggestions?

YED Committee Member Information Form

A form completed by youth to gain a clear understanding of their interests, skills, talents, needs, and what they want to get from being a member of the committee. The information is useful for adult supports to identify what resource and supports are necessary to maximize positive youth outcomes. (Referred to on page 23)

YED Committee Member Information

Date (M/D/Y): _____ / ____ / ____ How did you learn about committee? _____

Contact Information

Name: _____

School/Grade: _____

Birthday/Age: _____

Phone/Cell #: _____

Email Address (please write clearly): _____

Do you usually check your emails? Yes No

What is the best way to connect with you (check all of the options that apply)?

Email Home Phone Cell Phone Text Facebook

Mailing Address: _____

Any allergies/special needs? _____

Favourite Healthy Snacks: _____

Questions

1. Why do you want to join this committee? What are your expectations?

2. List 2 things you would like to gain or learn from this committee?

3. What are the best days for meetings?

4. Please share any interests, hobbies or activities you enjoy doing?

5. Is there anything you would like me to know about you when we work together (e.g., special learning needs, shy public speaking, health challenges, etc.?)

6. Other Comments?

YED Committee Member Involvement Tracking Form

A tool track key information for reports and references for youth job, postsecondary, scholarship, and/or bursary applications. (Referred to on pages 23, and 28)

Youth Engagement and Development Committee Involvement Tracker

Name: _____
 Committee: _____
 Date Started: (MONTH/DAY/YEAR)
 Date Completed: (MONTH/DAY/YEAR)

Meetings Attended

Meeting Date	Volunteer Hours	Comments or Notes
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
TOTAL		

Events/Activities

Activity	Date (D/M/Y)	#Vol Hrs	Role	What I Gained
TOTAL				

Training Opportunities

Training	Date (D/M/Y)	#Vol Hrs	What I Gained	Comments
TOTAL				

Request for reference/scholarship/postsecondary

Other Notes

YED Evaluation Tool for Youth on Committees

An evaluation tool designed to be completed at the end of the term of youth membership by youth member(s) to assess the quality of YED experience and identify lessons learned. (Referred to on pages 23, and 28)

YED Evaluation for Youth on Committees

As a youth representative, your feedback is helpful to identify what has worked well and lessons learned from your experience on the committee. Participation is voluntary and would be greatly appreciated. It will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The information you provide is confidential. It will be used to identify strategies and useful resources/supports necessary for increasing youth engagement opportunities

1. a) How long have you been on the committee?

- Less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 7-12 months
- More than 12 months

If more than 12 months, please specify: _____

b) Are you planning to maintain your membership on the committee?

- Yes, I will be continuing my membership without any changes.
- Yes, but with some changes.
- No, the term of membership was successfully completed.
- No, I am graduating or moving away.
- No, I am not interested anymore or too busy.
- No, there are barriers to my participation

If you responded "Yes, but with some changes" or "No", please comment: _____

2. Identify the degree to which the following statements match your experience on the committee:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The committee was welcoming.				
My ideas and opinions were valued by the committee.				
I felt safe sharing my honest opinions and ideas at meetings.				
My work on the committee is helping to make a positive difference in the community.				

Comments: _____

3. How effective was the committee at:

	Very Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Not At All Effective
Working with you to identify priorities and make meaningful decisions together.				
Enhancing your opportunities for development.				

Comments: _____

4. a) Identify any challenges that you experienced that made getting involved on the committee difficult. Check all that apply:

- I did not have transportation.
- Organizational policies and procedures were not youth-friendly.
- There was not a youth-friendly space to work.
- Some adults were not youth-friendly.
- Timing of meetings or initiatives.
- Location of meetings or initiatives make it difficult for me to get to them.
- I am really busy and have a hard time balancing my schedule to participate on the committee.

b) Please share your ideas to help deal with the barriers:

5. Did you receive an orientation to the committee?

- Yes
- No

Comments: _____

6. a) The following statements are based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation.¹ Please identify the statement that most accurately reflects your overall experience on the committee. Check only one:

- Youth were given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth were NOT informed about how their input would be used or how decisions were made.
- Youth were given tasks and/or asked to share their views. Youth were informed about how their input was used and how decisions were made.
- Activities were adult-initiated. Decision making was shared with youth as partners.
- Youth initiated and directed activities. Adults played a minimal role.
- Activities were youth-initiated. Decision making was shared with adults as partners.

b) Was this the level of participation that you felt was most effective for you and the committee?

7. What kinds of meaningful decision making roles have you had as a member of the committee?

Note: This does not include you performing tasks planned by adults. If that was your experience, please check "Not applicable." Otherwise, please check all that apply:

- Not applicable.*
- Shared my views as a young person and insights about peers.
- Helped make the committee's work more relevant to young people.
- Assisted in the identification of priorities.
- Problem solved through challenges.
- Took on supervisory roles.
- Served as a mentor or instructor.
- Assisted with budgeting.
- Helped coordinate the planning and implementation of committee initiatives.
- Created news releases, media advisories, conducted media interviews.
- Assisted with research, monitoring and/or evaluation.
- Other (please specify): _____

8. In what ways were your contributions recognized? Check all that apply.

- My accomplishments were showcased to people who are important to me (e.g. friends, parents, school staff, community leaders, etc.).
- I received a certificate of recognition.
- I received a letter of reference.
- I was nominated for an award.
- I was given a token of appreciation.

9. Please identify the following indicators for Developmental Youth Outcomes that you have gained through your involvement on the committee.² Check all that apply:

- A sense of belonging, feeling liked and respected by others involved with the committee.
- Satisfying accomplishments through my involvement with the committee.
- Benefits associated with contributing regularly an organization.
- Developed or enhanced conflict resolution skills.
- Developed or enhanced coping skills.
- Increased Knowledge and confidence to access helping resources and supports.
- Capacity to work effectively within systems (e.g., understand how agency policies work).
- Increased professional networks and contacts.

Comments: _____

10. What else did you gain from being involved on the committee? Check all that apply:

- High school community hours.
- Personal enjoyment.
- References for University, scholarship applications or resume.
- Other (please specify): _____

11. Did your experience on the committee meet your expectations?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

Comments: _____

12. What suggestions do you have for improving the quality of the Youth Engagement and Development experience for the committee and young people? _____

YED Recruitment and Retention Tips

Considerations useful for the development of a youth recruitment and retention plan. (Referred to on page 22, and 27)

YED Recruitment and Retention Tips

The following considerations are useful for the development of a youth recruitment and retention plan.

Youth Friendly Considerations for Meetings and Activities:

- **Accessible Timing:** Lunch time at school or after school usually works. Frequency depends on the availability of members.
- **Accessible Locations:** Generally, convenient locations are usually in a central area, near bus stop or within walking distance from schools, such as libraries, YMCA, local clubs, etc. In-house can be a convenient location, depending on where it is situated. Schools can be a good place, particularly in smaller communities where schools serve as a community hub. In this case, it is important to have representatives from all of the schools to ensure community based initiatives.
- **Transportation:** If transportation is a barrier, arrange for a cab, bus pass, or hold after school meetings in conjunction with late bus. If parents see value, they may be positioned to ensure their son/daughter has a ride.
- **Food:** Always have delicious, healthy snacks available.

Identification and Selection of Potential Youth Members

- A common barrier to engagement identified by adults is that youth are too busy. This should be a flag. Often the same highly engaged youth are offered many opportunities, and they are too busy. It is important to create opportunities for a wide range of possibilities and talents. When working with youth who are newly engaged, initially it can take more time and support, but once the relationship is built and youth have positive experiences working with supportive adults, youth can more freely share their ideas and talents.
- When identifying and selecting suitable youth candidates, consider young people who would:
 - benefit from something to call their own and a chance to explore their interests, talents, voice in a safe space with adults who care
 - increase feelings of belonging and self esteem through membership
 - be interested in issues addressed by committee
 - find it of value to explore future career options by gaining experience working in a certain area related to your committee
- To identify youth who would be a good fit, find adult champions who have trusting relationships with young people and vision for their possibilities (e.g., social workers, counsellors, student support worker, principal, staff of organizations with strong positive relationships with youth, etc.).

YED Relationships

- Effective recruitment efforts build on existing relationships with youth, parents/guardians, professional networks, community partners, and colleagues who can provide ideas for getting diverse youth and appropriate community partners to the table.
- Ensure departing members invite new members. Inviting younger siblings of current members to appropriate events, is a great way to spark interest in future membership when they are old enough.
- Engage parents (in celebrations, showcase work, highlighting types of opportunities, etc.) so they recognize their child's great work. This is a good development practice as well as increases support for participation.
- Encourage confident or outgoing youth to assume an ambassador role can help foster an inclusive environment for other youth who may be shy. Inviting youth to come together in pairs or with group of friends can also help break down barriers.
- Ensure youth have meaningful role that they enjoy. Start and end meetings on an energizing note.

Promotional Materials

- Recruitment pamphlets, banner ups, flyers are valuable as they clearly outline what the committee is about, how it works, the benefits of getting involved, and how to get involved. Also consider including testimonials from youth and showcasing examples of accomplishments.
- Recruitment pamphlets can be distributed through community partners, youth, parents/guardians, and colleagues.

Presentations/Displays

- Include recruitment messages and promotional materials with presentations and/or displays led by youth leaders at relevant trainings, meetings and conferences, such as school board meetings, principal meetings, parent councils, youth groups, sports games, etc.
- Highlight how the work of the youth-led committee meets the interests of the target audience and fits with their mandates.
- Invite committee alumni to share what they gained from their experience with the group and how it's applicable to their current work.

Training/Events/Initiatives

Host an inspiring training session or initiative relevant to youth interests can be a great way to spark interest.

YED Tips for Adult Supports

Tips for adult supports to help maximize positive youth outcomes. (Referred to on pages 22, and 27)

Youth Engagement and Development (YED) Tips for Adult Supports

Building YED Relationships

Adults have a powerful role in fostering connections between young people and organizations. It can be challenging to ensure the right level of support for each young person (i.e., some youth need more structure, others need more independence) while balancing organizational mandates. This is especially true when there are many young people involved. Building trusting relationships helps foster clear communication to ensure the appropriate level of support.

- Get to know who your youth members are and what they are all about (their interests, talents, dreams, goals, etc.).
- Make sure they know you genuinely care about them.
- Match their interests and talents with the goals of the committee while enhancing development.
- Some youth are quiet at first. Don't confuse this with lack of engagement. Comfort level improves over time as relationships and confidence are built.
- Create long-term sustainable opportunities.

Resources and Supports

- Identify what resources are needed for youth to successfully carry out their role, keeping in mind individual skills and developmental levels.
- Be conscious of potential barriers for young people (e.g., cost, transportation, uncertainty, discomfort with traditional settings, adultism, etc.) and strategize solutions accordingly.
- Help youth reps think about different ways they can follow up from the meeting. Make sure they have the knowledge, skills and resources to do so.
- **Ensure youth members can articulate the transferable knowledge and skills that were gained and how they apply to other aspects of their life.**

Communication

- Ask what communication methods are preferred (social media, email, telephone, in-person). Although many youth prefer social media, do not assume this is true for everyone.
- When communicating through e-mail, make sure:
 - the emails you send to youth members are applicable to them and they know what they need to do to follow up and in what timelines.
 - youth members use email and know to check them.
- Outline the purpose and roles using clear language: Sometimes people think everyone is on the same page and yet there are misunderstandings.

- This can lead to frustration and disappointments.
- If seeking youth perspectives, remember: Youth members can give *their own* perspective, but *not* the perspective of *all* youth. Young people are a diverse group. They can share their personal point of view and insights about their peers.
 - When seeking youth perspective or feedback, it is very important to ask the right questions to ensure the reality of youth experience (versus a polite, but inaccurate response). Asking situational questions in the context of real youth experiences captures more helpful responses than general questions. For example, when asking a group of youth if they thought it was a good idea to use a pamphlet in a community parade, they said “yes”. When re-asked, “if you and your friends were at the parade on Saturday, what would they do with the pamphlet?” They said they would probably throw it away.
 - Avoid jargon and acronyms.
 - During meetings and presentations:
 - encourage a variety of ways of sharing information (e.g., video, audio, etc.).
 - ask questions to get everyone thinking about the links between youth perspectives and the topic of discussion.

Youth Committee Member Recognition

It is important that youth members know their contributions are valued. There are many ways to do so. Some examples include showcasing their accomplishments, providing a certificate of recognition, letter of reference, nominate for applicable awards, thank you card, or token of appreciation, etc. It is especially meaningful to ensure the contributions of youth committee members are recognized by people who matter to them (e.g., parents, peers, principals, etc.).

The following links provide further information that can help adult committee members foster authentic youth participation:

- Search Institute’s “Asset Building Ideas for Youth Workers”
<http://www.search-institute.org/content/asset-building-ideas-for-youth-workers>
- Youth Engagement Centre’s “Adult Allies in Action”
http://www.engagementcentre.ca/files/alliesFINAL_e_web.pdf

Youth Led Committee Annual Health Promotion Campaign Planning Template

A tool to develop an overall campaign for the entire year that is completed by the committee at the start of each year. (Referred to on page 26)

Youth Led Committee Annual Health Promotion Campaign Planning

Date	
Youth Committee/Group	
City or Town	

1. What is the issue that we need to address?
2. Why is it important to do something about it?
3. What is already being done around this issue? Who are potential partners or challengers? Are there other campaigns addressing this issue? If so, how can we compliment efforts to avoid duplication?
4. **GOAL:** What kind of change do we want to see in our community that would reduce chronic disease and enhance positive health outcomes on a SPECIFIC health issue?

5. **S.M.A.R.T OBJECTIVES:** What are the steps needed to achieve goal? Ensure objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Specific. FOR EXAMPLE: To increase/decrease behaviour/knowledge via health promotion strategy by date

Objectives	OUTCOME: Objective Achieved?	If yes, how do we know? If no, why not? What could have been done differently?

6. PROPOSED CAMPAIGN INITIATIVES (October-June):

Activity/Initiative	*Health Promotion Strategy	Planning Time Frame	Implementing Time Frame

*Health Promotion Strategies:

- **Awareness:** Provide info to increase knowledge/interest in a particular lifestyle or issue (e.g., dance, battle of bands)
- **Education & Skill Building:** Help build knowledge and confidence so that a positive lifestyle change can be made and sustained (e.g., Teen Cuisine teaches about healthy food choices and basic cooking skills in fun way)
- **Environmental Support:** Create supportive physical and social environments that encourage and support healthy lifestyles (e.g., Build greenhouse to increase accessibility to fresh fruit/vegetables longer growing season)
- **Advocacy/Policy Development:** Ensure government decisions, practices and social/physical environments support healthy lifestyles

7. EVALUATION PLANS: How will we know our event/activity was successful?

What information do we need to determine if our campaign is successful? Develop a plan for capturing the information required during the event (e.g., pre-post test, interviews, tracking forms, etc.)

Youth Led Committee Annual Health Promotion Campaign Planning

3

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Month	Important Themes/Dates	Potential Activities/Training
September/ October		First Meeting of the Year
November	National Addiction Awareness Week Remembrance Day Action Week	
December	Christmas Vacation Hockey starts	
January	Exams National Non Smoking Week	
February	Through With Chew Week Heart Month Shadows of Mind Film Festival Tobacco and Sports Through With Chew Week- school policy/high school sports	
March	Nutrition Month Hockey ends	
April	National Cancer Month Oral Cancer Month Kick Butt Day- TBD National Volunteer Week education smoke free parks and rec	
May	World No Tobacco Day May 31	
June	Exams Graduation Closing Meetings	Final Group Meeting: Volunteer Appreciation/Recruitment Celebration Submit Report to School Boards
July	No committee activities (except community day parades).	
August	No committee activities	

Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation Template

A tool designed to support the committee with the planning and evaluation of specific health promotion campaign activities. (Referred to on pages 26, and 28)

Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation

Campaign Issue	
Youth Committee/Group	
City or Town	

BRIEF ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Name	Date and Time	Location
<p>What do we want to do? How will we do it?</p>		

AUDIENCE OF INTEREST:

- Youth- Specify age-range _____
- Parents
- Professionals – Specify _____
- Community Leaders – Specify _____
- Other – Specify _____

Audience of Interest?	OUTCOME: Did we reach our audience?	If yes, how do we know (e.g., who attended activity, how many people attended, what was interest level, etc.)? If no, why not? What could have been done differently?

Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation

KEY MESSAGES: What do people need to remember after the event is over? Use 1-3 short and clear messages.

Key Message	Reference Reliable Source

EVALUATION PLANS: How will we know our event/activity was successful?

What information do we need to determine if our activity is successful? Develop a plan for capturing the information required during the event (e.g., pre-post test, interviews, tracking forms, etc.)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS: Who are other stakeholders that should be involved?

Contact Person	Position/Organization	Contact Info/Best Way to Contact	Who will make contact?

ADVERTISEMENTS/PROMOTIONS FOR EVENT: How will people know about your activity?

- Social Media
- Flyer/Invitations
- Save the Date
- Announcement
- Paid Advertisement (Print, Radio, Internet, TV)
- Other

Who will develop promotional materials (content, design)?

Timelines

Distribution Plan

Youth Led Committee Event Planning and Evaluation

POST ACTIVITY FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION:

Staff	List names
Committee Members	List names
Volunteer Hours (#vol * #hours)	List volunteer and number of volunteer hours
# Promotional Items Dist TOTAL	List promo items distributed and quantity of each
# Educational Items Dist TOTAL	List educational items distributed and quantity of each
# of Participants Attending	People who came to activity/event
Contact Person and Information:	The person/people, title, organization and contract info. People who are responsible for venue or other important parts of the event. This is helpful info for future events.
Community Partners?	Organization, Title, Person. Briefly describe how they partnered with you on this activity/event What supports or organizations were most helpful?
Earned Media	Type of media, Title of media, Date, Reporter Attach earned media
Evaluation	Attach any evaluation tools or reports.

PROCESS EVALUATION GROUP QUESTIONS:

<p>What were the best things about this activity? What went well?</p>	<p>Lessons Learned? If event repeated what should we do differently? Were there any barriers that got in the way or slowed down our work?</p>
---	---

KNOWLEDGE/SKILL BUILDING:

What did you learn from organizing, implementing, evaluating this activity? What Knowledge/Skills gained through organizing, implementing and evaluating this activity? Examples of skills include things like, planning, goal setting, networking, media, research, evaluation, photography, decision-making, listening, conflict resolution, responsibility, problem solving, networking, advocacy, health promotion, professionalism, etc.)

GENERAL COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS

Additional comments/observations (were there any unexpected outcomes)?

Youth Led Committee Event Information Tracking Form

Tracks information during events that is useful evaluation and reporting. (Referred to on page 28)

Youth Led Committee Event Information Tracking for Displays, Events and Presentations

Activity Title	
Date	
Timeframe	
Location	
Committee Participants	
Volunteers and Time Total Volunteer Hrs	
Contact Person Title, Organization Contact Information	
Total # of Participants	
Total # Promotional Items Distributed	
Total # Educational Items Distributed	
Observations	

Youth Led Committee Sample Banner Up

An example of a recruitment banner up used to promote a youth-led committee. (Referred to on page 27)

Join Schools Without Borders



- ★ Teach Others
- ★ Gain New Learning Experiences



- ★ Help Our Community & Environment Become Tobacco-Free



- ★ Earn Community Hours
- ★ Make a Difference



- ★ Have Fun
- ★ Make New Friends



For more information visit
www.algomapublichealth.com/ayaa



Youth Led Committee Sample Orientation Package

An example of orientation information for new committee members, such as the purpose of the committee, how it works, roles of committee members and benefits of participating. (Referred to on page 27) *Note: consider adding specific examples of successful initiatives and earned media specific to the committee's achievements.*

Orientation Package

Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA)



Saving youth,
one butt at a time!

AYAA Mission:

The AYAA is committed to supporting **healthy communities** and **creating change** by **empowering young people** through leadership opportunities.

AYAA Values:

Health★Social Justice★
★Leadership★Teamwork★
★Diversity★Creativity★
★ Respect ★



Elliot Lake ★ Sault Ste Marie ★ Blind River ★ Wawa

AYAA VALUES

- ☺ **Health:** A general state of wellbeing of the body and the mind. This reflects the AYAA because we support healthy communities by promoting healthy lifestyles.
- ☺ **Social Justice:** The idea that every individual and group is entitled to equal rights. This reflects the AYAA because we strive to voice our opinions around health promotion issues that challenge social justice for youth in our communities.
- ☺ **Leadership:** The ability to engage people in community based activities and events. This reflects the AYAA because we serve as mentors and role models supporting healthy lifestyles. We also inspire confidence and critical thinking skills to influence social change.
- ☺ **Teamwork:** The action by a group of people with a shared goal achieved by coordinated efforts. This reflects the AYAA because we make decisions based on our common goals and group consensus based on our different strengths.
- ☺ **Diversity:** A wide range of personalities, possibilities, and ideas. This reflects the AYAA because we all have different views, backgrounds, personalities and social circles. Everyone is welcome.
- ☺ **Creativity:** The process of developing new, unique ideas. This reflects the AYAA because we are always using creative ideas for activities or slogans or themes, etc.
- ☺ **Respect:** Courteous regard for people's feelings and being considerate. The basis of our work is a deep respect for ourselves, each other, and others.

Algoma Youth Action Alliance

The Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA) is a coalition across Algoma that consists of four youth-led health promotion committees.

1. Wawa's Teens In Motion
2. Sault Ste. Marie's Schools Without Borders
3. Blind River's STEALTH
4. Elliot Lake's Teens In Action

Each committee consists of students aged 12-24, Algoma Public Health staff, and supportive Community Partners. We get together once a month after school (snacks provided) to look at health issues important to us and come up with a plan to take action on them to help make our community stronger.

In working to reach this goal, youth reps can get to know other youth from different schools, across Algoma and even across the province. The committees also offer unique educational experiences. Some of the learning experiences for the student members have included:

- Supervised chairing of meetings.
- Reporting on events happening in their schools.
- Brainstorming ideas and planning projects and events.
- Organizing committee initiatives at their own schools.
- Working with the media including developing press releases, radio ads, doing television and newspaper interviews.
- Writing letters of request for Board of Education approval for activities planned by the committee and being the contact person to answer any questions about the activities.
- Opportunities to be sponsored to attend out-of-town youth conferences as a committee representative.
- Working on a sub-committee with students from other schools.
- Facilitating Power Point Presentations at a youth conference and Board of Education principal's meetings on initiatives organized by the *Schools Without Borders Committee*.
- The unique opportunity to work with and learn from teachers and public health staff.

High school students can collect mandatory volunteer hours for their participation.

In addition to unique learning experiences, meeting new people, and doing things that really make a difference in the community, committee work provides youth reps with valuable experiences for future college/university applications, scholarship/award applications, as well as resumes.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Name:	Algoma Youth Action Alliance Coalition, which is comprised of four youth-led Committees in Wawa, Sault Ste Marie, Blind River and Elliot Lake.
Purpose/Goal:	To create youth development opportunities, in which members determine youth-led, health promotion priorities. Youth, in partnership with adult supports, promote healthy lifestyles through comprehensive initiatives across Algoma. Each committee focuses on their respective local community (i.e., Wawa, Sault Ste Marie, Blind River and Elliot Lake).
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and share youth engagement and development opportunities for youth membership and peers. • Keep Committee Members informed on current and emerging health related issues in the region and province. • Work with community partners to ensure collaboration and information sharing. • Mobilize youth to support youth-led health initiatives • Deliver youth-led health promotion messages through planned initiatives to youth.
Chair:	Rotates among members.
Recorder:	Rotates among members.
Membership:	Each committee consists of Youth, supportive Teachers/Guidance Counsellors, and Community Partners from respective local communities in Wawa, Sault Ste Marie, Blind River, and Elliot Lake, supportive Algoma Public Health staff, and a Youth Engagement Coordinator.
Reporting to:	Tobacco Control Coordinator, Program Director for Chronic Disease, and Ministry of Health Promotion
Frequency:	Monthly meetings, with intermittent working groups as needed.
Term:	N/A
Decision-making Format:	Consensus is preferred, where possible.
Distribution of Minutes:	Committee Members, Program Director for Chronic Disease

 Signature of Medical Officer of Health

 Date

Name: _____

Committee: _____

Date Started: (MONTH/DAY/YEAR) _____

Date Completed: (MONTH/DAY/YEAR) _____

Committee Involvement Tracker

Meetings Attended

Meeting Date	Volunteer Hours	Comments or Notes
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
TOTAL		

Events/Activities

Activity	Date (D/M/Y)	#Vol Hrs	Role	What I Gained
TOTAL				

Training Opportunities

Training	Date (D/M/Y)	#Vol Hrs	What I Gained	Comments
TOTAL				

Request for reference/scholarship/postsecondary

Other Notes

Youth Led Committee Sample Recruitment Pamphlet

An example of a recruitment pamphlet used to promote a youth-led committee. (Referred to on page 27)

What AYAA has to offer senior elementary and high school aged youth:

- ★ Fun
- ★ New friendships
- ★ Unique ways to earn high school community hours
- ★ A chance to have your voice heard by different levels of government
- ★ Opportunities to help our community and environment become tobacco-free
- ★ A chance to be part of building a stronger community
- ★ Opportunities to teach others about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and being tobacco-free
- ★ Develop media skills, such as designing ads, press releases and doing interviews
- ★ Workshops, conferences and training
- ★ Experiences to include on job, university or scholarship applications
- ★ And so much more

How do you get involved?

Anyone interested, can contact Corina Artuso, Youth Advisor, at **705-942-4646 ext 3043** or cartuso@algomapublichealth.com for more information on meetings and upcoming events.

You can also check out www.algomapublichealth.com/ayaa

Whether you're interested in learning or leadership opportunities, the Algoma Youth Action Alliance has something for everyone.

Everyone is welcome.



February 2010

Algoma Youth Action Alliance

*Sault Ste. Marie
Blind River
Elliot Lake
Wawa*

Who We Are

The Algoma Youth Action Alliance is a youth-led, adult-supported coalition with four committees across the district interested in promoting healthy lifestyles, in particular being tobacco-free to youth and the community.



What do Committee reps do?

Once a month, committee reps get together after school to plan events and address health promotion issues focusing on tobacco prevention. In doing so, youth gain valuable skills that can be used in the future and help to make a difference in their community.

Some great events AYAA Committees have organized:

Black Rose (Feb 2009)

To symbolize the deceptive tactics of the tobacco industry and the 36 Ontarians who die each day from tobacco related illnesses, the Elliot Lake reps carried out a Black Rose initiative during February's Heart Month.



Blizzard Ball Soccer Tourney (Feb 2009)

Sault Ste. Marie's Schools Without Borders (SWB) partnered with Bon Soo Winter Carnival to organize a mini snow soccer tournament to promote Tobacco-Free Sports.



Postcard Campaign (Feb 2008)

Wawa's youth committee gave members of the public an opportunity to sign postcards in support of banning the sale of chew tobacco in Ontario. The committee presented a skit with their postcards to MPP Mike Brown at the Wawa Community Center.



Blind River Community Day Parade (July 2008)

The Blind River youth committee reps participated in community day parade with their theme "Smoke-Free Cars" displayed on a huge banner and the cardboard cars "Driven" by youth.



Community Development: Pick Up Cigarette Butts (Oct 2008)

By cleaning up 12,636 cigarette butts, SWB reps helped protect our environment and demonstrated support for Sault Area Hospitals' Smoke Free properties policy. A follow up tree planting event will take place.



Chalk the Walk (May 2008)

SWB reps demonstrated support for the Smoke-Free Cars legislation initiated by MPP David Orzietti by hosting a rally.



Youth Led Committee Training Feedback Form

A tool designed to gain participant feedback on a training session and how it will be applied to current and future endeavours. (Referred to on page 28)

Recommended Resources and References



Recommended YED Resource List

Health Resources in Action (formerly The Medical Foundation)

<http://hria.org>

For over fifty years, Health Resources in Action has been a leader in developing programs that advance public health and medical research. Through our Community Health and Medical Foundation divisions, we work with governments, communities, scientists, and non-profit organizations that share an imperative for resolving today's most critical public health issues through policy, research, prevention, and health promotion.

Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health

www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/training/youth-engagement

The Centre provides training in important and emerging topics, including youth engagement, family engagement, evaluation, implementation and mental health literacy.

Ontario Tobacco Research Unit

www.otru.org/pdf/newsletters/OTRU_news_vol4no1_web.pdf

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) is an Ontario-based research network that is recognized as a Canadian leader in tobacco control research, monitoring and evaluation, teaching and training and as a respected source of science based information on tobacco control

OPHA Youth Engagement Project

www.youthengagement.ca/

Funded by Health Canada, OPHA welcomed a new project on Youth Engagement in February 2009. The need for this project has been determined and substantiated through a combination of extensive research and information gathered from the public health field.

Parks and Recreation Ontario

www.youthinrecreation.org

Offer an annual symposium for managers and staff around youth engagement and development. Also coordinate a sprints list serve for members to obtain regular updates about youth development and to receive information about relevant opportunities.

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/enhancing-healthy-adolescent-development>

Comprehensive youth engagement document titled "Clinical Best Practice Guidelines Enhancing Healthy Adolescent Development"

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

www.engagementcentre.ca/

This website is not only a collection of the work we have done as a Centre but also contains a lot of information done by other people and organizations that are interested in Youth Engagement.

The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC2)

www.tc2.ca/wp/

The TC² model of critical thinking embeds critical thinking into regional school curriculums to make it more accessible to teachers and their students in a broad range of educational contexts.

The Innovation Centre

www.theinnovationcenter.org

The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development unleashes the potential of youth, adults, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society. Provides information, resources and support around Youth Leadership, Youth and Civic Engagement, Youth-Adult Partnership, Youth Development, Program Evaluation, Organizational Development, Community Building, Consulting Services

The Youth Advocacy Training Institute

www.yationlung.ca

The Youth Advocacy Training Institute (YATI) is a program of the Ontario Lung Association. YATI supports youth and youth-serving organizations in Ontario by providing exciting and interactive learning experiences for youth and adults alike on a variety of topics that help adults and youth work together to improve the health of their communities through advocacy, education, and positive youth development.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

www.wkkf.org

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.

Youth Voices Research Group

<http://www.youthvoices.ca/research-resources/>

A research and social innovation unit based at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto focused on creating accessible, responsive, and health promoting systems for youth and young adults. Our research team combines nearly 15 years of experience working in youth engagement with leading-edge action research and systems-informed methods to enable young people to have a greater voice and opportunities to lead social change efforts for a healthier society.

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