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# BUILD POWER, SHARE POWER, LEVERAGE POWER

How foundations can best support youth-led organizations and movements to amplify their impact.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information visit: [www.uwaterloo.ca/youthinn](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/youthinn)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction and methodology

Ashoka Canada's Foundation Academy for Collaboration ("The Academy") is an ongoing program of Ashoka Canada that is a peer-to-peer action learning space that brings together high impact social change leaders, philanthropists and community organizers, to listen to each other, learn together and collaborate on our country's most intractable systemic challenges.

The Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship, which is the second Academy hosted by Ashoka Canada had the following objectives:

- Connect philanthropic leaders and young changemakers in Canada;
- Gather insights on leading practices for youth engagement and supporting youth-led social and environmental impact; and
- Exchange and align around opportunities to collectively advance change

The Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship was stewarded by youth focused Ashoka Fellows, **Ilona Dougherty** and **Fabrice Vil** with organizing support from Ashoka Canada and had the following phases:

- Connect
- Gather Insights
- Youth Engagement
- Exchange and Align
- Co-Create

This report is the result of the Gather Insights phase of this project.

The research question that guided the development of this report is as follows:

How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues?

In order to answer this question, a systematic literature review was conducted. After a broad search to identify the most relevant academic and grey literature that speaks to this topic, 41 articles were selected to be read and then deductively and inductively coded.

In addition, in order to ensure youth voice was at the center of this research, 16 young people were identified and selected to be interviewed. Selecting these young people was done through a media search that allowed the authors to identify a wide range of diverse young leaders who are beyond our own networks to be considered for an interview. By conducting a media search, we aimed to identify underrepresented voices and avoid only selecting young leaders who are frequently spotlighted and repeatedly given opportunities.

Through this media search, 177 Canadian young leaders were identified, a diverse group of 55 young changemakers were invited to be interviewed and 16 accepted our request for an interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. After the interview was completed, a brief survey was sent to interview participants with questions related to demographic characteristics.






# Results

## The key findings of the literature review are:

Leading practices in engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations are as follows:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation's power in such a way that existing power structures both within and beyond the foundation are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations are prepared before engaging young people. This includes the leadership and staff 'buying in' to diverse, equitable and inclusive youth engagement, meaningful intergenerational collaboration and valuing young people's unique abilities, and attitudes and stereotypes about young people being proactively addressed;
- Foundations establish adequate structures for youth engagement and allocate appropriate resources. This includes embedding youth engagement within the formal structures of the foundation as well as providing on-going financial and staff support;
- Foundations enact a robust recruitment strategy that goes beyond engaging the 'usual suspects' by prioritizing recruiting 'hard to reach' young people as well as young people with strong connections to community;
- Foundations dedicate the time needed to establish relationships between adults and young people that center belonging, trust, and space for discomfort and ambiguity;
- Foundations ensure young people are prepared for their involvement and supported throughout with thoughtful emotional support, a balance of safety and support as well as choice and challenge, just in time training, and ongoing mentorship;
- Foundations ensure young people are given the chance to make real decisions, take ownership over mission critical tasks and have a meaningful impact;
- Foundations ensure young people engage with the wider community through intergenerational collaboration and by embedding young people's work within a wider network of support; and
- Foundations regularly gather and share data about youth engagement efforts and regularly integrate feedback received.



**“Ensuring an organization is prepared to engage young people in decision making means that the whole organization is willing to be transformed and to have their assumptions challenged through the process.”**



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## **“Issues of power, control, and decision-making need to be examined throughout the philanthropic community.”**

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Leading practices in how foundations can support youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need to amplify their social and environmental impact are as follows:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation’s power in such a way that existing power structures are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations support convenings and youth-led networks; and
- Foundations improve granting practices by providing adequate and long-term funding to youth-led organizations, providing training on technical, financial and project management to young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements, providing clear and simple reporting guidelines as well as by committing to regularly fund organizations without charitable status.

### **The interviews provide a picture of what foundations can do to better support youth-led organizations and movements, the key findings from the interviews are as follows:**

- Provide more funding specifically to youth-led organizations and movements including:
  - Offer larger funding amounts for youth-led work;
  - Ensure that funding is sufficient so that young people working in these organizations and movements are paid a living wage;
  - Provide general operational support;
  - Fund work that is usually considered radical or political;
  - Fund organizations without a formal structure and non-profits who don’t have charitable status;
  - Provide funds for therapy or access to a therapist as part of grants;
  - Fund opportunities for cultivating joy and rest amongst young leaders; and
  - Ensure funding provided is flexible.
- Work in partnership with young people when making funding decisions;
- Work to address power imbalances within the foundation and use the foundation’s influence to work to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally;
- Support the convening of young leaders;
- Disclose where the foundation received its money on the foundation website to create a more transparent relationship between funders and potential grantees;
- Better promote funding opportunities to ensure they reach a wide cross section of young leaders, young-led organizations and movements; and
- Offer opportunities for creativity and flexibility in reporting requirements.

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## **“I would say that the weight of the environmental movement is honestly resting upon the shoulders of young people...I wish there was more like empathy and wanting to share not just your finances, but your knowledge, your space, your platform with young people.”**

Interviewee

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# Insights

By reviewing the latest academic and grey literature as well as conducting interviews with young leaders we were able to identify key insights that help answer the question that is at the core of this research: *How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues?*

Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021)'s work is a useful framework to use to describe how best to meaningfully support youth-led organizations and movements to increase their impact, we have adapted it for this purpose in the following way:

## Build power

- Ensure adequate and dedicated funding for youth-led organizations and movements on young people's terms with an emphasis on funding youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political and funding youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities;

## Share Power

- Engage young people as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations with a focus on engaging young people from equity-deserving communities and those with strong connections to community; and

## Leverage Power

- Use foundations' influence to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally;

**We expand on these three insights below:**

## Build power

Through the interviews it became clear that in order to best support youth-led organizations and movements more funding specifically earmarked to support youth-led work is needed. In particular funding that is granted on young people's terms with an emphasis on funding youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political and funding youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities. Tangible changes that should be made to granting programs identified in this research are as follows:

- Organizations and collectives of young people who are not charitable organizations or incorporated non profits are eligible for funding;
- Larger funding amounts and longer term funding is available specifically for youth-led work;
- Funding that allows youth-led organizations and movements to pay a living wage and cover other operational costs is readily available for youth-led work;
- Funding for youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political is readily available;
- Funding for youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities is readily available;
- Funding for therapy or access to a therapist for young leaders and those working in and with youth-led organizations and movements is offered as part of grants;
- Funding for cultivating joy and rest amongst young leaders and those working in and with youth-led organizations and movements is readily available;
- Funding criteria as well as reporting requirements are transparent, flexible and allow for creativity, and foundations ensure there is a staff available to work with young grantees to explain and adjust these requirements as needed;
- Networking and convening for youth-led organizations and movements is supported by funders but led by young people; and
- Technical, financial and project management training is available to young grantees before, during and after they receive funding.





## Share power

Power can be shared by meaningfully engaging young people as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations. A focus on engaging young people from equity-deserving communities as well as those with strong connections to community to ensure that young people engaged are not just representing themselves but can offer a broader perspective is key. Leading practices to facilitate meaningful engagement in this context are:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation's power in such a way that existing power structures both within and beyond the foundation are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations are prepared before engaging young people. This includes the leadership and staff 'buying in' to diverse, equitable and inclusive youth engagement, meaningful intergenerational collaboration and valuing young people's unique abilities, and attitudes and stereotypes about young people being proactively addressed;
- Foundations establish adequate structures for youth engagement and allocate appropriate resources. This includes embedding youth engagement within the formal structures of the foundation as well as providing on-going financial and staff support;
- Foundations enact a robust recruitment strategy that goes beyond engaging the 'usual suspects' by prioritizing recruiting 'hard to reach' young people as well as young people with strong connections to community;
- Foundations dedicate the time needed to establish relationships between adults and young people that center belonging, trust, and space for discomfort and ambiguity;
- Foundations ensure young people are prepared for their involvement and supported throughout with thoughtful emotional support, a balance of safety and support as well as choice and challenge, just in time training, and ongoing mentorship;
- Foundations ensure young people are given the chance to make real decisions, take ownership over mission critical tasks and have a meaningful impact;
- Foundations ensure young people engage with the wider community through intergenerational collaboration and by embedding young people's work within a wider network of support; and
- Foundations regularly gather and share data about youth engagement efforts and regularly integrate feedback received.



## Leverage power

Foundations' own power can be leveraged to support youth-led work by foundations' using their influence to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally. Leading practices to leverage power include:

- Foundations working to ensure that adult leaders in social and environmental change movements and organizations value young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements and that they collaborate with them and support them;
- Foundations advocating to ensure that other funders, in particularly government, build and share power with young people including adhering to the leading practices outlined above;
- Foundations fund research to address the gaps in knowledge identified in this research:
  - Research to benchmark the current state of youth engagement practices by Canadian foundations; and
  - Research to study the impact of funding and in-kind support currently being offered by Canadian foundations to youth-led organizations and movements.





## Critical shifts

The results of the first Ashoka Academy outlined a need to shift from the current state of “citizen voices – especially the voices of disenfranchised youth – are not driving decision-making within government and institutions, to a future state of “citizen voices – notably from young people – are supported, organized and strengthened to enhance their agency and move decision-makers.”

In order to achieve this shift, after reflecting on the research outlined in this report, Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship members propose that the following critical shifts:

Current State	Future State
<p>Youth-led organizations and movements do not have adequate funding.</p>	<p>Adequate and dedicated funding for youth-led organizations and movements is available on young people’s terms and is trust-based. This includes funding for activities that have traditionally been perceived by too radical or political including advocacy, lobbying and protest, funding to support mental wellbeing and joy and funding work led by youth from equity-deserving communities.</p>
<p>Young people are not consistently or meaningfully engaged in a decision-making role in the granting activities and governance of foundations. When they are engaged it is usually limited to an advisory role.</p>	<p>Young people are consistently and meaningfully engaged as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations. This includes diverse young people directly making decisions about what issues and causes funding will be directed towards, how funding is allocated as well as decisions surrounding the operations of the foundation including decisions related to governance and human resources.</p>
<p>Power imbalances between young people and adults are common and widespread.</p>	<p>Foundations are using their influence to advocate for other decision-making institutions to collaborate with young people. In particular foundations are working side by side with young people to ensure that power imbalances between young people and adults in adult-led non-profits, government and society more broadly are addressed.</p>







## Recommended concrete actions and conclusion

For the exchange and align as well as the co-create portion of this project, a draft version of this report was shared with Academy members and young leaders and in October - December 2022, three sessions between took place with both Academy members and young leaders. The first was a daylong session in Montréal and the next two were virtual. The ultimate aim of these sessions was to explore opportunities to experiment and/or collaborate on shared priorities.

Out of these sessions came three ideas for concrete next steps that the young leaders and Academy members believed could be taken collectively to support the critical shifts outlined above. While the leading practices outlined throughout this report can be implemented by individual foundations, the three ideas below are meant to be viewed as collaborative projects that a coalition of foundations, youth-serving organizations, young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements may consider advancing together. These ideas are initial brainstorms that would need further fleshing out:

1. Create youth-led fund and/or invest in and support existing youth-led funds.
2. Supporting foundations, civil society and government to improve their youth allyship practices through an education series and resources.
3. Create intergenerational gathering spaces where young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements have access to support and decision-makers.

The results of this research, echo the findings of Ashoka Canada's first Academy. This research shows that young leaders in youth-led organizations and movements are calling for similar action to what social innovators in general are asking for from foundations namely:

- "Build sustained, trusting, and collaborative partnerships with grantees.
- Share decision-making power over funding.
- Funders should use their voices to confront...inequities" (Ashoka Canada, 2020, p. 8)

The difference being that there is even a larger power imbalance between young people, especially those from equity-deserving communities, and funders than there is between adults in social and environmental change organizations and movements and funders.

Young people are often at the forefront of social and environmental change movements, offering more radical and political perspectives that push us to go further than adults are comfortable going (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018; Ho et al., 2015). In a time of rapid change and increasing urgency to address social and environmental challenges, this push to go further and act more quickly that is coming from young people, is exactly what is needed.

If we hope to address the social and environmental challenges we are all facing, working in intergenerational collaboration with young leaders is not only necessary it is an imperative and it should be prioritized.

In order to effectively do so, we need to build power in youth-led organization and movements, share power with young leaders and perhaps most importantly, leverage our own power and influence to address broader systemic barriers to intergenerational collaboration.



# INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the report summarizing the results of the Ashoka Canada's Foundation Academy for Collaboration identified two critical shifts that were necessary for philanthropic foundations in Canada to take in order for the philanthropic sector to contribute to meaningful systemic change in the COVID recovery. One of these shifts was identified as the need to shift from the current state of "citizen voices – especially the voices of disenfranchised youth – are not driving decision-making within government and institutions" to a future state of "citizen voices – notably from young people – are supported, organized and strengthened to enhance their agency and move decision-makers."

As part of the Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship, this research report aims to identify concrete next steps to actualize this future state. Conducted by the Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo, this report turns to both academic and grey literature, as well as interviews with young leaders to determine a way forward.

We begin this report by providing an overview of Ashoka Canada's Foundation Academy for Collaboration program as well as the Ashoka Canada's Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship in particular. We then share the methods used for this research, followed by the results of both the literature review and interviews, and finally we offer insights and recommended critical shifts.

It is our hope that this report contributes to a better understanding of how meaningful youth engagement occurs and how youth-led impact can be meaningfully supported, as well offering practical next steps for those carrying out this important work.





# BACKGROUND

## The Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration

Ashoka Canada’s Foundation Academy for Collaboration (“The Academy”) is an ongoing program of Ashoka Canada that is a peer-to-peer action learning space that brings together high impact social change leaders, philanthropists and community organizers, to listen to each other, learn together and collaborate on our country’s most intractable systemic challenges.

The first Academy, which took place from January to November 2020 was facilitated by members of the CoCreative team (<https://www.wearecocreative.com/>). Through monthly discussion groups, the members of The Academy worked together to build a shared understanding and identify opportunities and challenges for collective work in collaboration with Ashoka Fellows. The Academy participants were asked to join The Academy with the intention of experimenting with others when shared interests and opportunities arose.

As outlined in The Academy’s final report, this work stands out in the philanthropic sector because of the members collective commitment to:

- “Centre community voice, agency, and power, particularly from marginalized communities;
- Support collective, community-based efforts that focus on systems-level change;
- Establish generative, community-funder partnerships that serve as learning/action communities to drive meaningful social change;
- Learn and contribute to new approaches for systems leadership and social innovation; and
- Act in partnership with transparency and integrity in building a better Canada.” (Ashoka Canada, 2020)

In The Academy’s first final report, shifts were identified that the participants, based on The Academy’s work, believed the philanthropic community should work to achieve:

	SHIFT FROM CURRENT	TO FUTURE
<b>Community Driven Solutions</b>	Foundations hold the power and set the agendas and priorities.	Communities, in particular systematically marginalized communities, hold the power to define solutions and leverage funding.
<b>Citizen Voice</b>	Communities, in particular systematically marginalized communities, hold the power to define solutions and leverage funding.	Citizen voices – notably from young people – are supported, organized, and strengthened to enhance their agency and move decisionmakers.

In order to achieve these shifts, three pilot projects were proposed:

- Canadians with a disability
- Indigenous entrepreneurship community
- Youth

Two of these pilots have since been actualized and achieved significant results (<https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca/> and [Minoayawin Initiative](#)). The third of these proposed pilot projects ‘youth’, led to the creation of a second Academy, the Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship.







## Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship

The purpose of this second Academy, the Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship was to:

- Connect philanthropic leaders and young changemakers in Canada;
- Gather insights on leading practices for youth engagement and supporting youth-led social and environmental impact; and
- Exchange and align around opportunities to collectively advance change.

The Academy is stewarded by youth focused Ashoka Fellows, **Ilona Dougherty** and **Fabrice Vil** with organizing support from Ashoka Canada.

### Phases

The Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship had six phases:

### The Academy member questionnaire themes

In the lead up to the first Ashoka Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship session, the Academy members were sent a brief questionnaire in order to determine their motivations for joining the Academy as well as desired outcomes. The questions asked in this questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. Key themes that arose out of this questionnaire include:

- An identified challenge that foundations struggle to find and trust innovative and grassroots as well as youth-led organizations;
- An identified challenge that the foundations tend to work with registered charities and/or at the very least organizations with full-time staff and a recognition that very few youth-led organizations are charities and/or have formal organizational structures;
- An identified challenge that the foundations sometimes lack the commitment to follow through on young people's input;
- An identified challenge that young people's lack of background information and context can lead to challenges in engaging them in governance structures.
- Questions about how best to shift power and decision making to those with lived/living experience; and
- Most Academy members indicated that they currently engage young changemakers and next generation philanthropists<sup>1</sup> in a variety of ways in their work; specifically, the vast majority of Academy members engage young people in an advisory capacity.

<sup>1</sup> Next generation philanthropists can be defined as young people who are between 18 and 40 who will inherit wealth and who have the opportunity to participate in the work of their family's foundation (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, n.d.).







## CONNECT

The Academy members were brought together for four virtual sessions to surface shared questions, concerns, insights and ideas on youth engagement and supporting youth-led social and environmental impact in Canada. This took place from September 2021 until January 2022.

## GATHER INSIGHTS

The Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo conducted a systematic literature review and carried out interviews with 16 young leaders from youth-led organizations and youth movements in order to answer the following research question: How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues? This report summarizes the gather insights phase of The Academy.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Once interviews had been conducted with young leaders, nine of these young leaders were invited to join the remaining Academy sessions and seven young people accepted the invitation. An invite letter, summary of the Academy and a terms of reference document were provided to the young leaders to ensure they were clear on what their involvement would look like. A group meeting with Ilona & Fabrice took place in September 2022 to ensure any questions were answered and that the young leaders feel supported.

## EXCHANGE AND ALIGN

In October 2022, one day-long in-person facilitated session with the Academy members and young leaders will take place in Montréal, Québec to discuss this research report and its implications. The goal will be to land on a shared understanding of the best practices, opportunities and challenges regarding how best to support youth-led social and environmental impact in Canada.

## CO-CREATE

In November and December 2022, two conversations between Academy members and young leaders took place virtually to determine opportunities to experiment and/or collaborate on shared priorities. The results of these sessions as well as reflections on lessons learned as part of The Academy are included towards the end of this report.



# METHODS FOR THE GATHER INSIGHTS PHASE

The gather insights phase of The Academy consisted of a systematic literature review as well as 16 interviews with young leaders in order to answer the following research question: How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues?

In addition, this study explored the following sub-questions:

- What are the leading practices relevant to engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations? How is this currently being measured by Canadian foundations (if at all)? (Literature review)
- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need? In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy? Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context? How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured? (Literature review & interviews)
- How did the leaders of youth-led organizations and youth-led movements arrive at the stage of becoming 'young changemakers'? What demographic characteristics are common? What demographic characteristics are less common? (Interviews)
- How can foundations better support leaders of youth-led civil society organizations and youth-led movements when it comes to ensuring wellbeing and preventing burnout? (Interviews)

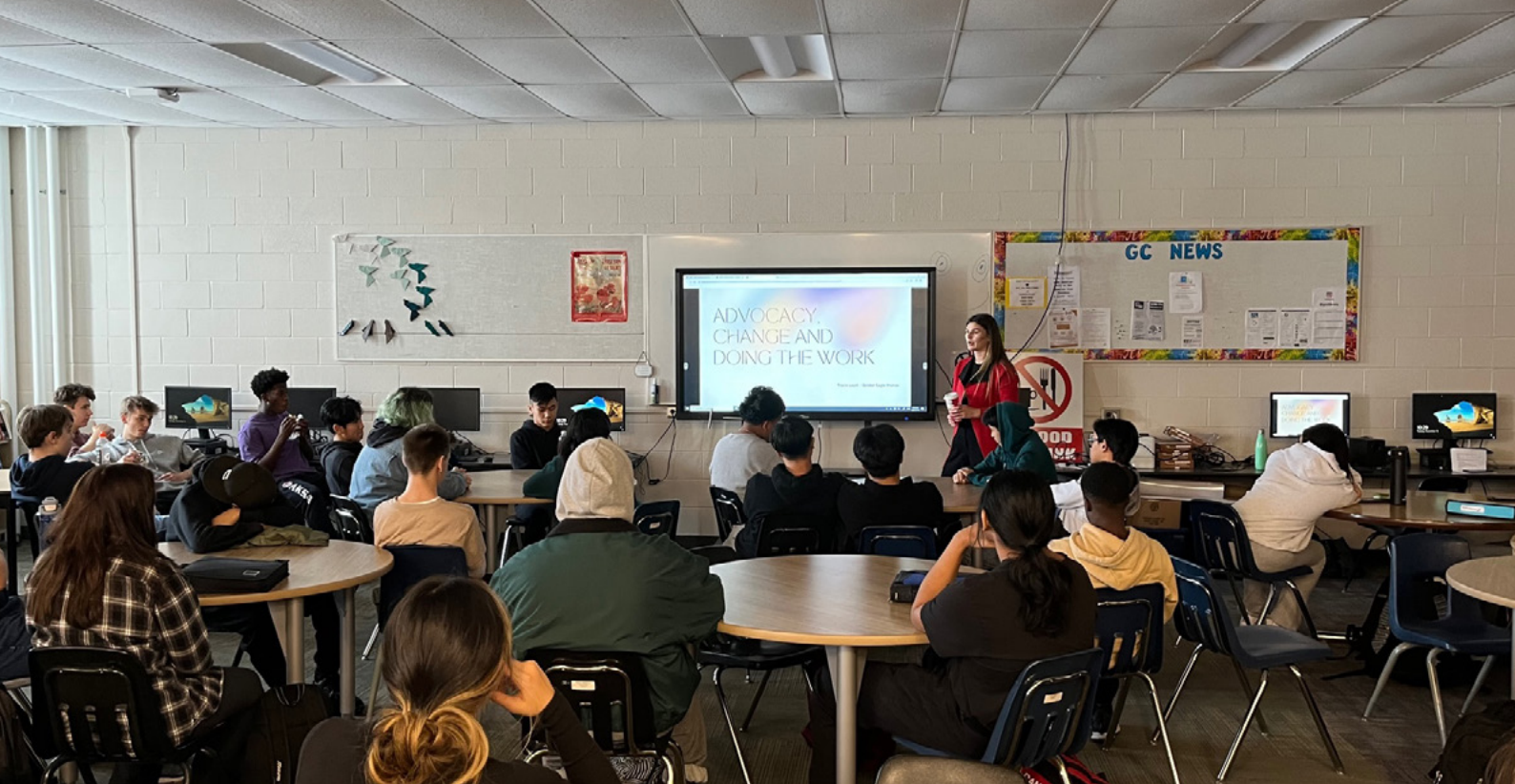
The research questions and sub-questions were developed in collaboration with the Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship Design Team (a small group of both young people and adults who supported the design of The Academy) as well as the Academy members themselves during the Connect sessions.

The research scope, which was discussed and decided upon by both groups provided the framework for this research:

- A focus on young people 15 to 25 years of age for both the literature review and interviews;
- Ensure perspectives of young people from diverse backgrounds and who are working on diverse issues are captured in both the literature review and interviews;
- Limit the interview identification and selection process to young people with a strong connection to Canada (based in Canada and/or from Canada);
- Focus the interview identification and selection process on identifying youth-led civil society organizations or informal youth movements that are having an impact on a national scale or on issues that have received national attention (examples may include youth-led organizations and youth engaged as leaders in movements such as Black Lives Matter, Climate Change, Land Back etc.);
- Aim to identify changes that philanthropic foundations can make to better support youth-led civil society organizations or informal youth movements in the areas of:
  - Engaging young people in governance and decision-making, both young changemakers and next generation philanthropists;
  - Funding youth-led organizations and youth movements;
  - Advocating for policy change and government funding that will support the work of young changemakers; and
  - Supporting youth-serving organizations.







## Literature review methods

A systematic literature review was selected as the first of two appropriate methods to answer the research question. The literature review aimed to answer the first set of sub-questions:

- What are the leading practices relevant to engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations? How is this currently being measured by Canadian foundations (if at all)?
- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need? In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy? Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context? How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?

A systematic literature review allowed the authors to summarize wide-ranging literature on our topic (Clarke & Crane, 2018; Page et al., 2021; Popay et al., 2006). The following steps were carried out as part of the systematic literature review process.

### Document sources

Proquest and Scopus databases were chosen for the search for relevant literature. ProQuest searches 45 databases generating results from a variety of subject areas (Proquest, 2022). Scopus searches over 80 million documents across 240 disciplines (Elsevier, 2022). In addition, over the last five years the Youth & Innovation Project has created its own database of youth engagement focused articles on the platform Mendeley. This database, which contains over 1700 articles, was also searched for articles that would be relevant for answering the research question and sub-questions.

### Search criteria

In order to ensure relevant literature was captured in the search the following exclusion criteria were used:

- Only literature that focuses on young people between the ages of 15-25; and
- Only literature from 2005 to 2021.

No geographic or discipline exclusions were applied to the search criteria.



## Keyword search and selection process

Keywords were tested based on the scope of the study and the research question and sub-questions. After several test searches, the following keyword combinations were selected for the document search in ProQuest, Scopus and Mendeley:

KEYWORD	AND	AND
<b>Philanthropy</b>	Youth	Governance
<b>Foundation</b>	Young People	Decision-Making
<b>Grant</b>	Next generation philanthropist	Engagement
<b>Funding</b>	Students	Volunteer
<b>Charities</b>	Youth Organizations	
<b>Funder</b>		

There are three categories for keywords. The first was an identifier for foundations such as 'philanthropy', 'foundation' and 'grant'. The second was an identifier for young people, with words such as 'youth', 'young people' and 'next generation philanthropist'. And the third was an identifier for engagement such as 'governance', 'decision-making' and 'engagement'. The chosen search field was "anywhere except full text" in both Proquest and Scopus which means that the articles that appeared in the search featured the keywords in their title, abstract or keywords.

The search in Scopus produced 4539 results, Proquest produced 95 831 results and Mendeley produced 761 document results.

The selection process involved a title scan of the 101 131 documents that resulted in the exclusion of 101 060 based on fit. The next stage of the selection process was an abstract scan of 71 documents conducted by a second reviewer resulting in the exclusion of an additional 30 articles, once again based on fit. The last stage of the selection process was a full read of 41 articles which were then deductively and inductively coded.

### Literature coding

After the selection process, deductive coding was conducted to gain a general understanding of the coverage of the literature selected. The variables included year of publication, document type, academic discipline, research approach, location of study, type of program or initiative outlined in the article and whether the young people described in the article were part of a demographic group that is equity-deserving.

The approved articles were then coded inductively to identify themes found in the literature. The inductive coding was guided by our research question and sub-questions.





## Media search and interview methods

Conducting interviews with 16 young people was the second method selected to answer the research question and the following sub-questions:

- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need? In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy? Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context? How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?
- How did the leaders of youth-led organizations and youth-led movements arrive at the stage of becoming 'young changemakers'? What demographic characteristics are common? What demographic characteristics are less common?
- How can foundations better support leaders of youth-led civil society organizations and youth-led movements when it comes to ensuring wellbeing and preventing burnout?

In order to identify and select the 16 young people to interview, a media search was conducted. A media search allowed the authors to identify a wide range of diverse young leaders who are beyond our own network to be considered for an interview. By conducting a media search, we aimed to identify underrepresented voices and avoid only selecting young leaders who are frequently spotlighted and repeatedly given opportunities. The following steps were carried out as part of the media search and interview process.

### Document sources

Canadian Newstream – Proquest was chosen for the media search using newspapers and print media as sources. Canadian Newstream – Proquest provides access to over 400 news sources and is updated daily (Proquest, 2022). From the newspapers available in Canadian Newstream – Proquest we selected 7 newspapers to include in our search: Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Winnipeg Free Press, Edmonton Journal, Montreal Gazette and the Canadian Press. Our aim was to ensure geographic diversity as well as a diversity of publications. Although we also aimed to include an Indigenous news source, Canadian Newstream – Proquest did not include any. We also did not search in French language media sources or use French keywords in our search; this was a limitation of this study.

### Search criteria

The research question and sub-questions guided the development of the search protocol. To capture a wide but relevant selection of young changemakers both inclusion and exclusion criteria were used. These criteria were:

- Only the Globe and Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Winnipeg Free Press, Edmonton Journal, Montreal Gazette and the Canadian Press were used as sources;
- Only media articles written between 2019 and 2022 were selected;
- Only young people from 15 to 25 years of age were included;
- Only young people who have had or are part of organizations that have had an impact on a national scale or on issues that have received national attention were included; and
- Only changemakers and youth-led organizations and movements based in Canada or with a strong connection to Canada were included.

We aimed to ensure that a diversity of young leaders were included in our search results including:

- Young people from diverse including equity-deserving backgrounds;
- Young people who were working on diverse issues;
- Young people who held different roles within their organization or movements; and
- Young people working on the six priorities (Leadership and Impact; Health and Wellness; Innovation, Skills and Learning; Employment; Truth and Reconciliation; and Environment and Climate Action) identified in the Government of Canada's Youth Policy (Government of Canada, 2019).



## Keyword search and selection process

Keywords were tested based on the scope of the study and the research question and sub-questions. After several test searches, the following keyword combinations were selected for the media search on Canadian Newstream – Proquest:

KEYWORD	AND	AND	AND	NOT (Climat* & Firdays for Future only)
<b>Black Lives Matter</b>	Young Person	Movement	Spokesperson	Company
<b>Stop Asian Hate</b>	Student*	Campaign	Leader*	Ecology
<b>BIPOC</b>	Youth	Rais* Awareness	Founder	Republican
<b>LGBTQ*</b>	Adolescen*	Support	Activis*	Children
<b>Vot*</b>	15 years old	Solutions	Adovcat*	
<b>Disability</b>	16 year old	Mobilization	Oraganiz*	
<b>Islamophobi*</b>	17 year old	Protest		
<b>Mental Health</b>	18 year old	Take Action		
<b>Suicide</b>	19 year old	Prevent		
<b>Access to education</b>	20 year old	Launch*		
<b>Student debt</b>	21 year old			
<b>Unpaid internships</b>	22 year old			
<b>Gig economy</b>	23 year old			
<b>Fair wage</b>	24 year old			
<b>Living wage</b>	25 year old			
<b>Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</b>				
<b>Indigenous Land Back</b>				
<b>Wet'suwet'en protests</b>				
<b>Idle No More</b>				
<b>Climate Movement</b>				
<b>Fridays for the Future</b>				
<b>Safe Water</b>				



There are five categories for keywords. The first was an issue, based on one of the six priorities (Leadership and Impact; Health and Wellness; Innovation, Skills and Learning; Employment; Truth and Reconciliation; and Environment and Climate Action) identified in the Government of Canada's Youth Policy (Government of Canada, 2019) such as 'Black Lives Matter', 'Gig Economy' and 'Safe Water'. The second was an identifier for young people, with words such as 'student', '15-year-old' and 'youth'. The third is an identifier for movements or organizations such as 'movement', 'campaign' or 'raise awareness'.

The fourth was an identifier which indicated that the young person is a leader within a movement or organization such as 'spokesperson', 'leader' or 'founder'. A fifth category of 'NOT' terms were used for the Climat\* and Fridays for the Future searches only, to reduce results down to a reasonable number and reduce the number of irrelevant articles. \*was used at the end of certain words for example vot\* to ensure variations such as 'vote' or 'voting' etc. were captured.

The chosen search field was "full text". After searching the keywords, we filtered by publication title in order to ensure that only articles from our selected news sources would come up.

The search produced 27 777 media article results. The selection process involved a title scan of all 27 777 media articles. Media articles with relevant titles were read and those which mentioned the name of a young leader were added to the spreadsheet. From the 27 777 media articles, 177 individual young leaders were identified. Several of these young leaders were mentioned in multiple media articles. The websites of any of the 177 young leaders whose organization had a website or who had a personal website are included in Appendix E.

The next stage of the selection process was gathering additional information about the 177 young leaders identified. The following information was compiled in a spreadsheet:

- Current age (if an activist's exact age could be found it was recorded. If only their age in a previous year was found their approximate current age was calculated);
- Organization or movement type (individual, informal group, for-profit company, social enterprise, non-profit organization, advisory body);
- Role (e.g. founder, co-founder, leadership role (paid or volunteer));
- Gender (if an activist's gender was explicitly stated it was recorded. Additionally, if it seemed reasonable to assume an activist's gender (i.e., they present as male or female and explicitly stated he/him, she/her or they/them pronouns) their assumed gender was recorded);
- Indigenous identity;
- LGBTQ2S+ identity;
- Whether the young leader is differently abled;
- Whether the young leader is a person of colour;
- Level of education completed (high school, college diploma, university – undergraduate degree, university – masters degree, none complete);
- Province/territory;
- Urban or rural community;
- Contact information (finding an email address was ideal. If this could not be found, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook profile links were recorded); and
- Movement or issue area that they work on.

A diverse group of 55 young changemakers were invited to be interviewed and 16 accepted our request for an interview. The interviews were between 45-60 minutes and took place over Zoom. The invitation email, information letter and interview consent form can be found in Appendix B. The questions used in the interview can be found in Appendix C. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. After the interview was completed, a brief survey was sent to interview participants with questions related to demographic characteristics. All questions on this survey were optional, and therefore not all participants answered every question. This survey can be found in Appendix D.



# OVERALL CONTEXT

## Generation Z

Before we begin to discuss the results of the literature review and interviews, which will focus specifically on young people and philanthropy in Canada, it is helpful to provide some overall context about young people in Canada in order to frame these results.

The generational cohort covered by this study is Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2018b; Statistics Canada, 2018b), who are currently between the ages of 12 and 26. There are approximately 7.3 million Canadians who are a part of Generation Z (Watkins, 2019).

Generation Z are on track to be the most educated generation in human history (Pew Research Center, 2018a). However, rather than one school to work transition, Generation Z are much more likely than past generations to have several. This might mean going back and forth between school and work multiple times or juggling work and school at the same time. In particular, this is true for young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, for whom there are often delays reaching stable employment (Dougherty et al., 2020).

While it is not new for young people to be economically vulnerable (Fong, 2012), now is the first time in industrialised history, except for times of war or significant natural disaster, that young people's financial means have descended this far below the rest of the population (Dougherty et al., 2020). This is due in part to Generation Z being more likely than any other age group to be employed in 'precarious work' (Lewchuk, 2017), defined as holding down multiple jobs, being employed in part-time or contractual work, having jobs without benefits or jobs with no security (Expert Panel on Youth Employment, 2017). Young people today are also more likely to be overqualified for the jobs they hold (Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2015).

Facing labour market challenges early in one's career has lasting effects, therefore not only making young people economically vulnerable now, but also far into the future (Fong, 2012). The road to financial stability is much more difficult for young people of colour and Indigenous young people for whom unemployment rates are higher than they are for young people as a whole (The Broadbent Institute, 2014).

Close to one in five Canadian young people report having a mental health issue and many Canadian young people report low life satisfaction despite living in a country with high life satisfaction reported by the adult population (Dougherty et al., 2020). A factor that may be contributing to this mental health crisis is the increasing pressure that Generation Z faces to succeed (Horowitz & Graf, 2019). There has been a rise in parental expectations for their children, which psychologists suggest has reached extremes that make it a cause for concern (Dougherty et al., 2020).

Experts agree that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted young Canadians and that those impacts have lasted longer for young people than for other age groups (Environics Institute et al., 2021). Amongst young people aged 18 to 24, there was an increase during the pandemic in the proportion that are neither working nor enrolled in formal education programs, otherwise known as 'NEET' youth (Environics Institute et al., 2021). The negative impacts of the pandemic on young people in the areas of employment and post secondary education attainment have been experienced most acutely by young people with lower household incomes, Indigenous youth, young people with a disability and Black youth (Environics Institute et al., 2021).



Luckily, the outlook for young people is not all bad news. The period of life where identity formation and searching for meaning and purpose play a prominent role has been prolonged for Generation Z (Schwartz et al., 2005) as a result of young people today spending more time in education than ever before (Schwartz et al., 2013). This prolonged search for meaning and purpose has led Generation Z to an increased desire to have a positive impact on society and the environment (Dougherty et al., 2020). Sixty percent of Generation Z want to make an impact on the world (Randstad, 2015).

This generation has a desire to contribute to something larger than themselves and they believe they have the power to make change in the world (Sladek & Grabinger, 2018). Two thirds of young Canadians have donated to an organization or charity in the last year (Environics Institute, 2017) and 66% of Canadian youth, 15 to 19 years of age, volunteer (Statistics Canada, 2018a).

Generation Z is also the most diverse generation in North American history (Perez & Hirschman, 2009). Experts suggest that Generation Z is more accepting of diversity and believes strongly in the importance of equality across race, gender and sexual orientation (Twenge, 2013). This already diverse generation is also more comfortable with fluid views of identity more broadly, including but not limited to race and political views (Dougherty et al., 2020).

## 15- to 25-year-olds' brain development

In addition to understanding the current context for Generation Z, it is also important to understand young people's brain development while they are young. This gives us added context to both understand the importance of meaningful youth engagement as well as to better understand young people. It is a common narrative, often repeated in the mainstream media, that young people's brains do not fully mature until they are 25 years of age (Jensen & Nutt, 2015). This prevailing narrative focuses on what young people's brains are lacking while they are young. But it only paints half of the picture. We now know that our brains continue to change throughout our lives and that there is no one point during our lives where our brains have achieved a fixed state (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018). While some parts of young people's brains are still developing, other parts of their brains are in a time of heightened ability (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018). Research in neuroscience and developmental psychology suggests that young people between 15 and 25 years have heightened abilities in the areas of collaboration, creativity, being observant, curious, action oriented, visionary, willing to experiment and to challenge the status quo as well as in the area of risk taking (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018). During this time of life, young people struggle with tasks such as making decisions in situations of high stress or emotion, planning for the future and multitasking (Jensen & Nutt, 2015; Steinberg, 2014). However, when it comes to "judgement in situations that permit unhurried decision making and consultation with others," young people are as mature as adults (Steinberg, 2014, p. 202).

The remainder of this report will focus on how we might best engage young people in the work of philanthropic foundations as well as how philanthropic foundations can best amplify the impact of young changemakers. However, the context outlined above is important framing that when kept in mind, will allow for more effective implementation of the findings described in this report.







## RESULTS

In this section of this report, we summarize the results of both the literature review as well as the interviews with the young changemakers who were selected and interviewed following the media search.

We start by summarizing the results of the literature review which gives us an overview of the current state of both academic and grey literature when it comes to how to engage young people in the work of philanthropic foundations as well as how philanthropic foundations can amplify the impact of young changemakers. We then turn to the young changemakers themselves whose lived/living experience were shared through interviews. We hope that together these results paint as full a picture as possible of both leading practices and the experience of young changemakers today.



# Literature review results

## Descriptive results

The search for literature conducted as part of this study selected 41 documents, consisting of 20 empirical studies and 21 conceptual studies.

Figure 1 shows the year of publication for these articles. This graph shows that there is a reasonable representation of different years of publication in the literature selected for review, with a concentration of literature in the last 10 years.

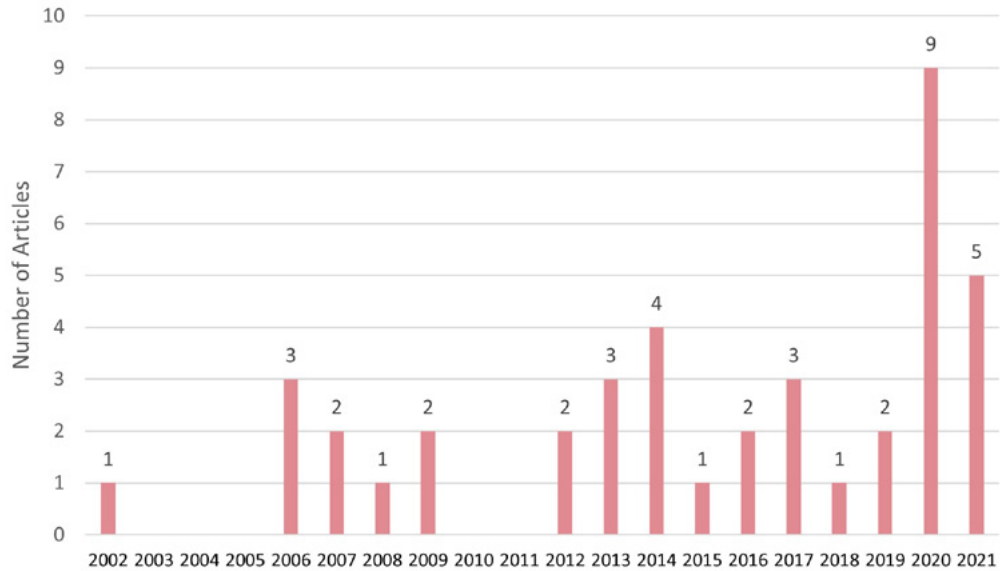


Figure 1  
Year of publication

Figure 2 shows whether the documents are grey literature (reports or news articles) or academic literature (academic articles, dissertations or book chapters). The vast majority of documents are academic articles and grey literature reports.

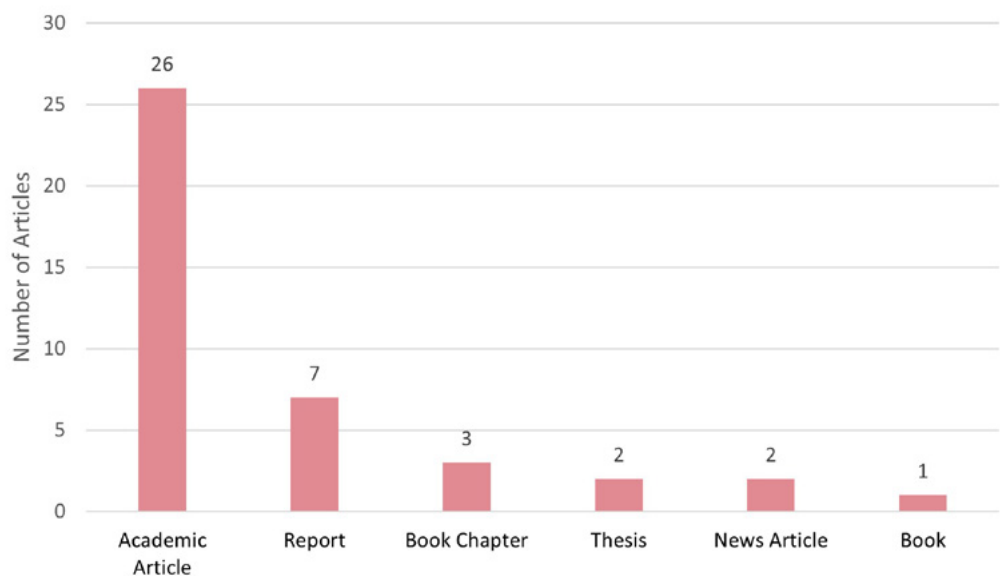


Figure 2  
Document Type

Figure 3 shows the research methods used for the empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods) with the primary method used being qualitative.

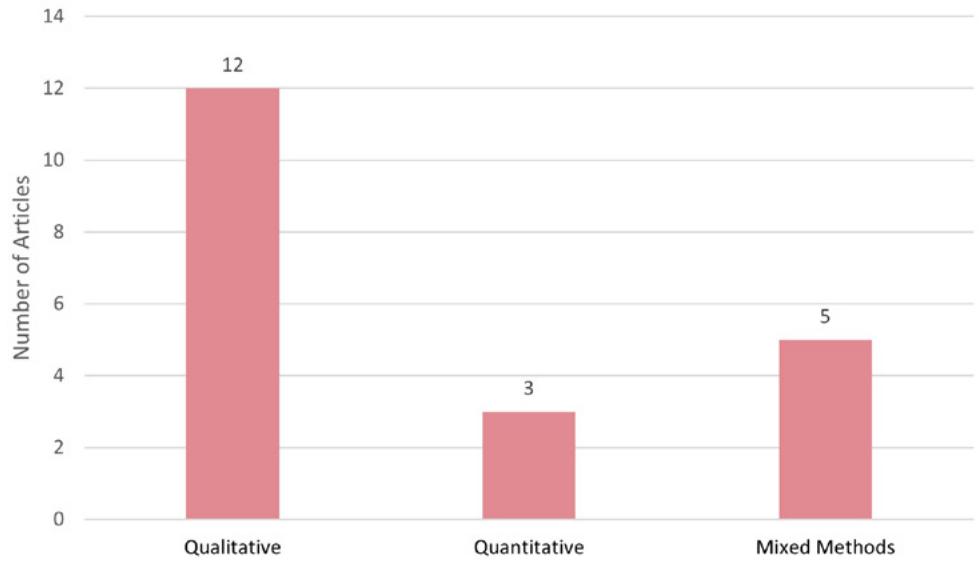


Figure 3  
Research Methods

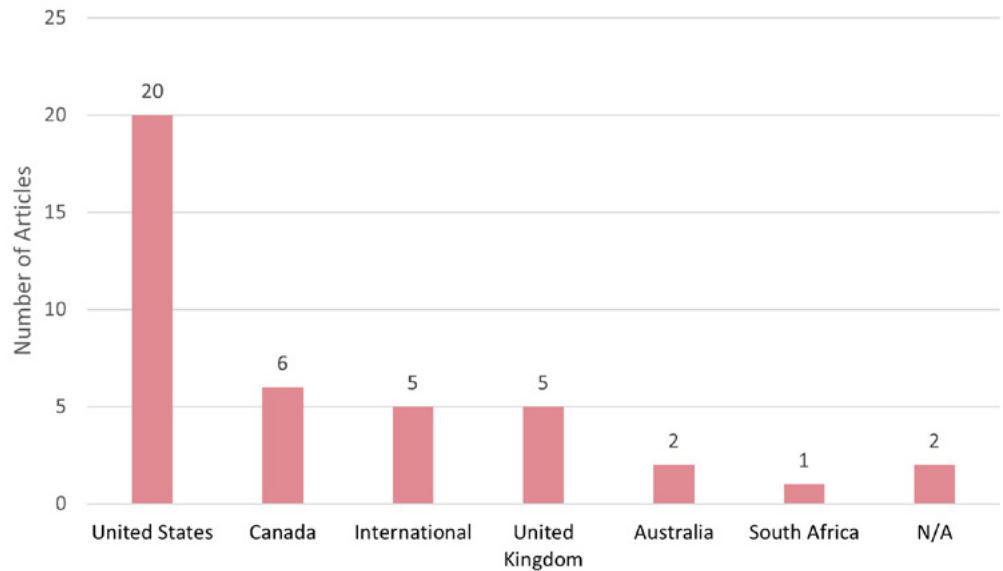
The academic articles examined are from many different disciplines. Figure 4 shows the academic disciplines represented by the academic articles included in these results.

Discipline	# of Articles
Interdisciplinary	8
Child Health	2
Community Psychology	2
Education	2
Health	2
Mental Health	2
Youth Development	2
Action Learning	1
Child Welfare	1
Civic Affairs	1
Medical Law	1
Social Science	1
Sociology	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

Figure 4  
Academic Disciplines



Figure 5 shows the location of studies or in the case of conceptual articles, the country that the document focused on. For example this might refer to the location of the organization that a case study discussed.



**Figure 5**  
Country of research

Figure 6 outlines the types of programs that are discussed in each article. 25 of the documents focused more generally on youth engagement with some reference to philanthropy while the remaining 16 more explicitly focused on philanthropy.

Programs	# of Articles
General youth engagement	11
Engaging youth in research	5
Engaging youth in micro-grants	4
Engaging youth in health policy or program decision-making	4
Action learning sets	1
Building social infrastructure to support youth organizing	1
Community grants to support students for further education	1
Engaging wealthy, progressive youth in supporting social justice	1
Engaging youth in policy-making	1
Examining youth-led decision making among youth who are grant providers/recipients	1
General youth engagement in philanthropy	1
Grants for youth	1
Positive youth development	1
Student voice initiatives	1
Youth engagement in collective impact initiatives	1
Youth evaluation advisory groups within youth grant-making organizations	1
Youth participation in global climate change and adaptation governance	1
Youth philanthropy program	1
Youth-driven report card	1
Youth-led livelihood programs	1
Youth-led program for delivering respectful relationships education	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

**Figure 6**  
Types of programs

The articles were also categorized by demographic characteristics of young people who are equity-deserving. Thirty-four studies did not focus on any particular equity-deserving group, three articles focused particularly on young people living in poverty, two articles focused on young people living in foster care, one article focused on young people with disabilities and one on equity-deserving young people more generally.

## Thematic analysis

This analysis is organized in two sections each aiming to address one of the two sub-questions that this literature review attempts to answer. The analysis of the two sub-questions contributes to answering the overall research question: How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues?

Literature review sub-question 1: Leading practices in youth engagement in decision-making

The first questions this literature review is aiming to answer are the following:

- What are the leading practices relevant to engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations?
- How is this currently being measured by Canadian foundations (if at all)?

In order to answer the first of these questions, we will discuss eight themes:

- Ensure the organization is prepared;
- Provide adequate structure and resources;
- Go beyond the 'usual suspects' but engage young leaders with connections to community;
- Take the time to establish relationships and belonging;
- Ensure young people are prepared and supported;
- Give young people the chance to make real decisions;
- Support young people to engage with the wider community; and
- Regularly gather and share feedback.

As it is not discussed in the literature, we were unable to answer the second question: How is this currently being measured by Canadian foundations (if at all)? This should be considered an area for further study.

While this literature review did not aim to surface definitions, it is helpful to use Shakesprere et al.'s definition of youth engagement to frame the leading practices outlined below: "Youth engagement is the intentional, meaningful, and sustained involvement of young people in actions to create positive social change" (Shakesprere et al., 2020, p. 2)

To better understand the results below, it is also helpful to explore what forms youth engagement can take in the context of foundations. In the case of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative the authors speak of youth advisory committees, intergenerational community partnership boards, a Youth Leadership Institute (a week-long training session) and the Jim Casey Young Fellows as ways that young people are engaged in their work (Poirier et al., 2020). Shakesprere et al. (2020) also speak of youth advisory boards or committees as well as intergenerational committees as possible forms. Richards-Schuster (Richards-Schuster, 2012) discusses youth evaluation advisory groups. Hagger (2007a) writes of the importance of including young people on a board of directors, including advocating for changing laws to allow minors to be able to serve on boards. Several articles speak of youth-led or experiential philanthropy as a means to engage young people in philanthropy (Benz et al., 2020; Bloch, 2018; Nikzad-Terhune & Taylor, 2020; Stacey et al., 2021). Blanchet-Cohen et al. (Blanchet-Cohen et al. 2014) discuss the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation funded program YouthScape, where community grants were selected and managed by 14- to 20-year-olds. Others speak of listening to and learning from grantees and/or young people using interviews or focus groups (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021; Shakesprere et al., 2020). It is important to note that there is not one 'right' form for meaningfully engaging young people, rather the leading practices discussed below should be paired with structures that are the best fit to accomplish the goals a particular Foundation is aiming to achieve.





## Ensure the organization is prepared

One of the most frequently mentioned leading practices in ensuring engagement of young people in a foundation's work occurs before young people are even engaged. Ensuring that organizations and adults within the organization have 'bought in' to youth engagement and that they are properly prepared to meaningfully engage diverse young people was mentioned as a leading practice in numerous articles (Bailey et al., 2015; Blanchet-Cohen & Cook, 2014; Mawn et al., 2015; Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Pincham et al., 2020; Richards-Schuster, 2012; Shakesprere et al., 2020; Sprague Martinez et al., 2020).

Zeldin and MacNeil (Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006) speak in their study about the process that adults and organizations need to go through in order to become 'ready' to accept the involvement of diverse young people. They suggest that this involves overcoming stereotypes about young people and learning to collaborate across generations.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2019) speaks of how preparing to engage young people involves addressing the attitudes and beliefs adults hold about young people. Poirier et al. (2020) echo this, speaking of how attitudes and beliefs can get in the way of effective partnerships. Paul and Lefkowitz (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006) discuss how ensuring that the whole organization is willing to be transformed and to have their assumptions challenged through the process of youth engagement is an essential prerequisite. In order to accomplish this, they recommend holding conversations on the pros and cons of involving young people, facilitating discussions to reveal beliefs and assumptions about young people and reflecting on what the organization wants to achieve through youth engagement before young people are engaged (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006).

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## Ensuring that the whole organization is willing to be transformed and to have their assumptions challenged through the process of youth engagement is an essential prerequisite.

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Before an organization is ready to engage young people, the adults in that organization should understand that being willing to 'walk the talk' of valuing young people and respecting their expertise, talents and abilities is essential for youth engagement (Atkins et al., 2020; Boeck et al., 2012; Hagger, 2007; Lindsay et al., 2021; Mawn et al., 2015; Richards-Schuster, 2012; Struthers & Williams, 2017; Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006). Blanchet-Cohen et al. (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2014) explain that being ready to treat young people as individuals capable of decision-making as well as being prepared to be honest with youth, including adults being willing to be transparent about their own shortcomings, is important for this work. Switzer (2016) speaks of the importance of viewing young people as active and self-determining members of a larger community. Zeldin and MacNeil (2006b) write about how, in order to diminish stereotypes, adults need time to wrestle with and reflect on issues of power and privilege that youth engagement inevitably brings to the forefront. Zeldin and MacNeil (2006) also explain that youth engagement is powerful when these kinds of experiences are meaningful and are in sharp contrast to how young people characterize their typical interactions with adults. As such, providing training and capacity building for adults before they engage with young people to ensure that youth engagement is meaningful is mentioned repeatedly in the literature (Blanchet-Cohen & Cook, 2014; Hagger, 2007; Richards-Schuster, 2012; Shakesprere et al., 2020).

This work does not stop once young people join the organization, as Dovey-Pearce et al. (2019) discuss; this work needs to be returned to again and again over time. Zeldin et al. quoting Camino (2005) describe the desired state as being a 'partnership'. "In many such relationships, the adult either dictates the agenda and controls what occurs or leaves the young people alone and abdicates responsibility for what occurs. In a partnership, the adult ally and young people work 'shoulder to shoulder' sharing ideas and expertise, translating information about one another's worlds, creating a mutual agenda, and taking joint responsibility for the outcome" (Zeldin et al., 2013, p. 392).

Despite the need for preparation, it is important not to wait too long to engage young people; as Lindsay et al. (2021) and Boek et al. (2012) explain, young people should be engaged as early and as often as possible throughout a project. Shakesprere et al., (2020), speak of how young people should be engaged in program development, design, implementation and evaluation.



## Provide adequate structure and resources

Another element of preparation that it is recommended that organizations undertake is to ensure that the appropriate structures and resources are in place before they begin engaging young people. Inadequate planning and under-resourced attempts to engage young people are likely to result in tokenistic and overall poor outcomes (Mawn et al., 2015) while sufficient time, planning and resources can address many of the challenges that can be faced in youth engagement work (Bailey et al., 2015).

Ensuring the adequate structures are in place includes identifying youth engagement as an organizational priority in the organization's bylaws, mission, values, policies and procedures, as well as the processes of the organization. This allows for the institutionalization of youth engagement (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Sprague Martinez et al., 2020; Zeldin et al., 2008). Formalizing the roles of young people within an organization is also important. For example, this can include establishing a youth advisory council or creating two youth seats on a Board of Directors. Ensuring these formalized roles are at all levels of decision-making from the Board of Directors onwards is important (Richards-Schuster, 2012; Wernick, 2009). This institutionalization of youth engagement ensures that an organization is making a long term commitment to engaging diverse young people and that both the young people and organization will benefit from this commitment (Asare-Nuamah & Mandaza, 2020; Hagger, 2007; Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006).

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## Ensuring the adequate structures are in place includes identifying youth engagement as an organizational priority.

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Ensuring ongoing and dedicated staff capacity is available to support youth engagement is also essential (Lindsay et al., 2021; Mitra, 2009; Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Poirier et al., 2020; Shakesprere et al., 2020) as is an organization making a commitment to financially support its youth engagement efforts overall (Asare-Nuamah & Mandaza, 2020; Atkins et al., 2020; Lindsay et al., 2021; Poirier et al., 2020; Switzer et al., 2016; The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). This should include young people being paid equally to adult counterparts doing the same work as well as financial support for travel, accommodation, childcare etc. In addition to financial compensation, organizations should consider how they can set up structures to ensure young people who engage in their organizations will be supported with other non-financial incentives such as school credit, reference letters etc (Lindsay et al., 2021; Oliver et al., 2006).

## Go beyond the 'usual suspects' but engage young leaders with connections to community

When an organization is ready to engage young people, it is important to ensure they are going beyond engaging the 'usual suspects'. Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) recommend taking the time to develop a recruitment strategy to find young people who are interested, but not overcommitted. Echoing this, Atkins et al. (2020) discuss the concept of "skimming", described as selecting primarily high-achieving youth, and how this is problematic and should be avoided through thoughtful recruitment. Chamisa and Shava (Chamisa & Shava, 2016) speak of how many young people who engage in decision-making are self-selected based on their skill, resilience and ambition, and how this again, should be avoided in favour of engaging a diversity of young people. Hagger (Hagger, 2007) recommends aiming to achieve equality of opportunity amongst young people and working to include disadvantaged or 'difficult to reach' young people. Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) speak of the importance of creating opportunities for all young people and not just the same youth all the time; this requires foundations to reach outside of their existing networks to recruit a diverse group of young people and a recognition that some youth will require more support to step into decision-making roles.

At the same time, it is also important to recognize that simply engaging individual young people who have lived/living experience but who do not have a connection to a youth-led organization or youth movement that is working collectively on issues related to that lived experience might not allow a foundation to achieve a meaningful connection to the broader youth community. Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) speak at length about the importance of building deep relationships with community members who are actively engaged in the type of work the foundation hopes to support and the same holds true for engaging young people.



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**Simply engaging individual young people who have lived/living experience but who do not have a connection to a youth-led organization or youth movement that is working collectively on issues related to that lived experience might not allow a foundation to achieve a meaningful connection to the broader youth community.**

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### **Take the time to establish relationships and belonging**

Once young people are engaging with an organization, a theme repeated throughout the literature is the importance of taking the time to build strong relationships between young people and adults (Boeck et al., 2012; Oliver et al., 2006; Shakesprere et al., 2020; Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006). As Zeldin and MacNeil (2006b) explain, the quality of relationships is a key factor in young participants' satisfaction with their experience. They go on to speak about how many young people express an initial skepticism about the motivations of adults, making it even more important for adults to work to ensure that these initial misgivings are not confirmed (Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006).

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation speaks of how they underestimated the time and skills needed to build and sustain these connections (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021). Zeldin and MacNeil (2006b) echo this, discussing a program that focused on prioritizing relationships for the better part of a year. Despite this, young people involved in the program still suggested that more time was needed for relationship building with adults.

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation emphasise the importance of building trust through an iterative process of listening and learning along the way as well as becoming increasingly comfortable with discomfort and ambiguity (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021). Creating a space where vulnerability and the personal experiences of group members are welcomed rather than just staying at the level of a 'professional facade' is important (Wernick, 2009). Taking the time to understand different perspectives, working through disagreements, not isolating someone when they have a different perspective as well as honesty and transparency are key (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2014; Richards-Schuster, 2012). Wernick (2009) speaks of the importance of ensuring those involved in this work feel that they belong and that their involvement is crucial. This can be done as Zeldin and MacNeil (Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006) explain through taking time to "argue, teach each other, tell stories, create shared narratives and celebrate successes" (Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006, p. 14).

Tangibly, relationship building can occur before programs begin, through a myriad activities during programs, as well as after a program ends (Wernick, 2009). Examples from Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) of relationship building activities include: spending time up front to create a sense of community; helping the group understand that there will be ups and downs in group work; defining group goals and articulating how the group will work together; and checking in with young people one-on-one regularly to gauge feelings and level of understanding.



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**Build trust through an iterative process of listening and learning along the way as well as becoming increasingly comfortable with discomfort and ambiguity.**

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## Ensure young people are prepared and supported

Another common leading practice discussed in the literature is the importance of providing support for young people to ensure they are prepared to engage in decision-making. As the Annie E. Casey Foundation explains, young people sharing their experiences and contributing to an organization's work can be emotionally taxing and intentional support is necessary (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). Poirier et al. (2020) echo this, speaking of the importance of thoughtful emotional support when doing systems change work. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2019) explains that emotional support can include encouraging self-care, supporting the young person in developing a plan to manage their response to information or a situation that may trigger challenging memories or emotions, and encouraging a young person to reach out to support networks. Paul and Lefkovitz (2006) also speak of the importance of support so that young people are ready for criticism and to receive challenges to their suggestions from adults.

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### **Young people sharing their experiences and contributing to an organization's work can be emotionally taxing and intentional support is necessary.**

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation go on to explain that offering training and preparation in advance of a young person's participation, empowers young people to make knowledgeable decisions and benefit from opportunities (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). Calvert and Zeldin (2002) discuss the importance of supporting young people in developing competencies by using the concept of 'scaffolding', described as providing a balance of safety and support as well as choice and challenge (Calvert & Zeldin, 2002). Calvert and Zeldin (2002) also speak of the importance of recognizing the different kinds of supports a particular young person may need. Poirier et al. (2020) discuss how support, in addition to emotional support mentioned above, can be physical or financial but that most importantly it should be tailored to meet the unique needs of each young person. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2019) speaks of how awareness of a young person's unique developmental needs is essential. Paul and Lefkovitz (2006) echo this by speaking of providing youth with relevant skill development opportunities to prepare them for whatever activity they are being asked to undertake next and how young people benefit from relevant 'just in time' training. In other words, training that takes place at the same time as a young person is about to use a skill or knowledge.

Supporting young people in preparing to engage requires time, effort and patience (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). Lindsay et al. (2021) discuss that they recommend a series of customized training sessions be held, based on each young person's level of participation and role. Paul and Lefkovitz (2006) suggest holding an orientation session for newly engaged young people as well as holding pre-meeting calls with young people or supporting young people to do needed research or gather input from their peers before a meeting. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2019) suggests a phone call to review the logistics of an upcoming event, being present to support a young person during an event or debriefing with the young person after an event. Switzer (2016) speaks of how capacity-building should also consider the needs of the entire group versus focusing only on individual skill development and should also recognize youth as important knowledge holders. Ensuring young people have the training they need to effectively participate in grant making, in particular, was mentioned by Richards-Schuster (2012) as being important. They discuss providing appropriate background information as well as holding workshops, retreats and/or ongoing opportunities for education related to grant making.

Related to the suggestions above is supporting young people to prepare through mentorship. Paul and Lefkovitz (2006) suggest assigning an adult mentor to each young person. They suggest mentorship might include: reviewing the meeting agenda together, checking in with young person before and after the meeting, answering questions, supporting the young person to think through a decision that will need to be made and identifying resources. Zeldin et al. (Zeldin et al., 2013a) suggest a different strategy, they recommend offering young people choices and suggesting they form different types of mentorship relationships with different adults.



## **Give young people the chance to make real decisions**

Once young people are properly prepared and supported to engage in decision-making, the importance of ensuring young people have an opportunity to make real decisions, take ownership and have a meaningful impact is repeated often throughout the literature as being essential to meaningful youth engagement (Lindsay et al., 2021; Oliver et al., 2006; Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Richards-Schuster, 2012; Switzer et al., 2016; Zeldin et al., 2013).

As Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) explain that ensuring foundation staff communicate clear boundaries for decision-making is important. “Staff members decide how much decision-making by youth will be appropriate for their organization. Then they define and clearly communicate boundaries and parameters for the youth so as not to frustrate them” (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006, p. 14). Once those boundaries are clearly established it is key that young people are given opportunities to make decisions with real consequences, are given legitimate authority and responsibility as well as opportunities to exercise their influence (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Zeldin et al., 2013; Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006). This means that sometimes young people might make decisions that are not always consistent with the organization’s priorities, but it is suggested in the literature that this is a necessary risk organizations should take (Vancouver Foundation, 2013). It is also important that young people are given the opportunity to examine and critique the root causes of the issues being discussed (Proweller & Monkman, 2014). Adults can provide guidance and support but should avoid controlling the process (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2014). As Blanchet-Cohen et al. (2014) explain, young people were very sensitive to being patronized and to the threat of domineering adults.

If adults must step in and veto a decision, clear communication about why they are doing so is essential (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006).

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**Young people are given opportunities to make decisions with real consequences, are given legitimate authority and responsibility as well as opportunities to exercise their influence.**

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## **Support young people to engage with the wider community**

While it is important that young people have an opportunity to make real decisions, this by no means suggests that young people should be working on their own, rather intergenerational collaboration and embedding young people’s work within a wider network of support is important. Finding ways to connect young people with others working on similar issues beyond the foundation is mentioned in several articles (Mawn et al., 2015; Poirier et al., 2020). This might include young people connecting with schools, non-profits, elected officials, peers and governments who are working on issues relevant to the foundation’s work (Atkins et al., 2020; Mitra, 2009). These kinds of community networks can offer young people a web of opportunities and ‘scaffolding’, providing access to social capital as well as diverse perspectives (Mitra, 2009; Zeldin et al., 2013).

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**Intergenerational collaboration and embedding young people’s work within a wider network of support is important.**

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## Regularly gather and share feedback

Lastly, an important tool for meaningful youth engagement is the evaluation of these initiatives (Bloch, 2018). Evaluations can improve youth engagement efforts, but they can also increase the credibility of young people's advice and recommendations (Richards-Schuster, 2012). Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) suggest that assessments should occur regularly and include self-reflection for both adults and youth. They recommend involving young in all stages of the assessment: determining the criteria, conducting focus groups and interviews, processing data and presenting and implementing findings. Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) recommend disseminating promising practices early and often.

## Literature review sub-question 2: Leading practices in supporting youth-led organizations and movements

The second questions this literature review is aiming to answer are the following:

- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need to amplify their impact?
- In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy?
- Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context?
- How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?

Very few of the documents we reviewed directly addressed any of these questions. In fact, we were unable to answer the last three questions as part of the literature review. We will however address these questions as we review the results of the interviews.

In tackling the first question, below we discuss how foundations can be more responsive and impactful in their funding overall by:

- Working towards equal partnership between foundations and youth-led organizations and movements
- Leveraging power

and two other themes that speak to more immediately and less systemic ways that foundations can improve their practices to increase youth-led impact:

- Support networking and convening
- Improving granting practices

## Working towards equal partnership between foundations and young-led organizations and movements

Often cited in the literature as a leading practice is ensuring that adults and foundations working with young-led organizations and movements are allies to these young people (Blanchet-Cohen & Cook, 2014; Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006; Richards-Schuster, 2012; Zeldin et al., 2013). Blanchet-Cohen and Cook let one of their study participants explain what this can look like: "Really, as an adult ally, it is just biting your tongue, and taking a step back and letting the grantee do it at their own pace. [You can] give them some questions to think about process but do not try and lead them" (Blanchet-Cohen & Cook, 2014, p. 400). Paul and Lefkowitz (2006) write about youth allyship including adults being persistent in their efforts to involve youth, not giving up on them and being advocates for the young people. Zeldin et al. (2013a) discuss how young people want to work with adult allies who are non-judgmental, passionate and organized.

Much of the literature suggests taking a step further beyond adult allyship towards equal partnership or fully sharing power with young people (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2014; Boeck et al., 2012; Chamisa & Shava, 2016; Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021; Poirier et al., 2020; Switzer et al., 2016; Zeldin et al., 2008; Zeldin & MacNeil, 2006).





The importance of foundations being transparent in their work is mentioned one way to work towards equal partnership (Ali, 2017; Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021). Wernick (2009) speaks of how being open and transparent allows Foundations to remain accountable to social and environmental movements. Wernick (2009) goes on to describe that foundations can become more accountable by becoming more transparent in their responses to outside criticism, their selection of leaders and by making information about their work and processes accessible.

Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) speak of how The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is exploring how to more fully share power with grantees. The report discusses how a next step for this particular foundation is to “consider how far it is willing to go in terms of involving grantees/community members in decision-making and be[ing] transparent about what roles grantees — and the communities they support — might play in decision-making processes” (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021, p. 21). They go on to speak about how this might be achieved by bringing community members onto the board and staff of the foundation or advisory committees as well as by developing a community-led planning processes to guide grant making decisions. Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) describe an ultimate goal of equal partnership as sharing control of grant making decisions equally with community members.

Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) also speak about how working towards equal partnership required a fundamental change in how The Nellie Mae Education Foundation saw their role. Shifting from viewing themselves as a funder to committing to a long-term process of collaborative social change. The authors spoke about to achieve this shift The Nellie Mae Education Foundation focused on building trusting relationships with grantees and community leaders. They also recognized the need to embrace the strategies that grantees were already effectively implementing rather than sticking to their own ideas of how change should occur. They began to understand that theories of change, key performance indicators, and evaluation plans must become iterative ‘living’ documents to be revised and updated along the way with grantee input. Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) spoke of how “it took courage for the staff to place the participatory process ahead of the Foundation’s pre-planned objectives and goals... [but that] began to shift the power dynamic between the Foundation and grantees” (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021, p. 9).

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## **Shifting from viewing themselves as a funder to committing to a long-term process of collaborative social change.**

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Blanchet-Cohen et al. (2014) speak of how one way to move towards equal partnership between a Foundation and young people is having young people lead granting committees and having these committees work by consensus. They explain that while this might mean that decision-making takes more time, it creates ownership of the process and the outcome amongst the young people involved. Poirier et al. (2020) discuss how equal partnership involves having honest conversations, respecting diverse experiences and opinions as well as adults advocating for young people’s engagement and needs at all times, even when they are not in the room. Shakesprere et al. (2020) speak about how returning power to young people means equipping them with the support and skills they need to design and lead work as well as ensuring young people are paid for their work with foundations.



## Leveraging power

Closely linked to equal partnership in the literature is the need for foundations to examine their power and privilege and then leverage that power in a way that challenges existing power structures in support of grantees work (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021; Wernick, 2009). Wernick (2009) discussed how those who study philanthropy describe how funders tend to support causes that they see as institutionally safe in maintaining their own power. As such they tend to provide funding to movements that are more mainstream rather than disruptive. Wernick (2009) goes on to describe philanthropy as an asymmetrical relationship between those who seek funding and funders, and how those who seek support for the most part have little say over the criteria used for who receives funding and for what purpose.

Blanchet-Cohen and Cook (Blanchet-Cohen & Cook, 2014) highlight the importance of examining and addressing power differences between adults and youth. The Laidlaw Foundation (2007) speaks of the need to “neutralize as much as possible the inherent power dynamics that can undermine the integrity of youth organizing work” (Laidlaw Foundation, 2007, p. 23). Wernick (2009) writes about how issues of power, control, and decision-making need to be examined throughout the philanthropic community. Building on values of accountability and transparency, Wernick (2009) discusses how there is now a movement of young people with wealth who are encouraging philanthropic foundations to talk about issues of money, identity and privilege.

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## Issues of power, control and decision-making need to be examined throughout the philanthropic community.

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Wernick (Wernick, 2009) further explains “what is important is that constituents gain a deeper understanding of the implications of coming from class privilege and try to move forward in a way that challenges class privilege and power. This does not mean that people give up their power...For example, while they may be able to give away their money, they will almost always maintain their relationships and access to elite institutions; they will always have their education and experiences growing up with health care and access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Instead, people need to become empowered and learn how to leverage their power in a way that does not replicate existing power structures” (Wernick, 2009, p. 144).

Some examples of ways that power can be leveraged include incorporating a cross-class team of movement organizers onto the staff and board of a foundation (Wernick, 2009). Foundations organizing philanthropic peers to share findings and insights and advocating for grantees, leveraging the foundation’s reputation and influence to increase the awareness and advocate for public policy (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021) as well as funders coming together to collaborate on funding strategies (Laidlaw Foundation, 2007).

In their report Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) describe the National Committee for Responsible Philanthropy’s three stages for leveraging power:

- “Build Power: Support systemic change by funding civic engagement, advocacy and community organizing among marginalized communities;
- Share Power: Nurture transparent, trusting relationships and co-creating strategies with stakeholders;
- Wield Power: Exercise public leadership beyond grantmaking to create equitable, catalytic change” (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021, p. 20).



## Support networking and convening

In addition to more systemic practices that foundations should undertake to ensure their work is more impactful, there were specific and concrete changes to granting practices that were mentioned in the literature that would support young people in increasing their impact. Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) write about how The Nellie Mae Education Foundation recognized that they could support their grantees in building power by supporting their grantees in building coalitions of likeminded groups. As part of this work this Foundation also embedded networking opportunities / convenings for youth and community organizing grantees in their work as well as launching a network of youth-led organizations. Laidlaw Foundation (2007) also discusses the importance of supporting youth-led networks as well as supporting the creation of stronger links between youth-serving and youth-led organizations, identifying a significant disconnect between these two types of organizations who are often working towards similar goals. Mauto (2013) speaks of the importance of supporting collaborate efforts between youth-led organizations and movements as well as encouraging youth-led organizations to partner with elected officials and community members.

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**Supporting youth-led networks as well as supporting the creation of stronger links between youth-serving and youth-led organizations.**

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**Adequate and long-term funding is available to youth-led organizations and youth-led organizations have access to training on technical, financial and project management.**

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### **Improving granting practices**

Mauto (2013) spoke of the need to provide adequate and long-term funding to youth-led organizations as well as ensure youth-led organizations receive training on technical, financial and project management. Blanchet-Cohen and Cook (2014b) write about the need to develop clear and simple reporting guidelines and then make time to explain the requirements to young grantees. Laidlaw Foundation (2007) speak of reality that many youth-led organizations are not incorporated or do not have charitable status and that there is a need to “re-think organizations so that we are not asking every group that has a good idea to create a non-profit organization” (Laidlaw Foundation, 2007, p. 34).

As mentioned above there were several questions that we hoped to answer as part of this literature review that we were unable to answer due to a lack of literature that addressed them. We recommend that these questions be addressed in future studies as there is clearly a gap in the literature in these areas:

- How are leading practices relevant to engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations currently being measured by Canadian foundations?
- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need to support policy advocacy?
- Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context?
- How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?

The literature review was able to answer two important questions:

- What are the leading practices relevant to engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations?
- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need to amplify their impact?



## The key findings of the literature review are:

Leading practices in engaging young changemakers and/or next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of foundations are as follows:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation's power in such a way that existing power structures both within and beyond the foundation are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations are prepared before engaging young people. This includes the leadership and staff 'buying in' to diverse, equitable and inclusive youth engagement, meaningful intergenerational collaboration and valuing young people's unique abilities, and attitudes and stereotypes about young people being proactively addressed;
- Foundations establish adequate structures for youth engagement and allocate appropriate resources. This includes embedding youth engagement within the formal structures of the foundation as well as providing on-going financial and staff support;
- Foundations enact a robust recruitment strategy that goes beyond engaging the 'usual suspects' by prioritizing recruiting 'hard to reach' young people as well as young people with strong connections to community;
- Foundations dedicate the time needed to establish relationships between adults and young people that center belonging, trust, and space for discomfort and ambiguity;
- Foundations ensure young people are prepared for their involvement and supported throughout with thoughtful emotional support, a balance of safety and support as well as choice and challenge, just in time training, and ongoing mentorship;
- Foundations ensure young people are given the chance to make real decisions, take ownership over mission critical tasks and have a meaningful impact;
- Foundations ensure young people engage with the wider community through intergenerational collaboration and by embedding young people's work within a wider network of support; and
- Foundations regularly gather and share data about youth engagement efforts and regularly integrate feedback received.

Leading practices in how foundations can support youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need to amplify their social and environmental impact are as follows:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation's power in such a way that existing power structures are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations support convenings and youth-led networks; and
- Foundations improve granting practices by providing adequate and long-term funding to youth-led organizations, providing training on technical, financial and project management to young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements, providing clear and simple reporting guidelines as well as by committing to regularly fund organizations without charitable status.



# Interview results

Through a series of 16 interviews with young leaders we attempted to answer the following questions:

- How did the leaders of youth-led organizations and youth-led movements arrive at the stage of becoming ‘young changemakers’? What demographic characteristics are common? What demographic characteristics less common?
- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need? In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy? Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context? How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?
- How can Foundations better support leaders of youth-led civil society organizations and youth-led movements when it comes to ensuring wellbeing and preventing burnout?

In the sections below, we summarize the findings from these interviews.

## Interview sub-question 1

The first set of sub-questions we are aiming to answer through the interviews are the following:

- How did the leaders of youth-led organizations and youth-led movements arrive at the stage of becoming ‘young changemakers’? What demographic characteristics are common? What demographic characteristics less common?

The results outlined below give us a picture of the demographic characteristics of the young people we interviewed, the issues they are working on and how they became involved in this work. The demographic information outlined below in the form of graphs was collected through a survey sent to interview participants at the end of the interview (Appendix D). All questions on this survey were optional, and therefore not all participants answered every question.

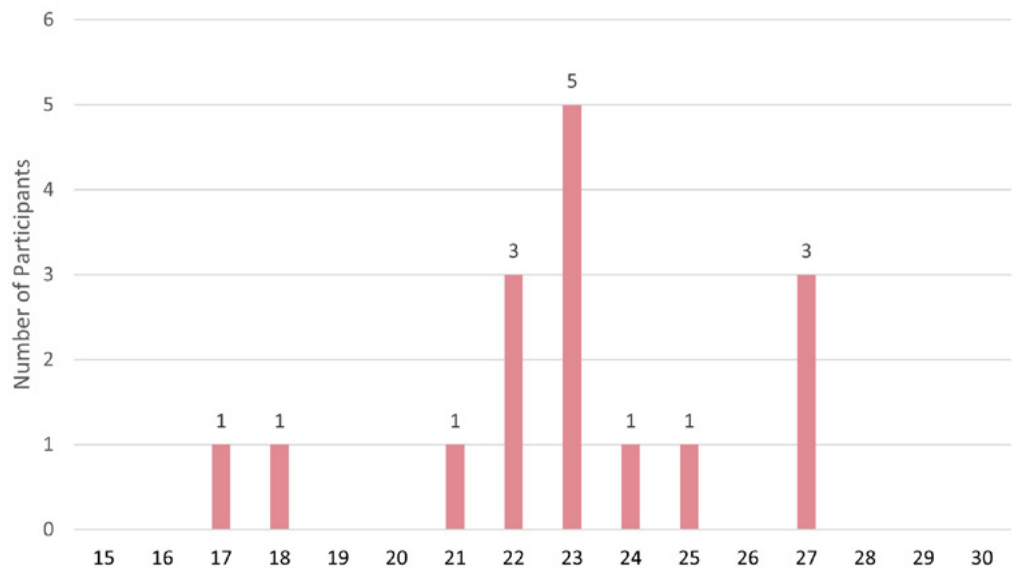
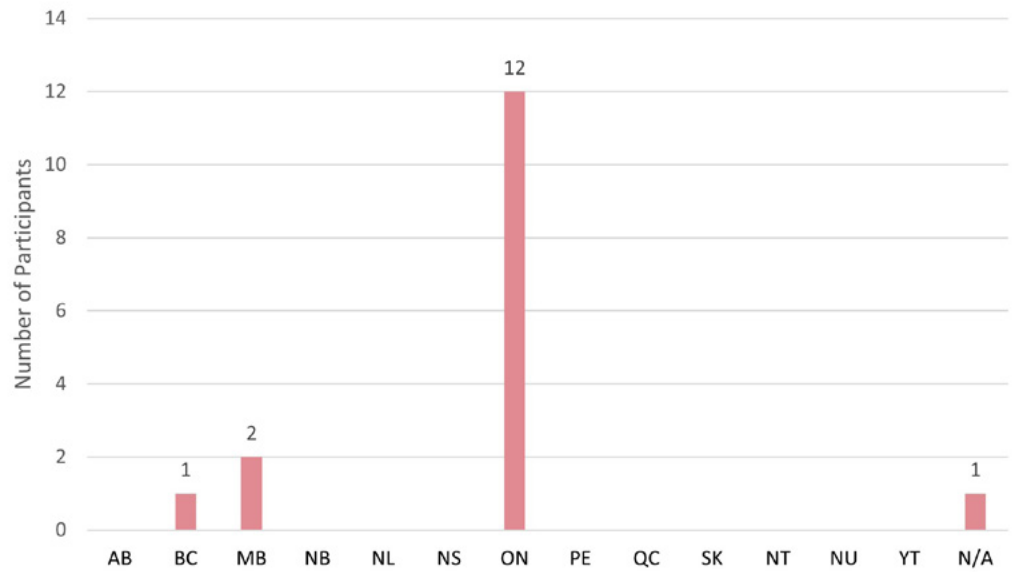


Figure 7  
Age of participants



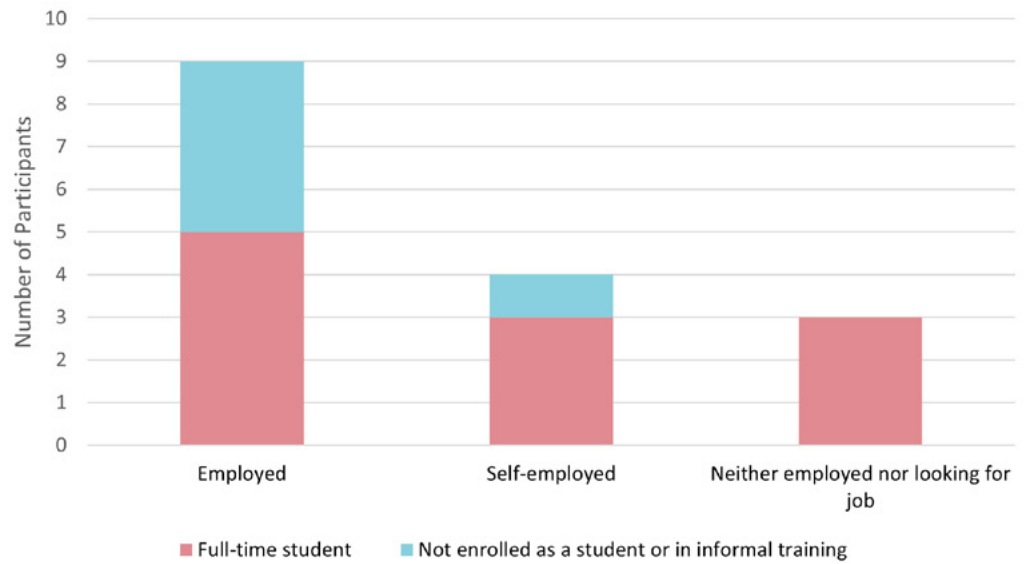


Figure 8 shows the province or territory where the interview participants are currently living.



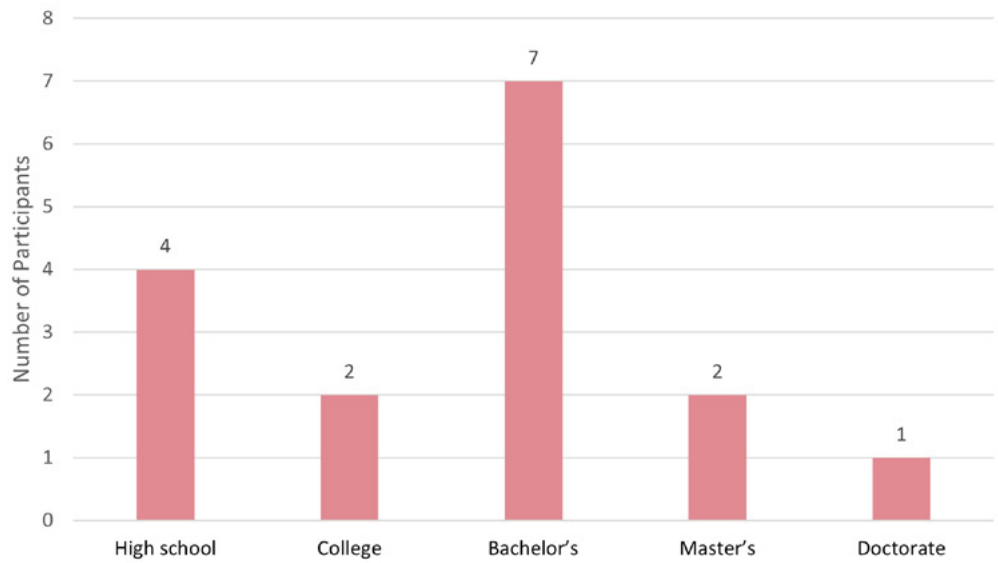
**Figure 8**  
Province or Territory

Figure 9 shows the current employment as well as current education status of interview participants.



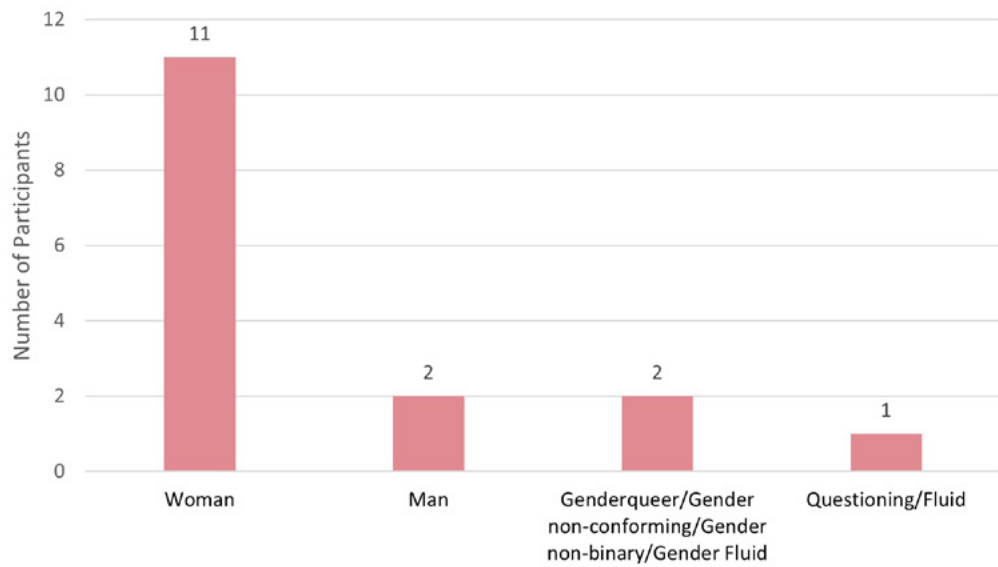
**Figure 9**  
Labour force status & education status

Figure 10 shows the highest level of education completed by the interview participants.



**Figure 10**  
Education completed

Figure 11 shows the gender of the interview participants.



**Figure 11**  
Gender

Figure 12 shows whether the participants identify as being part of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

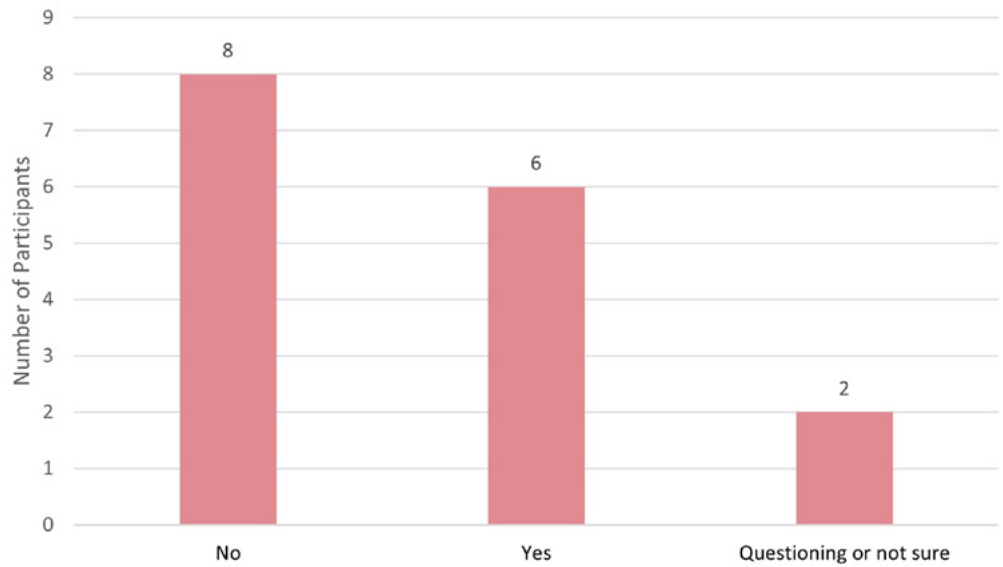


Figure 12  
LGBTQ2S+ community

Figure 13 shows the birth country of interview participants.

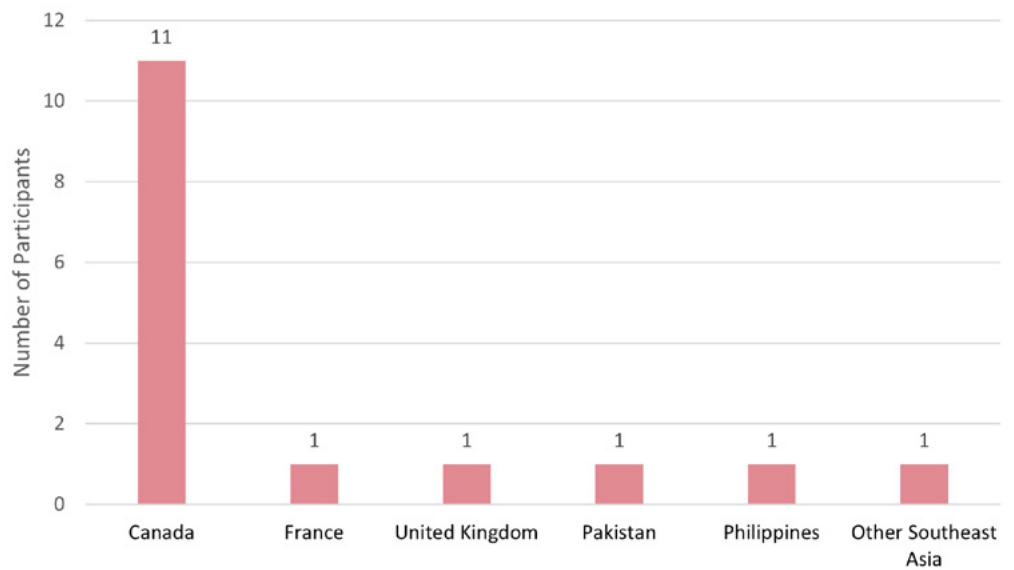
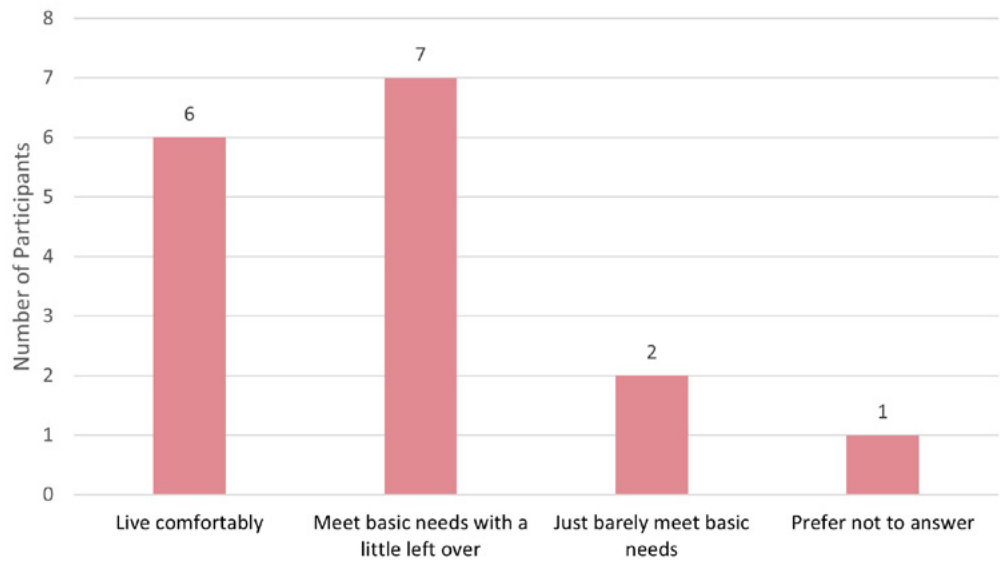


Figure 13  
Birth country of participants

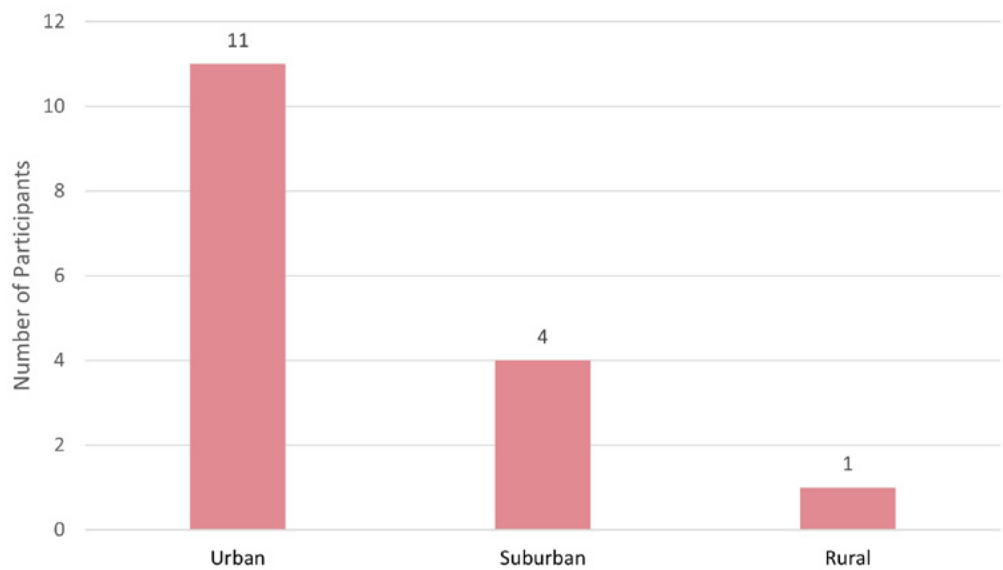


Figure 14 shows the financial situation of interview participants.



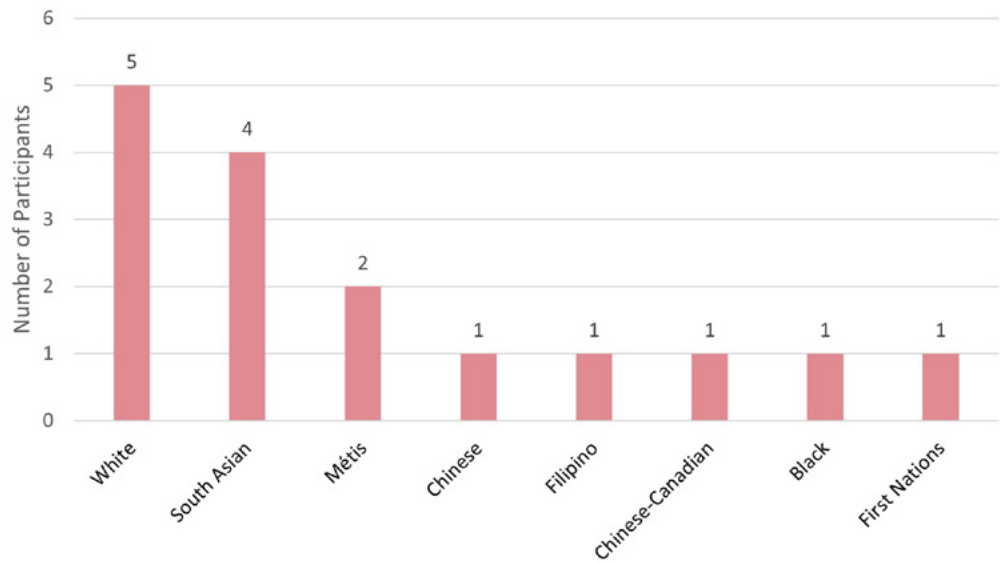
**Figure 14**  
**Financial situation**

Figure 15 shows whether the interview participants live in an urban, suburban or rural community.



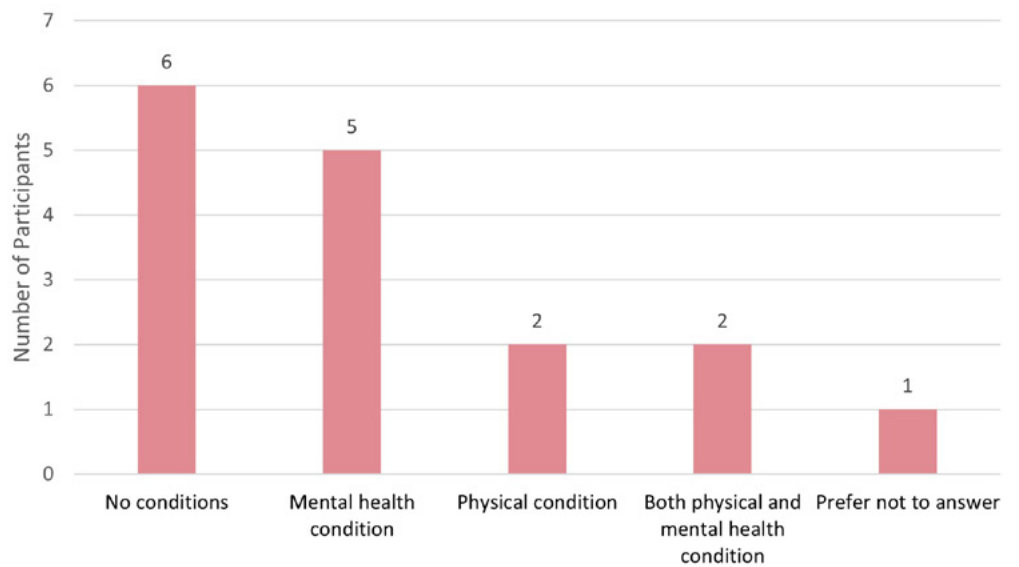
**Figure 15**  
**Type of community**

Figure 16 shows the racial / ethnic identity of interview participants.



**Figure 16**  
Racial/ethnic identity

Figure 17 shows whether or not the interview participants identify as differently abled.



**Figure 17**  
Differently abled

These graphs show that, as much as is possible given the relatively small sample size of 16 interviews, we were able to interview a diverse group of young people, with the exception of having an overrepresentation of woman, young people living in Ontario and young people who live in an urban setting.

Of the 16 young people interviewed, all of them have received national media attention for their work. Eight of them have founded or co-founded their own organizations, two are unpaid volunteers for an organization that they did not found, four have led campaigns using traditional media or social media, one is a consultant for several organizations they did not found and one is the Executive Director of an organization that they did not found. The vast majority of interviewees are also involved in, other unpaid and sometimes paid activities related to social and environmental causes. Only one of the young people interviewed had participated in a committee that was awarding grants outside of a post-secondary education context. A few of the young people interviewed had participated in granting committees in a post-secondary education context.

These 16 young people are engaged in a variety of social and environmental issues, the vast majority are involved in more than one cause and have an intersectional approach to their work. The issues that these young people are working on include 'queer and BIPOC' storytelling, advocacy around missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, the Indigenous youth movement more broadly, LGBTQ2S+ advocacy, climate strikes, advocacy around mental health and addiction services, anti-Asian hate, advocacy for affordable post-secondary education, awareness raising and advocacy around racism, disability, sexual violence and other forms of discrimination, advocating for mental health services in post-secondary education, supporting youth leadership on nature and climate solutions globally, supporting youth leadership more generally, and advocating against Canadian banks who invest in fossil fuels.

The interviewees spoke of the many catalysts that led them to get involved in social and environmental causes. Several spoke of not feeling like getting involved was a choice, due to circumstance. These circumstances ranged from growing up in the middle east during the Arab Spring, to not being sure how they were going to pay for post-secondary education, to feeling a sense of urgency around the climate crisis. One interviewee spoke of personal tragedy of losing both parents at a young age as being the catalyst for their involvement.

Several of the interviewees spoke of their own health issues or disability as being a catalyst for their engagement. It was also common for interviewees to speak of personally experiencing racism or other forms of discrimination or seeing their family members experience discrimination. One interviewee spoke of growing up in a small town and the isolation and negative outlook on life that they saw around them as being a catalyst for involvement. One interviewee spoke of having spent time with Indigenous elders and this being a key factor is understanding their gifts and what they had to offer, but also feeling a heavy sense of responsibility as a result. One interviewee spoke of how other Indigenous young people supported them in getting involved after a disappointing experience with an elected official. One interviewee spoke of the feeling that their career no longer had meaning as being the reason for founding their organization. Another spoke of spending time in nature as a child. Several interviewees spoke about class projects in high school and the research associated with these projects as being a turning point for them to get involved on issues ranging from missing and murdered Indigenous women to biodiversity.



## Interview sub-question 2

The second set of sub-questions we were aiming to answer through the interviews was the following:

- What kind of funding and in-kind support do youth-led organizations and youth-led movements need? In particular, what kind of support is needed to support policy advocacy? Where are the gaps in funding and in-kind support in the Canadian context? How is the impact of the funding and in-kind support currently offered to youth-led organizations and youth-led movements being measured?

While we tackle the first three questions in the sections below, we were unable to answer the last question as part of these interviews, due for the most part to the fact that many of the young people we interviewed receive very little funding for their work.

### Funding and in-kind support being received

To begin answering our second set of sub-questions, we started by asking interviewees what funding they or their organizations have received or are currently receiving.

One interviewee spoke of their organization only receiving funding from the Federal Government's Canada Summer Jobs program to be able to cover some wages but not having any other financial support from funders.

Another interviewee spoke about how their organization had not received any government funding but had received a few grants from other sources but none of them have been larger than \$10 000.

Three of the interviewees spoke of their groups having received funding from other larger non-profits who were giving out grants to support youth-led initiatives. One interviewee spoke of how this funding was "the only funding that we've ever had."

A few of the interviewees spoke of receiving funding from foundations. One of the interviewees whose work is high profile, spoke of small private foundations approaching them with small gifts in the range of a few thousand dollars. The interviewee explained that their organization has a budget of about \$10 000 a year. They went on to describe their interaction with one funder and the impact it had on their organization; "hey, here's a cheque for \$3000 and get started with that, and that lasted us the whole year."

One interviewee spoke of how they receive over 70% of their funding from foundations, but that it is largely from foundations based in the United States or Europe. They explained "we actually have very little funding from Canada and not for lack of trying."



Hey, here's a cheque for \$3000 and get started with that, and that lasted us the whole year.

Interviewee





One interviewee spoke of collaborations with several large Canadian corporations funding their work. Another interviewee spoke of receiving a small contribution from a corporation, “\$150 bucks for Canada’s 150th birthday. And that actually paid for about half or a little over half of those first letters. So [the corporation] did in fact support a part of this, I don’t think they had any idea what that money was going to be used for.”

Several interviewees spoke of having personally received scholarships which, by supporting their schooling and living costs, had allowed them to carry out their social change work. Several interviewees spoke of receiving small honorariums for speaking or being on a panel that helped support their work. As one interviewee explained, “I think the most I got paid was \$800. But anything else, it was always like \$15, \$25 or a Tim Hortons gift card and that’s not that useful.”

Many of the interviewees spoke of having other part-time or full-time paid work that they do in addition to their social change work. And one interviewee spoke of taking on other paid consulting contracts to allow them to keep working on their organization. One interviewee spoke of living in a two income household which means as they describe that they are “able to take on contracts as I want to, as opposed to as I need to, which really helps.” Another interviewee spoke about using savings from a previous well paying job to fund their organization.

Several interviewees spoke of having received informal financial support and donations from the community, “so we’ll have buckets out the [event] and people will just put bills in there and that’s where a lot of the money has come from.” Another interviewee explained “this [social media campaign] wasn’t funded by any organizations...but we actually had a lot of support from just private individuals...e-transferring money.” One interviewee also spoke of raising \$1000 via a GoFundMe campaign. A representative of a student advocacy organization spoke of how their work is funded by students through student fees at member post-secondary institutions.

We also asked the interviewees what kind of in-kind support they had received for their work. Everyone spoke of the ‘labour’ of volunteers as being key to the work they are doing. Many of the interviewees indicated that their organization has no paid staff. Some interviewees indicated that beyond unpaid labour they were not receiving any in-kind support.

One interviewee spoke of community members “showing up at my door with food for me when I was too tired to talk” as well as community members helping with administrative tasks such as booking meeting rooms and promoting events. One interviewee spoke of other non-profits supporting their work in-kind by “lending us their [meeting] rooms” as well as providing them with a mailing address when needed.

This same group also spoke of companies offering discounts, for example a staging company offering a discounted stage to support an event. Another interviewee spoke of receiving in-kind subscriptions to software such as Adobe and Canva that helped them do their work. And yet another explained, “there have been times where like half the megaphones we use do not belong to us.” Several interviewees spoke of receiving pro bono legal advice, pro bono trainings, help reviewing funding proposals or support reaching out to media. As one interviewee explained, “what I found was fantastic was when organizations would do some of the logistical stuff for us, it’s just quite complicated and boring, like getting an insurance for an event.”

One interviewee described support they have received navigating tensions during a protest, “we’ve also had a lot of adults donate their time to mediate between the protesters and the police for example...There’s a lot more risk for someone who looks like me to be communicating with police and in a high tension situation than there is for a 40 year old white male that volunteers his time to make sure that we feel safe. So, it sounds very small but coming out and showing your support can make a big difference.”



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Interviewee

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One interviewee spoke of having transportation paid for so they could attend events as well as a respite worker who could support them throughout the event "whether it's minor things like... prepping my mic and my mic stand for a speech I'm about to give, keeping my water bottle there with me, or the major things like medicine, going to the bathroom, anything like that, that's major, and something I value a lot when I have to go in person."

One interviewee spoke about a family member who supported their work by sending out a "mass mail out and press releases, because that's what he did in his [former job]."

One interviewee spoke of a retreat they were given the opportunity to attend that focused on wellbeing that was very helpful for them to allow them to rest and recover and thus continue with their work.

Overall, there was a consistent theme amongst interviewees that they were receiving little to no financial support for their work and what they do receive is a mix of relatively small financial support (a few hundred or a few thousand dollars per source) and in-kind support. Much of the support received is informal support from the community in the form of small donations of money or in-kind support or unpaid labour. Even though the support these young people are receiving might be considered small, it has a significant impact on their work and the interviewees express that they are grateful for the support they received.

### Searching for funding

We also asked interviewees where they looked to find funding opportunities. The vast majority of interviewees said that when they searched for funding opportunities on Google. Some spoke of finding funding opportunities via social media including on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Some spoke of finding funding opportunities via word of mouth, as one interviewee explained "I have other friends who have non-profits, so often if one of us has an opportunity, we send it to each other." Some of the interviewees spoke of looking in scholarship databases through their university and others spoke of finding opportunities for funding on mailing lists that they have joined. One interviewee spoke of learning about scholarship opportunities through their school's guidance counsellor.

One interviewee whose organization receives the majority of their funding from foundations spoke of how their "most successful fundraising has been instances where we met somebody in person at an event, and shook hands and talked about our work, and then followed up. So that's been really successful." They went on to say that "our other most successful strategy has been asking other people to make introductions for us...and collaborating with other youth organizations, has also been really important...working on a joint application with another youth organization."

Another interviewee whose organization's funding is mostly corporate partnerships explained "I guess I formed a very solid network of people who trusted each other in this and were willing to kind of take risks on my what we're building...[they would] offer their support [in the form of] introductions, connections and that type of thing."

Overall, the vast majority of the interviewees rely on Google, social media and word of mouth to search for funding opportunities.





## What funding and support is needed

After we got a sense of what financial and in-kind support the interviewees receive, and were they look for funding opportunities, we asked them what kind of funding and support would increase the impact of their work but that they do not currently receive.

Several interviewees spoke of the need for support both financial and in-kind related to administrative tasks surrounding starting a non-profit. As one interviewee explained “I don’t even know who to ask those questions to it’s kind of like you have a blindfold on, and you’re like walking in the dark pretty much”.

One interviewee spoke of the need for larger scale support for youth-led initiatives in the range of \$100 000. Another interviewee spoke of needing more support for their work, but this interviewee set their sights much lower “I didn’t need much to keep going with this but I need some support so I would say probably...\$3500.” Overall it was expressed that the micro-grants available for youth-led work are not large enough to allow young people to carry out impactful work. As one interviewee explained “Micro grants aren’t enough to actually sustain activist work in a real meaningful capacity. And so, yeah, just giving out 500 micro grants is maybe not as impactful as giving out one really awesome big one.”

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Interviewee

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One interviewee spoke of needing funding to better support the Indigenous young people they work with “as well as reviewing our internal policies on Indigenization, and kind of getting their opinions on how we can change.”

Almost all the interviewees spoke of the need for support to ensure that both themselves and the young people who are working with them are paid a living wage. One interviewee explained, “we put together a whole media strategy for the school...so the amount of unpaid labor going into that was the equivalent of a full time job for somebody... I really I wish we found some way to pay people.”

Another interviewee explained, “the thing that is my priority right now is being able to increase wages to match with inflation, which is not something that we have been able to do. And being able to increase the amount of benefits that we offer, which is not something we have been able to do. We have never had a fully full time team, we have always had only some staff part time and I think that would make a world of a difference to be able to have a full time team. And we have only ever been able to offer contracts that are a year long.





It would be amazing to be able to offer contracts that were at least two, if not even three years long to have better job security for our team, and to be able to...dream of projects that are longer than a year." Or as another interviewee put it, "supporting people's time, so that they can afford to think about climate crisis and don't need to worry about how they're going to pay rent or support their families or buy food."

Related to the ability to pay wages is the need for funding that allows for operational support. One interview explained that supporting the young people they work with in the global South to be able to buy laptops and access the internet, support local travel or offer them modest honorariums is something they would like to do more of.

One interviewee spoke of the need for funders to take risks and provide funding for innovative ideas. "Because a lot of the times, the funders, you know, they hesitate to try something completely new and completely different that a young person might want to do for a project."

Several interviewees spoke about the need for more funding that is flexible and unrestricted. As one interviewee explained "that is definitely the thing that we need the most. We have been very fortunate to work with funders that have been quite flexible, that have given us the space to shift things and change our mind or tried things that are going to be more effective or innovative or takes risks... Some of our most like successful programs and projects have been because of funding that has been a bit flexible."

The most consistent needs expressed by the interviewees were an overall need for more funding, larger funding amounts for youth-led work, funding for wages, general operational support and funding that is flexible.

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**Supporting people's time, so that they can afford to think about climate crisis and don't need to worry about how they're going to pay rent or support their families or buy food.**

Interviewee

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## Who won't you accept money from?

To get a better sense of the ways in which the interviewees were looking to be supported, we asked them who they would and would not accept money from and under what conditions.

In particular, oil extraction companies, big banks, weapons manufacturers, large tech companies, venture capitalists and Canadian government departments (Indigenous Affairs, Natural Resources and Innovation, Science and Economic Development) were mentioned as funders that some of the interviewees would not accept money from, while others would think long and hard before they accepted money from these funders.

One interviewee also explained “one organisation...I had a real problem with their administration and in the way they treated people and all of these things”, so as a result this interviewee choose not to partner with this organization.

One interviewee explained that it is not just about who a particular funder is rather “it is twofold it's both who you are, and the nature of the gift of the contribution.” They went on to explain, “it's like if you're an organization that has done a lot of really terrible things for the environment or for inequality, then [the grant] needs to be like 100% unrestricted funding. You're not allowed to put your name on anything that we do and we don't want to see our logo on your stuff, either. You can announce that you've given us funding but like that's it.” This was a strategy and sentiment echoed by several of the interviewees. Taking it one step further, one of the interviewee's organization does not guarantee any visibility to its funders regardless of who they are.

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**It's like if you're an organization that has done a lot of really terrible things for the environment or for inequality, then [the grant] needs to be like 100% unrestricted funding.**

Interviewee

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One interviewee suggested that foundations disclosing where they got their money from on their website would be helpful in creating a more transparent relationship between funders and potential grantees.

When asked why they might not accept money from a particular funder, one interviewee explained, “our money needs are so much less than our people needs, we'd rather retain our people, our motivated activists.”

One interviewee told a story of how they had recently decided to leave a funding partnership and give the money back. They explained that it was “because their relationship was becoming quite harmful for the team member that was leading the project and we put that first and left the project. There was a lot of micromanagement happening. The funder had very specific requirements which were becoming challenging. So [giving back funding has] only happened once. I hope it never happens again. But that is something that we're willing to do. The relationship with the funder was more harmful than the potential benefits of actually doing the work.”

The responses from the interviewees about who they would or would not accept funding from and under what circumstances clearly illustrate that they are willing to go without rather than compromise their values. They are also ready to make requests of funders and if those requests are not met, they are ok with saying no to the funding being offered or even go so far as to be willing to give it back. Interviewees suggest that foundations disclosing where they got their money from on their website would be helpful in creating a more transparent relationship between funders and potential grantees.





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## **I think organizations may shy away from [working with me] because they do not want to upset government.**

Interviewee

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### Barriers

We also spoke to interviewees about the barriers they face in accessing and securing funding.

One of the barriers mentioned by several of the interviewees is that they do not feel as though they can secure support from funders because their work is seen as too political or too radical. In other words, their work is focused on dismantling systems or challenge the status quo and assumptions or addressing root causes of social and environmental problems. As one interviewee whose work involves government advocacy explained, “I think organizations may shy away from [working with me] because they do not want to upset government who they have to work with.” Another interviewee explained how their work on a past project has impacted their current work, “a lot of people come up to me and say you must love putting that on your resume and I laughed because I’m like, you can’t put something like that on a resume because when people read that I challenged my institution, they see it as...if you are awarded this grant you’re not going to be a nice and respectable ambassador of our program.”

Another barrier identified is funders values not aligning with the young people’s values. As one interviewee described “I think another challenge is also aligning our values with people who have money. So often when groups have large amounts of funding, it’s like are we going to accept funding from these people?” As another interviewee explained “it becomes really tricky from an Indigenous perspective, you’re supposed to do work in a good way.”

And yet another interviewee described “I find it really annoying when you know I’m writing about why I’m an environmentalist and I use this story of colonialism and racism and the response is sort of like, ‘no, no, we’re talking about the environment’. There is a lack of intersectional allyship.” Another perspective on why values alignment with funders is sometimes hard was this one, “often you can’t get government funding, if you’re not a registered NGO...and a lot of youth don’t want to. [Registering] makes the organization sort of institutionalized, then you have to have a board and then there’s a hierarchy. In the [youth] environmental movement there a lot of distaste towards hierarchies and putting people above each other.”

None of the organizations or campaigns that had been founded by the interviewees that we spoke to are charities. Some but not all were incorporated as non-profits. This is also a barrier to receiving funding. As one interviewee explained, “I’ve been kind of learning that Canada has a distinction between non-profit and charity, which is not the way it’s done everywhere else. For example, us being a non-profit is good enough for American foundations and for European foundations. It’s not good enough for [the] Canadian foundations that we’ve connected to.” As another interviewee explained “we are not yet an incorporated charity. So that like cuts off a whole lot of funding and we are still new, like we’re not even five years old yet. So when we were first applying for funding, it was like, Oh, you need to be incorporated for a year.” As another interviewee explained, eligibility criteria in general is a barrier, “[grants we are eligible for] just don’t exist. Sometimes I spend hours Googling and go pages and pages and pages and look through the qualifications. And after all that I realize okay, so we don’t qualify.”



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Interviewee

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Another interviewee explained that in the era post WE charity scandal, innovative incorporation structures where an organization for example has both a for-profit arm and a charitable arm are questioned, making their organization that is currently structured as a for-profit, feel that it is not worth the hassle of applying for charitable status even though their work fits that definition.

Many interviewees also spoke of a lack of capacity. One interview spoke of how "it's not like we have full time staff to devote time to jumping through hoops to navigate a system that wasn't meant for us." Another interviewee described it this way, "I would love if other organizations could just think about the fact that we don't have the same means as them. We are not sitting on thousands and thousands of dollars, we do not have lots of employees. We're a very small group so...it's not as easy as like setting off a piece of paper to the finance person to fill out." Other interviewees spoke of the amount of paperwork required to apply for and receive funding is not feasible for them "sometimes if I count up the hours, I'm getting paid one cent an hour for just filling out paperwork." Interviewees also spoke of the high turnover rate in youth organizations and the challenges that poses for having capacity to meet funder requirements. And yet another interviewee of the challenges of managing time as a young leader, "You're doing the work and managing that on top of going to high school and just being a teenager and having family problems and everything."

Interviewees indicated that they also had trouble measuring impact or doing the kind of long term planning that funders often asked for, "a big component to getting funds from an organization requires you to document your impact. You also have to usually have a very tangible impact. Three years later, [only] now can I say that [our work] had a direct impact."

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**It's not like we have full time staff to devote time to jumping through hoops to navigate a system that wasn't meant for us.**

Interviewee

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Several interviewees spoke of frustrations working with larger non-profits who have more stable funding. Or in their words the “non-profit industrial complex”. As one interviewee described “when I look at like the budgets of some very large organizations that invite you to speak but do not offer us honorariums because they have a big name and it gives the youth, a platform. I think platforming is very important, but you also have to value young people. And I think that is a mindset that a lot of these larger adult run organizations, [not valuing young people].” Another interviewee spoke about how their organization “spends so much time training people instead of just organizing, and then they end up being recruited by an NGO and so I think if [larger] NGOs could actually put a significant amount of their resources to mentorship and training, [that would make a big difference for youth-led organizations].” Another interviewee spoke of how “it can be competitive in the environmental movement but I wish there were more adults willing to share their knowledge...I do think there are tons of people in the environment movement who do not understand how essential their knowledge is and instead they just want to keep it to themselves...When we talk about sustainability, its environmental sustainability, but it is also the social sustainability of the movement so [supporting] young people is an important part of ensuring the movement is successful.” Another interviewee explained “I find that on one hand, I’m very privileged, because I’ve been in these circles, literally since I was nine years old. But at the same time, I still feel like a lot of these various organisations have elbows up and are not willing to create space...And this is not unique to my experience, but very much so common among young leaders who are trying to make a difference whereby the older institutions really are not kind of extending an arm to be collaborative. So that for me has been frustrating.”

The main themes shared by interviewees related to the barriers they face in receiving funding where their work is too radical or political; a sense that their values are not aligned with funders values; not being a charitable organization; not having the capacity to meet funders requirements; and feeling as though being young leads to their work not being valued.

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**I find that on one hand, I’m very privileged, because I’ve been in these [non-profit] circles, literally since I was nine years old. But at the same time, I still feel like a lot of these various organisations have elbows up and are not willing to create space.**

Interviewee

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## What can funders do differently?

Lastly, to answer sub-question 2, we asked interviewees what funders could do differently to support young changemakers to increase their social and environmental impact.

The interviewees spoke about how funders could do a better job of recognizing the value of young people and working in partnership with them. As one interviewee put it “I would say that the weight of the environmental movement is honestly resting upon the shoulders of young people...I wish there was more like empathy and wanting to share not just your finances, but your knowledge, your space, your platform with young people.”

Another interviewee explained what a more collaborative relationship with a funder might look like “I think a good relationship to me looks like okay look let’s talk about your idea and then, and then let’s figure out together like how to make this happen.” They went on to say that they wished that funders would also recognize that young people have a lot of knowledge that adults don’t have and that they would support the creation of spaces for knowledge transfer and a reciprocal relationship between generations. As one interviewee explained “It [should not be] just this transactional exchange...[Foundations need to] be better at relationships.”

The term ‘mutual aid’ came up in multiple interviews. It can be defined as “voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit.” (Wikipedia, 2022, p. 1). This was repeatedly mentioned as a leading practice in how money can be distributed in a way that avoids hierarchy and diffuses power imbalances.

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**I would say that the weight of the environmental movement is honestly resting upon the shoulders of young people... I wish there was more like empathy and wanting to share not just your finances, but your knowledge, your space, your platform with young people.**

### Interviewee

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A common theme in the interviews was a desire from the interviewees for funders to understand that their work is complex. They asked that funders take the time to get to know them and come to their events to really understand what they do. As one interviewee put it “they need to be more comfortable taking that leap of faith. They need to be more comfortable saying let’s see where this goes.”

Interviewees also spoke of how funders could fund wages to ensure that young people who work in these organizations and movements make a living wage. As one interviewee put it “I just think even a little bit of money to pay ourselves would make a big difference.”

Interviewees also spoke of the need for funders to ensure the information about their funding opportunities gets to the young people who would benefit from it most. As one interviewee explained “Promotion is a big one, I’d say. I don’t know why everything is so secretive.”

Several of the interviewees suggested that there is a need for more creativity in terms of how young people can communicate impact to a foundation. One interviewee explained “I think it would be much more interesting if you know we made a video together, we’re like, this is what our organization is about.” The interviewees also thought creativity would be helpful because “factual data doesn’t accurately represent the stuff that we do a lot of the time.”

There was overall an expressed desire for reducing the reporting requirements that come with receiving funding, as well as more flexibility in general. There was a desire expressed for convening and bringing together young people working on similar issues. And if more traditional reporting is necessary, the interviewees suggested that funders include extra funding to ensure organizations could hire someone to carry this out.

Common themes in the interviews related to what funders could do differently were working in partnership with young people, working to address power imbalances, taking the time to understand young people’s work as well as funding wages, better promoting funding opportunities, and creativity and flexibility in reporting requirements.



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**One of the things that we try to tell funders, is that, you create this toxic cycle when young people are trying to engage in these spaces, dealing with extractive relationships, tokenism, scarcity of resources, not being supported and are unfunded or underfunded, [then they] burnout and leave the movement.**

Interviewee

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### Interview sub-question 3

The last question we are aiming to answer with these interviews relates to foundations supporting young leaders wellbeing and preventing burnout:

- How can foundations better support leaders of youth-led organizations and movements when it comes to ensuring wellbeing and preventing burnout?

Across the board, the interviewees spoke of mental health distress and burnout as being a significant challenge for both them and their peers. As one interviewee described, “one of the things that we try to tell funders, is that, you create this toxic cycle when young people are trying to engage in these spaces, dealing with extractive relationships, tokenism, scarcity of resources, not being supported and are unfunded or underfunded, [then they] burnout and leave the movement.” Another interviewee spoke about how they have “definitely been extremely mentally impacted by the environmental movement. I’ve had [faced] a lot of racism in the environmental movement, and that has damaged me a lot to...it is definitely lacking a support system in the youth space.”

An Indigenous interviewee explained, “this work is not something that I get to turn on and off... There’s always people that need support and in addition you’re, an Indigenous person working in Indigenous community. You’re working in your own trauma and your own healing, trying to support other people. This is my whole life.”

Another interviewee spoke of the impacts on mental health and wellbeing that occur as a result of asking for funding, “I think one of the most frustrating things for me is like the people who usually hold the wealth, are straight white people who have benefited off of generations of oppression and systemic violence etc. It’s dehumanizing [to ask for funding], I now have to go to the colonizer and be like ‘excuse me, can I have some funds.’”

In terms of what funders can do to support the wellbeing of young leaders, many of the interviewees spoke of the idea of a funder offering funds for therapy or access to therapists as part of a grant. As one interviewee put it “Yes, if an organization we were working with, said, here’s your money, and here’s also a therapist [that would be great].”

Supporting the creation of safe spaces for young people to connect with their peers, build community and create strong relationships was also suggested repeatedly as something funders could support. Interviewees spoke of the importance of these spaces incorporating Indigenous practices and identity. Interviewees also spoke of the importance of ensuring that young leaders, especially those from equity-deserving groups, have an opportunity for joy and rest. It was suggested that funders fund this as well as funding the hard work of social change.

Trainings were also mentioned as something that would be helpful including conflict de-escalation training, general mental health and wellbeing related trainings as well as trainings that would support young people to deal with the inevitable setbacks that occur when trying to work towards social and environmental change.



It was also mentioned that trying to mitigate the power dynamics that exist between funders and young people, but also young people and adults more generally would be an important step in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young leaders.

Many interviews also mentioned the importance of being paid a living wage to ensure that they do not have to work multiple jobs on top of doing social change work. As well as to ensure that young leaders do not have the stress, of as one interviewee put it, how “am I going to be able to pay my team.”

Interviewees were clear that mental health distress and burnout are pervasive issues within youth-led organizations and movements. Their recommendations for solutions to addressing this are providing funds for therapy or access to a therapist as part of grants, supporting convening of young leaders to discuss these issues and support each other, funding opportunities for cultivating joy and rest, providing trainings, addressing power dynamics between young people and adults and ensuring the young people working in these organizations and movements are paid a living wage.

### The interviews provide a picture of what foundations can do to better support youth-led organizations and movements, the key findings from the interviews are as follows:

- Provide more funding specifically to youth-led organizations and movements including:
  - Offer larger funding amounts for youth-led work;
  - Ensure that funding is sufficient so that young people working in these organizations and movements are paid a living wage;
  - Provide general operational support;
  - Fund work that is usually considered radical or political;
  - Fund organizations without a formal structure and non-profits who don't have charitable status;
  - Provide funds for therapy or access to a therapist as part of grants;
  - Fund opportunities for cultivating joy and rest amongst young leaders; and
  - Ensure funding provided is flexible.
- Work in partnership with young people when making funding decisions;
- Work to address power imbalances within the foundation and use the foundation's influence to work to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally;
- Support the convening of young leaders;
- Disclose where the foundation received its money on the foundation website to create a more transparent relationship between funders and potential grantees;
- Better promote funding opportunities to ensure they reach a wide cross section of young leaders, young-led organizations and movements; and
- Offer opportunities for creativity and flexibility in reporting requirements.



# INSIGHTS

By reviewing the latest academic and grey literature as well as conducting interviews with young leaders we were able to identify key insights that help answer the question that is at the core of this research: How can Canadian foundations best support youth-led civil society organizations and youth movements to have an impact on social and environmental issues?

In their report Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021) describe the National Committee for Responsible Philanthropy's three stages for how foundation's can leverage their power to support grassroots work:

- "Build Power: Support systemic change by funding civic engagement, advocacy and community organizing among marginalized communities;
- Share Power: Nurture transparent, trusting relationships and co-creating strategies with stakeholders;
- Wield Power: Exercise public leadership beyond grantmaking to create equitable, catalytic change." (Flores & Fierle-Hedrick, 2021, p. 20)

Flores and Fierle-Hedrick (2021)'s work is a useful framework to use to describe how best to meaningfully support youth-led organizations and movements to increase their impact, we have adapted it for this purpose in the following way:

## Build power

- Ensure adequate and dedicated funding for youth-led organizations and movements on young people's terms with an emphasis on funding youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political and funding youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities;

## Share Power

- Engage young people as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations with a focus on engaging young people from equity-deserving communities and those with strong connections to community; and

## Leverage Power

- Use foundations' influence to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally;

**We expand on these three insights below:**

## Build Power

Through the interviews it became clear that in order to best support youth-led organizations and movements more funding specifically earmarked to support youth-led work is needed. In particular funding that is granted on young people's terms with an emphasis on funding youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political and funding youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities. Tangible changes that should be made to granting programs identified in this research are as follows:

- Organizations and collectives of young people who are not charitable organizations or incorporated non-profits are eligible for funding;
- Larger funding amounts and longer term funding is available specifically for youth-led work;
- Funding that allows youth-led organizations and movements to pay a living wage and cover other operational costs is readily available for youth-led work;
- Funding for youth-led work that has traditionally been perceived by too radical or political is readily available;
- Funding for youth-led work led by equity-deserving communities is readily available;





- Funding for therapy or access to a therapist for young leaders and those working in and with youth-led organizations and movements is offered as part of grants;
- Funding for cultivating joy and rest amongst young leaders and those working in and with youth-led organizations and movements is readily available;
- Funding criteria as well as reporting requirements are transparent, flexible and allow for creativity, and foundations ensure there is a staff available to work with young grantees to explain and adjust these requirements as needed;
- Networking and convening for youth-led organizations and movements is supported by funders but led by young people; and
- Technical, financial and project management training is available to young grantees before, during and after they receive funding.

## Share power

Power can be shared by meaningfully engaging young people as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations. A focus on engaging young people from equity-deserving communities as well as those with strong connections to community to ensure that young people engaged are not just representing themselves but can offer a broader perspective is key. Leading practices to facilitate meaningful engagement in this context are:

- Foundations commit to an equal partnership with youth-led organizations and movements by sharing the control of grant making decisions equally with young people as well as by designating the time and resources needed to build trusting relationships with young people;
- Foundations commit to an ongoing examination of how power and control impact decision-making within the foundation and leverage the foundation's power in such a way that existing power structures both within and beyond the foundation are challenged in support of grantees work;
- Foundations are prepared before engaging young people. This includes the leadership and staff 'buying in' to diverse, equitable and inclusive youth engagement, meaningful intergenerational collaboration and valuing young people's unique abilities, and attitudes and stereotypes about young people being proactively addressed;
- Foundations establish adequate structures for youth engagement and allocate appropriate resources.  
This includes embedding youth engagement within the formal structures of the foundation as well as providing on-going financial and staff support;
- Foundations enact a robust recruitment strategy that goes beyond engaging the 'usual suspects' by prioritizing recruiting 'hard to reach' young people as well as young people with strong connections to community;
- Foundations dedicate the time needed to establish relationships between adults and young people that center belonging, trust, and space for discomfort and ambiguity;
- Foundations ensure young people are prepared for their involvement and supported throughout with thoughtful emotional support, a balance of safety and support as well as choice and challenge, just in time training, and ongoing mentorship;
- Foundations ensure young people are given the chance to make real decisions, take ownership over mission critical tasks and have a meaningful impact;
- Foundations ensure young people engage with the wider community through intergenerational collaboration and by embedding young people's work within a wider network of support; and
- Foundations regularly gather and share data about youth engagement efforts and regularly integrate feedback received.



## Leverage power

Foundations' own power can be leveraged to support youth-led work by foundations' using their influence to address power imbalances between young people and adults in civil society, government and society more generally. Leading practices to leverage power include:

- Foundations working to ensure that adult leaders in social and environmental change movements and organizations value young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements and that they collaborate with them and support them;
- Foundations advocating to ensure that other funders, in particularly government, build and share power with young people including adhering to the leading practices outlined above;
- Foundations fund research to address the gaps in knowledge identified in this research:
  - Research to benchmark the current state of youth engagement practices by Canadian foundations; and
  - Research to study the impact of funding and in-kind support currently being offered by Canadian foundations to youth-led organizations and movements.







## Critical shifts

The results of the first Ashoka Academy outlined a need to shift from the current state of “citizen voices – especially the voices of disenfranchised youth – are not driving decision-making within government and institutions, to a future state of “citizen voices – notably from young people – are supported, organized and strengthened to enhance their agency and move decision-makers.”

In order to achieve this shift, after reflecting on the research outlined in this report, Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship members propose that the following critical shifts:

Current State	Future State
<p>Youth-led organizations and movements do not have adequate funding.</p>	<p>Adequate and dedicated funding for youth-led organizations and movements is available on young people’s terms and is trust-based. This includes funding for activities that have traditionally been perceived by too radical or political including advocacy, lobbying and protest, funding to support mental wellbeing and joy and funding work led by youth from equity-deserving communities.</p>
<p>Young people are not consistently or meaningfully engaged in a decision-making role in the granting activities and governance of foundations. When they are engaged it is usually limited to an advisory role.</p>	<p>Young people are consistently and meaningfully engaged as decision-makers in the granting activities and governance of foundations. This includes diverse young people directly making decisions about what issues and causes funding will be directed towards, how funding is allocated as well as decisions surrounding the operations of the foundation including decisions related to governance and human resources.</p>
<p>Power imbalances between young people and adults are common and widespread.</p>	<p>Foundations are using their influence to advocate for other decision-making institutions to collaborate with young people. In particular foundations are working side by side with young people to ensure that power imbalances between young people and adults in adult-led non-profits, government and society more broadly are addressed.</p>



# COLLABORATIVE PROCESS SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDED CONCRETE ACTIONS

As outlined earlier in this report, the Ashoka Canada Foundation Academy for Collaboration on Youth Allyship took place in several stages:

- Connect
- Gather insights
- Youth engagement
- Exchange and align
- Co-create

For the exchange and align as well as the co-create portion of this project, a draft version of this report was shared with Academy members and young leaders and in October - December 2022, three sessions between took place with both Academy members and young leaders. The first was a daylong session in Montréal and the next two were virtual. The ultimate aim of these sessions was to explore opportunities to experiment and/or collaborate on shared priorities.

Out of these sessions came three ideas for concrete next steps that the young leaders and Academy members believed could be taken collectively to support the critical shifts outlined above. While the leading practices outlined throughout this report can be implemented by individual foundations, the three ideas below are meant to be viewed as collaborative projects that a coalition of foundations, youth-serving organizations, young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements may consider advancing together. These ideas are initial brainstorming that would need further fleshing out:

1

## Create youth-led fund and/or invest in and support existing youth-led funds.

In order for a youth-led fund to contribute towards achieving the critical shifts outlined in this report it would need to:

- Ensure young people hold decision making power for how funds are allocated as well as the the design and administration of the fund and are paid a living wage for this work;
- Ensure the fund operates based on the leading practices identified within this report;
- Ensure all funding includes an allocation for well-being practices for young people (whether it is included in the initial request or not);
- Any funders who contribute to this fund would be vetted by young people (An example of this is the Right Relations Collaborative - <https://rightrelationscollaborative.ca/>);
- Ensure thoughtful consideration is given to about youth are defined for the purpose of this fund;
- Ensure funding is available to 'non qualified donees', organizations that are non-profits or who do not have a formal structure; and
- Ensure lessons learned by the Indigenous Resilience Fund (<https://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/indigenous-peoples-resilience-fund>), Foundations for Black Communities (<https://www.forblackcommunities.org/>), Feast House (<https://feast-house.ca/>) and other similar initiatives are integrated into this work.





## 2

### Supporting foundations, civil society and government to improve their youth allyship practices through an education series and resources.

In order for this to contribute towards achieving the critical shifts outlined in this report it would need to:

- Pay young people to co-design workshops and develop education resources;
- Ensure young aren't doing all this work, that they have support and are working in intergenerational collaboration;
- Recognize that young people will age out of this demographic and are constantly changing, and funders are not, as such this work needs to be done in an intergenerational context with new young people feeding into it regularly;
- Regularly research who are new 'younger youth' who are becoming young leaders and who can feed into this work;
- Create a repository of different youth-led organizations and movements that foundations, government and civil society can reach out to (for example similar to what is planned by for EDI consultants: <https://www.futureancestors.ca/constellation>);
- Have this intergenerational collaborative advocate for the needs of youth-led organizations and movements (for example advocate for youth-led organizations needs in the context of the changing guidelines for the funding non-qualified donees).

## 3

### Create intergenerational gathering spaces where young leaders, youth-led organizations and movements have access the support and decision-makers.

In order for this to contribute towards achieving the critical shifts outlined in this report it would need to:

- Involve an in-person component;
- Support young people in the areas of programming, outreach, facilitation, administration, finance, operations and personal wellbeing;
- Opportunities where young people and funders as well as other decision-makers can come together;
- Follow up with funders as well as other decision-makers after any gatherings to see how they are moving forward with the connections they made at the gathering;
- Funders and decision-makers would help build connections and invite other funders to come; and
- Model on elements of the work of Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (<https://www.fesplanet.org/>), The Youth Harbour (<https://theyouthharbour.org/>), Trinity Foundation (<https://trinitycentres.org/>) and Foundation house (<https://www.foundation.house/>).



# CONCLUSION

The results of this research, echo the findings of Ashoka Canada's first Academy. This research shows that young leaders in youth-led organizations and movements are calling for similar action to what social innovators in general are asking for from foundations namely:

- "Build sustained, trusting, and collaborative partnerships with grantees.
- Share decision-making power over funding.
- Funders should use their voices to confront...inequities" (Ashoka Canada, 2020, p. 8)

The difference being that there is even a larger power imbalance between young people, especially those from equity-deserving communities, and funders than there is between adults in social and environmental change organizations and movements and funders.

Young people are often at the forefront of social and environmental change movements, offering more radical and political perspectives that push us to go further than adults are comfortable going (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018; Ho et al., 2015). In a time of rapid change and increasing urgency to address social and environmental challenges, this push to go further and act more quickly that is coming from young people, is exactly what is needed.

If we hope to address the social and environmental challenges we are all facing, working in intergenerational collaboration with young leaders is not only necessary it is an imperative and it should be prioritized. In order to effectively do so, we need to build power in youth-led organization and movements, share power with young leaders and perhaps most importantly, leverage our own power and influence to address broader systemic barriers to intergenerational collaboration.

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**If we hope to address the social and environmental challenges we are all facing, working in intergenerational collaboration with young leaders is not only necessary it is an imperative and it should be prioritized.**

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

Youth Allyship Collaborative – Initial funder questionnaire

- How do you currently engage young changemakers in the governance and decision-making processes of your Foundation?
- How are you currently engaging next generation philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of your Foundation?
- Are there any reports, studies or other sources that have been particularly influential in how you have designed the way you engage with young changemakers and/or next generational philanthropists?
- What challenges have you faced when it comes to engaging young changemakers and/or next generational philanthropists in the governance and decision-making processes of the Foundation?
- What challenges have you faced in your funding or support of youth-led organizations and youth movements?
- What gaps do you see in how youth-led organizations and youth movements are funded and/or supported in the Canadian context?
- Who are the youth-led organizations and youth movements that you work closely with / are most inspired by?
- What youth-led organizations and youth movements do you wish you knew more about?
- What kind of policy change and government support do you think is needed to best support young changemakers to have an impact on social and environmental issues?
- What kind of support do youth-serving organizations need to best support young changemakers to have an impact on social and environmental issues?
- How does your Foundation currently support young changemakers when it comes to ensuring wellbeing and preventing burnout?

## Appendix B

### Email invite

Email Subject: Invitation to participate in an important study from the University of Waterloo.

[INSERT NAME],

Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo co-led by Dr. Amelia Clarke and Ilona Dougherty is conducting a research study in partnership with Ashoka Canada that aims to determine how Canadian philanthropic foundations might best support youth-led organizations and movements in achieving positive social and environmental impact.

I am writing to you with the hope that you would be willing to set up a time for a virtual interview. You have been selected as one of 20 young changemakers to participate in an interview, that we have identified through an extensive media search.

Here is a link to the Youth & Innovation Project's scheduling software, where you can indicate which date and time works best for you: [INSERT LINK].

In appreciation of your time, you will receive \$50 upon participation in the interview. Please note that this amount is taxable and that it is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

The interview will take place in English, if you prefer to have the interview take place in French, please let us know and we are happy to make the necessary arrangements.



The interview will be approximately 45 minutes long and can be scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be hosted through Zoom, so you can join the interview through a laptop or you can dial in by phone.

The main topics of the interview are related to your experience and perspectives about how Canadian philanthropic foundations might best support youth-led organizations and movements in achieving positive social and environmental impact. A report summarizing the findings of these interviews as well as a literature review that has already been conducted, will be shared with the members of the Ashoka Academy for Youth Allyship, Philanthropic Foundations of Canada member organizations as well as publicly.

Your responses will not be linked to your name or if applicable, the name of your organization anywhere in the report, and no data will be shared beyond the Youth & Innovation Project's small team of researchers that would connect you or your organization to specific comments.

We have also attached an information letter with more details/information about the study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44514). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

If there anything the Youth & Innovation Project can do to facilitate your participation in this interview or any accessibility needs that you would like to make the Youth & Innovation Project aware of please don't hesitate to contact us at youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your time,

### **Information letter**

Note: If you are under 18 years old in Quebec or 16 years old in the rest of Canada, please share this information letter with your parents/guardians. If they have any questions or concerns, they can contact us at youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca.

Hello,

I am writing to you from the Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario.

Youth & Innovation Project co-led by Dr. Amelia Clarke and Ilona Dougherty is conducting a research study in partnership with Ashoka Canada that aims to determine how Canadian philanthropic foundations might best support youth-led organizations and movements in achieving positive social and environmental impact.

You have been selected as one of 20 young changemakers to participate in an interview, that we have identified through an extensive media search.

Participation in this interview is voluntary, will take the form of a 45 minute interview via Zoom and will take place at a mutually convenient time. Zoom has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via its services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free.

In appreciation of your time, you will receive \$50 upon participation in the interview. Please note that this amount is taxable and that it is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

We will ask you to share your experience and perspectives about how Canadian philanthropic foundations might best support youth-led organizations and movements in achieving positive social and environmental impact. With your permission, the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes only. This recording will only be viewed by the researchers and the person who transcribes the video, and it will be securely stored to ensure your identity remains confidential. You may choose to turn off your video before the interviewer starts recording so that only an audio file is recorded. A report summarizing the findings of these interviews as well as a literature review that has already been conducted, will be shared with the members of the Ashoka Academy on Youth Allyship, with Philanthropic Foundations of Canada member organizations as well as publicly. Members of the academy include representatives from 6 Canadian philanthropic foundations, Philanthropic Foundations of Canada and Ashoka Canada.





Your responses will not be linked to your name or if applicable, the name of your organization anywhere in the report, and no data will be shared beyond the Youth & Innovation Project's small team of researchers.

The data collected in this study may be used in future academic publications or in studies that further explore youth-led movements and organizations, the responses will not be linked to your name or if applicable, the name of your organization in any future publications. As a result, there is no risk associated with participating in this interview. If you do not wish to participate, you can withdraw from this study anytime up until the data has been analyzed and the report submitted to Ashoka Canada and your responses will be deleted. You may also skip any questions in the interview that you do not wish to answer. The information collected from this study will be kept for a period of at least seven years and will be password protected.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44514). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [reb@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:reb@uwaterloo.ca).

If you are an Indigenous person and/or representing an Indigenous organization, we would like to assure you that this research recognizes the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to preserve and maintain their role as traditional guardians of these ecosystems through the maintenance of their cultures, spiritual beliefs and customary practices. This research respects the integrity, morality and spirituality of the culture, traditions and relationships of the Indigenous communities and aims to avoid the imposition of external conceptions and standards. We recognize that the Indigenous communities have the right to exclude and/or keep any information concerning their culture, traditions or spiritual beliefs confidential. Further, we acknowledge the traditional rights of Indigenous peoples to control the way the information they provide is used and accessed. As such we will include time during in the interview for you to provide us with any comments that you would like us to consider when we handle and process your responses.

If you would like to participate, please follow the link provided in the email sent to you to indicate a time and date that works for you for the interview.

If you have any questions about participation in this research study or the Youth and Innovation Project, please feel free to contact us at [youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you for your assistance with this research study.

Sincerely,

Ilona Dougherty

Managing Director  
*Youth & Innovation Project*  
University of Waterloo

<https://uwaterloo.ca/youth-and-innovation/>

### **Interview consent form**

By agreeing to participate in the study you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by the Youth and Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study and I have received satisfactory answers to my questions and any additional details that I requested. I was informed that participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent by informing the researcher, up until the data has been analyzed and the summary report is submitted to Ashoka Canada.

Your responses will not be linked to your name or if applicable, the name of your organization anywhere in the report, and no data will be shared beyond the Youth & Innovation Project's small team of researchers.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44514) If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [reb@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:reb@uwaterloo.ca). For all other questions contact us at [youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca).



Please check the box to state your agreement:

- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this research study.
- I agree to my interview being recorded on Zoom to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. This recording will be confidential and only viewed by the Youth & Innovation Project's research team.
- I understand that the data collected in this study may be used in future academic publications or in studies that further explore the impact of young changemakers.
- I understand that my responses will not be linked to my name or the name of my organization in the summary report or in any future publications. But that a list of interview participants will be included in the final report.

Interviewee Name:

Interviewee Digital Signature:

Date:

### **Indigenous participation disclaimer**

This research recognizes the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to preserve and maintain their role as traditional guardians of these ecosystems through the maintenance of their cultures, spiritual beliefs and customary practices. This research respects the integrity, morality and spirituality of the culture, traditions and relationships of the Indigenous communities and aims to avoid the imposition of external conceptions and standards. We recognize that Indigenous communities have the right to exclude and/or keep any information concerning their culture, traditions or spiritual beliefs confidential. Further, we acknowledge the traditional rights of Indigenous peoples to control the way the information they provide is used and accessed.

Do you identify as an Indigenous person or do you represent an Indigenous organization? YES / NO / Prefer not to answer

If so, is there anything that you would like us to consider when we are handling and processing your responses?

Are you a member of another historically underrepresented group or are you part of an organization that represents another historically underrepresented group? YES / NO / Prefer not to answer

If so, there anything that you would like us to consider when we are handling and processing your responses?

Is there anything we can do to facilitate your participation in this interview or any accessibility needs that you would like to make us aware of?



# Appendix C

## Interview questions

- What movement(s) or organization(s) do you currently work with as a paid staff or as a volunteer? If there is more than one, please list all that you are currently working with.
- What is your role these organization(s) or movement(s)?
- What social, environmental or economic issue(s) does your work aim to address?
- Why are you passionate about these issue(s)?
- Have you been personally impacted by these issue(s)? If yes, how so?
- How did you become involved in working on this issue? For example, were you given an opportunity at school or work, were other family or friends involved in this issue, or was there another way it was introduced to you?
- Is your work supported by funders? 'Fundlers' can refer to individuals, organizations, or governments that contribute financially to your movement or organization.
- What kind of financial support do you receive? For example, your work could be funded largely by grants from Foundations, grants from Government, by private donations or through crowd funding.
- Do you also receive in-kind support from funders? This refers to non-financial support such as offering training sessions for your group, access to pro-bono (free) legal services, free use of office space, or donations of objects such as laptops.
- What type of in-kind support do you receive?
- What kind of funding or in-kind support do you wish your organization or movement received but that you don't currently receive?
- What challenges have you personally faced or have the groups you work with as a volunteer or paid staff faced in trying to access funding?
- Do you have any advice for funders about how they can make the eligibility criteria for grants or donations more accessible for groups like yours?
- Do you have any advice for funders about how they can make the application process more accessible for groups like yours?
- Do you have any advice for funders about how they can make the reporting requirements more accessible for groups like yours?
- How could the process of applying for / receiving funding be made better, more accessible, and more equitable?
- Can you give an example of a funder you felt supported by? If so, how did they made you feel supported?
- Is there anything that deters you from working with foundations, encourages you to look for other types of funding or do your work without funding?
- What should funders make sure to keep doing when it comes to funding movements or organizations like yours?
- What do you wish that funders understood about your work that you don't feel like they currently understand?
- Have you ever been involved in the decision-making processes of a funder for example being on an advisory council or granting committee?
- How could you best be supported by funders in your efforts to enact policy change? So for example, policy change could include changes like giving Indigenous nations more significant representation in government, advocating for your issue with government at the municipal, provincial or federal level or working to change a law at the municipal, provincial or federal level.
- Whose perspective is missing from conversations on funding for social and environmental issues?



These questions relate to your experience engaging with funders as it relates to your identity and personal experiences. Your wellbeing is most important, so please feel free to skip any questions that you need to.

- What kind of support from funders would improve your mental health and wellbeing and the mental health and wellbeing of others in your group or movement?
- Do you have open conversations with funders? Do you feel heard in these conversations?
- Do you feel like an equal partner when you meet with your funders? If not, why not?
- How do you navigate any power imbalances in your relationships with funders?
- Thank you so much for answering my questions. Do you have any questions for me?

## Appendix D

As outlined in the consent form you filled out when you scheduled the interview that you just participated in we will now ask you some demographic questions.

Please indicate that you understand that any data provided in this survey will not be linked to your name or any identifiable information including the questions we asked you in this interview. The data you provide in this survey will only be used in aggregate to provide an overview of the demographics of those who participated in this study.

All the questions in this survey are optional, you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

I understand: YES / NO

1. What is your age? TEXT BOX
2. What province or territory do you currently live in? TEXT BOX
3. What is your current labour force status?
  - a. Employed
  - b. Self-employed
  - c. Not employed but looking for job
  - d. Neither employed nor looking for job
4. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
  - a. Elementary or middle school
  - b. High school
  - c. College (College includes college or other non-university certificates, college or other non-university diplomas, collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) certificates and CEGEP diplomas)
  - d. Bachelor's
  - e. Master's
  - f. Doctorate
5. Are you currently enrolled as a student and/or in informal training?
  - a. Full-time student
  - b. Part-time student
  - c. I am pursuing informal training (any program, structured course, or tutorial outside of an educational institution, e.g., online programming course, training for specific software).
  - d. No, I am not enrolled as a student or in informal training





6. Which of the following most closely reflects your gender identity?
  - a. Man
  - b. Woman
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Other: TEXT BOX
  - e. Prefer not to answer
  
7. Do you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited) community?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Questioning or not sure
  - d. Prefer not to answer
  
8. What is your place of birth?
  - a. Canada
  - b. United States
  - c. Central America
  - d. Jamaica
  - e. Other Caribbean and Bermuda
  - f. South America
  - g. United Kingdom
  - h. Germany
  - i. France
  - j. Other Northern and Western Europe
  - k. Poland
  - l. Other Eastern Europe
  - m. Italy
  - n. Portugal
  - o. Other Southern Europe
  - p. Eastern Africa
  - q. Northern Africa
  - r. Other Africa
  - s. Iran
  - t. Other West Central Asia and the Middle East
  - u. China
  - v. South Korea
  - w. Other Eastern Asia
  - x. Philippines
  - y. Vietnam
  - z. Other Southeast Asia
  - aa. India
  - ab. Pakistan
  - ac. Sri Lanka
  - ad. Other Southern Asia
  - ae. Oceania and others
  - af. Other: TEXT BOX
  - ag. Prefer not to answer

Skip to 11. Are you or have you been in the foster care system? If a. Canada is selected in 9. What is your place of birth?



9. Are you now, or have you ever been, a landed immigrant in Canada? (A landed immigrant (permanent resident) is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities)?
- Economic immigrant (permanent resident)
  - Immigrant sponsored by family and other immigrants (permanent resident)
  - Refugee (permanent resident)
  - Non-permanent immigrant (e.g. study visa, work permit)
  - Prefer not to answer
10. Are you or have you been in the foster care system?
- Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to answer
11. How would you describe your overall personal financial situation (consider your own wages from all your jobs and any other income you receive from other sources):
- Live comfortably
  - Meet basic needs with a little left over
  - Just barely meet basic needs
  - Don't meet basic needs
  - Prefer not to answer
12. What kind of community do you live in most of the year?
- Remote
  - Rural
  - Suburban
  - Urban
  - On reserve
  - Prefer not to answer
13. Are you...?
- Arab
  - Black
  - Chinese
  - Filipino
  - Indigenous (North American)
  - Japanese
  - Korean
  - Latin American
  - South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
  - Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
  - White
  - West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
  - Other: TEXT BOX
  - Prefer not to answer

Display 15. Do you identify yourself as...? If f. Indigenous (North American) is selected.

14. Do you identify yourself as...?
- First Nations
  - Inuk (Inuit)
  - Métis
  - Other: TEXT BOX
  - Prefer not to answer



15. What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and still understand?
  - a. English
  - b. French
  - c. Other: TEXT BOX
  - d. Prefer not to answer
16. Do you have a long-term physical condition that limits your ability to fully participate in your community, at school, at work, or in some other activities?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
17. Do you have a long-term mental condition that limits your ability to fully participate in your community, at school, at work, or in some other activities?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer

## Appendix E

The websites of any of the 177 young leaders identified in the media search whose organization had a website or who had a personal website themselves are included in the list below.

Organization or Name	Website
Asian Resilience Collective Canada	<a href="https://www.asianresiliencecollectivecanada.org/">https://www.asianresiliencecollectivecanada.org/</a>
Shake Up the Establishment	<a href="https://www.shakeuptheestab.org/">https://www.shakeuptheestab.org/</a>
The Starfish Canada	<a href="https://thestarfish.ca/">https://thestarfish.ca/</a>
Fridays for Future Toronto	<a href="https://www.fridaysforfutureto.org/">https://www.fridaysforfutureto.org/</a>
OneUpAction International	<a href="https://oneupaction.org/">https://oneupaction.org/</a>
Amelia Penney-Crocker	<a href="https://ameliapennycrocker.com/">https://ameliapennycrocker.com/</a>
Toronto Youth Cabinet	<a href="https://www.thetyc.ca/">https://www.thetyc.ca/</a>
The Weekly Rant	<a href="https://www.wklyrant.com/">https://www.wklyrant.com/</a>
Future Majority	<a href="https://www.futuremajority.ca/">https://www.futuremajority.ca/</a>
Fridays for Future Calgary	<a href="https://fridaysforfuturecalgary.ca/">https://fridaysforfuturecalgary.ca/</a>
Climate Justice Toronto	<a href="https://climatejusticeto.com/">https://climatejusticeto.com/</a>
A Way Home Kamloops	<a href="https://www.awayhomekamloops.com/">https://www.awayhomekamloops.com/</a>
Assembly of Seven Generations	<a href="http://www.a7g.ca/">http://www.a7g.ca/</a>
Be The Change Earth Alliance	<a href="https://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/">https://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/</a>



Organization or Name	Website
Apathy is Boring	<a href="https://www.apathyisboring.com/">https://www.apathyisboring.com/</a>
Bleed the North	<a href="https://www.bleedthenorth.org/">https://www.bleedthenorth.org/</a>
Starts With One	<a href="http://swocanada.org/">http://swocanada.org/</a>
Future Ancestors Services Inc.	<a href="https://www.futureancestors.ca/">https://www.futureancestors.ca/</a>
Black Eco Bloom	<a href="https://www.blackecobloom.org/">https://www.blackecobloom.org/</a>
Sustainabiliteens	<a href="https://www.sustainabiliteens.org/">https://www.sustainabiliteens.org/</a>
Climate Strike Canada	<a href="https://climatestrikecanada.org/en">https://climatestrikecanada.org/en</a>
Canadian Alliance of Student Associations	<a href="https://www.casa-acaе.com/">https://www.casa-acaе.com/</a>
missINFORMED	<a href="https://www.missinformed.ca/">https://www.missinformed.ca/</a>
Youth4Nature	<a href="https://www.youth4nature.org/">https://www.youth4nature.org/</a>
Climate Recentered	<a href="https://www.climaterecentered.org/">https://www.climaterecentered.org/</a>
Banking on a Better Future	<a href="https://bankingonabetterfuture.org/">https://bankingonabetterfuture.org/</a>
Revolutionnaire	<a href="https://www.revolutionnaire.co/">https://www.revolutionnaire.co/</a>
Noah Irvine	<a href="https://learningtolivebook.ca/">https://learningtolivebook.ca/</a>
Riley Yesno	<a href="https://rileyesno.com/">https://rileyesno.com/</a>
Anishiative	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/WinnipegAnishiative/">https://www.facebook.com/WinnipegAnishiative/</a>
Takeover Skateboarding	<a href="https://www.thisistakeover.com/">https://www.thisistakeover.com/</a>
Canadian Roots Exchange	<a href="https://canadianroots.ca/">https://canadianroots.ca/</a>
Disability Justice Network of Ontario	<a href="https://www.djno.ca/">https://www.djno.ca/</a>
Fridays for Future Sudbury	<a href="https://fridaysforfuture.ca/">https://fridaysforfuture.ca/</a>
Steff Di Pardo	<a href="https://linktr.ee/totallyfunkless">https://linktr.ee/totallyfunkless</a>
Ta'Kaiya Blaney	<a href="http://www.takaiyablaney.com/">http://www.takaiyablaney.com/</a>
Waanishka Movement Inc.	<a href="https://www.waanishkामovement.com/">https://www.waanishkामovement.com/</a>
We Matter	<a href="https://wemattercampaign.org/">https://wemattercampaign.org/</a>
Tunchai Redvers	<a href="https://www.tanchayredvers.com/">https://www.tanchayredvers.com/</a>





# PHOTOS

Cover Image: <i>Photo of Youth4Nature</i> , Youth4Nature Foundation (2019)	
<i>Students Working On Project</i> , Brodie Vissers, Burst	2
<i>Photo of Tracie Léost International Women's Day</i> , Tracie Léost (2023)	5
<i>Justice march for Linda Beardy</i> , Tracie Léost (2023)	6, 58
<i>Youth group meeting</i> , Nima Latifpour (2018)	7
<i>Nima Latifpour</i> (2018)	8
<i>Group in circle</i> , Nima Latifpour (2019)	10
<i>Group getting ready for canoeing</i> , Tracie Léost (2022)	11
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<i>Manito Ahbee's NextGEN Youth Gathering</i> , Tracie Léost (2023)	20
<i>A Group of Students Working in the Library</i> , Envato (2020)	27
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<i>Studying group project brainstorming with classmates</i> , Envato (2020)	46
<i>Youth group meeting</i> , Christina Wocintechchat, Unsplash (2020)	47
<i>Right to Play</i> , via Facebook (2020)	49
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<i>Women in Computer Science</i> , (2020)	53
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<i>Youth delegate travelling</i> , Nima Latifpour (2018)	61

