The Canadian CED
Network
Emerging Leaders
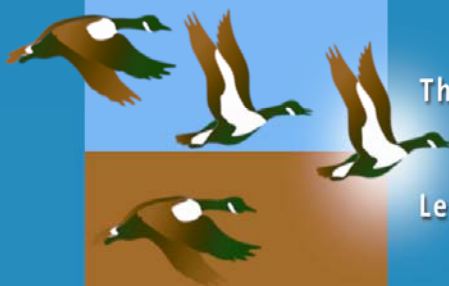
Youth in Community Economic Development

Final Report

September
2006

The Canadian **CED** Network

Le Réseau canadien de **DÉC**

Strengthening Canada's Communities

Des communautés plus fortes au Canada

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Summary

"I used to sleep under a bridge. Now I can build one." (Eva's Phoenix)

This report is based upon both the accompanying literature review and the Youth and CED Profiles examining youth involvement in community economic development (CED). The profiles have been produced as part of The Canadian CED Network's efforts to encourage effective practices in youth leadership and engagement to enhance the social and economic conditions of Canada's communities.

The Canadian CED Network's youth committee, Emerging Leaders, identified the need for this research. In order to build on strengths and share resources they felt that it was necessary to learn where CED was being done and led by young people in their communities across Canada. Based on this identified need, The Canadian CED Network found funding for this research to be accomplished. In turn, the research complements The Canadian CED Network's new youth initiative, an internship program called CreateAction. CreateAction is a program designed with young people to provide a relevant six-month work experience placement for out of school, post-graduate youth who have a career focus in CED.

The Youth and CED research is a compilation of profiles of youth CED from across Canada, and an analysis of effective and instructive practice drawn from the stories. The goal of the project is to inspire people of all ages by presenting CED organizations and projects currently being led and motivated by young people. The stories are intended to offer examples to learn from youth-driven CED, and the effective practices are intended to provide some strategies to genuinely do so.

The main sections of this report are Who's Doing Youth and CED, Lessons Learned, Barriers and Challenges, Conclusions and Recommendations. The section on Who's Doing Youth and CED offers examples taken from the organizational profiles researched over the last six months. Some of the Lessons Learned highlighted are: Reasons Young People Get Involved; Financial Compensation; Long-term Programming and Sustainability; the Values of Partnership; and, Youth and Intergenerational Ownership. Themes that emerged as the profiles were gathered were Youth-led compared to Youth-Inclusive Organizations; the Diversity of Youth in CED; Transition and Transience; the Value of Mentorship; Creative Solutions; and Challenges.

The stories and methodologies provided in the Youth and CED profiles contribute to the argument against the frequently assumed apathy and lack of interest or ability of young people to contribute back to their communities, and to care and have the interest in making decisions. The profiles also speak to the need for a variety of methods and available flexibility of commitment, allowing for the changing environments and potential gaps in the system for young people.

Though the styles, methods and levels of engagement vary within the scope of the profiles researched, the inclusion and leadership of youth within CED organizations has a significant impact on communities, organizations and the youth themselves. Though there are lessons to

be learned regarding how to genuinely include and infuse an organization, to genuinely engage young people, and more work to be done at setting young people up with decision-making power, research begins to show the value that results from these investments.

Recommendations include creating an environment of mutual respect between generations, the impact of long term funding for youth initiatives, particularly concerning structural support, and methods to strengthen the work in Youth and CED.

Introduction

This research is a compilation of profiles of youth CED from across Canada, and an analysis of effective and instructive practice drawn from the stories. The purpose is to inspire people of all ages by presenting CED organizations and projects currently being led and motivated by young people. The stories are intended to offer examples so that youth, practitioners and communities may learn from youth-driven CED, and the effective practices are intended to provide some strategies to genuinely do so.

The Canadian CED Network wanted to support this initiative as it was a priority that had been identified by the young people within its network.

Canadian Community Economic Development Network

Founded in 1999, The Canadian CED Network (CCEDNet) is a national, member-based organization that is actively working to build a "communities agenda" in Canada. Its mission is to promote and support community economic development for the social, economic and environmental betterment of communities across the country.

CCEDNet represents over 500 members who are practising CED in a wide variety of social and industry sectors. The rich experience of these CED practitioners has provided the foundation needed to promote a national Policy Framework and raise the bar for CED in Canada.

CCEDNet is working towards a communities agenda in Canada where CED is recognized by all levels of government as a proven and effective development strategy. The Network wants to revolutionize how CED is understood, practiced and funded in Canada by promoting evidence-based policy recommendations to all levels of government. CCEDNet members believe that CED has the potential to dramatically reduce inequality in Canada and foster innovation and productivity. CED has a proven track record for building wealth, creating jobs, fostering innovation and productivity, and improving social well being, with numerous success stories documented across the country illustrating how wealth, jobs and community health have been fostered. What is needed now is to scale up these successes to other communities across the country is further evidence, education and policy changes to provide better support for CED organizations, to develop human capital, to increase community investment, and to support social enterprise.

Emerging Leaders

The Emerging Leaders Committee is a group of young people established within The Canadian CED Network with *"the purpose of increasing the number and quality of young practitioners entering into the CED field & ensuring an active and meaningful voice in CCEDNet."* This youth-led initiative hopes to engage young people in leading the transformative development of their communities to create social and economic opportunities.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of the research these terms are defined as follows:

Community Economic Development (CED)

CED can be defined as action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis, particularly with those who are most disadvantaged.[i]

Youth

Because of the variety of cultures within our profiles the researchers did not put an age bracket on "youth" but asked the organizations to clarify their target age group. As written by the Global Youth Action Network, "we realize that in many parts of the world, youth are seen as playing different roles in their communities."[ii] Audrey Poitras, President of the Métis Nation of Alberta, stated,

> By continuing to define youth by their problems or lack of maturity, we create barriers between youth and the community.[iii]

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, youth is defined as persons involved and impacted by action within their community, who may face the barrier of not being recognized or respected as a leader within that change due to societal assumption of inexperience or apathy.

Youth Inclusion/Participation

"Participation and involvement usually mean different things to different young people."[iv]

According to the *Levels of Public Engagement Continuum*, published by NSW Department of Planning, adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)[v], engagement follows a continuum of informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowerment. This continuum applies not only to decision-making or a youth board position, but also throughout the organization, including governance.

Youth Inclusion and Participation will therefore be contextualized following this continuum and according to the particular profile or practice. To see the full chart please consult Appendix A.

Youth Infusion

Youth Infusion refers to the fundamental goal: to integrate youth and young adults into all spheres of community life and to ensure that their voice and action are valued and utilized in efforts aimed at social or community change. At the organizational level, an institution is "infused" when youth are valued as effective partners and when structures are created at multiple levels to ensure that the voice of young people is represented in decision-making. (Youth in Decision-Making, 3)

Challenges within the Definitions

The majority of the feedback received and information researched was focused on the lack of acknowledgement of youth leadership and lack of opportunities for youth to lead in a genuine way - hence the proposed definition of Youth. However towards the end of the study there were several important exceptions noted. A number of the organizations profiled work with young people in rural areas, or in First Nations communities. These organizations noted that in contrast to the norm, their concern was that as soon as any young person in their rural area or within their First Nations community became recognized as a leader or showed signs of effective leadership, responsibility were loaded onto their shoulders. This led to two further concerns – that the young person was given responsibility that they didn't have the skills to handle or the time to gain those skills quickly enough, or that they burnt out before their time.

It was not possible to explore this issue more in depth but there are certainly more questions that could be raised.

Research Methodology

This report is based upon both the accompanying literature review and the fourteen Youth and CED Profiles examining youth involvement in community economic development (CED) The profiles have been produced as part of the Canadian CED Network's efforts to encourage effective practices in youth leadership and engagement to enhance the social and economic conditions of Canada's communities.

The Canadian CED Network's youth committee, Emerging Leaders, identified the need for this research. In order to build on strengths and share resources the committee felt that it was necessary to learn where CED was being done and led by young people in their communities across Canada. Based on this identified need, The Canadian CED Network found funding for this research to be accomplished.

The researchers wished to make this study as inclusive as possible and relevant to people of all ages working in CED. Once the need for the study was identified and the funds to do so obtained, it was necessary to find out what information would be useful to young people and practitioners in order to further focus the study. Emails and phone conversations with youth from Emerging Leaders (National), Emerging Leaders Manitoba, The New Theory (Emerging Leaders BC), and member practitioners of The Canadian CED Network established what information would be useful and the questions to direct towards organizations. A literature review was undertaken, again asking for sources and suggestions of resources from members, by email and phone and in person.

Once the base of the study was established it was time to begin identifying and talking with organizations of Youth who were doing CED. To identify and contact these organizations the same groups as above were applied to, and then if the organization fell within the definitions of the research they were interviewed by phone, or in person if possible. When possible more than one person at the organization was interviewed, particularly young people leading or participating in the projects being profiled. As many other sources as were available were consulted in order to pull the profile together, from website information, to minutes from annual general meetings, to organizational newsletters, to previously done research through the

organization itself or an outside source.

As the case profiles were being compiled the organizations were included and consulted throughout. The final copy of the organizational profile was approved by the organization before being published. All organizations received electronic copies (and hard copies when requested) of the final profiles, to be used as they wished. Several have already used those profiles for funding proposals. Organizations were notified of the link to their organization's profile from the Emerging Leaders website.

This was an excellent relationship-building opportunity, between The Canadian CED Network, Emerging Leaders and the organizations, and between the organizations themselves as they learned of each other's work. This relationship building has only just begun and will hopefully continue and develop further.

At the time of the writing of this report fourteen organizations have been interviewed, with eleven profiles available on the Emerging Leaders website. Four are offered in French as well as English. This will be expanded as funding becomes available.

Participating Organizations:

Bamfield Community School Association (Bamfield, BC)   http://www.bamfield.ca/bcsa.htm
Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (Saskatoon, SK)   http://www.cnyc.ca/
Environmental Youth Alliance (Vancouver, BC)   www.eya.ca
Eva's Initiatives; Eva's Phoenix; The Print Shop (Toronto, ON)
        http://www.evasinitiatives.com/
Falls Brook Centre (NB)   http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca/
Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (ON)   http://fesfo.ca/
Lifecycles and Common Ground (Victoria, BC)   http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/
QQS Projects Society; Koeye Lodge (BC)
Santropol Roulant (Montreal, QC)   http://www.santropolroulant.org/fr/home-f.html
Storytellers Foundation; The Learning Shop (Hazelton, BC)
        http://www.upperskeena.ca/lrnxact.html
The Right Stuff (Trail, BC)
Blanshard Community Centre (Victoria, BC) http://www.blanshardcc.com/index.shtml
Columbia Youth Development Team (Trail, BC)
Youth Builders, JobWORKS (Saskatoon, SK)

2. Who's Doing Youth and CED in Canada

Some great examples of who's doing Youth and CED are:

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) is developing its CED activities, and is working on providing an even more inclusive environment. Though the younger participants don't have as much decision-making power outside of the newsletter that they create, the young staff and executive director are very influential in decisions of the organization.   There are also several people under thirty or in their early thirties who participate on the board. The staff are interested in encouraging higher levels of youth inclusion and decision-making for their younger participants.

At the Storytellers Foundation there is work supporting young practitioners that includes mobilizing in the region, providing training opportunities for young facilitators, supporting and facilitating reflection-on-action with younger practitioners, and fostering mentoring relationships in the region. Young practitioners are mentored and trained to use informal education strategies to mobilize other young people, to support them to have a voice in the community, and to set them up to act on their ideas. An overall Community Learning Lens is applied, encompassing the entire community and presenting learning itself as a product and outcome of the work.

Santropol Roulant's meals on wheels program may not specifically qualify as CED, but the organization has a remarkable holistic approach of inclusion of any marginalized voice within their community, and of creating a community of care and engagement of all ages. "Much of the [outside] recognition is due to the Roulant's success in attracting volunteers from an age group that is notoriously difficult to pull in. That it is able to do this with no advertising and amidst the kind of turnover that is perfectly natural to students, wanderers, and early career explorers, is all the more striking." (Santropol, Southern Wall, 6)   This approach to social inclusion is appealing to many youth because not only is it real and present, but it involves change and frequently challenges the status quo.

A key objective of the Bamfield Community School Association is to enhance opportunities for its young people to be able to remain in the area through a holistic and integrated approach to their social and economic issues. Youth lead all the communications initiatives of the association including the Channel 5 TV station, the radio station, the community notice board, and the online learning community. The young coordinator of the media programs is also leading the movement to bring broadband to the community. Although there are spaces on the Board for youth members, they have not as yet been filled. However the philosophy and approach of the BCSA has created a growing number of young people in Bamfield who are staying in the community, starting small business and working to enhance CED in the region. (Bamfield)

Building on community assets and capacities, the Network in Bamfield has developed five entrepreneurial projects with strong youth participation. The projects reflect the strengths identified by the community in science and technology, arts and culture, tourism and hospitality, and the new resource economy. The Community Broadband Internet project provides

infrastructure for e-learning, e-health, and e-commerce that is required for community growth, and it has been completely youth-led. (Bamfield)

At QQS Projects Society every opportunity is taken to create a teaching/learning environment for the young people, particularly focused on culture and the environment of the region. When the Big House was built, four young people who had dropped out of school were supported to find their own funding and then apprentice with the builder. This method passed on skills and increased the feeling of community ownership of the young people. A similar methodology of sharing knowledge was then applied young people who were interested in learning to carve, learning how to make tools, finding the materials. Every project within the Society is directed with the young people, even the building of the medicinal gardens.

Emergent Areas in Youth CED Engagement

Some organizations are already deeply involved in Youth and CED, whereas others are now recognizing it as a potential area of growth, and a language that begins to describe some of their emerging initiatives. Two of the organizations that identified with Community Economic Development but felt that they had more work to do were the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) and Eva's Initiatives.

At CNYC there is growing youth involvement in more areas of the co-op than there were previously, but the young people working there are determined to further engage their even younger participants in choosing their direction.

At Eva's Initiatives there is more youth decision-making power being encouraged through the potential mentorship programs and new youth members on their Print Shop Advisory Board. Youth inclusion of at-risk youth into the Toronto community is growing because of the work being done at Eva's Initiatives and Eva's Phoenix. An example of this re-inclusion into society was Eva's strategy of training young people to build their own shelter. Not only did it encourage ownership and contribute back to their peers and community, but over eighty percent then went on to be employed afterwards, giving back to their community again.

As the researchers gathered Youth and CED information and stories from across Canada common themes began to emerge, and lessons learned from various perspectives were shared. As the CED sector grows and organizations and practitioners learn from each other's experience, the perspectives of the old schoolers, those emerging in the field and the new folks will all contribute to its direction.

3. Themes and Lessons Learned

There is no simple job training program, housing project, or food delivery service. Even common success factors like genuine youth inclusion or youth decision-making power are complicated because they are successful for very different reasons – what has worked for some may not work for others because of the different contexts, environments or expectations. Each project and success is multi-layered. Even the case profiles, the "longer stories", are only an introduction to enormous amounts of creativity, energy and empathy for and between young people, and by young people towards their community.

Themes that emerged as the profiles were gathered were: Youth-led compared to Youth-Inclusive Organizations; the Diversity of Youth in CED; Transition and Transience; the Value of Mentorship; Creativity; Creative Solutions, and Challenges.

Lessons Learned that were highlighted included Reasons Young People Get Involved; Financial Compensation; Long term-Programming and Sustainability; Keeping it Real; Values of Partnership; Sufficient Time; Action-Based; Multi-Directional Approach; Culture of Work; Organization Evolution; Youth and Intergenerational Ownership; Creating a Learning Space; Using Evaluation and Creating Self-Sufficiency.

Youth-led Compared to Youth Inclusive Organizations

When this research began the researchers were looking for Youth Organizations doing CED, but quickly realized that they faced a challenge that wasn't expected: Where were said organizations? Why was it such a challenge to identify them? Then a pattern of two different kinds of Youth and CED models began to emerge: Youth Organizations doing CED, and CED Organizations with strong youth-led inclusion and decision-making processes. The presence of one style of organization does not necessarily exclude the other, as youth-led can be youth-inclusive, and a non-youth-led organizations can have youth-led programming within it. Only one organization was started by young people and remained a youth-led organization. Several other organizations began as youth organizations but have graduated into organizations with strong youth leadership and decision-making power. This was sometime due to the young people that started them then becoming adults, wishing to stay involved in the issues that they remained passionate about, yet continuing to recognize the value and importance of setting the stage and supports for young people to lead and make change in their communities.

How many youth organizations and initiatives are focused on the issue they are passionate about, not necessarily on the issue of youth itself? In fact, nearly every single one of the organizations profiled fell into this category of a focus on issues of social inclusion or the environment rather than solely youth inclusion. Santropol Roulant (healthy food and community for isolated seniors), the Environmental Youth Alliance (environmental and social justice), LifeCycles (connection between food, health, urban sustainability and community), QQS Projects Society (youth, culture and environment), and the Storytellers Foundation (informal

education and a different approach to human and economic development) are a few examples.

What this suggests is that the transition from a youth-led organization to an organization with strong youth leadership might be a very natural one. Unless the organization was specifically focused on only youth inclusion as an issue, perhaps this transition is to be expected as people follow their passion as they age. This is not to suggest that having a focus on youth leadership, youth inclusion and supporting youth-led organizations isn't critical. Rather that if transition is to be expected, than to set the organization up to deal with and recognize the new space as just as valuable is equally important.

In *Hearing the Voices of Youth*, one of the factors identified as needed if youth are to be genuinely included and engaged is an "adult" champion of their inclusion. There is "The need for a "champion" in the community as well as a group of "youth friendly" adults to promote youth participation, particularly [as this helps add continuity to a transient- physically and age-wise-population's movement]." Organizations that have gone through the transition mentioned above may be in an ideal position to play that role.

Three of the organizations profiled went through major changes during their organizational development. Santropol Roulant and the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) went through this significant change in their first five years, while the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) experienced this change closer to its ten-year mark. This organizational change meant re-identifying priorities and direction, and each organization chose differently. Santropol Roulant faced a funding challenge, and needed to decide whether or not their project decisions would become dependent on funding, and then to identify what their alternative road would be. EYA changed from a solely youth-led environmental group to a social and environmental justice group with significant youth leadership. CNYC previously focused on younger children and little community projects. Now the overall goal of the organization is to empower older youth (14-19) through the dignity of paid employment, and access to school credits for youth that are doing work of a scholastic nature in the community.

The Diversity of Youth in CED

"Youth" can be defined in many different ways, and the spectrum within the profiles was a perfect example of this diversity. To initially identify the profiles youth was defined with an age range (18-30), though there was flexibility and participants were encouraged to use their definition of Youth and to share their particular contexts.

There is a range of ages included in the profiles, and the age groups within the term "youth" who working or participating in the organizations varies greatly. There were organizations led entirely by young people working with and for people of all ages in their community. There were CED or social justice organizations with inclusive and high levels of youth decision-making power. There were CED organizations with inclusive and high levels of youth decision-making power that worked in turn with their even younger participants.

Transition and Transience

What happens when the youth who started youth organizations "grow up"? Do those now older people/youth move on so that new youth can replace them? Does the organization change to become more intergenerational in its decision-making processes?   Does the organization transform from a youth-led to an adult-led organization with high youth-inclusion strategies?

Any or all of these changes can take place, and all of them are shown in the profiles. If organizations are able to recognize the type of change that is occurring and define themselves accordingly they may set themselves up to not only deal with that transition, but will have a clearer purpose and goal when working with young people. As mentioned previously in this paper, an organization that has gone through such a transition will most likely recognize the deep value of genuine youth inclusion and will not only be able to demonstrate effective practice of youth inclusion and decision-making, but can play a role as a champion for youth inclusion in their communities.

Managing for Turnover/Transience

Turnover and the reputation of the transience of youth are well known and documented challenges to working with youth, and youth in CED is no exception. Yet some of the organizations coin this issue with a positive attitude for the long-term and have created highly creative methods of working with this transience. At La Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, "There is very high turnover because students are in school for only four to five years – a reality recognized as both a strength and a weakness. So a lot of energy is put into ensuring that each generation of new leaders is informed and better equipped to fulfill their role in schools and allow them to contribute to the evolution of our activities which have been crafted by thousands of other youths since 1875!" (FESFO)

Santropol Roulant has been recognized repeatedly for their ability to consistently draw in some of the most transient populations, including youth, to work with their organization. Yet contrary to common practice, at Santropol Roulant time is not spent on figuring out how to attract and then actually draw people in to work or volunteer. "Instead [of concentrating on developing techniques to draw, retain and motivate young volunteers] Santropol's focus is on creating a dynamic and empowering space where people of all ages can learn and grow, develop meaningful relationships, and take an active role in shaping their communities." (Santropol Roulant) Flexibility is built into the system and people are expected to come because they want to, not because they have to. "The commitment asked is simple, yet powerful. Each person defines for themselves what they have to offer and when, the decision is entirely theirs. Yet once that decision and commitment is made they are expected to honour it, and the majority seem to rise to those expectations." (Santropol Roulant) Because participants are able to define what they can give, and how and when they can give it, it sets them up to succeed and contribute, whether or not they can do it on a regular basis.

As young people are figuring out who they are and where they want to be, frequent change and movement can be expected, both literally and figuratively. As interests change and develop, as commitments to school, work and adventure progress, time availability will also change. If it is

possible to figure out a way to accommodate varying time availability allowing for all of the potential variables, engaging becomes a simpler task. The Columbia Youth Development Team defines it this way: "The availability of different levels of involvement is also key to engaging the heart. There are five people on the advisory team that have to stay consistent. But apart from that we tried to make it okay for people to come and go a bit, to make it okay for people to leave and come back, no huge commitments." (Columbia Youth Development Team)

At the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) they have experimented with varying styles of leadership and involvement in the organization, in an effort to be both flexible and still remain accountable to their members. "The outcomes from organizational learning about creating an equitable environment for youth and adults include a mixture of leadership and management structure that is a mixture of the traditional organization and the youth-driven non-hierarchical organization." (EYA)

The Value of Mentorship

Recognition of mentorship as not only a valuable but also critical part of the development of Youth within CED is growing among organizations. Though funding for mentorship is not yet common, there are both formal and informal mentorship programs being developed. Within the CED sector the notion of a sharing of values and methods with new practitioners into the field as a method of passing the learning on has been identified.

Eva's Initiatives is one of the organizations that has designed a comprehensive mentorship program. Though it has not been able to secure funding the design is a comprehensive one and has already led to discussion in larger networks. The program involves four different styles of mentorship: Workplace Mentorship, based on the employment environment; Peer Mentorship, based on similar life experience; Project-based Mentorship, based on a specific project like a short film documentary; and, One-to-One Mentorship, based on and adult with youth relationship to offer perspective, guidance and support if needed.

There are many more informal mentorship relationships being acknowledged in the organizations profiled. In many cases it evolves around role models, where younger participants look up to older youth that are staff. This relationship may be career based, interest based, or life based. It may be informal, but those relationships are recognized as playing significant roles in sharing organizational culture with newer arrivals. Some organizations have established these relationships and lesson sharing as critical to their organizational development and specify their importance by dedicating and valuing time given to them.

Creativity

Each of these profiles had a creative and unique aspect to it. As the projects, organizations and communities differed, so did the approaches to engaging and including youth into those communities. Some of the innovative initiatives that were led by young people are:

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC)'s new executive director set up a school credit recognition program in the Saskatoon community. The program positions young people who are generally at-risk to receive school credits for the work that they do in their community. The goal is to link them back into the school system or into long-term employment. CNYC younger participants have also taken over the design and production of the newsletter. The newsletters have become a powerful voice for the younger members and they have assumed ownership of it.

At Santropol Roulant a "culture of evaluation" has been created within the organization. Instead of evaluation being solely one step of a project's or organizational process, it is an ongoing exercise that includes all of the members. Evaluation is presented as a means to continually identify strengths that can then empower the community members to take action and lead the change, not only as a method of understanding. The learning becomes continuous and highly inclusive because all comments are valued and play their role – setting anyone and everyone up to be an agent of change.

At the Bamfield Community School Association the young people created the Bamfield Huu Ay Aht Story Adventure and Archives. The project shows the cultural richness and diversity of the region and was created with and for young people. The creation of the Adventure and Archives were teaching tools for youth and by youth in all facets of video and web production. A very real outcome of the project was the metamorphosis of the Bamfield Community School into the Bamfield School for Coastal and Marine Studies. The Community School Association has taken full advantage of the technology available, and other isolated communities are taking notice.

The Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) led the facilitation of a coalition of youth-driven agencies. The purpose of this coalition was to come together and collectively increase the capacity of member organizations and groups, and the youth in the community, to effect positive change. The building of the coalition led to many things: Ignite Magazine (2002-2004), Youth Outreach Team (now established in within the City of Vancouver Social Planning Office), and the building of a Hub for youth organizations to share space.

Creative Solutions

One of the common themes of nearly every organization we profiled was their ability to identify a gap in the system and to then "work to include people who need an alternative route to participate, learn and engage with the community."

In the core neighbourhood of downtown Saskatoon, the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) identified a lack of "First Employers" in their community, organizations that provide entry-level employment for youth. With the added challenges of little access to transportation for young people, a common lack of a culture of work in core neighbourhood families, a higher level of poverty than other areas of the city, no local grocery stores and few resources for young people who don't fit easily into the system, CNYC got creative about how to encourage young people in their community to engage and participate. Programs and a structure that were appropriate to the community of young people they work with were developed, and there are young people directing the programs for even younger participants as well as getting involved

on the Board of Directors. In addition the co-op has taken note of lessons learned, like how crucial it is in that particular community to pay out at the end of each day rather than at the end of the week or month, and how to turn life and work experience into school credit. There is recognition that at the systemic level many of the CNYC co-op members are being left behind, yet find a new space to engage and learn at the co-op.

At Santropol Roulant the organization identified isolated seniors as their primary focus, which then naturally extended to any individual or group isolated from their community as they aim to create a community of care around the clients. Then not only was there an alternative route created for isolated seniors to participate and engage in their community, but suddenly a complementary route of engagement and participation was created for young people as they reached out to the seniors and began developing relationships. Each route was created in a way that took into account the particular needs, interests and desires of the parties in question, from relationship building, to environmental concern, to mobility, to the transience and time availability, to the need for cheap and healthy food, to community connection and learning.

At La Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) the goal is to ensure that Franco-Ontarian youth participate fully in the development of their community. The approach the organization has found effective to gain this result is to set young people up to learn who they are as a person and their role in their community so that they can identify where and how to best effect change, all in a way that affirms their identity and pride as young Francophones outside of Quebec. Through recognizing the challenges that these young people face, and setting them up to feel confidence in their selves and their French community, the organization becomes an incubator for leaders in the Franco-Ontarian community.

Eva's Phoenix and The Print Shop approach the transition from homeless or at-risk of homelessness to a productive, self-sufficient and healthy life for youth in a holistic way. The issues of youth homelessness are too complex to be solved with only an employment or training program, or the availability of a shelter, or substance abuse services, or counselling, or housing support, or services to reconnect youth with their families. Instead, not only are all of these programs supplied under the same roof, but attempts are also made to use the process as a vehicle to support the young people becoming more self-sustainable. The clearest example of this was through training the young people to build their shelter, which increased not only their skills, but also their ownership over the shelter and the opportunity to help their peers and contribute back to the community.

Youth Builders JobWORKS is about empowering youth. The program can be run in many ways – basically it combines vocational with academic. Eventually it puts together a program around rebuilding lives, neighbourhoods, and houses. It sets young people up to get through high school, particularly if they are not fitting into or are disengaged with the regular system. The project also focuses on building a community and connecting young people both with their community and with a larger social movement. Because of the particular challenges and barriers in the downtown of Winnipeg there are some very run down and low income areas. Many gang members and other at-risk youth have joined this program and have been trained in areas like construction. They help repair places for older and low-income people. They have literally been a part of changing the face of their community and it is playing a role in turning the area around. There is real ownership and pride at being able to see and feel the difference, and of knowing that they are able to give back to their community in a unique way.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned are as diverse as the organizations profiled. There are overlaps both within these lessons, as well as with other sections of this report such as effective practice, youth inclusion, and themes. Many of these learnings have been self-identified by the organizations and individuals, leading to further recognition and valuing of this knowledge within their work. Not every example of a lesson learned within an organization has been included in this report, though each of the specific lessons learned have been identified.

Reasons Young People Get Involved

As this project was being conceived, one of the young people stated that what would be really useful to communicate would be why young people chose to get involved in CED, what made them commit to a project, cause or organization, what made them choose to engage with their hearts. Though at first a simple question, most interview respondents found it a challenging one to answer. There was quite a range within the answers depending upon who was asked, how old they were, and what level of decision-making and engagement in which they participated in the organization.

At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) there were reflections of reasons to engage as a young participant and as a young staff member or program director. The younger people that the Co-op works with are from mostly low income families, so the kids get involved from basic reasons, like earning money or enjoyment of the space and community, to more complex reasons like the opportunity to build strong relationships and friendships, or of finding an environment that will engage when other systems have let you fall through the cracks. The young staff engage for many reasons, among them an eagerness to make creative connections, individually, communally, organizationally and even nationally.

Through organization-wide reflections Santropol Roulant has undertaken over the past several years, they have learned that there are unique aspects of organizational culture, space and activities that attract young people to volunteer and engage widely in the community. Volunteers often express the overwhelming feeling of belonging and connectedness they experience when taking part in the activities of the organization. Santropol Roulant is described as an organization that is highly inclusive in its approach and that inspires and empowers them to learn, grow and contribute to their community in meaningful ways."(Santropol) The organization does not set a list of needs and jobs but instead, "believes that connecting to the ideas and projects that volunteers bring through the door is essential to assuring their commitment and engagement."(Santropol)

At the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) working in the environmental movement is seen as a direct gateway into meaningful work that connects youth with their larger community and a global movement, while still being able to effect change at the local level.

At LifeCycles the cornerstone to all of their programs is a focus on "social cohesion and healthy lifestyles… getting to know your neighbours and taking time to talk and share resources…" (LifeCycles) The integration of participatory and comprehensive analysis sets everyone up to

contribute to what is happening, bringing the community in and then giving back. This methodology is proving very effective at both attracting young people to the organization and then setting them up to take those values and use them in their own endeavours.

There's no way to force youth to engage with their heart, nor is it really possible to strategize specific methods to draw youth in because each person, project and situation is so diverse. Yet a holistic approach, one that focuses on what is needed for overall social inclusion, creating an inclusive, fun environment where people are able to teach and learn, as well as to feel like they are contributing to change, certainly appears to encourage commitment and interest!

Financial Compensation

The young people involved in these projects, organizations and initiatives are frequently financially compensated (well) for their time and effort. It's important to value the time of young people, and essential to recognize as a potential need with high-risk youth or a population that may be living a hand-to-mouth existence. Compensation can happen at multiple levels: pay the youth staff well to facilitate the younger youth, and compensate the even younger youth too, particularly in low-income areas. Some of the organizations that financially compensate their young people for the work that they do are the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, The Right Stuff, Eva's Initiatives, and the QQS Projects Society.

Financial compensation is not the only way to officially recognize a young person's contribution, though it is important. The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op has organized and now manages a community credit recognition program between the Catholic School Division and various local organizations. This sets young people up to earn credits for community work that they do that is of a scholastic nature. The goal of the program is to link kids back into school or into employment, valuing the young person's time by transforming it into a genuine investment in their future.

Youth empowerment is not about poverty labour, yet repeatedly youth initiatives are under funded, are very short-term, or are presented with an unreasonable expectation of deliverables relative to time allotted. When there is a learning curve – not an unreasonable expectation as youth gain experience – more time is needed. These funding realities make it very challenging to create a consistent, longer-term or systemic strategy for youth leadership in Canadian communities.

Long-term programming/Sustainability

The idea of long-term programming and sustainability apply in multiple ways in regards to the collected profiles. At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC), Eva's Phoenix, The Print Shop and the QQS Project Society, long-term programming refers to the skills shared that will not only set their young people up with the skills to live in a sustainable manner and raise their own lot, but the gaining of those skills is then seen as an investment that will come back to the community. Ownership of one's own change and the ability to contribute back are vital.

CNYC encourages youth to work co-operatively, while teaching practical skills that increase self-sufficiency. Eva's Phoenix teaches not only career skills but also life skills. The QQS Society ensures that there is knowledge exchange with the community and region, particularly youth, building awareness and engaging youth in the longer-term vision. All of the money raised is cycled back into the community. Plus, not only does their staff now go further in school, but their choices of study are more varied, they are returning to the community, and younger people are looking up to them as role models. Long-term skill building also sets this remote First Nation community to strengthen its capacity for self-government and entry into a conservation economy through running Koeye Lodge as an enterprising non-profit.

At Santropol Roulant "the goal is definitely to be sustainable in the long-term, but it's not our production that's going to do that for us, it's the viable sustainable relationships. Our product is how we do it, and how we want to create that." (Santropol Roulant)   At the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) the main goal is « to ensure that Franco-Ontarian youth participate fully in the development of their community. » The focus is on generating the youth confidence and pride in their culture, language and role in the environment and the community, developing relationships within and between communities, and then to offer tools to be genuinely engaged.

The Environmental Youth Alliance has a vision of long-term sustainability that includes social, environmental and economic aspects. Though the organization is now much more focused around issues of social justice, everything is considered through an ecologically sustainable lens. LifeCycles has a similar approach in that all of their work is coming from a vision of "urban sustainability, food as the powerful connector of all – health, environment, economy, and social cohesion." (LifeCycles) At the Falls Brook Centre they "strive to put the values of sustainable living into practice." (Falls Brook) The Centre approaches sustainability from many directions: an organic farm, a forestry museum, a certified woodlot, solar and wind energy systems, a small conference centre, herbariums, tree nurseries, non-timber forest product plantings for mushrooms and ginseng, and restoration sites for outreach programs and an opportunity to revive the local economy on a sustainable scale.

Keep it real.

Again and again organizations, coordinators and participants stated how effective the work and level of engagement is when the work is _Relevant_ and _Real_ in their lives. At Eva's Phoenix the young people were trained and then built their own shelter. At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op the young participants build high quality items that are then bought by community members, the profits going to the young carpenters and artists. The youth-designed and produced newsletter is read by the community, and their work experience both at CNYC and in other organizations in the community can be used to graduate from school through the school credit recognition program set up by CNYC staff. At Santropol Roulant the meals-on-wheels program acts as an easy gateway into the rest of the organization and the organizational culture. The goal at the end of the day is clear – to provide healthy meals to isolated seniors – but so much more happens in between.

Then there is the larger connotation of "Real". Several organizations and young people mentioned the importance of being connected to something larger than oneself. At Santropol

Roulant participants commented that, "I came here to get back into the world," and staff said, "It is our [Santropol Roulant's] responsibility to do our work with creativity, spirit and imagination – so that beyond achieving goals like new and transferable skills for young people or feeding isolated seniors, are the intangibles such as "being connected to something larger than myself." At the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA), "working in the environmental movement is also seen as a direct gateway into meaningful work that connects youth with their larger community and a global movement, while still being able to effect change at a local level."

At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) the young participants are frequently very at-risk, come from the lower income core neighbourhood, and are living a fairly hand-to-mouth existence. It is not uncommon for young people of the Core to fall through the cracks of the system, particularly the cracks of the school system. At CNYC the staff try to show the participants that the work that they are doing is real, that community members will or will not read their newsletter or buy their wood products depending on the quality of the work. The lesson is then learned again as the profits go up or down in relation to the quality of the work. "Often in the education system we use the method of "let's pretend." For example, that somebody is actually going to read what you are writing about, or but what you are making – that there's a customer for the product you're creating. But the young people know there's not, apart from the teacher and maybe their parents. In our projects, everything that we do has real consumers. It's real. (CNYC)

The Blanshard Community Centre works in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Victoria, British Columbia. The Executive Director and young staff member considered the importance of the emotional commitment and need to enjoy and value the work or project from all sides if you are involved, whether as an adult or a young person. "Whatever you want to be doing with young people, they need to buy-in, and it has to be what they want to do. But it also really helps if it's also something that you want to do; you have to buy into it too! It needs to be real and valued, from all sides." (Blanshard Community Centre)

One of the young leaders of the Columbia Youth Development Team also commented on the connection between real life commitment and consequences to the quality of the work, as well as the need to be passionate about the work as a method of engaging. "Getting the heart engaged? Well, we've all been so excited about this! And I think that we project that – it's all of our reputations on the line here, this is real. So to engage? Make it real and love it!" (Columbia Youth Development Team)

Value of Partnerships, Relationship Building and Networking

The recognition of the value and necessity of *building partnerships and relationships* is high among all of the organizations studied. The benefits to building relationships, partnerships and networking between individuals, organizations, regions and sectors were lessons many participants mentioned.

Not only did the Environmental Youth Alliance, Santropol Roulant and the QQS Projects Society identify the learning around relationship building and the importance doing so being a reason for their success and survival, they also considered the significance of intergenerational relationship building.

Santropol Roulant has a vision of creating a community of care, where the focus is on the gifts and skills everyone can contribute, and respect for everyone's experience no matter their age. "We are trying to achieve a more intergenerational component. We want to create space for the community to find solutions to their own problems." (Santropol Roulant)

The QQS Projects Society touched on the partnership needed between generations when creating an effective project that young people and adults alike could engage in. "We learned the importance of co-creating programs with the children and youth. We couldn't set up programs for the kids, but rather with the kids." (QQS)

The Environmental Youth Alliance recognized that their organizational and intergenerational relationship approach to governance supported a more fluid, creative and non-hierarchical structure balanced by a more formal one that ensured transparency in decision-making processes and accountability to their members.

Communication and relationship building with the communities outside the organization were also noted as beneficial, particularly from a long-term perspective. "When you live in poverty in an urban centre, and have come from rural areas – it's possible to get more and more isolated, we try to break that isolation. Community and connectivity go hand in hand, if you're not connected, you're lost. And then it's easier to oppress you." (Youth Builders, JobWORKS)

Some organizations, like the QQS Projects Society, talked about engaging and connecting not only with their immediate community, but also with the larger world outside. "We bring in the international volunteer groups to ensure that we engage ourselves with the rest of the world." (QQS)

LifeCycles is another organization that focused on the need for networking, on a personal, professional and sectoral level. "Nurture all the people involved. Create networks of peer and sectoral support. Ensure youth feel comfortable in the larger community." (LifeCycles)

The young staff at the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op have seen the difference partnerships can make and are actively learning how to increase communication and sharing with other groups, both in their community and other regions of Canada.

At Santropol Roulant relationship building is not only seen as one of the primary responsibilities, but considerable time is set aside to dedicate towards it. The staff figure that seventy percent of the work is building and maintaining relationships because those relationships are the essence of the organization, its vitality and its connection to the community. In relation to funding, Santropol Roulant has prioritized having a wide partner-funding base in order to ensure not only that the funders do not overly influence the direction of the organization but also to ensure that the organization is committed to talking and consulting with their community as the community is the membership.

At the Storytellers Foundation the consensus is that relationship building is central to their work. "Learning Shop staff work to foster conditions in the environment, and develop a set of relationships, for people to learn to care for each other in order to build a civil society." (Storytellers) The organization not only tries to build relationships between themselves and the

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community, but between community members themselves, setting people up to discover their own interests and passions, to share with others and to connect with other visions in their communal environment, all "with the ultimate goal that others are inspired to act." (Storytellers)

Relationship building is critical to the success of the Environmental Youth Alliance. Part of their success around including and engaging young people is their focus on combining the social, economic and environmental agenda – effectively seeing them as interdependent integrated approaches.

The mandate of the Bamfield Community School Association is "to bring community members together to identify and use their combined assets to improve the quality of life and education available in the community". A recent initiative brought the volunteer sector of the community, represented by seventeen different societies, into one community organization, the Community Affairs Committee, to coordinate these initiatives.

At the QQS Projects Society they have developed a protocol that everyone doing research in the Heiltsuk territory has to be prepared to give time to the summer traditional knowledge camps as well, to share their knowledge with the young people of the community. This builds the local knowledge base of the immediate environment, and connects community members with members of the larger global community.

Each style of relationship or partnership is different, depending on the organization, community, and particular goals of each.

Sufficient Time

The issue of time, as something needed and to be valued, came up repeatedly. Time is needed to build relationships and partnerships, to change people's attitudes and the system. Time is particularly critical when working with any marginalized group, to allow people a chance to make mistakes and then learn from them. A learning curve should be a natural expectation as young people build their skills, and time is needed to allow for this.

"It takes time to learn and develop stuff, there has to be faith that it will become something valuable. That it's okay to make huge mistakes because learning will come out of it if you look for it." (Santropol Roulant) "It takes significant investment in time to develop a social venture." (The Right Stuff)

Even the building of relationships can take more time when working with young people because they are often still beginning the process of establishing their networks for life and careers. "Be prepared to educate internally and externally regarding cultural issues. Real social change takes time." (The Right Stuff)

Action-Based

Santropol Roulant and the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) state the importance of activities

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being action based. Having a gateway activity, like the food delivery program for isolated seniors in Montreal or the connection to the environmental movement, an activity where you can see the difference you make at a local level while at the same time becoming connected to a greater community or movement, is a hugely effective method to get young people engaged. It engages the head, the hands and the heart, setting a person up to actively use and apply their ideas and energy, while at the same time connecting them with others and to contribute to the local and even global community.

At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC), both the young participants and young staff are focused on their social enterprise, yet through it not only earn a wage but are also exposed to an inclusive, supportive, encouraging environment and are contributing back to their community. The executive director has worked to have an academic recognition program established so that young participants that do not fit into the regular school system can still graduate. CNYC has set up an alternative route for young people to participate, learn and engage with the community, in a way that sets them up to direct much of that involvement themselves.

At Youth Builders JobWORKS, the academic program combines vocational with academic instruction, again setting up young people to contribute back to their larger community but engaging them first with technical knowledge and skill building. "People will choose to go here [JobWORKS]. In regular school you work all day long at math and stuff. Here you work in the shop in the morning, but then get to do school work in the afternoon." (JobWORKS) It is also possible for the young people to literally see the difference they are making in their community by walking around the neighbourhood to see the houses they have re-furbished and fixed, again engaging the both the heart and hands.

Multi-Directional Approach

A number of the organizations profiled have a remarkably holistic approach to their work. They deal with complex issues that are expected to have complex solutions. At the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) job training is a question of supporting young people to become re-engaged in their communities, genuinely including them in the process of community change. The theory is that if young people are able to make positive contributions in the networks within their communities it will begin to break down barriers to cooperation between the generations.

At Santropol Roulant members begin by becoming familiar with the food preparation and delivery program. As they get to know the organization they are exposed to its culture, are encouraged to contribute their creativity and ideas, and the resulting environment is one where people of all ages come together to identify, take action and make change in their community.

At Eva's Phoenix, supporting homeless and at-risk youth to become self-sustainable goes further than just providing a shelter. Apart from the creation of an employment training social enterprise, The Print Shop, more programs and services were added based on the recommendations of the street youth from the shelters. These new programs and services address diverse issues from substance abuse to employment training and job search skills, to completing school, learning life skills, receiving career training and sex education, to exploring recreational activities and the potential for family recognition.

"Eva's Initiatives prides itself on its ongoing efforts to seek long-term solutions by offering pro-active and collaborative programs and services that respond directly to the needs of homeless and at-risk youth in the community – and provide the stability they require to move off the streets permanently." (Eva)

In addition to trying to consider the multiple reasons people disengage or are excluded from community – and therefore the particular combination of approaches to supporting them to re-engage – it also helps to be strategic about which direction to choose and when.

"The way to stay sane is to be strategic, to identify when you go and when you hang back. You need to look at the bigger picture – that this activism could be for the next ten or fifteen years. And you can come at it from multiple directions, moving your community forward, while also working at policy." (EYA)

The Culture of Work

One of the barriers to youth employment recognized as a lesson learned by an organization was in regards to the soft skills of employment rather than simply the technical skills.

"One of the largest barriers to employment is not having the social skills and the understanding of what an employer demands in a workplace environment." (Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op)

This relates directly to other organization's mandates of approaching the complex needs of homeless or at-risk youth with a multi-layered approach to solutions and self-sustainability. When working with at risk-youth, or even youth with not much experience yet, it is not enough to just offer the necessary technical skills of the workplace. The culture of work can be a complicated one and takes just as much skill to excel.

Organizational Evolution

The Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) is an organization that has gone through a lot of structural and mission-based change. Through this experience they have learned a lot about the style of organizational structures that work and don't work for them.

"Youth-led agencies need to have some basic supports in the organizational structure but they don't want to have those imposed. Youth naturally tend to create very egalitarian structures, something that organizational analysts generally consider positively. This non-hierarchical structure can be incredibly dynamic as an institution. With a little bit of support the youth organizations can move a lot further." (EYA)

According to Doug Ragan at EYA, there are three underlying management issues that make youth-driven organizations vulnerable to poverty-traps:

–   Lack of connections to people with management experience

–   Lack of experience and training in programming and administration
–   A solely youth-driven organizational structure.

The Right Stuff is a small but very successful social enterprise in Trail, British Columbia. The organizations' learnings are that it takes a whole organization and community to make a social enterprise work – everybody needs to be on board, not only within the organization but within the community as well.

At LifeCycles in Victoria, they have found that in order for success for not only their organization but also the young people they work with, they need "to provide proper support for: business support, peer networks, personal support, confidence building, communications and conflict resolution skills, a mentor network." It is important to "be consistent, be there, and to create a centre or place for ongoing support."

Youth and Intergenerational Ownership

The value of ownership of a project or organization, by the participants, members, and larger community, has been recognized as one of the success factors of some of the organizations profiled.

At the QQS Projects Society they recognize that their "success is due to the fact that this has been a community effort, a Society effort. Everybody benefits from this – everybody supports it. The fact that all of the community owns this is what has made it successful." (QQS)

The community of Bamfield has faced challenges due to its remote location, and there is growing recognition of the interconnectedness of school and community. While communicating and starting to collaborate with other communities along the coast the pattern and relationship between school and community became increasingly apparent, and the significance of the relationship recognized. For the school to survive the community needed to take ownership, which would in turn contribute to their own survival. "Due to the process and design of the West Coast Learning Network there was an increased awareness in the importance of the school to the survival of the community, how the school is such an integral part of the community, and how much people really do value education." (Bamfield Community School Association)

At the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op the youth have taken ownership of the newsletter and its production. The newsletter has become a forum for youth to discuss issues of youth in the core neighbourhood, and now receives considerable community support.

The by youth for youth creation of the Bamfield Huu Ay Aht Story Adventure and Archives meant, "beginning with a place-based learning concept, building on existing capacities, presenting and reflecting, and most importantly, celebrating the successes publicly, gave a sense of ownership to the community. Through this ownership of knowledge, skills and success, the community of learners recognized the benefit of the project." (Bamfield)

At the QQS Projects Society the Koeye Lodge was purchased after the Heiltsuk young people approached the community and implored the elders to protect the Koeye and the Lodge. "The kids asked why we didn't just buy the lodge. Because we were on the land doing so much

conservation work, we were well connected with the conservation organizations including Raincoast, the Land Conservancy in Victoria, and EcoTrust. We put together a package to raise the money to buy the lodge." (QQS) The QQS Projects Society then took it one step further. As they built their Big House, the medicine garden, every project included the apprenticing of young people, particularly young people at-risk, to build their personal capacity and attachment to the community.

"Everybody benefits from this – everybody supports it. That's always been the case. The fact that all of the community owns this is what has made it successful. It gives the community ownership but also ensures that their interests are being served." (QQS)

Creating a Learning Space

The idea of an alternative learning space ties in to the holistic approach to CED and seems to be particularly relevant when working with at-risk or marginalized populations. In all cases efforts have been made to attach value to that alternative learning space, whether informally through simply recognizing its value and dedicating time to it, or by having it formally recognized in an accreditation program like through the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op.   Most significantly it sets young people who may be excluded from the main system up to succeed in their own right.

"This is a worker co-op, where people make money, but it's an alternative learning space too – so much happens under the radar! There's a lot going on that's informal, but it's learning nonetheless, it's still skill building. It's hard to fit into the system, especially if you're poor or don't have access or opportunity." (CNYC)

The Storytellers Foundation in Hazelton has a storefront informal education centre called The Learning Shop. "Learning Shop staff use the practices of informal education to support children and youth, and those practitioners (adult and youth) who work around youth, to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge for youth to engage in community economic development. The staff applies an integrating cycle to create opportunities for youth to address the impacts of joblessness and impoverishment." Storyteller's Foundation uses a community-learning lens throughout their work. This means, "that learning is recognized as a product and an outcome of the work. Its purpose is for social and political changes as defined by local people." (Storytellers)

LifeCycles has a very broad definition of learning, but one that seems to work well with their particular organizational culture. "Open up to learning in all directions." (LifeCycles)

The Falls Brook Centre has a multi-directional approach to learning, from formal courses to creating opportunities for learning and drawing on every activity.   "There is learning at the technical level, the organizational level, the governance level, and all of it is through hands on experience. Young people learn about organic agriculture through planting a garden, they learn about co-ops through forming them." (Falls Brook Centre)

One of the unique initiatives of the QQS Society is their policy of requiring anyone doing any kind of research in their territory to then share that learning with the community, particularly the young people. It is sometimes even possible for the young people to participate in the process

of the research projects, such as the fish contaminant study where the young people will be catching the salmon and monitoring the air filters. "We became an "enterprising non-profit" and we require everyone doing research in our territory to sign a research protocol that ensures they share their research and knowledge." (QQS)

Using Evaluation

The merit of evaluation was noted in several organizational profiles, yet also the challenge to make that an original and fun process to help result in real learning.

Santropol Roulant has created a culture of evaluation that is an ongoing process within their organization called Organic Evaluation. "At Santropol Roulant, evaluation is not a linear "function" at all. Nor is it separate from our ultimate mission. It is a particular way of being together and of bringing people together… We have created a space for open dialogue, almost an anti-structure" which breeds openness, and flexibility due to the constant accessibility of employees to volunteers, clients and the public." (Santropol Roulant)

La Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) has been working at identifying clearly what they want to learn in order to develop clearer and more precise evaluation questions. "The value of evaluation, the gathering of that information – we're exploring the balance that needs to be found between gathering quality information with the short attention span most people have for filling out forms." (FESFO)

Creating Self-Sufficiency

Many of the lessons learned noted above also fit into self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency was defined on several different levels, from personal, to organizational, to economic, to environmental.

For Eva's Initiatives the focus is a social and communal self-sufficiency. "Success at the Phoenix has a double bottom line. Success is achieved when our youth participants and the enterprise itself develop paths towards self-sufficiency." (Eva's)

At the Falls Brook Centre the focus is an environmental self-sustainability that can lead to communal self-sustainability. "Our successes are that we can actually draw from the resources that we've created. For instance – At the end of the day when the funding runs out, we still have our converted school bus that goes around and is run by the diesel and solar/wind applications on the roof, and it goes to schools promoting renewable energy and climate solutions. We've still got our windmills and our solar panels." (Falls Brook Centre)

4. Challenges and Barriers to Youth Participation

Again and again, a major challenge to youth participation and engagement identified is the issue of short-term funding. Even three years of funding allows for some kind of longevity, of projects, of relationship building, of organizational development. Though some social enterprises like The Right Stuff are able to make a profit with their work, others – particularly those working with at-risk youth – do not see making a profit as a reality when combined with the extra challenges faced by their participants and members.

Both the experience of the profiled organizations and outside research identified a lack of consistent funding, frequently due to the overall funding environment, as a barrier to planning and ongoing youth program development. "The existing literature indicated that few communities in Canada have an infrastructure that makes youth participation a normal and routine part of the daily life of institutions or civil society. In many communities programs are developed that incorporate youth, but [when the contract or funding comes to an end, youth participation is also left behind.]" (Voices)

Interestingly, addressing the issue of inconsistent funding could also address issues concerning the transience of youth. If Canadian community infrastructure could support consistent youth engagement in organizations and community decision-making and it was a normal part of the routine to include and encourage youth leadership, then engagement strategies wouldn't need to be started over every time funding disappeared and was renewed again. Plus, all of the learning and connections made initially might still be intact. A supportive infrastructure could allow young people to re-connect into the movement from their new location if the connections and relationships reached across communities, provinces and the country.

Yet another funding challenge is creating a diverse base of funders. After the first five years of operation Santropol Roulant realized that all of its funding was coming from very few sources. This made the organization dependent and susceptible to decision-making based on funding. Members and staff of the organization got together and realized that when all the funding comes from one source communication with people from other areas and groups declined. Learning from this experience, Santropol created a policy that would prevent a sole-funder situation from recurring. Now funding comes from the government, foundations and individual donors, and auto-financing. Everything is returned back into the organization, mission funding, core funding and staffing.

In isolated areas even the most creative initiatives cannot always compete with factors outside of their control. In Bamfield the community is caught in a downward cycle where "community decline and school decline are inextricably intertwined…" (Bamfield) The school district funding dropped from $75,000 to $46,000, the number of kids enrolled then dropped from 77 to 32, and the school has gone from six to three teachers. "As the school population dwindles, more families with children leave the community. Because of the state of the school, the community's

largest employer, the Bamfield Marine Science Centre, is not able to recruit new faculty if they have school age children." (Bamfield) This then further impacts the flow of people into the community…

Though genuine youth participation and infusion into an organization can have a positive impact on the organization, youth and community involved, there are also certain conditions and potential barriers that need to be recognized and addressed to make it a valuable experience for everyone. These barriers range from attitudinal to structural.
The Columbia Basin Trust Youth Advisory Council identified "stereotyping, values, continuity/turnover, costs, recruiting youth, tokenism, inequities, pacing, formality, intimidation, and manipulation"[vi] as some of the barriers facing youth in organizations and the community.

Research in the United States suggests that generally, "adults do not view youth as effective decision-makers. Thus it is not surprising that organizations do not typically create roles and responsibilities for young people. But the problem is deeper. Many adults believe that youth cannot or do not care to contribute substantially to the process of decision-making and indeed may hinder it." (Youth in Decision-Making, 21) This creates a severe barrier to youth involvement and further prevents support for youth initiatives. Both background research and the accompanying Youth and CED profiles demonstrate that youth can and do offer substantial contribution and leadership to decision-making processes. However it is the ongoing doubtful attitude and misperception regardless of the evidence available that presents the greatest obstacle.

"Involving young people in organizational governance represents one of the most innovative strategies for promoting youth and community development. Unfortunately, adult attitudes and current organizational structures are not set up to support youth and adult partnerships in decision-making." (Youth in Decision Making, 10) Again, people's attitude and lack of support for intergenerational partnership to change that attitude may be the most significant test to increased youth inclusion within the governance of organizations and communities.

> Over time, marked discontinuity has emerged in the United States between what is expected from youth and what is expected from adults. Moreover, adolescents remain marginalized in community decision-making processes, and are infrequently invited to engage in collective problem solving. This isolation creates social contexts where negative stereotypes may flourish, and results in few opportunities for youth and adults to work in partnership. Further, these contexts and stereotypes are sustained by policies that assume young people are unable or unwilling to contribute to the common good.
> (Youth in Decision-Making, 1)

Another issue raised was the complexity of *youth representation* and *voice*.   "Youth representation was a double-edged sword for many of the young people in our study. Several were hesitant to speak for other youth. [...] "I don't represent all the young people that you serve. I can't speak for all youth, especially "at-risk" youth..." (Youth in Decision-Making, 24)

Concern about voice was an issue during the writing of this report due to the diversity of projects, youth and organizations included in the profiles. Identifying patterns is only beginning of a discussion as each Youth and CED profile is unique, and the people and environments of the organizations are unique again.

In regards to youth participation of a political nature other barriers were exposed, including the danger of exclusion of particular groups of youth, especially marginalized youth, the offering of power without any option of real responsibility to make change, and an uneven balance of positive benefit to participation. Though the focus of *Hearing the Voices of Youth* is political these issues seem to resonate in terms of general community engagement, and awareness of these points may help prevent these concerns in CED as well.

"There was concern that only a certain segment of the population would be invited to participate at the local level. Others were critical of the lack of power usually associated with a formal committee, noting that such groups operate only in an advisory capacity." (Voices) Another concern [about youth participation] at the political level was that it benefited adults more than youth. Youth Advisory Councils were seen as providing politicians with more than they provided to the youth involved. (Voices)

The number of different ways that youth in the profiles used to both get engaged and engage other young people speaks to the need for creativity, particularly when working with more marginalized young people. If genuine youth engagement is hoped for then it is not enough to provide only one mechanism. "The young people who are interested in this type of activity [boards, etc.] usually find a way to get involved and have their voices heard. For many young people, however, such opportunities do not exist. Many marginal youth do not trust adults and are uncomfortable getting involved in "adult" processes such as going to meetings and voting on motions."(Voices)

Nearly all of the organizations and youth initiatives profiled in this research have been recognized or are beginning to be recognized by their communities for their ability to work with both young and elderly people who may have been excluded or missed by mainstream or other programs and structures of the community or province.

5. Youth Inclusion in CED

The Environmental Youth Alliance approaches youth inclusion through job training in a more complex way than just a handover or teaching of skills. "It is a question of supporting young people to become re-engaged with their communities, genuinely including them in the process of change."

"Supporting young people to become re-engaged with their communities, genuinely including them in the process of change" is a common theme with the majority of the organizations profiled, though their methods may differ. Some follow CED principles more than others, some are more focused on empowerment, social justice and leadership that often leads to CED as young people contribute to the development processes in their communities.

The goal of the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) programs is to link youth back into the school system or to employment. Young people get engaged with CNYC for a variety of reasons. The participants come from for many reasons, but frequently it is because other systems have let them fall through the cracks.

La Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO) works to bring young francophones outside of Quebec together, to support them to realize that not only are they not as isolated as they may believe but that they can have a strong community voice, and can be proud of their culture. This experience provides the knowledge, skills and tools that then sets them up to fully participate in the development of their communities, in ways they may not have been confident doing before.

At Youth Builders JobWORKS there is an 18-week Youth Builder's program, designed to provide 20 homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless youth with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and skills in a high demand occupational field. One of the young participants commented that many of his friends that used to be in gangs have now gone on to college and university. Even more unique, these young people now walk around their neighbourhood and are able to see the low-income houses that they have helped to re-furbish and repair, literally changing the face of the neighbourhood. They have been a direct part of the change and renewal in their community.

At Santropol Roulant the emphasis is on intergenerational relationship building and re-engagement in community, led by primarily young people reaching out to isolated seniors, and in the process engaging the entire community – in becoming "a model of community care." This inclusive approach to re-engaging in a community is not just based on one activity, but rather around the larger goal to "engage a whole community network around that person."

The examples listed above are not the only examples of young people getting involved in, engaging and leading in their communities and organizations. Yet these examples and the methodologies shown help to support the argument against the frequently assumed apathy and lack of interest or ability of young people to contribute back to their communities, and to support

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their care and interest in genuinely contributing to community decision-making. The profiles also speak to the need for a variety of methods, creativity and available flexibility of commitment, allowing for the changing environments and potential gaps in the system for young people.

Youth and CED Activities

There are some powerful illustrations of innovative CED Activities occurring in Canadian communities. Some organizations focus on one activity that then acts as a vehicle for their other ventures. Santropol Roulant is one example of this as their main goal is to deliver healthy meals to seniors, but this actually becomes a vehicle for community and social inclusion. Other organizations like the Bamfield Community School Association and The Storytellers Foundation have multiple CED activities running at once.

The Bamfield Community School Association supports a number of CED activities simultaneously. Some examples of their work include the Huu Ay Aht CD-ROM Project, the Community Capacity Assessment, the Community Web-site/listserv, the Kiixen Historical Site, and the Channel 5 News Bulletin.

The Huu Ay Aht CD features the Huu Ay Aht First Nation's language, history and culture. The West Coast Learning Network promoted the CD, featuring it in a public forum in 2003 and they continue to integrate the CD into local curriculum where possible. Youth played a key role in the research and data collection for this project. The Community Capacity Assessment was an initiative of the youth video club. The members created a collection of video clips of resources and people in the community to enhance awareness and support for regional community development and transformational learning. School students compiled data and the video club produced a video that was written, shot, and edited by students. The Community Web-site/listserv was created by students and reaches a third of the community. The web site www.bamfieldcommunity.com is currently being re-designed to enable a link to school and community learners' products including writings, artwork, and student research. The Kiixen Historical Site came together when students recorded and digitized the launch of the ancient 5,000-year-old Kiixen village site. They videotaped the dedication ceremony and worked with an archaeological team collecting research for the site. The video club produces a weekly TV show that is run by students in grades 4 through 7. Students do the behind the scenes camera work, are the on-camera hosts and staff the news desk and weatherboard. Six youth from grade 6 to 10 produce the news broadcasts and also produce videos and commercials. Students maintain the community bulletin board that is broadcast 24 hours a day. The club also produced several short video documentaries in and around Bamfield. The videos were presented at the BC Rural Teachers' Association's annual conference and at the International Rural Network's conference in Aberdeen, Scotland. The club has created productions about the Kiixen historical site, the Wizard of Oz, and a Huu Ay Aht partnership project *Huu Ay Aht For Kids* and a CD of Huu Ay Aht children singing traditional songs. The youth coordinator has also spearheaded the task of bridging the digital divide in the Bamfield and Anacla area and currently is in the process of rolling out a wireless community broadband network, with plans to offer service to residents by the end of June 2006.

The QQS Projects Society, an enterprising non-profit primarily run by youth, has had some

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dynamic Youth and CED initiatives and organizational structure as well:

The Koeye programs, including the Lodge and its programs for ecotourism and healing are youth directed by young Heiltsuk people in the QQS Society. The programs promote healing, education, capacity building and community development. (QQS) The Board of Directors has three members in their early twenties. These young people are the leaders of the current programs, and only young people are hired to run those programs.

Apart from the overall holistic purpose of "building an intergenerational community and creating a forum for action and interaction between and among generations, CED activities and projects at Santropol Roulant also include the Harvesting Histories Program, the Map of the World Project, the Rooftop Garden Project, and Santrocycle Bike Workshops. These are all combined within a vibrant learning space. In addition, there is a recognized practice of taking stock of the existing values in a community before a project is started, and of valuing the time that will take as part of the process.

The Storytellers Foundation has several CED and youth initiatives. The Rural Roots and Peer Learning Network came out of the goal of creating vibrant communities for all citizens, with a particular focus on youth. The Learning Shop is an informal education centre that was created in response to past community action research where people of the Upper Skeena expressed a need to learn to work together and a need to support the youth population. The Learning Shop staff use the practices of informal education to support children and youth, and those practitioners (adult and youth) who work around youth, to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge for youth to engage in CED. The Foundation trains Peer Health-Literacy Educators. These young practitioners are mentored to use informal education strategies to mobilize youth, support youth to voice opinions and ideas about community issues and opportunities, and help youth turn these ideas into action that creates change that is sustainable. The Upper Skeena Food Action Coalition is made up of 15 members working together to support young people to create and maintain work within a grassroots healthy eating/active living sector.

The Falls Brook Centre (FBC) sends some of its young people abroad.   While working internationally the young interns encourage rural communities to attain food self-sufficiency, and bring back many ideas back to try out at the centre. FBC's philosophy allows young people to experiment with more sustainable ways of living and working on the land.

Social Enterprise

Social enterprise is a common theme in the CED sector. There are several social enterprise initiatives that were profiled, some more focused on CED than others. They included the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, The Right Stuff, Youth Builders JobWORKS, The Print Shop at Eva's Phoenix, and the Food Delivery Program at Santropol Roulant. Four out of these five social enterprises work with marginalized or at-risk youth populations. Not only are they providing employment and skills to these youth, but they are often also orienting these same young people to contribute to their community.

The Right Stuff is a social venture – it uses the collating and delivery of the paper as a business training opportunity for unemployed youth workers who have difficulty finding employment due

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to their age, lack of work experience and limited skills. At Falls Brook Centre some of the young women run an organic catering business, as well as a small mushroom growing activity where organic certified Shitake mushrooms are sold to high-end restaurants.   LifeCycles works cooperatively with youth to provide entrepreneurial development, mentorship opportunities and peer support, in an effort to help them create sustainable, environmentally and socially responsible community businesses. At Santropol Roulant the meals on wheels social enterprise is the gateway activity to the intergenerational community building stage.   The Phoenix Print Shop is a print training facility and a commercial print shop at Eva's Phoenix that provides homeless and at-risk youth the opportunity to learn basic skills needed for long-term self-sufficiency in the graphic communication industry.

Creating Conditions for Organizational Change

The authors of *Youth and Decision-Making* stress, "that youth inclusive processes and positive outcomes do not occur naturally, and are not in the repertoire of most organizations and communities." The results from the youth and CED profiles, in addition to the literature review have found much in common with the conditions stated below.

Conditions most likely to facilitate positive outcomes:

1-   The top decision-making body in the organization needs to be committed to youth governance and youth-adult partnerships, and must change their ways of operating accordingly. The data are clear: If a governance body is focused on vision and learning, there is room for young people to make substantial contributions.

2-   Organizational change is facilitated by an adult visionary leader, one with institutional power and authority, to strongly advocate for youth decision-making. Without this leadership, traditional management structure and stereotypical views about young people are too powerful to overcome. (Youth in Decision-Making, 9)

Adult views about young people are difficult to change, and this is true even for adults in governance positions. Change occurs when organizations offer 3 types of experience to adults:

1-   Adults perceive a good reason to work with youth [i.e. not tokenistic]

2-   Adult attitudes change occurs most readily when young people perform well in the boardroom, or in other places regarded as adult turf. It is important for adults to witness youth succeeding in the nuts and bolts of organizational improvement.

3-   Adults change their view of young people when they have the opportunity to observe youth engaged in community action that had real pay-offs for community residents.
(Youth in Decision-Making, 10)

"To delegate responsibility to young people is to give them power, which in turn leads to recognition."[vii]

6. Conclusions

Why Involving Youth is worth a Community's Efforts; Instructive Practice and Conditions Necessary to Engage Youth

Though the styles, methods and levels of engagement vary within the scope of the profiles researched, the inclusion and leadership of youth within and of CED organizations has a significant impact on their communities, their organizations and themselves. Though there are lessons to be learned regarding how to genuinely include and infuse an organization, how to genuinely engage young people, and more work to be done at setting young people up with decision-making power, research begins to show the value that results from these investments with time.   As stated in *Youth in Decision-Making*, "we conclude that young people can have powerful and positive effects on adults and organizations. It does not happen all of the time of course. [...] But when the right conditions are in place, involving youth in decision-making is a powerful strategy for positive change." (Youth in Decision-Making, 5)

As CED organizations evolve their missions, vision and methodologies will need to follow that development, and will have to adapt to the changing environments within their communities. As witnessed in the profiles, youth can be a valuable asset to this process. "During adolescence, many young people are driven to explore issues of social justice. They are creating and experimenting with their own principles and political ideas, leading many to become involved in cause-based action. Consequently, in many organizations, the young people become the keepers of the vision. They are the ones who focus on the mission." (Youth in Decision-Making, 5)

In conjunction with the research in *Youth in Decision-Making*, the profiles show some of the complementary aspects between "the social concerns and developmental needs of young people and the decision-making needs of organizations." Santropol Roulant has developed a Culture of Evaluation that entails an ongoing evaluation of its organizational structure, vision, process and projects by all of its members and staff, all of the time. Not only is this style hugely inclusive but its flexibility also allows change to happen naturally and creatively, and the people involved are able to witness those changes. The Environmental Youth Alliance has found an intergenerational organizational structure to be the one that most suits its needs and work, setting it up to grow and change as the vision changes, but also to maintain some consistency of process. La Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne is driven by young people, and has learned how to adapt to a constantly changing audience and set of needs and vision as students graduate and move on.

Several of the organizations, including Santropol Roulant, LifeCycles and the Storytellers Foundation, do not actually focus specifically on youth inclusion, but rather overall social inclusion within their organizations and community. Not only does this seem to attract youth to work with them, but as soon the focus becomes the inclusion of the voice of one marginalized group, it seems to create a more conducive environment for other marginalized groups to

participate. "[Among other things] Youth bring under-represented groups into organizational decision-making." (Youth in Decision-Making, 23)

It is not only a question of involving youth in the organization, but of encouraging and enabling leadership within the organization and the community. In addition to further contributing to the evolution of the organization, it will again support outreach to other marginalized groups within the CED sector community. "These organizations have found that having young people in significant decision-making roles also provides critical connection to larger social circles of youth and provide a strategy for ensuring diverse representation. These connections are crucial to the success of the organization and could not be made by adults." (Youth in Decision-Making, 24)

Involving youth is not entirely about just improving the environment so that more youth will participate. Youth inclusion can strengthen the processes of the organization for all of its members as what youth often need to participate also enhances and raises the enjoyment of adult members as well! "What organizations often discovered is that the voices of youth at the table are generalizable to others. The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), for example, was contemplating improving board processes for the benefit of younger members. The board soon realized that all of the issues raised for youth also pertained to adults. [...] In brief, communication in decision-making groups, such as boards, seems to improve when the organization seeks to address youth concerns and meet the needs of young people." (Youth in Decision-Making, 26)

Contrary to the assumption that youth will make the work environment less efficient due to their *inexperience*, "Most frequently, adults concluded that their level of involvement in the work at hand increased because of their collaboration with youth. [...] ...the emotional connection that youth bring to community and youth-oriented issues tends to spark adult interest in these issues." (Youth in Decision-Making, 32) Though the initial time investment to actively engage and encourage youth leadership in CED organizations may seem high, the profiles and outside research show the benefits to this commitment.

As young people age and new young people take their places, the needs, values and expectations of the generation will change. This change may include a transition of attitude, and a youth organization will need to learn quickly how to take advantage of the opportunity for change if it is to survive for a long period of time. If there is energy and enthusiasm, and the need and desire to exist is clear, then the initiative or organization ought to be funded. Currently too few of said initiatives have consistent and long-term funding.

However some youth organizations may not be supposed to last forever, but are meant rather to answer a need of the youth of that particular generation. When the need is there again, people will find a way to support it, though much of the original learning may have been lost. This is not to suggest that youth organizations shouldn't be funded because it isn't worth it due to the turnover – completely the opposite actually – but that it shouldn't be considered a failure if a youth organization doesn't last for decades. There is an opportunity for great change, growth and creativity when working with a population who tends to be on the move, whether intellectually, emotionally or physically. Why wouldn't a youth organization be allowed the same freedom to change, to possibly become something completely different from when it started – similar to the participants involved?

As CED practitioners and interested community members concerned about the future of the CED sector, it is critical for the sector and communities to recognize that "A community cannot achieve optimal health and functioning while disparaging a major segment of its membership" (Youth in Decision-Making, 31) There are significant challenges and barriers that both youth and adults face to working together. As the Youth and CED profiles demonstrate, there is a lot of excellent work going on in Youth and CED but it is continually challenged by the realities mentioned previously. Whether the barriers or challenges are structural, attitudinal, financial, or factors outside of communities, they will need to be recognized before real change, genuine youth inclusion, engagement and leadership can be taken within the CED sector. This will mean effort by both youth and adults to create a mutual respect between generations, recognition of various styles of experience and the value of the diversity of this experience.

7. Recommendations

#1 – Sustainable Long-term Funding for youth focused CED work, by and within both styles of organization, youth-led and CED youth-inclusive. (And for structural support across Canada too?)

#2 – That there is more focus on Youth Infusion into organizations of the CED sector. The Canadian CED Network and its members need to further explore the practice of youth infusion in their work.

> The current emphasis is on **infusing** young people into all levels of organizational decision-making. What makes this priority quite different from those of the past is that advocates are pushing for youth to be directly involved in the deliberation and enactment of organizational policy. Young people, these advocates say, need to be involved not only in the day-to-day programming decisions, but they should also be involved in organizational governance. It is only through this "infusion" that communities will be able to promote the development of all youth and adults. (Youth in Decision-Making, 1)

#3 – Continued funding of practical youth initiatives by youth-led and youth-inclusive organizations. One example is The Canadian CED Network's youth internship program, CreateAction. This program creates opportunities for young people interested in the CED sector to enter into career-related employment that further supports their communities, their vision of social and/or environmental justice, and the CED sector.

> This is a critical factor: kids choose the issue, adults guide and train them through the action. [...] Stressing however that support needs to be in the context of empowerment. (Youth in Decision-Making, 29)

Three Recommended Best Practices with Youth

1- You need to have some involvement at all three levels of a community- local, interagency and political- in order to keep youth participation on the public agenda

2- The need for a "champion" in the community as well as a group of "youth friendly" adults to promote youth participation, particularly [as this helps add continuity to a transient- physically and age-wise- population's movement].

3- Leadership was seen as a critical factor for both youth and adults. (Voices)

8. Bibliography

All quotes taken from the profiles and the sources within the profiles have been identified as (Profile Name). Please refer to the original profiles for further information. The profiles are available at http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/emergingleaders.asp or through contacting The Canadian CED Network. There are more resources and youth and CED-relevant publications available in the accompanying Literature Review, also posted on the Emerging Leaders website.

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Web Links

(MORE TO ADD)
Bamfield Community School Association (Bamfield, British Columbia)

The Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA) is a small non-profit society located in the remote village of Bamfield, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. BCSA incorporated in September 1995 with a mandate of "bringing community members together to identify and use their combined assets to improve the quality of life and education available in the community".

In partnership with the Huu Ay Aht First Nation, the BCSA has been creatively engaging and empowering local youth in a wide variety of ventures. This profile highlights the work of this innovative community school association, and in particular outlines the adventures of the West Coast Learning Community and the youth-led TV and media programs.

Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op is a community centre where youth from Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods have the opportunity to become involved in economic ventures with co-operative and environmental themes. The youth are involved in a working co-operative in which their ideas provide the inspiration for work projects and they share the profits earned by these projects.[viii]

Environmental Youth Alliance (Vancouver, British Columbia)

The Environmental Youth Alliance is more than an environmental organization. Like organizations that take a community economic development (CED) approach in their work, EYA approaches sustainable development in an integrated manner that addresses environmental, social, and economic goals together. EYA is a non-profit, non-governmental charity, "a community development organization dedicated to improving the physical and social environment through hands on community projects that involve, train and employ young people, and to creating sustainable living alternatives that are concretely measurable and attainable."[ix]

Eva's Initiatives; Eva's Phoenix; The Print Shop (Toronto, Ontario)

The mission of Eva's Initiatives is to work collaboratively with homeless, at-risk youth between the ages of 16-24 to help them to lead productive, self-sufficient and healthy lives by providing safe shelter and other services. They create long-term solutions for homeless youth by developing and implementing proactive and progressive services. They operate three shelters in the Greater Toronto Area that house 122 youth each night. The three shelters provide homeless youth with emergency and transitional housing, harm reduction services to address drug and alcohol use, counselling, employment and training programs, housing support and services to reconnect youth with their families.[x]

Falls Brook Centre (New Brunswick)

Falls Brook Centre is an education and training centre in rural New Brunswick. It strives to put the values of sustainable living into practice. The 400 acres on-site are certified organic by OCIA, New Brunswick. Along with organic farm land, a forestry museum and woodlot that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, other on-site activities include solar and wind energy systems, a small conference centre, herbariums, tree nurseries, non-timber forest product plantings for mushrooms and ginseng, and restoration sites that provide the basis for many outreach programs and an opportunity to revive the local economy on a small sustainable scale.

Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (Ontario)

"FESFO's main goal is to ensure that Franco-Ontarian youth participate fully in the development

of their community. In order to achieve this, FESFO must allow youth to discover their own personalities, understand their place in their environment, in order to better identify, evaluate and improve it, have positive experiences in French with other youth to open themselves up to the world, understand the role they can play as Francophones in their community, and help other youth identify themselves as Franco-Ontarian through actions that affirm their identity as Francophones."[xi]

Lifecycles and Common Ground (Victoria, British Columbia)

LifeCycles is a great example of a small NGO that is cultivating a passion for food and farming among young people, of spreading that affection for the rich soil of everything organic and home crafted. Established in 1994 their mission is "to cultivate awareness and action about growing food, educate widely about the impacts of organic food, health and urban sustainability, and CED in the Greater Victoria area". This non-governmental organization focuses on building community connections for youth through hands-on projects that contribute towards improving local food production.

QQS Projects Society; Koeye Lodge (British Columbia)

QQS Society is a registered charity and enterprising non-profit established by the Heiltsuk First Nation on the remote central coast of BC in 1999. The Society was established to support Heiltsuk youth, culture and the environment and is backed by the Hemas, the traditional hereditary leadership, as well as the wider Heiltsuk community.

Santropol Roulant (Montreal, Quebec)

Santropol Roulant is a Montreal-based not-for-profit organization founded and run by young people in the community. The society brings people together across generations and cultures through an innovative meals-on-wheels service, intergenerational activities and various volunteer programs. Santropol Roulant uses food as a vehicle to break social and economic isolation between generations and to strengthen and nourish the local community.

Storytellers Foundation; The Learning Shop (Hazelton, British Columbia)

The Right Stuff (Trail, British Columbia)

The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre was established as a non-profit society in 1997 in response to rising unemployment, economic restructuring, the need for skill enhancement and training and the changing demographics in the Greater Trail region. The mandate of the Skills Centre is to serve as a focal point for bringing together community resources to support individual, organizational and community capacity building. The Skills Centre's social enterprise venture is called "The Right Stuff". The venture is designed "to meet the needs of youth related to employment and training and to diversify and grow the Skills Centres' revenue sources to support other projects and programs that fulfill our social mandate."

Columbia Youth Development Team (Trail, British Columbia)

Blanshard Community Centre (Victoria, British Columbia)

Youth Builders, JobWORKS (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

9. Appendices

Appendix A

Levels of Public Engagement Continuum ;
Published by NSW Department of Planning, adapted from the International Association for
Public Participation (IAP2).[1]

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT →				
INFORM	**CONSULT**	**INVOLVE**	**COLLABORATE**	**EMPOWER**
Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public and private concerns are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public	Promise to the public
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendatios into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	To place final decision making in the hands of the public

Source: IAP2 International Association for Public Participation.

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[1] This diagram was retrieved from http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/intro/pdf/ceh_techniques.pdf
on January 12th, 2006.

Appendix B

Who are Youth?

There are many definitions. Youth take up their roles in society at varying ages.
Canadian Policy Research Network

Summary of Youth Definitions

Defining youth has proven to be more of a challenge then expected. The one point nearly all authors seem able to agree on is that there is no one term to define Youth. Discovering the reasons behind the definitions provided is more complex. Frequently it is even difficult to determine how organizations and people working with youth define Youth.

Youth is not only defined as an age group but also according to the various growth stages and roles of youth, depending upon the society or community, encouraging people to identify themselves instead of being identified by others. Definitions often vary according to culture, and the roles and responsibilities accorded to young people within those cultures. The definitions can be either very inclusive or quite exclusive. As Canada has a stated goal of multi-culturalism the cultural influences and expectations will also be important to consider when defining Youth.

It is important when working with and in the youth community to recognize that "youth community" is little more than an age cohort, within which all of the differences and unique lives and experience which we attribute to the "adult" population are present.[2]

Summary of Youth Inclusion and Youth Infusion

What are Youth Inclusion and Youth Infusion? What are some examples of youth inclusion and youth infusion? What if you want it but haven't got it? What arguments can you use to support change in your organization or community process?   What are some of the barriers? There is some powerful research available to contribute to this discussion, that even goes so far as to suggest that including and infusing youth in an organization or community process results in turn in increased diversity within the process for other marginalized groups as well. One of the organizational outcomes of involving youth, according to the *Youth in Decision-Making* Study published by the University of Wisconsin, was that

> organizations placed a greater value on inclusivity and representation. They came to see that their programming benefits when multiple and diverse community voices are included in decision-making processes.[3]

One practice of youth inclusion that is mentioned in research is that of including a space for youth on the boards of organizations. This can be an effective practice if certain conditions are

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[2] Jamie Yard, Bridging the Divides Community Mapping Project Proposal.
[3] Youth in Decision-Making. P.8

put in place such as making sure that there is more than one youth representative so that they have peer support. "Peers also provide a safe place for adolescents to test out adult decision-making skills. It is not surprising that young people are often more willing to engage in collective decision-making and action when their peers are also participating." (Youth in Decision-Making, 24) Yet before assuming that young people on an organization's board indicates inclusion it's necessary to recognize that there are limitations and barriers- either to youth placed on boards, or to youth actually accessing that position.

Research has shown that when young people are engaged at multiple levels in organizations, "organizations placed a greater value on inclusivity and representation. They came to see that their programming benefits when multiple and diverse community voices are included in decision-making processes."[4]

The current emphasis is on **infusing** young people into all levels of organizational decision-making. What makes this priority quite different from those of the past is that advocates are pushing for youth to be directly involved in the deliberation and enactment of organizational policy. Young people, these advocates say, need to be involved not only in the day-to-day programming decisions, but they should also be involved in organizational governance. It is only through this "infusion" that communities will be able to promote the development of all youth and adults.[5]

Youth infusion exposed two main themes, integration of young people as active and valued members at multiple levels of their communities, and a need to contribute and lead not only at the decision-making levels but in the governance of their communities and organizations as well.

In communities

> *Youth Infusion refers to the fundamental goal: to integrate youth and young adults into all spheres of community life and to ensure that their voice and action are valued and utilized in efforts aimed at social or community change. At the organizational level, an institution is "infused" when youth are valued as effective partners and when structures are created at multiple levels to ensure that the voice of young people is represented in decision-making. (Youth in Decision-Making, 3)*

"Youth Governance (or youth decision-making) is a fundamental and core strategy of youth infusion. It refers to those situations where youth work- often in partnership with adults- to set the overall policy direction of organizations, institutions, and coalitions." (Youth in Decision-Making, 3)

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[4] Youth in Decision-Making. P.8
[5] Youth in Decision-Making. P.1

Appendix C

General Reasons for Research

The Youth and CED profiles gathered offer further examples of the variety of approaches possible. A research project of Youth and CED was the chosen approach because in addition to building a knowledge base,

"research provides a foundation of support for social change.

It can serve 3 basic purposes for those advocating for greater youth involvement in decision-making.

1-   Can address accountability concerns
2-   Can propel dissemination practices (can add clarity and definition to those who wish to involve youth but who do not know where or how to begin in their community)
3-   Offers a different type of legitimacy than practitioner knowledge- combined the two offer the most convincing message"   (Youth in Decision-Making, 2)

Whether the organizations profiled were youth-led organizations doing CED, or CED organizations with strong youth-decision making and involvement process, nearly every one shows various ways that youth are impacting the adults they're working with, the organizations' choices, and the communities they live in. "Although it is clear that bringing youth to the table can have powerful impacts on young people, there is no research to address its affects on adults, organizations and communities." (Youth in Decision-Making, Rationale) These Youth and CED can begin to contribute to this base of research.

Appendix D

Outcomes of Involving Youth in Organizational Change

An excerpt from *Youth in Decision-Making*

"Adult Outcomes of Involving Youth:

1- Adults experienced the competence of youth firsthand, and began to perceive young people as legitimate, crucial contributors to organizational decision-making processes
2- Working with youth served to enhance the commitment and energy of adults to the organization
3- Adults felt more effective and more confident in working with and relating to youth
4- Adults came to understand the needs and concerns of youth, and became more attuned to programming issues, making them more likely to reach outside the organization and share their knowledge and insights. They gained a stronger sense of community connectedness

Organizational Outcomes of Involving Youth:

1- The principles and practices of youth involvement became embedded within the organizational culture
2- Most organizations found that young people help clarify and bring focus to the organizations mission, and some organizations made this a formal role of youth
3- The adults and organizations as a whole became more connected and responsive to youth in the community. This investment and energy led to programming improvements
4- Organizations placed a greater value on inclusivity and representation. They came to see that their programming benefits when multiple and diverse community voices are included in decision-making processes.
5- Having youth as decision-makers helped convince foundations and other funding agencies that the organization was serious about promoting youth development
6- Including youth in decision-making led organizations to reach out to the community in more diverse ways (eg. Community advocacy, policy-making and service) (Youth in Decision Making, 8)

Appendix E

Organizational Timeline
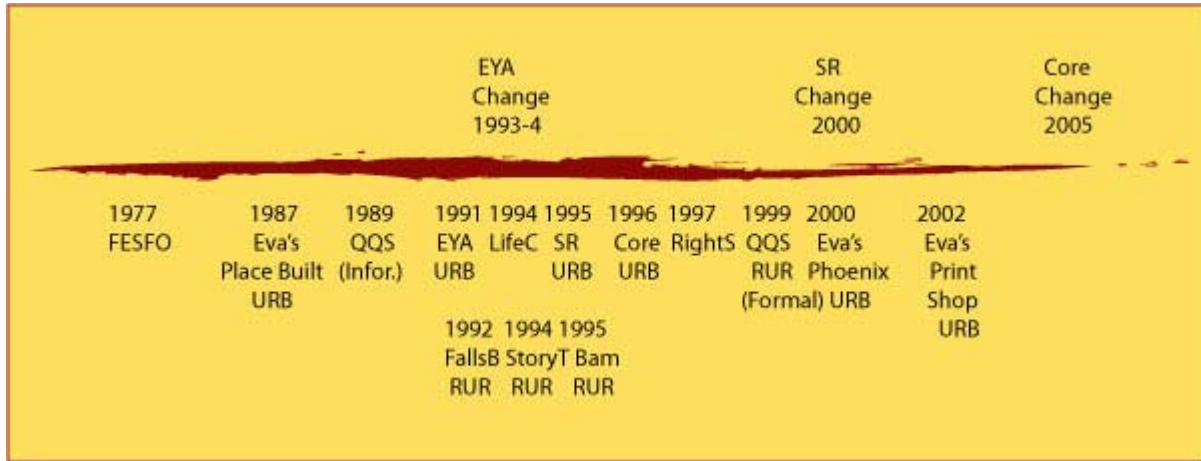
This report is contributing to the goals of the Emerging Leaders Committee of The Canadian CED Network in creating leadership opportunities for young people in CED.

Thanks very much to everyone that contributed!

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[i] Taken from www.ccednet-rcdec.ca on January 18th, 2006.

[ii] Taken from http://www.youthone.com/webathon/project_en_main.cfm on December 10th, 2005.

[iii] Taken from http://www.ayn.ca/ViewNews.aspx?id=151 on December 8th, 2005.

[iv] **Hearing the Voices of Youth. Proper Source info required.**

[v] This diagram was retrieved from http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/intro/pdf/ceh_techniques.pdf on January 12th, 2006.

[vi] Columbia Basin Trust Youth Advisory Council Website: www.cbt.org

[vii] Making Waves, Youth Publication. *Les Sentiers Jeunes-Essors.*

[viii] Taken from http://www.cnyc.ca/ on January 20th, 2006.

[ix] Taken from http://www.eya.ca/ on January 17th, 2006. All references to this website will be identified as (EYA) for the rest of the document.

[x] Taken from http://www.evasinitiatives.com/who.htm on February 10th, 2006. This source will be identified as (Eva) in the rest of the document.

[xi] Interview with Eric Stephenson, February 28th, 2006.