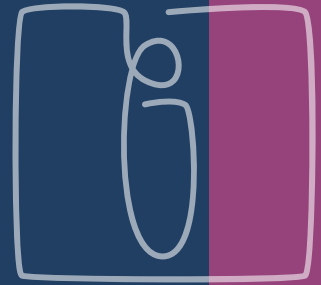




Case Study:

SERVICE NAVIGATION



**COMMUNITIES
BUILDING YOUTH
FUTURES (CBYF)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This case study represents communities' actions and opinions as of March 2024

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Cover Photo: Karolina Grabowska



MEET JELISE

COMMUNITY
Sudbury, ON



Jelise Keating grew up in Scarborough but has lived in Sudbury, Ontario for the past eight years—going on nine. She originally moved to Sudbury to attend Laurentian University, but ended up preferring the comparative calm of Sudbury to the hustle and bustle of Toronto.

"...In terms of the way that the city in itself moves, everything moves pretty slowly. You don't feel like you have to rush, you don't feel like you have to race anybody. You get to actually be on your own journey in Sudbury, which is really nice. The difficulty with living here is navigating the space because Sudbury is so large that you could actually fit all of Toronto just in Sudbury alone."

While the City of Greater Sudbury is the largest city by population in northern Ontario, it's population is still a fraction of the size of Toronto's. Jelise describes downtown as a zone where "everybody knows everyone," but, of course, not everyone lives close to the downtown core.

"When you go out towards the more rural towns within Sudbury: Copper Cliff, Coniston, [or] Lively, people know each other because they live in the area, but they're not as connected to the downtown area. [...] It could be a 20 [or] 45 minute drive downtown, if you live on the outskirts of Sudbury. So it's very difficult for youth who live out there to connect with youth who actually live in the core."

The challenges Jelise identified are exactly where she wanted to start her work. Jelise describes herself as "a serving leader," because she believes that the best way to lead is to "know what it means to authentically serve others." She wants to bring consistency to service access; to make services such as public health

“ [E]verything moves pretty slowly. You don't feel like you have to rush, you don't feel like you have to race anybody. You get to actually be on your own journey in Sudbury[...].”

Jelise

MEET JELISE

clinics or housing supports available, something that folks can come to depend on to ease and aid their everyday lives, regardless of their location within the Greater Sudbury area.

"I find that sometimes [service providers] focus more on the downtown area than they do the outskirts. And then the municipality, some of their youth centers are actually closed right now, either due to Covid or due to lack of attendance. [...] So I find if they really made an effort to be more consistent with the way in which they engage youth and had more programs for youth that are actually municipality run, or maybe in partnership with the youth organization that's already doing a really good job at engaging the youth in these various townships, then it would actually be better. The youth engagement would actually be a lot higher."

Jelise zeros in on youth engagement and strategic partnerships as key components of community work that actually...works. As we'll see in **Section 3, joining CBYF enabled Jelise to make a real difference in her community.**

“ [I]f they really made an effort to be more consistent with the way in which they engage youth and had more programs for youth that are actually municipality run [...] then it would actually be better. The youth engagement would actually be a lot higher.”

Jelise

Photo: Chuttersnap

MEET JELISE

MEET CBYF

HIGHLIGHTED DATA FROM 20 CBYF COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

Tamarack Institute's Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) is a 5-year initiative empowering youth like Jelise to become leaders, innovators, and decision-makers. Funded by the Government of Canada, CBYF is more than a program; it's a movement that places **youth at the center** of local community change. With a focus on small, rural, and remote areas, CBYF uses **a place-based approach and the collective impact framework** to support youth in building a bright and prosperous future for themselves, their peers, and their community.

To nurture a pan-Canadian collective of change-makers, The Tamarack Institute fosters peer networks, annual gatherings, and accessible support resources throughout the CBYF network. These systems help communities connect both locally and nationally, cultivating ecosystems to support youth, sustain initiatives, and encourage lasting change. Organizational support has been crucial to the success of CBYF, as it has accelerated learning by leveraging the exchange of new solutions and practices.

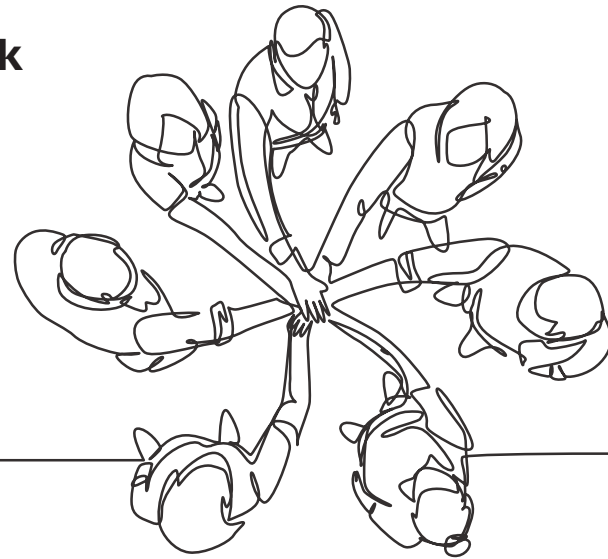
Data to highlight across the network of 20 CBYF communities

YOUTH REACHED

63,938 youth reached

2,567 youth joined a leadership table

2,025 youth hired to backbone staff team



"CBYF not only gives you the tools and tips that you need in order to be in these spaces, they also give you the support and encouragement. There isn't a CBYF member that you could meet that would be like, oh no, don't do that." Jelise

"I found that I've been able to make change, some way, somehow, whether it's getting all the right people to the table for the conversation with youth or bringing youth voices and their perspective to those who actually need to hear it and see it." Jelise

MEET JELISE

MEET CBYF

HIGHLIGHTED DATA FROM 20 CBYF COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

TAMARACK'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS & SUPPORTS

1,000+ coaching calls & support sessions delivered

770 accessible tools, resources, and publications shared

130+ community of practice sessions hosted

5 national gatherings hosted, engaging the entire CBYF network

Meet the CBYF Network

CBYF was designed to mentor youth on the road to success, empowering them to define the meaning of success and pave their own way towards it. 20 distinct regions across Canada are engaging in this crucial work, by leveraging the assets and expertise of the whole community to support youth futures.

While each community's initiatives and strategies may differ based on their specific context and youth needs, the goal of CBYF is universal: **to improve education outcomes and help youth successfully transition from education to employment to adulthood, and beyond.**

Meet CBYF's Cross Cutting Themes

By December 2020, through research and comprehensive community consultations, the CBYF network identified **six major themes** related to academic and

employment success for youth. These themes reveal the interconnected and often concealed factors that influence a youth's ability to engage fully in work and school.



MEET CBYF HIGHLIGHTED DATA FROM 20 CBYF COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

You can explore each community's priorities by diving into their **Plans on a Page**. These plans detail the community's vision for change, core strategies to achieve

their goals, intended outcomes, and research that informed the plan.



Spotlight on:

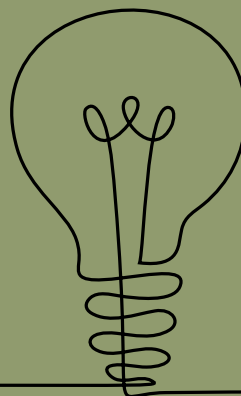
Service Navigation and Access to Supports

CONNECTING YOUTH TO SUPPORTS & RESOURCES

“Support” is a broad term that should be understood as any action taken to maintain, improve, or repair communities so that individuals may live in them as well as possible. This broad concept allows us to identify strategies youth employ in response to place-related challenges and opportunities as well as remedy the corresponding gaps. In rural communities, service navigation plays a particularly vital role in shaping the identity, purpose, and engagement of young people. The perception of what is possible can depend entirely on youths’ ability to successfully navigate and access support and services while also affecting their relationship to their community—be that one of connection or alienation. However, youth in these areas may face unseen barriers that prevent them from knowing about, much less accessing, vital support systems already in place.

By using a transformative and holistic approach driven by the Collective Impact framework, CBYF supports young people in re-engaging, or staying engaged, in their community during a crucial period of development. The model underscores the need for and benefits of community-driven innovation; long-term change is made sustainable through adaptation and a commitment to remaining open to new ideas. By investing in the well-being and resilience of youth populations, CBYF is contributing to the overall health and success of communities nationally. **Section 5** explores exciting examples of youth-led initiatives working to improve service navigation and access to support across Canada, while developing new solutions where gaps exist.

JELISE MEETS CBYF



Jelise had been living and working in Sudbury for years when she saw that CBYF was hiring. She felt she was a natural fit for the organization due to her past, but also because of her vision for the future.

"I started with CBYF in early 2020 as a youth engagement intern. I applied for the job because I graduated with my degree in psychology with a minor in entrepreneurship. And being somebody who's always worked with youth and in youth communities, I wanted to find out how I could support youth in Sudbury."

"I joined CBYF because they don't just consider the views of a small group of people. They ask everybody. They want to educate everyone, and help support the development of solutions, which really align with my values. I believe that somebody's voice and their life experience speaks not only to who they are, but who they want to become."

Today, Jelise is the communications specialist at Future North, the name that youth in CBYF Sudbury settled on to represent them. She stayed with the organization because of the support she received there— CBYF completely changed her perspective on what a colleague can be.

"The whole Tamarack team is very open, very supportive, and it's easy to discuss with them. [...] It's not something you see from a lot of mentors or peers or coaches. CBYF and Tamarack, they changed that for me and probably for a lot of other members too. They made it so easy to access information and they were more than willing to help you. They're more than willing to show up."

Encouraged by the team at The Tamarack Institute, Jelise felt confident and emboldened to test out new ideas, pushing the boundaries of her imagination and leveraging the benefits of collective impact.

“ I joined CBYF because they don't just consider the views of a small group of people. They ask everybody.” **Jelise**



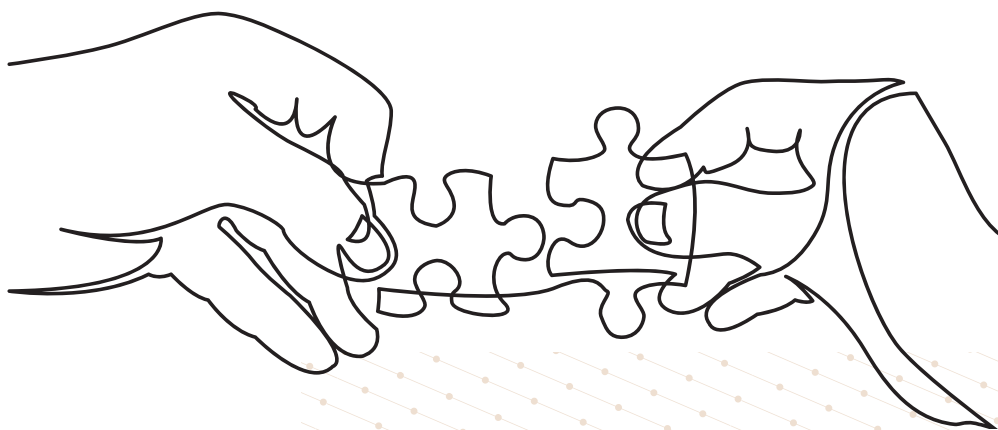
*"It's so encouraging. If you have an idea, if you're trying something new that's out of the box, they don't want to see you quit on that. They don't want you to say it's too much. They'll support you. They'll show up, they'll meet with you and talk about it. **There isn't one opportunity that I have been a part of that hasn't gone amazing or taught me a lesson that was then transferable to other CBYF communities. So we learn from each other and we teach each other.**"*

Future North has become a subject matter expert on youth engagement and gone on to inspire and help numerous communities in the CBYF network. Jelise credits their success to a genuine commitment to valuing diverse youth voices—with tangible results.

"So [at] Future North, we value the time that youth give us. We value their time, we value their voice, we value their opinion, we value it all. Their life experience and their lived experience is so important to us because no one's lived experience is exactly the same. So for us, we have our youth expert panel, which is I think 15 youths now between the ages of 15 and 30."

The youth expert panel was instrumental in shaping the direction Future North took in their programming, their branding, and their overall ethos. In [Section 4](#), we take a look at Sudbury's Community Map, made for and by youth.

“ We value [youths'] time, we value their voice, we value their opinion, we value it all. Their life experience and their lived experience is so important to us because no one's lived experience is exactly the same.” **Jelise**



MEET SUDBURY'S COMMUNITY MAP



The community mapping project started from a simple hypothesis: youth experienced barriers accessing services and supports in Sudbury. Through research with youth focus groups, Future North confirmed this to be true: youth did not know where to access services, how to access them, or even the extent to which services were available to them. With their first round of Community Innovation Funding from The Tamarack Institute, Future North set about creating the Community Map, an online interactive tool providing a “one-stop-shop” where all services can be found.

While the community map works as an important standalone tool for the community, Future North uses the data generated from the map for advocacy purposes as well. One technological feature of the map is a “heat map” that demonstrates the physical concentration of services. Armed with real evidence of underserved areas, Future North knows where to direct their energy. Hearing Jelise talk about her role in the mapping project, and how she uses it to forge new networks of service, is downright inspiring:

“[Part of my work is] making sure the map is updated, getting new and more service providers on that map, getting the information going to see them and understand them, engaging with youth and finding out what it is they needed and kind of being like the road sign—how the road sign points in all different directions. So connecting youth to these services, pointing them in the direction of where they want to be so that they’re not lost and they don’t feel like they can’t find anything. That brought me a lot of joy because not only was I able to hear what youth needed from service providers, I was also able to create programs or workshops and activities that help them to increase their skills capability, increase their capacity to do more, to get closer to where they wanted to be, or find someone who was willing to partner with me, whether it be an organization or a school or a student who wanted to make changes.” Jelise

“ [N]ot only was I able to hear what youth needed from service providers, I was also able to create programs or workshops and activities that help them to increase their skills capability, increase their capacity to do more, to get closer to where they wanted to be[...].”

Jelise

MEET SUDBURY'S COMMUNITY MAP

Even when youth can find the services they need, bureaucratic challenges remain due to many services operating in an independent fashion. Jelise and her team have found that, by connecting service providers to each other, they can improve and strengthen the operations of service providers and lessen the burden on youth.

"We were also able to connect more services together. There are so many services that work as a silo. There are so many silos, and that doesn't help you because you're working with the same youth, but when they're over here, they give you all their information to come to another service provider that does something similar and have to either retraumatize themselves explaining the situation again, or they have to start all over again. That doesn't really help them get any closer to where they want to be. So connecting services and having them speak with each other and really come together, we're trying to reverberate that collective impact model within our city as well." **Jelise**

“ There are so many services that work as a silo. There are so many silos, and that doesn't help you because you're working with the same youth [...].” **Jelise**

Photo: Max Fisher



MEET SUDBURY'S COMMUNITY MAP

According to their data collection efforts, since its launch, the **Community Map** has been accessed by 5000+ folks in Sudbury. Efforts to improve the map, and ensure it remains useful and relevant to young people are ongoing, through outreach, surveys, and continued focus groups. A youth directory was established with youth who expressed interest in continued participation in the project. The directory has swelled to 100+ highly engaged youth, many of whom joined action teams and the Leader Table for the overall initiative. A Youth Engagement toolkit, put together using insights on youth engagement from this project, led to further funding from Pathways to Education and impressed the Municipality of the City of Greater Sudbury who expressed interest in (and eventually contracted) Future North as a youth engagement consultant.

Out of this one project, dozens of connections were made: between service providers, between Future North and the youth of Sudbury, and between Future North and other CBYF communities. The process of creation ended up being as important as the final product—with community change rippling out in all directions.

COMMUNITY MAP

If you don't see yourself on the map, click **ADD ME**.

ADD ME

Future North's interactive community map is designed to create a central location for youth services, resources and activities within the District of Sudbury and Manitoulin.

Please note some services, hours of operation and service features may be temporarily affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Fees: YES \$ / NO ☹️ | After Hours: YES ✓ / NO ✗ | Service: Virtual 📺 / In-Person 👤

Filter by: All

Health Sciences North - Withdrawal Management Services | Horizon Santé Nord - Services de gestion du sevrage
ADDICTIONS | DÉPENDANCES
336 Pine Street, Sudbury, ON, Canada
This service offers non-medical Level 2 withdrawal management program for individuals who are either under the influence of, or in withdrawal from alcohol or drugs. Provides a safe and supportive environment for detoxification from the effects of alcohol or drugs.
Un service de gestion de niveau 2 pour lequel les personnes reçoivent des soins de soutien pour les aider à gérer les symptômes et le processus de sevrage.
Phone: 705-671-7366

English/ Français: EN/FR | After Hours And Weekend Services Available?: ✓ | Service Delivery: 👤

Map showing various service locations in Sudbury, including: Long & McQuade Musical Instruments, Domino's Pizza, Intelcom express, Food Basics, Flour Mill, Sudbury Orthodontics, Northern Exotics, Tony's Auto Shop, Ruberto Painting & Decorating, HLH Construction, Canadian Khalsa Darbar, and Gus's.

MEET SOME OF

CBYF'S IMPACT

ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO

SUPPORTS & RESOURCES



The impressive success of Sudbury's Community Map indicated to other communities that there may be ways to utilize youth's digital literacy to improve access to services. After all, CBYF members are not trying to reinvent the wheel but are looking for new ways to amplify and reinvigorate community workers, whenever possible.

In Nova Scotia, **CBYF Digby** program coordinator and youth leader, Morgan Dunn, saw an opportunity for a similar resource in her community. Students enrolled in Digby Alternative School, another CBYF initiative, were explicitly seeking to engage with the wider community, as part of their curriculum. Students would lead the data collection necessary to populate the map and provide insights on the kinds of service providers that would be most useful for youth to be aware of. This would be a research and outreach project for the students with the added benefit of increasing the general knowledge of resources in the area. Part of Sudbury's success stemmed from engaging a team of savvy web developers who were able to create a modern, beautiful, and, most importantly, genuinely easy-to-use tool. Rather than spend untold hours interviewing web developers, Digby was able to speak with the right team, right away. The CBYF ecosystem was able to fast-track the project getting started on an accelerated timeline.

In Quebec, the **CBYF Laval** team found that there was no need to create a new digital resource because an organization was already

working in this space: [Trouve ta ressource](#) (find your resource). CBYF Laval worked to support this work because, like CBYF, Trouve ta ressource is putting young people at the heart of a collective approach to innovation with the ultimate goal of improving the well-being of youth. Similar to the projects in Sudbury and Digby, the organization sought to compile a digital directory of useful services in the community in the form of an interactive map.

Again leveraging technology, at **CBYF Whitehorse**, youth interns identified young people struggling to access educational and mental health support. In response, the team created a QR code resource list, and distributed it across downtown Whitehorse for easy access to vital services.

Below, we dive deep into three other community projects in Prince Albert, Chilliwack, and Oxford County, that address the theme of Service Navigation and Access to Supports.



Prince Albert, Saskatchewan PIHTIKWE: BEYOND THE DOORSTEP

Background

Before *Pihtikwe: Beyond the Doorstep* was launched, the team at CBYF Prince Albert had already identified service navigation as a major pillar of their work and had made strides towards addressing barriers to access through their efforts to **bridge the digital divide**. Building off of this initiative, the team knew that meeting youth where they are at and operating from a place of trust were crucial to the success of any youth-focused project in their community. Although the team

found that there were many resources available, most youth simply did not know about them or what they could offer youth, specifically. Nearly half of the population in Prince Albert identify as Indigenous, presenting demographic challenges related to access to services and supports. A common barrier for Indigenous youth is a lack of trust in organizations, businesses, and agencies due the history of colonization in this country.

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



The Solution

Pihtikwe seeks to overcome innate distrust and a feeling of fearfulness, linked to generational trauma and present discrimination, by having youth dive deep into organizations in the area to foster trust and raise awareness about what is available. By posting the video

directory online, *Pihtikwe* considers and integrates the reality of how most youth access information and how written material may present an additional barrier for those youth most at risk.

Approach

YOUTH-LED

Because the project was created by youth for youth, those doing the interviewing were closest to the specific questions and misconceptions youth may have about any given organization. Youth are more likely to trust members of their own peer group but

moreover youth who, like them, may have struggled to feel like they belonged or had something to contribute. By hiring an inclusive group of ten youth who represent a broad contingent of youth, CBYF Prince Albert ensured that youth saw themselves in the work.

UNRELENTING OUTREACH

Unrelenting outreach involves CBYF staff working to make sure that the youth involved in the project feel supported and equipped to do the work. For instance, understanding the importance of maintaining and respecting a strict schedule while also being flexible to the needs of youth. This created a working environment where youth were encouraged to step out of their comfort zone to learn valuable communications skills, such as email etiquette, interview skills, video editing, and how to schedule meetings in a safe space. By working with a production company, Big Drum Media, the youth were introduced to

the kind of professionalism required to see a project to completion.

"It was helpful for me to be able to work as part of a group in a physically accessible space. This project helped with my mindset. Before this project I thought I wouldn't be able to find opportunities for me to fully contribute to my community. It's always complicated to belong or be included. With this project, I learned that I do belong and I need to continue to advocate for myself and youth in Prince Albert. I learned how to become more confident talking to a camera. I would like to continue to be involved in projects like this." **Youth Participant**

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



GOAL-ORIENTED

The decision to close the project with a Community Agency Showcase provided the project with an end goal to work towards. This kind of structure helps to motivate youth to stay engaged and involved and brings the work to the larger community. Through the showcase, *Pihtikwe* was able to reach more organizations who approached the team and wanted to be included. The community was also given the opportunity to ask the youth

questions and provide feedback, truly bridging the gap between youth and service providers.

"My confidence has increased hugely. I became less unsure of myself. I wasn't worried about how I'll come across. I learned how to be more communicative. I'd just call people, even though I was a bit anxious. I'm very proud of myself because I was able to do things that made me nervous."
Youth Participant

Results



17 organizations interviewed by youth



10 strong relationships built with youth



Directory is up on the CBYF PA website for all to access

Key Takeaways

When youth design and develop projects themselves, they are more likely to resonate with fellow youth and actually be used. Giving youth an opportunity to get involved in their community has ripple effects for everyone around them. Many of the youth involved in this project previously identified as missing a sense of connection to their community. By building strong relationships with the organizations they spoke to, these youth were able to forge bonds and gain a sense of empowerment with one youth being offered an external paid

position based on the strength of their communications skills, recently acquired through this project.

"[I experienced] the importance of having a sense of community. I didn't know what that was until I started getting involved with CBYF. I feel connected and supported by more than friends and family."
Youth Participant

Click here to view [**Pihtikwe: Beyond the Doorstep—Story of the Youth**](#)



Chilliwack, British Columbia

CHANNELING YOUTH VOICES

Background

Channelling Youth Voices is an ongoing project that started as a short documentary film which came to fruition after a year-long participatory research collaboration between Community Health and Social Innovation researchers, CBYF facilitators, and Chilliwack youth. After the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth who had aged out of government care services faced increased challenges related

to mental and/or physical health, impacts of incarceration, substance abuse, poverty, and homelessness or precarious housing. However, instead of only focusing on challenges, the documentary seeks to highlight the survival strategies employed by youth in the Fraser Valley, recognizing the resilience of youth in the face of adversity.

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



The Solution

Youth wanted to talk about barriers they had experienced in trying to navigate the care system to find help or treatment with the hope of changing it. While not a 'solution' in and of itself, the documentary was an inspiring way to engage youth, illuminate critical gaps in services, as well as raise awareness in the community around the fact that it is not easy

for youth who have had to depend on services to suddenly lose access to those services at the age of 19. The documentary represents a starting point for discussion grounded in lived experience and recommendations from youth who often face a drastic gap in support as they breach the category of 'adulthood.'

Approach

YOUTH-LED

70 youth engaged in the documentary process in total including team leads, advisory members, youth interviewees, youth diary submissions, and community conversations. The documentary was entirely shot by youth who were given the tools of their choice as well as the tech support needed to use them. Through their submissions and their

deft interviewing, youth worked to shape the content and tone of the documentary. The search for stable, maintainable housing as well as mental health supports was of primary concern in every conversation. Youth were able to challenge the perception that they are inherently unserious by speaking frankly about their lived experience.

FLEXIBILITY

In order to include youth who want to get involved, yet, for one reason or another, cannot attend an activity or may not feel comfortable participating, *Channelling Youth Voices* offers diverse paths to engagement. Activities were held multiple times to accommodate atypical schedules and youth were given the space

necessary to meaningfully engage. Reflecting on their experiences was sometimes emotional and triggering. By keeping communication channels open, organizers were able to take the time to ensure youth were heard while shifting timelines appropriately to keep youth engaged at a pace they were comfortable with.

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



Impact and Key Takeaways

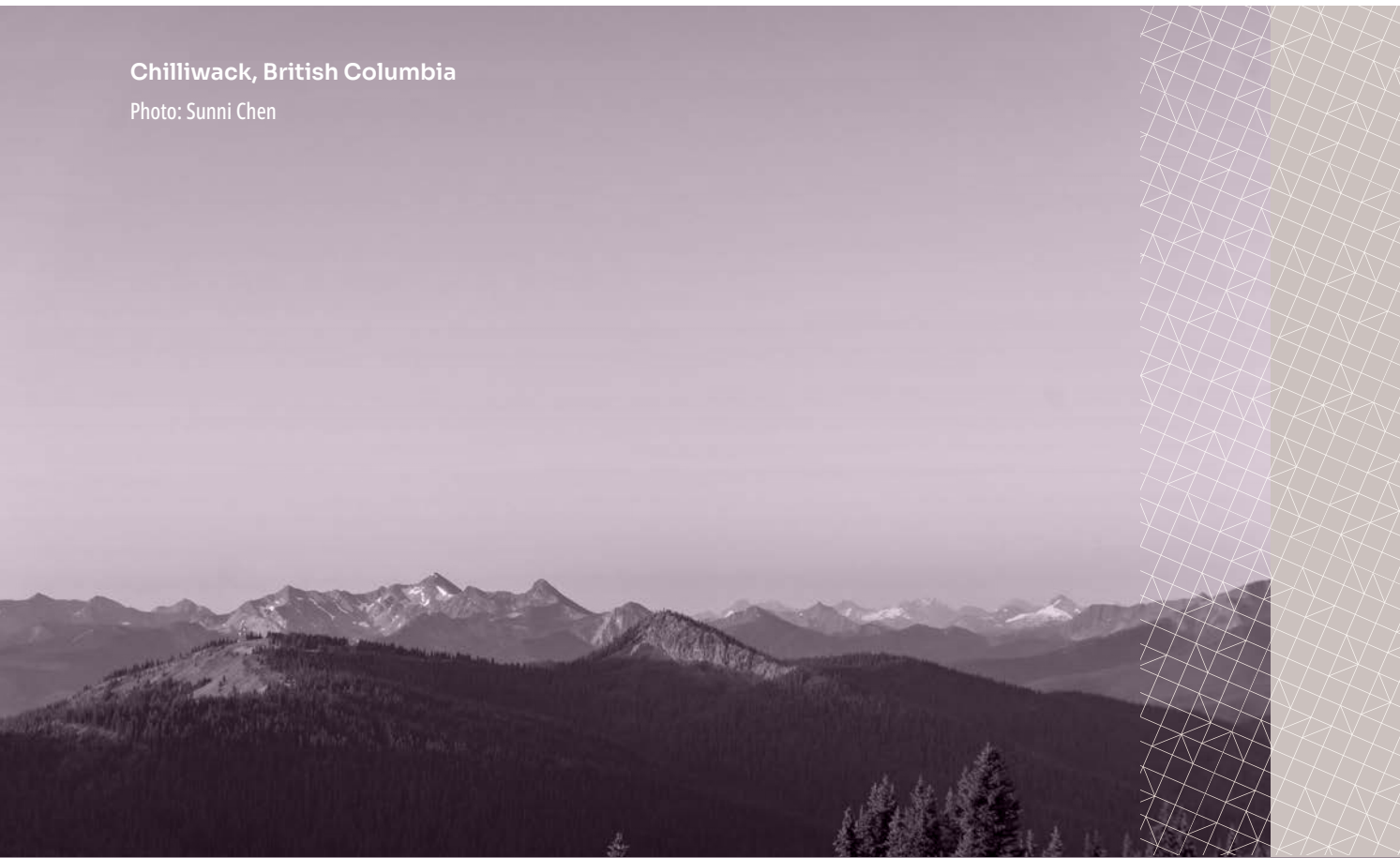
The film was screened publicly and attracted the attention of local service providers which resulted in additional funding from two community groups for a knowledge mobilization event with an initial registration of 75 people. *Channeling Youth Voices* also presented as part of a roundtable at Simon Fraser University's "Horizons" conference which focused on participatory models of knowledge generation, mobilization, and collective

imagination. For many youth, being involved in this project created a sense of fellowship and validation as they realized they were not alone in their struggles. *Channelling Youth Voices* still works in the community today, independent from CBYF, and continues to push for the expansion of services beyond the age of 19.

We urge you to [watch the documentary](#).

Chilliwack, British Columbia

Photo: Sunni Chen





Oxford County, Ontario

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION FUND (YEEF)

Background

Youth residing in remote areas, such as Oxford County, frequently contend with a lack of essential support and resources in comparison to their urban counterparts. The limited outreach capacity of local organizations due to size or budget constraints compounds the issue, leaving many youth unaware of available support networks.

Taking a holistic view of youth and their needs, the CBYF team conducted consultations

with both youth and members of the CBYF Youth Council. By experimenting with a new approach to empower youth to speak directly to community leaders about their experiences accessing resources, the objective was to design a strategy to provide youth with the support they needed to thrive within the community.

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



Solution

YEEF was developed as a result of these consultations, with the goal to directly remove the challenges economically disadvantaged youth face while pursuing education and employment goals. Funding was made available to cover needs like health (uncovered prescriptions, eyeglasses), transportation (bus passes, cab rides), school equipment, and grocery store gift cards. The objective was to eliminate the hurdles youth face when navigating

complex support systems, which often include intricate paperwork and complex eligibility requirements.

CBYF partners formed a subcommittee to manage the fund, and promote it to local youth-serving organizations. Adults in supportive roles could submit applications on behalf of youth with their consent.

Approach

LOW BARRIER AND BROAD CRITERIA

To apply for the funding, youth simply had to state why their request would positively influence their ability to engage in school or work. Traditionally, funding streams and financial aid come attached with stringent requirements and limitations around what kinds of support is offered, or how it can be used. Thanks to CBYF's open approach and lack of strict guidelines, two youth used the funding to access therapy, which greatly impacted their capacity to function and excel in school, work, and life overall:

"I am a youth that has had no parents to help me financially. Before the support I received, I was really struggling financially and mentally. Thankfully with your help I am on track to graduate this summer and hopefully be attending college next year... I also have been finally able to open up and get a therapist that was very much needed. Without therapy I wouldn't be where I am and be as successful as I am today. Honestly without therapy I don't think I'd still be here, that's how much I was in need of this kind of support".
Youth YEEF recipient

Oxford County, Ontario

Photo: Dylan Carr



CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



INCLUSIVE ELIGIBILITY

Being between the age of 15 to 29 was the only eligibility requirement to access a YEEF grant. Unlike conventional benefits and services with complicated applications, the need to present various official IDs, and an onus on individuals to prove eligibility, this approach reduces administrative burdens from grant recipients,

which can leave youth feeling overwhelmed and disenfranchised. Expanding funding to those over 25 also addresses the support gap for individuals who have “aged out of care” and are no longer eligible for resources available to those under 18.

RELATIONAL OUTREACH

The presence of services and resources alone doesn't ensure equal access. Many youth may lack the resources, capacity, or transportation necessary to locate and access essential support and care. CBYF employed a relational approach, partnering with youth-serving organizations and supportive adults

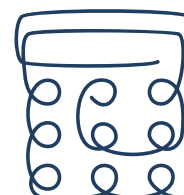
regularly interacting with youth. With their consent, these adults could submit applications on behalf of the youth, adopting a strategy designed to “meet youth where they are”, easing the burden on youth to find help on their own.

Impact

YEEF provided direct support to 35 youth, enabling them to acquire essential items, resources, and support needed to succeed in school and work. Youth who invested in new technology or school supplies reported a substantial improvement in their study capabilities, thanks to having reliable equipment at home and the relief from financial stress related to resource allocation decisions. Several youth mentioned they were able to access vital mental health support they couldn't afford before. The flexible funding even helped a young person facing food insecurity to purchase a new fridge.

“With your committee's help, I have completed 3 online credits and went to 8-9 therapy sessions. I have grown and not had to struggle and stress about things that to me are huge but to others with parents or easier lives would find to be very small issues.” Youth YEEF recipient

“Without a laptop I wouldn't have been able to do the work I need to get done at home. I was able to get a small laptop perfect for any work I had to get done online!” Youth YEEF recipient



CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH'S ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES



Results



35 youth received \$500 to fuel their pursuits in education and employment



89% of recipients belonged to an underrepresented group

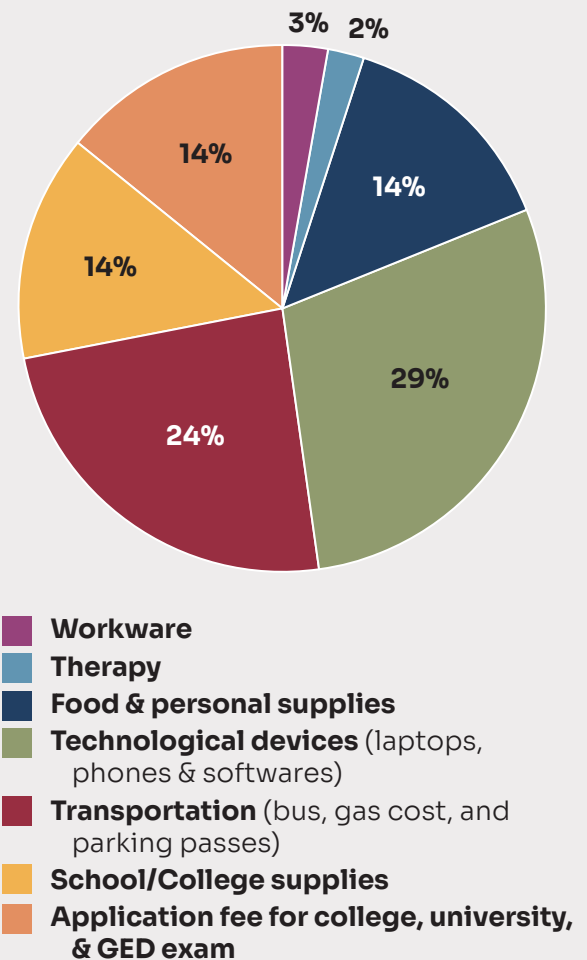


\$15,680 distributed directly to youth

Key Takeaways

While this funding method doesn't address the root cause behind the lack of support accessible to young people in remote regions, YEEF effectively responded to the immediate needs of over 30 financially unstable youth. The initiative granted them the agency to articulate and define their needs, conveying to the youth that their community cares and is committed to supporting their success. By positioning youth as experts in identifying service gaps, youth are empowered and emboldened to meaningfully seek support, and open up about their experiences.

Through developing the YEEF grants, Oxford County established a compelling model for increased investment in straightforward resource distribution methods with clear and simple eligibility criteria.



MEET CBYF'S

IMPACTS ON YOUTH

Jelise is clear that her team owes its successes in Sudbury to youth themselves. Youth were consulted not just at the beginning of the project, but every step of the way. Jelise wanted to make sure that her team contributed something to the community that made a real impact in the lives of youth.

*"...actually going and saying to youth, Hey, we have this map. What do you guys think about it? You told us this is what you wanted. This is what you needed. How beneficial is it? Are we missing any information? Is there anything we can do to improve it? And having that feedback, **we are always looking for feedback, and that is what helps us to create change, not only [for our] organization, but for other organizations as well.**" Jelise*

Across Canada, CBYF's radical community collaborations and youth-for-youth programming **reached 49K+ young people**. In late 2023, Tamarack launched a listening campaign to assess how CBYF projects impacted these participants to improve access to important services like mental health care, school, housing, and food. Through surveys and relational meetings, youth had the chance to share their experience and contribute ideas for future cohorts.

“ [W]e are always looking for feedback, and that is what helps us to create change [...].” **Jelise**



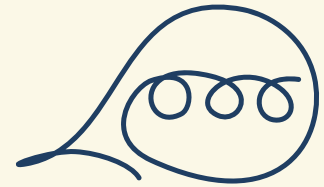
Photo: Cottonbro Studio

CBYF'S IMPACTS ON YOUTH

This is what they had to say :¹

“ I have witnessed a shift of people and service providers realizing [that] they must listen to what youth say. Youth are now becoming more directly involved in projects/initiatives for them.”

Youth Participant



“ Much more engagement and resources.”

Youth Participant”

“People are starting to look for resources to help their goals and help them socialize with others in society.”

“I notice that a lot of youth are willing to engage and are willing to accept the help when things are overwhelming.”

“Something that stood out to me was navigating social support—before I didn’t think Regina had anything going on, didn’t know about employment and education support, but working with Claire [from CBYF Regina], I took on on networking opportunities and met service providers and [learned] what they’re about. One was 211 Saskatchewan—they have everything for you and it’s a helpful tool for anyone who needs a job or service.”

CBYF initiatives demonstrably prove that placing youth at the center of the work—works. When service providers listen to youth and incorporate their ideas, youth are more likely to engage with those services—not only accessing what providers seek to offer, but actually working to shape future programs. **54% of youth**

¹ All quotes presented here are the result of dozens of consultation sessions with youth as well as survey responses. Quotes are intentionally left anonymous to preserve youth’s privacy.

CBYF'S IMPACTS ON YOUTH

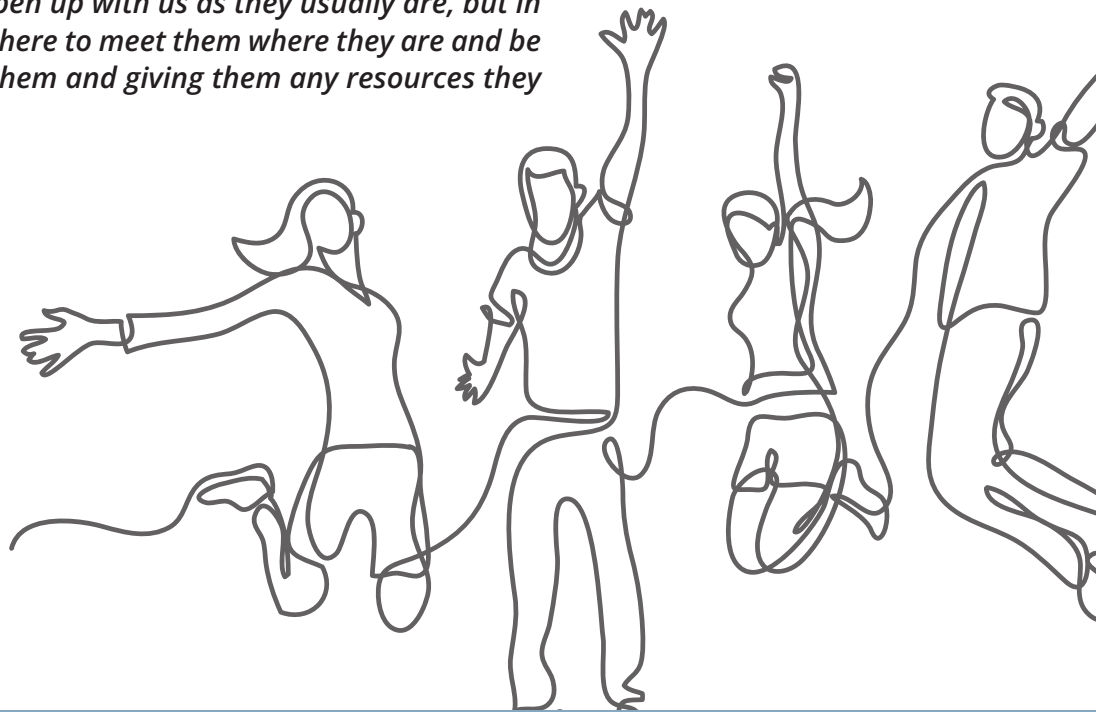
surveyed indicated that, since getting involved with CBYF, their level of engagement in community activities has increased. And their continued involvement in the community goes beyond CBYF, as 59% of youth survey respondents agreed that their involvement with the initiative led them to participate in other community activities outside the project's scope. Correspondingly, youth found that greater involvement leads to more work being done, creating a positive feedback loop.

By finding innovative ways to reach youth and share knowledge with them, CBYF is taking the first steps towards having youth actually access those services. Breaking down information asymmetries between youth and the resources out there for them was a key pillar of CBYF's work and lays the foundation for meaningful community engagement in the future.

"I found it really helpful to know what's going on, what's changed since I've been in high school, what kind of resources are available? Who needs them? You know, what kind of demographics are there in the town?"

"When we began working within the school community the youth were apprehensive to connect or open up with us as they usually are, but in us showing them that we are there to meet them where they are and be a listening ear while guiding them and giving them any resources they may not know about."

“ [There is] more awareness around community issues [and] more work being done by service organizations in the community.” Youth Participant



MEET

CBYF'S IMPACTS ON YOUTH FUTURES

Each CBYF community is unique; what “service navigation and access to supports” means for each is entirely different. In Sudbury, Digby, and Laval, investing in digital tools that help bring service navigation into the 21st century was crucial to improving access and awareness of what already exists. In Prince Albert, youth aimed at that same goal but used video to capture the nuances and personalities of service providers. Youth from Chilliwack sought to bring service gaps to light, courageously sharing their stories in the hope that these gaps may one day be closed. Oxford County plunged into the work head first, distributing funds to youth in immediate need.

“ [I] previously didn’t believe [I] had the ability to network, utilize resources, [and] bring together [my] vision for the future.” **Youth Participant**

“ [My participation with CBYF taught me] to not only contribute but to listen & get perspectives from others. [It] motivated me to attend more community engagement and participate more in general.” **Youth Participant**

Photo: Andrea Piacquadio



CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH FUTURES

Despite these differences, across the country youth were in need of more support in one way or another. CBYF communities rose to this challenge and, due to their unwavering commitment to youth-led collective impact, youth have drastically shifted their outlook on the future, along with a reevaluation of the resources and paths available to them.

Having youth navigate support systems with ease is the long-term goal but creating systemic change is a long process. Four years into CBYF, communities have created long term partnerships, attended major annual events, acquired outside funding and support, and inspired the beginnings of a paradigm shift in rural Canada.



Photo: Cottonbro Studio

“ It impacted me as a person and made me think I’m a better member of the community. I want to continue on, when I graduate, with communication and outreach. Help people and talk back and forth—I got to work on this skill, it was impactful in the project. I got to interact with organizations, people... it helped me decide on another aspect of my postsecondary life which is working in social work, helping troubled youth, helping any way that I can.” **Youth Participant**

“ [People] can’t ignore it when the collective of people who care is bigger. They can’t ignore it when everyone’s saying the same thing, then they have to be a part of the conversation. But in order for that to happen, we actually have to open ourselves up and be willing to learn and teach each other. There’s a lot of silos, not only in cities, but across the country. Everybody thinks that they’re in this alone, and CBYF has definitely shown me that we’re not, we just have to make the effort to work together. And what Tamarack has done successfully over and over again is show us exactly how to do that.”

Youth Participant

CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH FUTURES

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT



Communities

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Alberni-Clayoquot | 9. Moncton | 16. Whitehorse, Yukon |
| 2. Chatham-Kent | 10. Oxford County | 17. Yellowknife |
| 3. Chilliwack | 11. Portage La Prairie | 18. Chippewas of the Thames |
| 4. Corner Brook | 12. Prince Edward County | 19. Prince Albert |
| 5. Digby | 13. Regina | 20. Nunavut |
| 6. Grande Prairie | 14. Saint-Léonard | |
| 7. Kahnawà:ke | 15. Sudbury | |
| 8. Laval | | |

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

Evidence of systems-level impact generated by CBYF include:

GREATER ALIGNMENT BETWEEN EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- **Chatham-Kent** presented to 500 teachers on how to connect youth to opportunities in the trades, and held a meeting with school board representatives who were interested in bringing this information into classrooms.
- **Laval** created connection, alignment, and a common vision amongst local service providers for how to best serve youth. Now the community organizes a bi-yearly event that connects over 150+ orgs, united around youth engagement.
- **Port Alberni** partnered with WorkBC to develop employment counseling workshops to secondary students offered. Workshops were open to all community members, and could be used as optional credits for students approaching graduation.
- **Yellowknife** created a Community Youth Network, made up of 20 members representing both the private and public sectors. The collective is dedicated to breaking down cross-sector silos, and connecting youth to diverse programs and supports.

CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND/OR PUBLIC POLICY

- **Digby** held a meeting with the Director of Community Transportation for Nova Scotia's Public Works to share youth-focused data, and a report on the state of rural transportation.
- **Sudbury** provided \$5,000 to youth to create a local tech hub, supporting those without access to technology. The youth team presented a report on their research and project proposal to the City of Greater Sudbury and Ontario Telemedicine Network, to engage the municipality and expand access to the service.
- **Yukon** organized a high-impact meeting with 11 Yukon Government deputy ministers, pitching and showcasing the work of CBYF. The ministers committed to exploring methods of integrating youth-led decision making into political processes.

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

- **Chippewas of the Thames First Nation** met with elected Band Council members to discuss creating a new stand alone youth department. The developing department will be youth-led, and focused on engaging the youth perspective to support the growth and resilience of the community.

CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

- **Prince Albert** partnered with local high schools to offer alternative credit options for students to explore local cultural history, and supported teachers to facilitate reconciliation-related projects.
- **Yukon** youth delivered Mental Health & Wellness Kits to high schools through partnering with the Department of Education, and led a training program to educators on how to create inclusive and welcoming spaces.
- **Alberni-Clayoquot** youth spoke at a gathering of 100+ health workers on the needs and priorities of their peers in the region. Their advocacy resulted in Island Health reinstating a nurse previously withdrawn from the public school, a direct result of the youth's persuasive presentation.
- **Oxford County** offered free mental health workshops for community members who work with young people, including coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, and librarians, including how to engage and serve youth who have experienced trauma.
- **Corner Brook** increased the capacity and reach of local youth service providers by providing 7 free trainings for staff teams. Workshops focused on youth-engagement best practices, and how to retain youth as volunteers and employees.



CBYF'S IMPACT ON YOUTH FUTURES

IMPACT SPOTLIGHT

NEW FUNDING FLOWS

- **Portage** secured a \$250,000 grant from the Rideau Foundation to maintain and expand the Roving Campus.
- **Digby** was awarded \$40,000 from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation to support the Black Youth Changemakers program.
- **Chilliwack** secured an additional **\$20,000** from RBC for the expansion of ASH.
- **The City of Grande Prairie** became CBYF's new fiscal sponsor, and provides an additional \$3,000 in funding.
- **The Alberni-Clayoquot Region** leveraged CBYF capacity-building to support their successful grant application for a **regional Foundry**.
- **Prince Albert** received \$20,000 in funding from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) to provide access to physical activity for underfunded communities.

All of the projects explored benefitted from the knowledge sharing that The Tamarack Institute facilitated, allowing communities to go beyond the constituencies with whom they regularly work to reframe their efforts and magnify their reach. Kania and Kramer (2011) write, "...collective impact is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public private partnerships. It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the process toward shared objectives".²

Relationship building takes time because brokering real trust is no small task. However, trust between youth and youth serving organizations is the bedrock of real change; although we may only be beginning to see the roots of change, statements from youth, like those above, are an inspiring reason to keep pushing to increase equitable access to high-quality programming.

² *Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011, Winter). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact



COMMUNITIES BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES

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Photo: Pavel Danilyuk