

## YOUTHSCAPE FINAL REPORT: LEARNINGS AND IMPACT

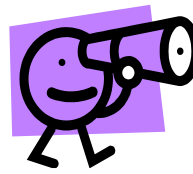


JUNE 2010

A National Initiative to Build Resilient  
Communities by Engaging Youth



# YOUTHSCAPE: AT A GLANCE



*“YouthScape is a Canada-wide initiative to engage young people in creating lifelong positive change. YouthScape is based on the idea that all young people can make important contributions to their communities and their own lives.”*

- Youth Steering Committee Member, Calgary

*“YouthScape creates an environment that you can come back to even after your project is completed. YouthScape lets you impact the city that you live in with the projects that you are doing.”*

-Youth Grantee, Thunder Bay

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past 4 years, YouthScape has been “changing the landscape” of Canadian municipalities by creating a “community based, youth paced” movement that puts youth, especially those with fewer opportunities, at the centre of community life by reaching out to inspire and involve them in approaches to nurture long-term change.

As a national initiative, YouthScape was convened by the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) and was supported by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the United Way of Calgary and Area. Five pilot communities were chosen for the YouthScape initiative: Halifax Regional Municipality, Rivière des Prairies (Montreal), Thunder Bay, Calgary and Saskatoon with Victoria replacing Saskatoon mid way through. These communities each took unique pathways to “change their landscape” from focusing on improving police-youth relations and supporting young parents, to expressing youth voice through art, music and dance. IICRD’s role in YouthScape was to:

- ◆ Link YouthScape community partners in a process of collaborative learning
- ◆ Distill and document lessons learned so they can be shared with other relevant stakeholders
- ◆ Provide overall coordination and support to the initiative

This report synthesizes some of our learning and provides a snapshot of the **impact** of YouthScape on the lives of young people, their communities and the national landscape, with a special focus on:

- ◆ Youth-led granting
- ◆ Organizational change

Appendices include:

- ◆ A list of Key Activities
- ◆ A list of and links to YouthScape Deliverables
- ◆ A Final Financial Report

Contributors to this report include Elaina Mack, Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Michele and Philip Cook and Taryn Danford, as well as YouthScape partner reports and interviews. IICRD has tried to capture the perspectives of community partners, local multi-sector partners, young people and the National Advisors.

## 2. OUR LEARNING



*"I would like to discuss how we are going to keep the learning community alive. It has been such an important part of YouthScape ...we have gotten so much out of connecting with and learning from everyone."*

- YouthScape Coordinator, Halifax

### DISTILLING THE LEARNING

The International Institute for Child Rights and Development has worked to intentionally and intensively learn from YouthScape to both implement required changes to our own projects and practice, and share these reflections with other organizations undertaking similar work.

#### Lesson 1 – Scope

Canada's lack of a youth engagement field combined with the fact that youth engagement for the sake of youth engagement is less than compelling had a significant impact on YouthScape. Young people and adults alike need something that they are passionate about to rally around. Whether the environment, social justice or self expression, young people as well as adults need to see how their involvement is going to make a difference and what they can DO before they engage.

#### Lesson 2 – Partner Selection

YouthScape used a Request for Proposal process, rather than building on existing energy points and relationships to select its partners. This limited the ability to select organizations that we had already worked with and that had demonstrated experience/skills/connections in the areas that was needed for the project. This set up an interesting "us and them" dynamic rather than a sense of reciprocity and mutual interest in working together.

For future initiatives, it would be recommended to:

- ◆ Build on existing partner relationships
- ◆ Provide initial community consultation and mapping support as part of project development
- ◆ Clearly delineate the strengths and gaps each partner is bringing to the project (i.e. leadership, reputation, risk taking history, experience working directly with "client group" etc.)
- ◆ Look at more youth-led organizations and structures as convening organizations and providing them with support to link to other systems to scale their innovation up and out

YouthScape began with having to change more 'mainstream' organizations which allowed for greater youth inclusion and engagement of marginalized groups in the long run but was at times a slow and painful process.

#### Lesson 3 – Capacity

While YouthScape built in Capacity Development as one of its' principles and budget line items, community partners were hesitant or unable to identify their capacity needs; IICRD was in a challenging position of

diplomatically suggesting and offering without imposing. This led to minimal uptake. For future initiatives we would integrate the establishment of collective outcome measures at the onset (using the Circle of Rights and/or Child Centered Outcome Mapping Processes) which would set the convening agency up as a support to achieve these outcomes rather than the external monitoring body. Motivation needs to be based in the passion to create change – not dictated by the \$ or outside approval.

#### Lesson 4 - Putting Youth and Action at the Centre

One mistake at the beginning of YouthScape was the assumption that the organizations selected to work with IICRD had both the values and capacity to put young people at the centre. Unfortunately, while the values were present in most cases, many partners got lost in the forest of complexity and top down structure – and failed to put young people at the center until the Foundation mandated the small grants component. To avoid making this mistake again, IICRD would work with local partners from the beginning to facilitate a process that would enable young people’s ideas, community contexts and priorities to drive the design and actions of the initiative from the bottom up and inside out. While time consuming and fairly labour intensive, this process would set up the initiative as youth centered from the beginning and create long-term sustainable relationships and actions across sectors.



#### Lesson 5 - Management and Leadership

IICRD has commented previously on the challenge of leadership and the balance between nudging and directing. While we cannot say we have this completely figured out yet, there are several things we would recommend:

- ◆ Build on existing relationships - or take the time to build these relationships before asking for commitments
- ◆ Show confidence in working with the unknown – establish clear roles and responsibilities and frame the journey as an adventure, co-creating the trail markers and success stops
- ◆ Recognize different styles and comfort zones and build in support for each
- ◆ Don't be afraid to let someone go if they are not a right fit (i.e. don't embrace the values or cannot work in emergent situations). We all have our strengths: build on these, do not ask someone to be someone they are not – it will not work

- ◆ Ensure that you are resourced and motivated to anticipate next steps allowing you to assess learning and resource needs along the way and execute quickly to support them
- ◆ Provide consistent templates and structures across sites from the development stage (including budgets, plan development and reporting). This allows for a sense of safety and for more meaningful support and feedback as there is a consistent framework to compare it to.

We falsely assumed that lack of structure would support innovation. Rather, it led to paralysis. It was only when participants felt safe and had something to work from that they felt able to innovate.

## Lesson 6 –Learning

### Learning Community

First, it is rare to find an individual or an organization that is confident enough to take each and every moment or situation as a learning opportunity, to be able to critically reflect on one's own processes without feeling defensive, and to be willing to openly share successes and challenges.

Conditions for creating a learning community include:

- ◆ A sense of safety and support – created through relationship (ideally initiated through face-to-face connections) and respectful protocol that participants are held accountable for
- ◆ Clear and consistent modeling
- ◆ A knowledge and experience base from which to share (once communities had projects going they were much more actively engaged)
- ◆ Passion for the topic (choose wisely and build on what is important to the participants 'now')
- ◆ Well structured and informed facilitation
- ◆ Ideally shared ownership and responsibility

### Participatory action research and developmental evaluation

YouthScape integrated participatory action research and developmental evaluation practices into the initiative to capture and instill learning that would benefit the initiative. While beneficial on many levels, there are a few things to consider:

- ◆ Utility – how do these processes support the implementation of the project?
- ◆ Documentation – who is responsible for documentation? How can you build it into the program? We found the reports were a useful way of involving communities in the documentation.
- ◆ Accountability – where does accountability lie? How do you move beyond the convening organization?
- ◆ Integration of tools early on – build-in tools that support the planning, action, evaluation and documenting
- ◆ Self selected outcomes that they measure themselves against – how do you involve organizations and youth in defining the outcomes as well as providing for some generic benchmarks?

As we create our reality and bring attention to what we focus on, it is important to find a balance between encouraging reflection and creating action. Discovering how to balance between gaining sufficient understanding to move forward with integrity, while not getting tied down in the “who and why,” appeared, at times, to be an art.

## Lesson 7 – Marginalization and Resilience

The priority given to involving marginalized youth within YouthScape was an important source of learning. For several partner organizations, this aspect was one of the most challenging. A few pieces to consider are:

- ◆ Definitions – define who is considered marginalized. There were divergent views around youth self-defining themselves and systemic issues that result in marginality (i.e. race and class)
- ◆ Healing – youth who have complex life histories need to be supported in their healing. This has implications for how the program is carried out and the type of support needed
- ◆ Organizational expertise – many organizations did not feel “qualified” to support marginalized young people in ways that were strength-based
- ◆ Approach – there were varying views on how to support marginalized youth and gaining comfort with risk, guidance and support

In terms of building resilience, we learned about the need to work at multiple levels with young people, adults and institutions. Building resiliency involves empowering young people as well as the systems that support them. It is in changing policies and establishing structures and practices that young people are better able to navigate the systems that affect their lives.

## Lesson 8 – Common Values and Principles

In a complex initiative like YouthScape, we discovered the importance of working from common principles. The guideposts we collectively developed to guide decisions and program implementation became a much more useful tool than the traditional log frame. This principle based framework allowed for emergence and ensured that each community site could follow their unique pathways without losing site of a common end goal. It also allowed for a platform of mutual accountability to be established.



### 3. OUR IMPACT AS A MOVEMENT



*“We have a lot to be proud of through YouthScape. Sometimes things were not always comfortable, but they were always exciting. It was great to get out there and have some fun... We have really stretched ourselves in the projects we have supported. New partnerships and products – it will be up to us as communities as to how we can use those to influence others and to make sure they don’t collect dust on the shelf.”*

– YouthScape Project Manager, National Learning Call (April 2010)



YouthScape has been an investment of over two and a half million dollars into youth in Canada. It has introduced new ideas and ways of doing things that have had a significant impact. Two components of YouthScape that have created impacts on youth, communities and organizations include:

#### 1. YOUTH-LED GRANTING

#### 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

#### 1. YOUTH-LED GRANTING

Youth grants were a key component of YouthScape. With 30% of the funds for building resiliency of communities through youth engagement being allocated to this component, what were the impacts? How did youth grants contribute (or not contribute) to social change?

Based on review and several interviews with grantees, adult/youth allies and staff, we found that:

1. The grants served as sparks and created ripples. In general, the grants were critical in moving the initiative forward. While the greatest impact was on young people themselves, peers, parents, organizations and communities were also affected.
2. There were key enabling conditions. In order for grants to have impact beyond the individual, several facilitating conditions were required.

**Table 1 Funding and Youth Grants in Numbers**

Community	Total Funding	Total # of Grants	Total \$ for Grants	# of Youth Grantees
Thunder Bay	\$647,918	54	\$191,047	405
Calgary	\$647,500	31	\$98,273	160
RDP	\$245,000	32	\$139,467	140
Halifax	\$573,272	30	\$179,786	160
Victoria	\$434,000	44	\$127,821	426
Saskatoon	\$210,158	-	-	-
IICRD	\$828,000	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,757,847</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>\$736,394</b>	<b>971</b>

As indicated in Table 1, almost 200 youth grants were distributed across the four communities in the YouthScape initiative. Grants varied in size from \$300 to \$15,000, dealing with a range of issues. An analysis by theme shows that the bulk of the grants centred on art/culture or skill swapping, although some focused on broader issues like the environment, the legal system and police, transit and childcare.

Quantifying the number of people impacted by the grants is difficult. We know that close to 1,000 young people were directly involved in managing the grants ranging in age from 13 to 30 years old. The number of people impacted by the grants was much larger however, especially if one considers participants in the events organized through the grants, or who benefitted from documents or products that were the result of the grants. In this case, the number of people impacted by the youth grants exceeded 10,000!

**Grants were the sparks that made youth engagement real.**

The youth grants proved to be critical in making youth engagement real. In the words of a young person: *“youth engagement terminology stuff – no one gets it, you have to experience it to fully understand what it means”* (Youth, Halifax, 15).

Prior to implementing the youth grants, considerable time was spent in talking about the importance of systems change and youth engagement, but both remained abstract ideas, in the words of a community representative: *“getting from the conceptual stuff to something happening is important. We need to have programs/project that make it real”* (Adult staff, Calgary); *“the granting process is an impetus for us to have broader impact,”* explained an adult staff from Halifax. Grants became the

*The grant given to Devon Meekis of Deer Lake supported him in designing a comic story on the challenging transitions from reserve to city life. The comic book has been distributed in each home and numerous businesses within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.*

mechanism for helping communities recognize the value of youth engagement and to instigate systems change. Communities described the grants as the “big fish” that created movement in their journey.

## Individual Ripples

As expected, youth grants had the most consistent impact on the individual young people directly involved in the grants. Interviews with youth grantees and supporting adults show that the grants helped build young people’s skills, and increase their self-esteem. In the words of a grantee: *“I felt that I learned that personally, even though we’re young as teenagers, we’re capable of doing stuff like this.”*

- ◆ In the words of a youth in-care speaking about the grant that allowed her to make a video on her views of street life: *“[the grant] meant a lot to me cause this was the first time I was actually able to commit through the whole thing and not drop out of something”* (Youth, Calgary).
- ◆ For another young person, who used a grant to organize lunch programs in her school for her peers to share stories about themselves the grant was life-changing: *“for me personally it was the grant that really started to change my life, I did not believe in myself, I was a nobody”* (Youth, Halifax).
- ◆ For another grant recipient who established a group for young artists: the grant itself and the granting process was *“reaffirmation that I can do what I love doing for a living...I think it exposed for me the anatomy of a system that I have always imagined being a part of, it showed me that it would be happening!”* (Youth, Thunder Bay).
- ◆ The grants also gave them the confidence to become more engaged in their community through the sharing of power: *“money creates power. The money created good power. It empowered them... the money requires planning and it gave them more incentive to plan more fully”* (Adult staff, Halifax).

*Lisa, an Aboriginal person from Thunder Bay described herself as a quiet and shy person; as not engaged in anything. Her involvement in YouthScape transformed her. A co-applicant of the greenhouse grant explains: “you’ve like grown and changed so much from this project and like, she’s like, been going to conferences and getting involved in the youth council.”*

## Peer and Family Ripples

The grants also provided an opportunity to engage peers, who may otherwise not have become involved.

- ◆ One young person talked about how thankful she was about having been recruited: *“...it changed me as a person, really happy XX came up with it. I don’t think I could have actually come up with it.”*
- ◆ In another case, the grants helped bring First Nation and non-Aboriginal young people together; in the words of a member of the granting team: *“it just kind of brought us all down to the same level, it’s not that we were ever higher than them or anything, we just never got the chance to talk to them, they always came off as really shy people and we were outgoing, just asking them questions and all this stuff and we never really just sat back and just chilled out...and just talked.”*
- ◆ The youth organizing iUnique lunches in school also shared that students stopped calling themselves “Fag” or “Emo” when she opened a space to ask about how these words made people feel.

The impacts with parents were more apparent with younger youth grantees.

- ◆ As one youth staff commented: *“it is a way to earn respect from their parents...show their parents that they can do it...then their parents can give them more respect.”*

For some parents, the fact that youth were given money directly was scary: *“I am not sure I agree with your radical and risky way of doing things;”* this was an obstacle that YouthScape staff worked around by involving the parent, who was later able to celebrate his son’s success.

## Organizational and Community Ripples

In terms of the impact on communities and organizations, we found that the grants helped organizations see the potential of young people and made them review the youth-friendliness of their policies and practices. In general, the organizations involved with YouthScape have increased their risk tolerance: *“we are more willing to take a chance”* (Calgary, adult).



- ◆ A community foundation commented on the effectiveness of youth grants: *“I have some quite frank criticism but it has left an inevitable mark on the community foundation in TB. We will continue youth-led granting...We will have more youth paced granting.”*
- ◆ One community report stated: *“the small grants represent a formal mechanism that also demonstrates a commitment not only to the belief in the capacity for youth, but in the formal acknowledgement that their time and energy is valuable and should be compensated.”*
- ◆ The grants helped *“put youth in a more positive light with policy decision-makers, so opinion – if not policy – is shifting”* (Adult staff, Halifax).
- ◆ With the grants young people were able to demonstrate what they were able to do: *“instead of just complaining about how the world is going downhill – the fact is we are doing this conference.”* Young people showed their capacity to take on responsibilities: *“with YouthScape the youth are the accountable people. That alone builds self- esteem”* (Adult staff, Halifax).
- ◆ *“It makes it possible for them to do work they want to do, it enabled them to get credibility and recognition from their community – positive recognition for them doing something well-enough”* (Youth Staff).

Finally, many communities feel that the long-term impacts of the grants are still unfolding.

*“We met with the Mayor to further develop our Youth Council pitch. We will be meeting with her to present different styles of youth councils.”* (Youth, Thunder Bay). They won’t know the outcome for a while, but are moving in the right direction!

## Enabling Conditions

An analysis of the grants suggests that the impacts of the grants depended on several enabling conditions. These were necessary to create sparks and broaden ripples; they acted as a reminder of the importance of intentionality in producing change.

These enabling conditions include:

- ◆ **Relevant guidelines for all stages.** Relevant guidelines at both the application and reporting phase for the grantees were key. Since youth-granting was uncommon, there were considerable trial-and-errors in YouthScape, with each community having to improve the guidelines with each round of grants. In the words of one staff: *“having the criteria spelled out at the beginning, and developing understanding and helping youth navigate the project so they understand their role and financing is important. You may be gung-ho about the project but yes there is reporting, and yes you need to keep receipts etc. You have to learn to track all that.”*
- ◆ **Accountability at multiple levels.** Establishing accountability mechanisms for young people was also key to enabling success: *“no one ran out with the money or went out buying crack as everyone feared.”* Accountability with peers was particularly effective.
- ◆ **Adult mentors who are system thinkers and true allies.** Youth often needed support on how to follow through with their ideas, and in seeing the possibilities. Mentors needed to help in *“making big dreams real.”* As another adult mentor explained: *“you want to encourage crazy ideas because so many good ideas come from that.”* Adults who were able to support rather than control were also critical. *“Really as an adult ally, it is just biting your tongue, and taking a step back and letting the grantee do it at their own pace, give them some questions to think about process but do not try and lead them.”*
- ◆ **Opportunities for networking amongst grantees.** An important support for grantees can be provided from hearing other grantees’ stories, and making connections with others. As one explains: *“perceptions of what is possible—resulted in some deeper changes;”* *“quite important to be intentional and bring grantees together, as seeing others is very powerful.”* In another grantee’s words, *“I’ve been just blown away by the other projects that are going on too... through YouthScape we automatically connected with these other kids who were excited and who were interested and motivated and doing all these cool things... you can encourage and invite other people ... without the grant, we wouldn’t have been able to have that.”*
- ◆ **Organizational openness to take risk.** Supporting grantees also required having organizations to be willing to take some risk, question policies that may not be supportive of youth involvement and change their practice.

## Key Implications

- ◆ Youth-granting plays an important role in making youth engagement a reality.
- ◆ Change at the individual level that results from youth-grants can be transformational and extend to others.
- ◆ Youth-grants need to be leveraged in order to create system change.

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Another impact is the affect YouthScape has had on the five convening organizations that managed the funds and coordinated the initiative in their communities. While these organizations were initially expected to play only a

facilitating role, their role was significant in shaping and implementing the project. Given their active involvement in YouthScape, we wanted to know what impact(s) YouthScape had on these organizations.

### Individual Ripples

As organizations tried the five main YouthScape strategies of hiring youth staff, youth granting, youth in decision making, creating spaces and places, and creative partnerships, they learned new tools and ways of engaging young people. As a result, in Calgary, young people from vulnerable populations got involved in projects. In Rivière des Prairies, young people began to see that they had a role to play, while in Halifax and Victoria they began to take on more ownership of the initiative as well as the grants. In Thunder Bay, young people felt more welcome and became more aware of the need to engage more vulnerable and marginalized populations.

- ◆ One of the CYFC staff shared that the youth on the street and in Bounce Back had never even heard of Child and Youth Friendly Calgary and were so involved in surviving that they were surprised that they would get involved in a project.
- ◆ As organizations changed their practices and policies, and learned new skills, young people who were not usually engaged began to show up in a completely different way.

### Organizational and Community Ripples

Interviews were carried out with managers of each convening organizations. Below is a summary of key impacts on the organization.

- ◆ **Financial and intellectual support to implement a vision.** Several organizations commented on how the long-term financial support for YouthScape made it possible for them to realize a vision. Staff from Halifax comment: *“the sustained funding for three years allowed us to reach and work directly with youth.”* Thunder Bay explains: *“having a stream of funding was the only way we could make in-roads into the community.”* Boscoville considers that both the financial support and the intellectual community were significant, explaining that: *“there were people who were reflecting around this approach as well as dollars to realize the approach.”*
- ◆ **A new form of accountability.** The funding requirements and structure brought unprecedented questioning and a new form of accountability to young people and the values and vision of the collective. In the case of Saskatoon, this resulted in the organization pulling out of the initiative one year into the project. As explains a former staff: *“It would have been easy to just go on as usual. The fact that it was such an abrupt shift was really interesting. If a project like this did not have DE, would John not have asked us the questions? If so, we would not have been as compelled to have had that level of discussion.”* For Calgary, YouthScape meant *“we had to prove ourselves.”*
- ◆ **New partnerships.** For all organizations, YouthScape has meant working with new partners, broadening their networks. In the case of Boscoville, YouthScape resulted in the creation of a Consortium that brought together different players of the community. For Calgary, it involved establishing relationships with organizations that work with more at-risk youth. Both in Thunder Bay and Victoria, YouthScape resulted in collaborations with First Nations youth-serving organizations. Overall, a range of organizations have been impacted by YouthScape, though the depth of



impact is difficult to determine as indicated in a map outlining the number of organizations affected by YouthScape from Thunder Bay (see April 2010 report).

- ◆ **A new approach to youth engagement.** For all organizations, YouthScape has brought a new perspective to their work with young people. In some communities, the novelty of the approach has been more significant than others. In Thunder Bay, for instance, the notion of youth-led was *“very difficult to understand ...the mentality of Thunder Bay in respect to work with youth is, ‘they are there to help carry out things already pre-determined’ and having that flipped has been quite the challenge.”* Calgary saw the challenge in terms of needing to bridge a traditional divide between youth engagement and care organizations. In Halifax and Victoria, the shift was less significant given prior work but they were able to capitalize on the resources and support. *“The language of YS helped us frame what we were already doing,”* shares a Victoria representative.
- ◆ **Review of policies and practices.** For all organizations, YouthScape required reviewing organizational policies or practices that had impact beyond the project. In the case of Thunder Bay, *“We have gone from very cautious to knowing youth should be a part of it and can be part of decision-making... now we are really understanding the benefits.”* In terms of staff, each organization struggled with creating job descriptions that could accommodate the requirements of YS. The director from Victoria explains: *“YS required staff to expand their understanding about community development; we had to go beyond the silo.”* She further explains how involvement in YouthScape led the organization to revisit policies for working with youth more generally. Similar stories were shared from Thunder Bay and Calgary.
- ◆ **A new way of working with funders and researchers.** A number of organizations consider that YouthScape introduced a new way of working, not only with youth, but with funders, and researchers. The director from Victoria reflects: *“One of the things we learned is that if we are going to partner with funders and researchers we have to be open to working differently.”* Looking at creative ways foster creativity and innovation while measuring impact and ensuring that everyone was being accountable to the initial intention and values of the initiative called for a new ways of working in community, communicating and reporting.

## Key Implications

- ◆ Organizations need to embrace and model the change they are trying to create before they can impact young people or larger systems.
- ◆ Multiple levels of thinking and skill are required to create change – organizations need to gain the skills to refine day-to-day practices with young people while connecting these changes and learning to the big picture.
- ◆ Management styles need to be inclusive, open and flexible while providing leadership to foster shared ownership and an atmosphere of reciprocal learning.

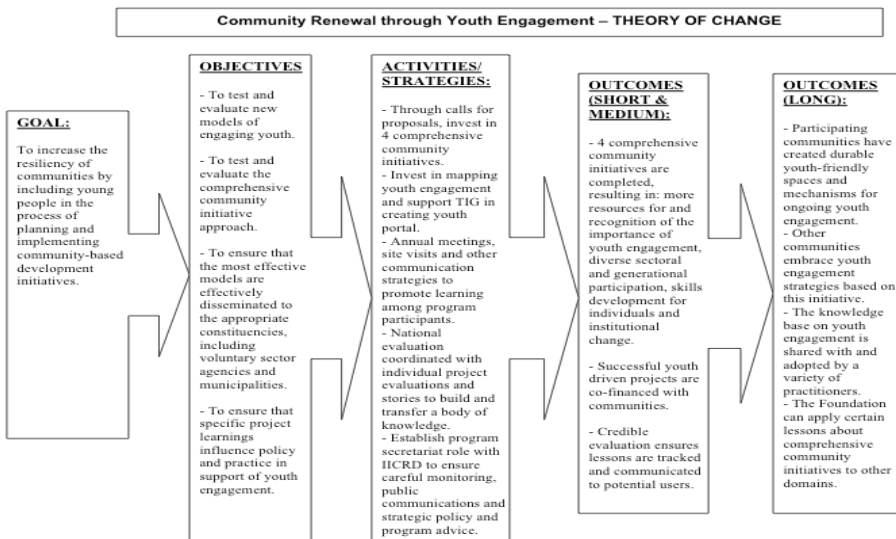
## National Impact

Throughout the initiative, IICRD has aimed to share the learnings and lessons from YouthScape in a variety of formats with national players within government, UNESCO, Community Foundations, the Federation of Municipalities and national youth serving organizations. There has been ongoing interest from other communities

wanting to join “the movement” as well as requests from funders and state parties wishing to build on the momentum and lessons learned (i.e. Heritage Canada and the Governor General).

So, while it is still too early to fully assess the national impacts of YouthScape, it with hope that the Guidebook and other deliverables will continue to be used to increase the engagement of Canadian youth in building stronger communities.

The impacts will continue to unfold: in the words of the Thunder Bay partner, the “biggest impact is yet to be seen!” In similar words from the Boscoville partner: “*unfortunately 2 or 3 years is too short. It is only the beginning. For sure, an awareness and an openness have been achieved.*” We have however achieved many of the outcomes predicted in the initial theory of change.



Youth Engagement Theory of Change, December 2005

*“I just want to recognize that this is a prestigious capturing of learning. This came from young people trying new things. Are their lives different now? Yes! We know that one of the biggest impacts is on the convening organizations – how your own ways worked and didn’t work. I can appreciate that it wasn’t always easy... I think that when you look at this, at YouthScape, it is one thing to capture the learnings but we all know that it is greater to influence others with it... We know that there are more steps that have to happen to be able to get youth engagement into “the water supply.” It is about looking in the mirror and saying, “does this actually create a youth friendly space?””*

-John Cawley, National Learning Call (April 2010)

## Next Steps

The potential of building and sustaining the momentum from YouthScape is both daunting and exciting. While the first phase of the initiative is coming to a close, the idea of a “community based. youth paced” movement remains. IICRD looks forward to working with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, advisors, community partners and above all, young people to make our communities healthier, more vibrant places in which to live.

IICRD also will be following up with Heritage Canada that used many of the lessons learned in YouthScape to develop their guidelines for their recent Youth Take Charge Initiative as well as Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada who is interested in meeting with many of the YouthScape youth and creating a national legacy focused on youth resiliency and creativity.

### YouthScape Legacies

All organizations are pursuing projects and approaches initiated during YouthScape.

- ◆ Heartwood is integrating YouthScape values and principles as well youth granting into their programming and is expanding provincially.
- ◆ Boscoville is pursuing another round of grants, considering it as a key mechanism for reaching out to young people and modeling youth engagement. Boscoville is also looking at sharing their experience in Beluga/YouthScape with other municipalities in Québec.
- ◆ YouthCore has now moved from LifeCycles to BC Healthy communities. They are starting their fourth round of granting and providing support to other municipalities interested in youth engagement.
- ◆ United Way is supporting the development of a Youth Strategy, as well as a youth council.
- ◆ Child and Youth Friendly Calgary is integrating the YouthScape program into their main program by continuing with the Bounce Back video work, as well as their involvement with Discovering Choices; they are also incorporating some of the practices from YouthScape into their granting program.
- ◆ IICRD is pursuing different funding opportunities to enable vulnerable youth-led organizations and Canada's Indigenous youth sector and support a community of practice that supports capacity building and links the fields of youth engagement and child rights.



# APPENDIX 1: KEY ACTIVITIES



*“We haven’t just heard about projects, we are hearing about things that are being put in place that should ripple on and unfold... There are also ripples that we don’t see and that we don’t hear about. These are the ripples that happen on an individual level. These ripples are quite clear but happen personally. We really started on a broad objective where we didn’t want to tell the organizations what to do. This was a challenge because it was youth engagement in a new way... We should expect speed bumps but also fireworks in defying the status quo. Things did start to align – there was more sharing and without question, some serious learning emerged. It will be important to look back in 10 years and be able to say, “YouthScape started some of this stuff!””*

– Lead DE, National Learning Call (April 2010)

The International Institute for Child Rights and Development worked on a variety of activities to wrap up the last phase of the YouthScape Project and support communities in developing their plans to continue to engage youth and discuss possibilities of moving the youth engagement movement forward. These have included:

*Youth space is part our strategic plan. We want to create open and accessible youth space that is both physical and virtual. “That’s what kids want, but adults make kids go through all these programs before they can hang out there.”*

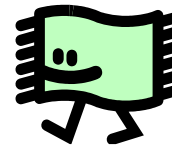
- Hamilton, July National Learning Call

- ◆ **INTEGRATING LEARNING AND IDENTIFYING RIPPLES** – An ongoing focus on “knowledge harvesting” to help YouthScape surface, sort and make sense of learning within and across communities through:
  - **Site visits and community calls** to tease out the impact of YouthScape
  - **Compiling and developing the YouthScape Guidebook** to showcase YouthScape’s stories, tools and lessons to support organizations and practitioners planning to or working with unengaged youth
  - **Supporting and editing the Developmental Evaluation 201 Handbook**
  - **Facilitating the ‘door crusher’ video** developed by Hightop with IICRD and the community partners
  
- ◆ **LEARNING AND INFUSING THE YOUTHSCAPE COMMUNITY** - We continued to facilitate personal and professional development, cultivate peer/intergenerational relationships and to expand the YouthScape network:
  - **Facilitating monthly national learning calls, youth calls, and a final wrap up celebration call.** The topics ranged from creating the sustainability of YouthScape to understanding impacts and ripples.
  - **Circulating the “Scoop on the Scape.”** This monthly e-newsletter was used to profile stories and learnings, and showcase potential opportunities for the YouthScape network including upcoming conferences and funding opportunities. All 7 editions are available at [www.youthscape.org](http://www.youthscape.org) under “Learning Centre.”
  
- ◆ **INFORMING AND CONTRIBUTING TO PRACTICE AND POLICY** - IICRD has continued to seek opportunities to “open doors” for YouthScape to influence multi-sector stakeholders at national and international levels. Though this, a long-term, ongoing effort has initiated several opportunities including:

- **Cultivating interest in and distributing the YS Guidebook and other YS resources.** YouthScape will be disseminated to over 100 community organizations and funders, while more than 300 people will be reached electronically. IICRD is specifically following up with key organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Canada, UNICEF Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Equitas, Motivate Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Justice Department, Canadian Alliance for Community Service Learning, Ashoka Canada, Social Innovation Centre, etc.
  - **Co-hosting Change starts with Youth.** In November 2009, IICRD co-hosted our final YouthScape Gathering which focused on unpacking impact and engaging local decision makers and leaders.
  - **Supporting Thunder Bay** in hosting their own Change starts with Youth forum and coached and provided support with meetings with the Mayor and Council.
  - **Meeting with representatives from Heritage Canada** to better inform their new Youth Take Charge initiative.
  - Round table discussion with the Governor General to explore IICRD's approach and work with youth and youth resiliency in Canada.
- ◆ **LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION** - Providing ongoing support and coordination of YouthScape continued to play an important role in our work at different levels. The ways in which YouthScape provided support includes:
- **Ongoing conversations with Executive Directors and Advisors.** Engagement in the final YS gathering focused on impact and individual interviews with EDs and staff members to unpack the impact of YS at different levels.
  - **Maintaining and nurturing funder relationships.** IICRD prepared a “brown bag” lunch presentation for the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation on several lessons, stories and strategies emerging from YouthScape. Meetings with the United Way of Calgary and Area were also held to bridge connections between local and national perspectives. In addition to these key supporters, IICRD is also nurturing relationships with Canadian Heritage, the Social Development Partnerships Program and Public Safety, to sustain the momentum of YS learnings.
  - **Developing, supporting and managing YS reports.** This spring IICRD worked closely with the YS sites to develop the final reporting guidelines and trailers, as well as their contributions to the practitioner guidebook.
  - **Liaising with Boscoville** around an organizational change guide and toolkit
  - **Supporting Hightop** in organizing and facilitating community video shoots for the video “Building Stronger Communities: Youth and Social Change”
  - **Planning for transition.** Supported communities in thinking about how they would continue the work of YouthScape.

# APPENDIX 2: YOUTHSCAPE DELIVERABLES

## RESOURCES



### Videos and Guidebooks

- ◆ “YouthScape – Building Stronger Communities: Youth and Social Change” – a Video ( 7 and 9 minute versions)
- ◆ Changing the Landscape: Involving Youth in Social Change – A Guidebook
- ◆ Engager les Jeunes au sein de nos milieux Guide 1
- ◆ DE 201: A Practitioner’s Guide to Developmental Evaluation

### Articles, Newsletters and bulletins

- ◆ YouthScape: A Funder’s Perspective
- ◆ Practices for marginalized youth-practitioner partnerships
- ◆ 3 Head Waters Publications: YouthScape Newsletters (2007-2009)
- ◆ The Art of the Nudge
- ◆ Youth granting resource package
- ◆ Igniting youth-led action
- ◆ Supporting youth-led action

### Articles in Development

- YouthScape Ripples: Looking at Impact – Youth-led Granting
- YouthScape: Organizational Change
- YouthScape: Youth and Decision Making

You can find these and other YouthScape resources, including great stories, articles and more information on effective youth engagement, online at » [www.youthscape.ca](http://www.youthscape.ca)