

YouthScape Thunder Bay Year 2

SECTION A:

Convening Organization: United Way of Thunder Bay

Reporting Period: April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009

Report Contributors:

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YouthScape staff from left to right: Diane Coloumbe - Finance and Administration, Neil Nelson - DE, Christine Battle -Youth Mentor and Sandra Albertson - CCB Manager

SECTION B:

i. Main Project Activities over last 6 months:

Section Contributor: Sandra Albertson

YouthScape Thunder Bay has been gaining momentum over the last 6 months due to the additional assistance of a part-time Youth Mentor and 3 placement students. The youth led granting process itself has been the main activity of our office.

Type of Activity	What YouthScape Did
Promote YouthScape concept within the community	Media – newspaper, radio, television Poster, word of mouth, networking meetings, info booths, spokespeople.
Host Learning Forums	See Youth Mentor report below
Conduct research	See DE Report below
Coordinated community granting	Advertising, proposal review and selection, proposal support, partnership development, meeting with youth and partners.
Provide support to grants	Project growing and financial management support – helped youth open project accounts and learn how to manage funding
Host Community Forum	Community forum for “Roots of Youth Violence” next steps within community
Working with United Ways of Ontario on Provincial Youth Policy Framework	Conference calls, UW of Ont facilitator at Roots of Youth Violence Forum, questions asked within community

ii. YouthScape Youth Led Grants: Information Provided on Separate “Grant Tracking” Page.

iii. Project Partners: Information provided on Separate “ YouthScape Connect the Dots” Page.

SECTION C: Learning

Section Contributors: Sandra Albertson, Christine Battle, Alice Sabourin

1. Mechanism:

YouthScape Learning Forums:

The community learning forums were developed as a mechanism to bring projects together and share experiences, best practices, have more face-to-face interactions and create an inclusive environment where people can connect and

share common bonds of YouthScape as well as learn transferable skills that can be applied to their projects development. We have held 3 learning forums since the summer of 2008.

The first was put together to introduce the concept of YouthScape to the community, create a buzz around the concept of youth-led granting and provide a supportive environment where proposals could be written, questions asked, ideas shared and connections between youth and their community made. The sessions were facilitated by Natasha, Michelle, Sandra, Neil and support from the LEGO committee. It was from this forum that 6 of our community projects were born.

Our second learning forum gave us a chance to bring all members of the funded projects together face-to-face and learn from each other. We had guest speakers from the Dilico youth outreach service provide us with information about “Ways to Engage the Disengaged”. This forum was set up as an informal networking atmosphere inclusive to both adult and youth. We also used this forum as an opportunity to conduct the questionnaire. We also split the youth and adults up in this session to work on the questionnaires and some tips on the idea around youth-led. Adults learned about being an “ally” and youth learned about being a “leader”.

Our third learning forum was set up to help us connect the dots between projects and participants. “You’re a funded project...so now what?” the goal of this workshop forum was to get people talking about their projects. A variety of activities were conducted to meet the needs of our very diverse group. Some members of this forum were hearing about youthscape for the first time, while others have attended all the learning forums to date. This forum was a great opportunity for us to see how far we have come and where the group wants to go. We also had 2 youth help facilitate ice breakers, present their experiences and tell the group what youthscape means to them.

As we go through the collaborative process of planning our learning forums we are developing a committee representative of the diversity of projects, needs of the members and inclusive for adults and youth to work together and plan our next community learning forum. To date we have planned the learning forums based on youth input and participation but we are ready to take it to the next level and include youth and allies in all stages of the forum planning planning to create the foundation for Thunder Bay’s youth movement.

Student Placements:

Students have come to us with no preconceived notion of what community development work is, what “youth led” means and how to engage young people. Most students have been “youth” who wanted to better understand what the community capacity building work of the United Way is. They also had an interest to work with youth. Together this desired learning duo has provided us with excellent opportunities to help build the confidence, skills and awareness of future community workers who have left the placement with a personal portfolio of skills related to building the capacity of youth, knowledge of the community

and related systems and a keen sense of the importance of youth in leadership roles.

Student support has been instrumental to moving the Thunder Bay project forward. Young people who have come on board from various educational areas have been excited and enthusiastic about trying something new in community building work. The concept of YouthScape has been one that students at first were unsure of...youth led, was not something they had worked in before. Allowing these students the opportunity to lead their own areas of work helped build the concept within the office which they could then carry out into the community. The students have also had many opportunities to talk about their work with their peers and faculty generating interest in our work and ripples into the community.

2. Guiding Principles:

Leadership Development:

Young people are emerging as teachers, leaders and role models for other youth.....

Through our learning forums it has been noted that young people are beginning to take on a leadership role through leading ice breakers, facilitating small group discussions, deciding what topics to cover and sharing their own learning through networking and collaborations with each other.

A couple stories really stand out in my mind as good examples of other emerging leadership from the learning forums:

Two girls from St. Patrick High School were invited to come to our last YouthScape Learning Forum because the PhotoVoice Project had recently started in their school. After the forum these young ladies worked with the help of a teacher to create the idea of "Rez through my eyes" this project aims to capture their life and experience on their rez and reflect using photos and words. This is a way of opening up their lives and connecting to their community. The existing PhotoVoice Project will now allocate funds directly to the girls to carry out their ideas.

Ashley Rae, a youth participant who was in detention for cutting class the day we had the Learning Forum at Dennis Franklin Cromarty School, decided to check out the forum after she got out of her detention. We naturally assumed she was part of the DFC Leadership group and invited her in. She stayed after the forum and helped us clean up and asked many questions about the work of YouthScape. From this conversation we invited her to come to the National YouthScape Conference in Banff. She came to the conference as a shy reserved student and left as an inspired leader ready to make change in her community. She sees getting involved in organized activities as a way to "keep on track" is a member of several groups, and projects at her school and in the community, attends school regularly and has stepped up as the leader of the Green space Warriors.

Kai is a 13 year old girl living with her mom who works a lot. She heard about a group called Changing our World (COW) that was helping youth meet other youth they would do fun activities in different neighbourhoods and were planning a conference to reach disengaged youth. "I wanted to join COW because I want to make friends and have fun" The COW group hit some road blocks in planning their conference and membership declined. Kai has now found a niche with one of the neighbourhood groups. The group has younger participants and Kai is taking on the role of helping younger people fit in and encourage participation in activities.

Building Social Networks:

Youth Naturally Form strong relationships with other youth. Groups are working together to become creative forces for positive change.

Youth Led Projects are developing their own structure, goals and culture to be inclusive and reflective of their participants. They are thinking of ways to attract new members, bring in their friends and make connections with other people to include them in their projects. PhotoVoice, DFC Leadership Group, Nexus and Feminexus and Simpson Ogden Group (OYSC) are great examples of this because they are all working collaboratively with other community projects outside of YouthScape unding and are finding ways to include more youth into their projects.

Supporting Local Place Based Projects:

Young people's dreams are viewed as assets and are becoming partners in creating a better future for everyone in our community.

Asset mapping, identifying community needs and creating action projects to fulfil those needs was the birth of YouthScape during our first learning forum. It has been identified a number of times that young people have a desire to have their voices heard around tables with issues important to them. YouthScape has become that table.

Youth are working through their ideas from concept to inception, and they are problem solving, consensus building and thinking of issues important to them. They are working through a problem solving process to create action projects and to create change in neighbourhoods, schools, social structures and the community as a whole. Youth are encouraged to think and challenged to think further. Our style is facilitated discussions, brainstorming, mind mapping, open forum and it seems to work really well.

Adults are involved in this process as participants and supporters of the process. The ideas come from young people and the connections come from the help of adult allies. In some cases projects are large undertakings and the expertise of adults is needed to set the project up and youth are the participants. However, it is also in these projects that youth are involved in all aspects of the decision making. Adults provide the location, food and support but youth learn, build confidence and begin to drive the process.

Girl Power “Nexus” is one of the projects where an adult ally is helping drive and coordinate the program “We wanted to involve more schools in the process and encourage wider action projects in the established groups.” Pauline Fogarty, 26, RMYC

COW is another example of an adult ally steering the project. In this case youth came up with the concept of the Youth Forum but due to school and other activities members dropped out to explore new things.

PhotoVoice is a project where the Adult ally sets everything up and shares the air with youth in a learning/teaching format. It is a very tricky project as membership is unsteady and the goals of the participants are not clearly defined. It is also a project that encourages youth to challenge themselves and reflect on “what this means to me” and capture on film every day experiences, encounters and reflective thoughts.

The Changing our World group (COW) in the past has set out to bring youth from youth groups within the community together to network, share and collaborate on projects. They experience a decline in membership this year as many members moved onto different projects had demanding school schedules and the formal structure became overwhelming for members to keep up with demands of their “titles”. Members of this group would like to explore working collaboratively with youthscape to revisit their original vision of bringing the community youth together for networking and learning, this time without any formal structure and “titles”.

Focus on Action Orientated Projects:

Projects that connect youth with their community in ways that increase their self-esteem and level of competency as well as improve the quality of life of the community as a whole.

Every year Thunder Bay has a Santa Claus parade, for some of us it’s a fun thing that goes on for families and little kids. Others see it as blocking the major streets in town, causing detours and traffic. For the DFC leadership group it was an opportunity to join the community in a positive celebration and feel included in their community. “Dressed up as presents, we handed out over 3000 oranges to the crowd and had a good time riding on a float. It was a chance to introduce ourselves to the community” Eagle Father Rae, 21, DFC Leadership Participant

In all our projects participants tell us how much they have grown individually. “I never said anything in any of my classes and now you can’t shut me up. My friends comment to me about how I used to be shy but now I’m not and its good. I’m proud of myself for finding my voice” Lisa Lester, 19, Greenhouses for a Greener World.

“I don’t do much outside of school. I have trouble making friends and “fitting in”. YouthScape helps people like me get involved” Kai, 13, changing our World group

“I needed something to do to keep me busy. I wasn’t really going to school much and missed home a lot. I got involved in YouthScape and had the chance to go to Banff –when I returned I really got involved in YouthScape now I think I am a part of every group there is.” Ashley Rae, DFC Groupie

3. Connecting the Dots:

PhotoVoice: Working within the school system

The dialogue about student spaces has been connected to a larger discussion about youth creating change. The pictures students have been taking will be presented to policy makers through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy to help make stronger cases for supports like the “Neighbourhood Capacity Building Program” (NCBP) within in high schools.

This project helped make connections with St. Patrick’s High School developing a life skills course for students with a mental health component.

The PhotoVoice Adult Ally has begun the discussion on the development of the 1st year Aboriginal course at Sir Winston Churchill High School which would provide an Aboriginal instructor/teacher, NCBP cultural resource teachers to help support students and develop youth spaces.

Lakehead University is at the forefront of Aboriginal Support Services. PhotoVoice pictures will be a tool for dialogue with the Aboriginal Vice Provost and school planners and policy makers to discuss what support means to Aboriginal students.

Section D: Stories:

YouthScape Advice Column:

“Believe in yourself and your project. Everything comes easier after that.”
Jennifer, 19 SUCCI Mural

“Be passionate about your goals. Dream big and you’ll be amazed at what you can do. And never be shy to spread the word about what you are doing; you are likely to find a friend you would’ve otherwise missed.” Heidi, Greenhouses for a Greener World

“The key to project success lies in having a core group with the time and dedication to fully commit themselves and work together for their goals. It’s also important to maintain focus at all times in order to make sure everyone knows what they are working for” Tim, 16, Changing our World

“If there is any way to focus on a goal that everyone can be active in working towards and will make change in school, such as designing a website of things interesting to them.” Pauline, 26, RMYC

“Being a mentor for me is about empowerment- it’s a way of interacting –a smiling face, a word of encouragement, a listening ear, a question of two that leads a young person to find a solution to a problem and challenges them to take it to the next level.”

Succession Planning is the biggest lesson Changing our World youth group has learned this year.

“We wanted to increase the sound of Thunder Bays youth voice. The idea was to bring together several representatives of different youth communities and youth groups into one cooperative organization. There was a lot of enthusiasm at the early meetings –it was catching. The group decided to elect co-chairs and create more of a formal meeting with minutes, motions, agendas and structure. We didn’t have any timelines on how long you signed up for a position and we were not held accountable if you did not do your assigned tasks. The structure seemed to divide the group, create power struggles and conflict between members.

Initially when the group started there were lots of organizations involved in meetings. There was great dialogue, sharing thoughts, planning, and ideas. There was also a great presentation to city Council who appeared to be quite impressed.

Unfortunately the networking meeting became less popular. Participants became engaged in other activities and our structure fell apart. “Success is always relative. There is nothing wrong with trying anything, because you’ll never learn unless you try.” Tim, 16, Changing our World

This project is currently suspended as there aren’t any youth that are willing to work on it. The idea of our youth forum was to involve more non participating youth, to engage those that had previously not been engaged and to empower youth with the tools to succeed in changing their communities for the better.

Nexus and Feminexus:

This project started off as a discussion group held at Churchill High School with 25 members the group would get together after school and on lunch hours to discuss issues important to them such as beauty and self-esteem. Over time the popularity of this group grew and girls from other schools showed an interest in getting a group set up at their schools.

It was at that point Pauline, 26 the driving force of the project identified a need to expand the project into 3 other schools. She identified girls that would make good facilitators and leaders and recruited them to participate in the expansion of the project. Ambitious undertaking that would lead to success, stumbling blocks and experiential learning.

To date the project has reached over 100 girls in four schools through positive peer action and girl social development. They have had talks from service providers, cosmetologists and are learning as much about themselves as they are about other people and building an understanding and respect for others differences.

At first when we decide to expand this project “It was frustrating to get the lines of communication open because of scheduling conflicts”. The girls wanted to get the project started but with the demands of school and other commitments it has been tough to get it off the ground.

Our project is based on peer-to-peer interactions, led by students and supported by teachers. Our plans for the future include some training on facilitating the DOVE self-esteem program, planning sessions for upcoming topics and developing this project into a community project outside of the school atmosphere bringing all the groups together for some workshops and activities.

Greenhouses for a Greener World –success is working together in collaboration and that will keep us dynamic.

As quoted from Heidi Zettel – Project Leader:

As a group we are hoping to do something inspirational for even just one youth in Thunder Bay. Then hopefully they can spread the word about how wicked cool gardening is. For me personally, I expect to be able to empower some intelligent but misguided youth by teaching them practical skills and giving them something to be proud of.

The response from the community is going really well. We are marketing to high schools to get ears perked up, and we are thinking about a garden club at Hillcrest high school. Everyone we tell is really supportive and thinks it is a great idea. Kevin from Belluz farms said he will help us too and even the university has let us start some seeds in their greenhouse.

We still have to build the greenhouse, but we’ve been recruiting a few more eager gardeners here and there, and keep spreading the word as much as we can.

The driving force behind our project is really a collaboration of a lot of great people who want to see something like it in our community. The support we get from neighbours and friends of all ages and background will keep us dynamic. Stay tuned to our adventures and check out our blog <http://www.youthgreenhouse.blogspot.com/>

SECTION E: National YouthScape Community:

Key Learning to target:

In 2009/10 build on existing projects....creating more solo projects at this point will only dilute the potential overall impact of the YouthScape project. We have a good understanding of where our projects can grow and how we can begin to create the needed systems changes that will have longer term impact in our communities.

IICRD could give a report back to the YS communities, which will combine learnings and key info from all the community reports. From this, we can come together via teleconference to discuss and plan areas of national impact.

This is also a good area for the DE's to give their feedback and opinions.

Appendix Reports:

**Appendix A: Developmental Evaluator, Neil Nelson
Logic Model Report**

**Appendix B: Adult Ally: Alice Sabourin
PhotoVoice Project**

Appendix C: Growing a Project: Sadie Krezonoski

**Appendix D: Building a “Truly” Youth Led Project:
Rose Nicolson**

APPENDIX A

Developmental Evaluator, Neil Nelson Logic Model Report

i. Timing

The year-end reports from the United Way's YouthScape manager are due about a week before the date I have agreed to with the lead Developmental Evaluator for the evaluation report. Consequently, this document will include those discussions most helpful to the local YouthScape leadership. The full evaluators report will have some more discussion – perhaps some more stories, different frameworks, more analysis of external and internal systems. Those topics are not critical to the local manager's immediate deadlines but will be of interest to all as we all seek lessons that are able to be generalized to other and future initiatives.

ii. Approach and Voice

The role of the Developmental Evaluator is powerfully and usefully different from "standard" evaluation. The DE is in part a partner, one responsible for sharing information about the fitness of the car's brakes before the driver takes it for a ride along the cliff-side. Not after all the dust has settled, which is too often how traditional evaluation works. Given that general approach and given that I have been sometimes an observer and sometimes a participant, how should my report be presented? Where there is only information, I'll present it objectively and in the third person where that seems appropriate. Where I am reporting on events in which I played a part, or reporting on an experience that was unique to me, I will speak in the first person: it would seem to the reader to be clumsy and false to do otherwise.

iii. Structure of the Report

While discussing this report with the local manager, we determined that using the Logic Model developed in early 2008 would be a useful framework. It is also simply honest: if we made promises then we should report on progress against those promises. This "Interim Report" follows that structure. The later version will add some information and reflections, will infer and speculate more (helpfully, though) but for now, in fact use of the original Logic Model seems to capture well the core of the reporting task and the YS manager's current needs.

iv. Assessing Progress According to the Logic Model

In the late winter of 2008, YouthScape staff developed a Logic Model framework to help plan, manage and evaluate their work over the life of the project. While not all goals have been met and some have appropriately been modified or abandoned, that Logic Model has proved to be a very useful framework for all of its intended uses. It will be examined here as concisely as is possible.

The complete document is too long to be included here but will be made available on request. There were four major goals and five secondary/process/indirect goals. All will be presented and discussed.

Here are the four explicit goals of YouthScape from the Logic Model developed in late winter of 2008.

1. Develop ways to have project reflect needs and wants of target audience (13-29)
2. Youth representation at board level in organizations. Vote or voice; either will be considered a success.
3. Space for recreation, crafts, fun services. Safe and welcoming, the “Safe Path”
4. Place for punks. The people who put the others at risk. The scary looking people. Connect with services. The Road back. “The Fringe”

What were the results? Here are the Evaluator’s observations and inferences.

4.1 Goal #1: Develop ways to have project reflect needs and wants of target audience (13-29) Youth representation at board level in organizations.

This was seen as having a “place” as its centre. That was not realistic in Thunder Bay at this time but was also not necessary. The Youth Grants activities contributed well to many of the outcomes anticipated here. For better or worse, most connections with groups of youth have been through secondary schools which provided a safe place to meet and work and sometimes to carry out the promised activities.

Since getting into Youth Grants a bit late (well into 2008), YS here stumbled some but has recovered well. That history will be described in other sections of this report and/or in the separate and formal Evaluator’s Final Report.

- Early calls for proposals did not reach a very broad audience but recent efforts have attracted more diverse youth.
- While few projects have had a “place based” component, they have engaged youth and those youth have had positive experiences. (One fairly recent grant one has indeed brought a “place” and that will be a high-leverage achievement.)
- Youth have met other youth via well-planned YS learning events and have reported important learning and feelings of mutual support.
- Some funded groups are into their second or third project and in those cases have fully earned continuing support.
- It has been youth, not YS and not even external mentors or adult allies, who have developed the ideas and done the work.
- The Youth Grants have had little impact on less engaged and higher risk youth – but the parallel Drop-In Centre/Place for Punks is now gaining momentum and will serve that cohort.

So on the whole, even if not via the routes anticipated a year and more go, YouthScape Thunder Bay is addressing its first promise with increasing strength.

4.2 Youth representation at board level in organizations. Vote or voice; either will be considered a success¹.

¹ I have from the beginning had significant problems with the notion of youth representation. Simply put: any youth who would willingly come to such meetings, or who could comfortably engage and contribute at the expected level, is by my standards disqualified from doing so. It’s a paradox. Youth who are truly disengaged (or unengaged or “don’t wanna be engaged”) would not and could not participate in such advisory or governance roles. Not at first. However, the “apprenticeship” experiences available via being part of the Place for Punks would indeed, over time, help some grow into such leadership roles.

This was a problematic goal. We just did not, early on and maybe still, have that kind of leverage on other organizations. Nor does YS here have any kind of youth permanent advisory body of its own – though in my view that would not have been a useful goal in any case, not yet. (Youth have, though, been involved well in the selection process for grants.)

YS does, however, have some ability to have upstream influence on the United Way of Thunder Bay and United Way has made considerable progress.

- They have identified youth violence as a key area of emphasis and have put money behind that promise.
- They have provided considerable financial support to YouthScape and have designated a percentage of their total funds to community capacity building in general.
- They will also have youth representation on their board soon.

Via the Youth Grants we have had some more subtle influence. The secondary schools from which most projects have emerged have been impressed by the ability of their students to take on and succeed at several complex projects. They speak well, sometimes with a bit of surprise, at the competence and maturity shown. They are aware of the “youth led” principle and are impressed with out stubborn commitment to it and by the strength and resilience of the groups of youth with whom we have worked.

Planning for the Drop-In Centre project is now under way and the leadership coalition for that initiative will recruit a youth advisory group pretty much immediately.

It’s a hard goal to achieve. What has been done, mostly “upstream” to United Way, is significant and is already well embedded.

4.3 Space for recreation, crafts, fun services. Safe and welcoming, the “Safe Path”

This was initially about safe recreational space for youth who, while truly less engaged, were not yet at the high-risk level of those targetted in the next goal.

That goal took some time. Initially YS here supported the local Boys and Girls club but they moved several miles away. That increased the need but removed the most likely partner. However, several factors converged to create some levels of success.

A bit of history is needed. The federal Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) project (2004-2006?) was United Way's first foray into the business of community capacity building. The Simpson-Ogden neighbourhood was the geographical target. From that ANC beginnings UW created its own Community Projects Office, created to support the emergence of Evergreen: A United Community, a very successful neighbourhood organization. That is the current home to YouthScape.

Evergreen has been working more and more with the City, especially Community Services and the Parks and Recreation departments. From tenuous early relationships we had, just a week ago, a meeting at which the following were (happily!) at a table together:

- The City's head of all community service projects.
- A senior City member from recreation.
- A City summer employee who moved her Youth Zone project's site from its former (miles away) home to our neighbourhood – frankly because one of us got her excited about the need and opportunity here.
- The entire young cast of a neighbourhood-based YS project
- The Evergreen staff member (and point person for most of their success), and
- A YS staff member who helped that Youth project to grow.

That is the stuff that dreams – and success – are made of.

There have already, via Evergreen, been some recreation opportunities in the neighbourhood. The Ogden Youth Supporting Communities group (a Youth Grants project) added three open skating events in late winter. They have plans for the summer, fully supported by the City. They will have a home base, via the City's Youth Zone summer project. And they will have access to local parks and recreation sites all summer long.

Here is the list of desired “Short Term Outcomes” for that goal as shown in the 2007 Logic Model:

- More and better targeted/more responsive offerings for youth
- Youth gain sense of control of activities and offerings
- City is visibly more responsive to neighbourhood youth
- More fun in Simpson-Ogden
- More activities AND a broader mix of activities available
- Connections among partners made, tested, strengthened

It is honestly possible to say that these have been achieved – some in early days and some well embedded.

Now that surprised me and it is fair to comment on that.

- I didn't think that goal was as important as others: I now apologize and recant.
- I didn't see those partnerships coming, not that many and not that strong.
- I didn't initially see Youth Grants as having this much potential for leverage; it looked like a “nice to do but ...” project.
- I did see the strength of Evergreen and its potential but could not see a way to get them connected to local youth.

How did all these good things happen?

When I work with organizations on planning and change initiatives I talk about an “Operational Vision”. Not just a vague, twenty-words-max “Vision Statement”. The client organization's leadership is shown how to take that brief statement and answer the question: “What will it look like when it's working?” The ideal output is what is called a “fuzzy vision”. That's what happened here. The Logic Model gave YS a picture of the future with

- enough resolution to target work better but
- enough room to better recognize and exploit unpredicted opportunities.

YS leadership had an appropriately “fuzzy vision”, one that allowed them to look beyond the specifics of their plan to the picture of that plans successful future. Well done.

	Story Time: OYSC
	<p>The youth group referred to above is called "OYSC - Ogden Youth Supporting Communities". They deserve a comment and a story.</p> <p>YS leadership asked a high school for a list of students whose bus route showed them to live in our neighbourhood, the Simpson-Ogden area. That was, in my view, a smart idea and it paid off - with willing help from the staff of Churchill Secondary School. This was what I call "prospecting", seeking potential groups and ideas directly. We've not been good at this in the past year and it was very reassuring to see that happen. It brought not only a very energized group of youth but also the good will of the school.</p> <p>A week or so ago I arrived at the school to meet and interview the group. I was early and I ran into the head of student services who was just bubbling with enthusiasm about the youth and about YouthScape. She commented particularly on the YS staffer who had worked with the youth.</p> <p>Not her words, but her thoughts: “She wouldn’t let them make her lead. She just refused and kept them working until they came up with a project that was totally theirs. Then she helped them plan it, but never took control. She was really stubborn. And really effective. Now they are independent, succeeding and taking on riskier goals as they grow.</p>

4.4 Place for punks. The people who put the others at risk. The scary looking people. Connect with services. The Road back. “The Fringe”

The fourth main element in the Logic Model was the Drop-In Centre, often (perhaps unfortunately) called the Place for Punks – P4P. Most of the projects seen early on were relatively safe. While they served) youth, those youth were in fact already reasonably engaged or at worst low-risk unengaged. Now the Recreation etc. goals above did – as shown – indeed have important impact. And some of their projects will reach a less engaged and higher risk youth cohort; that can be seen as “collateral benefit”. No criticism: they just aren’t going to enlist or connect with the homeless, the addicted, the almost-criminals, the youth trying not to continue to be criminals, the victims, the persons at risk of losing what little is left to them.

Here are the desired outputs as seen in the winter of 2008.

- The “house” with one room big enough for meetings and other rooms, nooks and crannies for simultaneous activities, programs etc.
- It is warm and safe, available TV, coffee and snacks all the time
- Needs a phone, a message drop, and to receive mail for youth
- It’s also an information network, a place to connect and share news – bulletin board plus human info-sources
- Service providers drop by as needed or as scheduled
- A sense of community will develop among the group
- There needs to be learning happening – likely unobtrusively, by example, and *ad hoc* in form and timing

In late Spring of 2008 the Coordinator who was the champion of this initiative left. How could YS carry this on? No-one on staff had the connections or experience to take this forward. There is a kind of “street cred” – not necessarily on the street itself but with the organizations and agencies who work there – that was not available. But the YS manager was stubbornly committed to working on that goal, knowing that such a facility was a logical way to reach those who Youth Grants were missing.

In the DE context in YouthScape we are encouraged to include stories. That’s appropriate here and easy to write since I was the agent who was allowed to keep this one in play.

Story Time: The Drop-In Centre
<p>The YS manager was the key to keeping this going. She believed in the vision of the former coordinator but didn’t have, personally or on staff, the time or experience to make it happen.</p> <p>She and I agreed that we were obligated to contact the organizations the former coordinator had accessed. I agreed (very willingly) to take on the task of bringing them together. In early June of 2008 we held what was essentially a workshop at the office for those organizations and presented the concept. A small majority were simply ready to go, that very minute: most worked with the target population. A minority found it too risky and wanted no part of it. The remaining few were uncertain.</p> <p>But – when asked, would you like us to pursue this and do a more complete needs assessment, 100% of the hands went up.</p> <p>Whoops. How shall we get that done? Still no staff with the time and ability to do it. Newly recruited staff were supportive enough but not sufficiently connected to get the decisions makers to the table. Who ya gonna call?</p> <p>In this case, after a few months of waiting, I volunteered again. It’s not quite evaluation, no. But needs assessment is close. It evaluates where resources should go. It helps to evaluate whether YS keeps its promises. It addresses the initial choice of a P4P-like initiative in the Logic Model. With semi-credible arguments like that, the YS manager and I convinced ourselves that I should do the needs assessment.</p> <p>The task took a few more months to complete – mostly due to my own other commitments plus getting available time to meet with the persons I wanted to have on board, or at least to have opinions from.</p> <p>I conducted eighteen interviews, some with more than one person at a time for a total of twenty-seven people. We also had four email responses to the interview questions.</p> <p>A few weeks ago we presented the results – why it matters, what the risks are and more – to a full room of key players. The people in the room had the power to take it forward. The presentation went very well and the room was convinced by the very thorough and very persuasive data they were shown. There was a lot of it. It was from them or their colleagues and it was both simple and simply presented: five questions only with results organized in a logical way.</p> <p>I challenged the room. Told them of all the initiatives, by name and content, that I had seen get this far and die because nobody stood up to take responsibility. Many in the room had been there for some of those lost opportunities. As advised by the persons interviewed I set a standard of six people – some with available start-the-process money in hand. And in a dramatic flourish I put a personal hundred-dollar bill on the table: Evergreen still has it; it was not a phony action.</p>

The YS manager committed a serious chunk of money to support the start-up process. United Way announced their new formal youth commitment and promised to help when it was time. That was enough. We got more than six and most carry with them the power needed to make it work.

A fair role for the DE? Well, our job is to find ways our projects can improve. I (and the manager) found one but had nobody else to carry it on. I felt responsible. So did she. We got it done. And a number of committed people are now working (in fact having their third meeting today) to connect with the truly disenfranchised, the excluded, the disengaged and the “I don’t even wanna be engaged!”.

Those are the youth YS has NOT been reaching – and I have been criticizing them about that for a year-and-a-half. I could not ethically say no to helping to make it happen! And it wasn’t a hard decision to make at all.

More will be said about this in the final report but a core idea must be presented here. So far, YouthScape in Thunder Bay has mostly affected youth who were already engaged or at least not at much risk. Those youth managing most of the Youth Grant projects are engaged, clean and articulate and have a safe home. Some are in fact a bit patronizing about what they will do for “the less fortunate”. Now that’s OK; they are good people and will learn much. They will have impact on themselves and on others. But there needed to be more.

I have personally dunned, nagged and surely annoyed local YS staff and leadership about their own mostly white middle-class demography and about the absence of truly high risk (and beyond high-risk) youth as beneficiaries of their work. And they have now responded at least to the second concern.

The risky P4P/Drop-In Centre is now fully sharing the stage. Money and time are committed. YouthScape has taken this to the starting line and will provide resources to keep it moving. Ultimately success is up to others in the service community: but YouthScape can now honestly say that we have done our part.

v. Other Goals, Commitments and Hopes

The four goals above were all direct goals. If you get them done you’ll know it. Progress is at least observable if not measurable. YS has control over enough of the variables to make a difference. The result, ultimately, should be some impact on some aspect of being a youth in Thunder Bay. But there were other “goals” we wanted to keep in mind.

There are outcomes YouthScape desired (as did IICRD and McConnell) and YS wanted to retain these as goals. They need to be categorized and discussed separately from the four above.

- Most were in truth pretty much beyond the direct control of the project – it was other organizations that had to change if YS were to succeed.
- Others were a bit soft, e.g. “advocate and educate”.

Here are the five goals of interest.

	Influence on Organizations
	The first set of goals at this level are at the core about having influence on other organizations, whether partners, funders or connected service providers. These goals included: 5. Organizations which work with/for youth collaborate better, self-analyze and pool resources 6. Need credible organizations to measure impact and to communicate it. 7. Need a way to keep and use the KNOWLEDGE re needs (and responses) that will be gathered. 8. Advocate and Educate
	Safety, A Shared Goal
	9. Improve youth safety in areas youth care about. Scary looking people too!!!

These will be discussed individually but first, a few thoughts.

- Mere communication and education is insufficient but it is helpful and should be done, as YS has.
- The power of example is not trivial and YS is imperfect, sure: but it is improving.
- Participating in networks, or building new ones, is a necessary role and has been taken on.
- The leverage available via money is considerable and should be used with a clear conscience: YS has gained access and support via supporting youth grants in schools, as one example, and has gained credibility and influence thereby. I constantly urge the TS staff to “buy yourself some friends”. The terminology is a bit crass – but it works.

Influence on Organizations

1. Organizations which work with/for youth collaborate better, self-analyze and pool resources.

- This is in part about how we operate, the power of example.
- Via Youth Grants we have some leverage, requiring partnerships formally or subtly.
- Notes we made a week ago showed anywhere from one to four or five organizations crossing paths re some funded projects.
- We have some Youth Grants now in their “third generation”: either groups growing and evolving and being worthy of second and even third grants
- Others are “third generation” because they have (1) almost failed and have recovered and/or (2) have themselves recruited new sites – in one case one of our grantees shared their funds voluntarily to move the project into an additional high school.

Those are impressive outcomes and they address this goal directly.

YouthScape here has also taken a leadership position in bringing organizations together. An opportunity arose talk with several youth-serving organizations

about having a better “Table” at which to meet, share information and possible coordinate actions. YouthScape agreed to participate actively and also that there was an existing coalition/table which could serve if strengthened. YS here will work to make that happen. Their position is as a partner v a lonely leader and my intuition is that this approach will work. YS will help, where possible, to support this as needed. Two years back YS here would not have had the networks or the credibility to be a major player in this way. This is an important milestone.

2. Need credible organizations to measure impact and to communicate it.

- Not much impact on measurement at all. That’s OK for now; that is a goal currently beyond our reach.
- Plus, youth grants should follow the “keep it simple” rule; we do not and should not impose complex evaluation or reporting requirements.
- The “Learning Forum” events have, re. communication, had impact here at least on youth participants. Youth tell us of the value of meeting other youth from projects a bit farther along. Both about how to do it and about “you CAN do it” messages from peers.
- Within the drop-In Centre (Place for Punks) initiative there is much sharing; it’s built into the way they have to go forward – it was built into the way we did our needs assessments and our reporting.
- This initiative has always simply (1) assumed and (2) required that organizations work together and share not just information but power also.

3. Need a way to keep and use the KNOWLEDGE re needs (and responses) that will be gathered.

- That happens routinely via the Youth Grants though there is no central repository of what has been learned.
- That might be a useful task in the next few months for a research intern or for the evaluator.
- The Drop-In Centre has a good store of knowledge to work with now. It will be used to guide next steps; we will attempt to ensure that happens.
- In terms of YS Thunder Bay itself, we have used knowledge gained from previous work to (1) choose to target considerable Youth Grant money and (2) invest non-McConnell funds to support the P4P work.

4. Advocate and Educate.

- The Learning Forum model has been a useful vehicle for this re cross-project influence and influence on sponsoring or mentoring organizations.
- The success of the Drop-In/P4P work is partly based on our own advocacy, communication and teaching.
- The major impact has been on United Way itself. This will be addressed more fully in the later/final evaluation report but the core impact should be presented here:
- UW continues to revise various policies which serve the core organization well but get in the way of working with youth.
- Full insurance is now in place.

- UW had formally committed to invest in work re youth violence – this was motivated in part by a local (provincially-funded) study on The Roots of Violence and on a needs analysis instigated and partly funded by UW which identified significant need in those areas. (Youth violence here double or triple the provincial average.)
- The UW needs analysis was done in full partnership with Thunder Bay Community Foundation using resources from Lakehead University – thus building significant opportunity for future influence and partnering.
- United Way responded to what they learned - and it was YouthScape that put the youth issue in front of them.

Safety, A Shared Goal

5. Improve youth safety in areas youth care about. Scary looking people too!!!

This was a key goal for all projects. It could be a specific goal: “we will provide this safe space for runaway youth”. It could be a goal about how we operate: engagement in project X will, by the way, keep twenty youth in a safe place two nights a week.

- Here, pretty much all projects have a safety component, if only because we wouldn't fund anything that added to risk.
- The Drop-In Centre/P4P will be the key contributor here.
- It will be a safe haven – via staff and routine but informal police presence.
- Referrals will happen here; some services will be available on site, all to the neediest of audiences.
- Persons at risk will be welcome including young offenders trying to stay safe, users and drinkers trying to stop, sex trade workers and victims of violence or other forms of abuse
- This is in many ways an anti-gang activity and a place of safety.

Again, once P4P is added to the mix, YouthScape here is much closer to keeping the broad promises of the program, especially those to the highest risk youth.

Summary Thoughts

I think IICRD and McConnell have underestimated the recent successes here in Thunder Bay. “A Spring” metaphor is irresistible here. Early Youth Grants and more than a year's work on the Drop-In Centre have served to create fertile soil and to plant some seeds. In the last two months the crops are booming. They are hopeful and healthy signs of a fine harvest to come over the next year and beyond.

It is only in the past couple of months that Youth Grants have evolved that last step to demonstrate (1) second and third generation influence, (2) considerable integration, multiple partners and multiple sponsors and mentors and (3) significant approval and excitement from members of host organizations.

It is only during that time that the Drop-In Centre (P4P) has taken on a life of its own. Community organizations now own it. We did the research. We built the credibility. We built the coalition. And we are providing the seed money to take it

forward. All of those initiatives were guided by what those community representatives told us as we performed the need assessment.

The Youth Grants and the P4P work are now cross-influencing each other. YS has partners participating in both. Expertise is being shared. Synergy is beginning.

The Coalition/Table mentioned earlier is called a “Youth Strategy”; that’s the intent, to gather key organizations to become more strategic (and better informed and more integrated) in the whole area of services to youth. It is now but seems to be working from a solid foundation.

In these ways YouthScape Thunder Bay is becoming a balanced initiative with successes across a range of target groups, methodologies and partners. Youth from all races, economic circumstances and are being included. (There is more to be done but the direction is right and the resources are adequate.) United Way and the City have brought financial support. The core YouthScape project has a very reasonable chance to persist beyond the end of McConnell funding and the end of the three years of support from the City.

There is more to do. There is more to learn. Not just by the locals.

I would be disappointed if either IICRD or McConnell felt that they had already learned all there is to be gleaned from the projects, nation-wide or local. In Thunder Bay the late start – really in fact a couple of re-starts – postponed many successes. But the leadership here has persisted, has built the infrastructure for impact and that is now beginning to happen – visibly and undeniably. As the most stubborn (yet intendedly helpful) critic of this project for the last year-and-a-half, I ask the reader to take the kudos offered here seriously: they have been earned. YS Thunder Bay is entering the final two or three chapters of its story and one can see a powerful finale coming along soon.

Appendix B

Adult Ally: Alice Sabourin

PhotoVoice Project

UW CCB Manager: Sandra Albertson Note:

This project is one of the projects that are successfully engaging youth who would not normally participate or could be “at risk”. Youth, with the help of an Adult Ally and over a period of months, have built a safe space where they can gather, with the support of an adult ally. YouthScape, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and Lakehead Public Schools have formed a strong partnership to develop and grow this project and provide support to the youth who are participating. Time was needed for the Adult Ally to nurture and grow trust among the group. The youth needed time to understand that they were in control of the project. They also took time to slowly develop and recognize the talents that they had. Many youth are now taking on leadership roles within the project sites and are excited about the next steps.

Process – how are we engaging youth: Meet where youth are already meeting: Schools

There are three school sites, we meet weekly with additional community outings youth attend including youth conferences, cultural gatherings and community celebrations. The project is a photographic documentary done by Aboriginal students of their lived experiences. The focus is providing youth a voice to policy makers, the community and each other to encourage dialogue and create change. Individual youth are given support to evolve their talents by encouraging them to participate and to give them artistic ownership and license of the pictures they take.

What hands on activities are youth involved in?

The primary hands on activities with youth has been providing cameras to youth, inviting them to take pictures and upon return as a group, putting the pictures on a large screen have a group discussion asking questions “*What is going on in this picture? What does it represent?*” Students discuss, comment review and critique the pictures based on life as an Aboriginal student in Thunder Bay.”

The youth have been taking pictures, making a collage art book, taken a photography class with Nadya Kwandebens, a nationally recognized Aboriginal photographer.



The youth have participated in planning sessions to delegate roles for completion of the project determining steps, dates and process. Youth assisted in writing the “who, what, where, when and why” for their own YouthScape project and participated in a photography workshop with Derek Khani on photography framing. They were also invited to write on “the writer’s wall” issues they face.

CCB Manager Note: *This may all seem to be adult led, but overall the steps of the project were discussed and opportunities for new experiences were given in order for the young people to feel confident, learn new skills and begin to carry out their own work.*

How did we get other youth involved, especially those who do not normally participate?

PhotoVoice is presently in three high schools:
Churchill (15-20 students)
Hillcrest (17 students)
St. Patrick’s (15-20 students)

Churchill has designed an “Aboriginal World View” class to increase Aboriginal student’s class attendance, success by providing intensified cultural programming. PhotoVoice was recognized as a support for students in this setting.

Hillcrest offered PhotoVoice through an Aboriginal Arts Class, originally 35 students from that class came to the first two presentations and on the third session made a choice if they wanted to attend. There is a core group of 10 who attend and commit their efforts weekly. The group is open, often some of the students from the larger group will come and join for a session, take some pictures and have a snack and leave.

St. Patrick's students meet with PhotoVoice on a weekly drop in during their lunch break, a core group of about 15 students come, some come to the space to play cards, have a snack and others come to chat, check in and take pictures.

NEW: Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School: A workshop on photography with Nadya Kwandens was offered to a grade 10 art class. Discussion followed and now the group is going to join PhotoVoice.

What are some of the greatest moments to date - Adult Allies Perspective:

The first photoshoot, downloading the pictures and seeing the images come back .The youth were proud, excited and interested in the next steps....

Watching the youth begin to respond to the group in a way that is supportive and specific to YouthScape;

Seeing the pictures and video footage taken by the youth and seeing their world from their eyes;

After several weeks of awkward meetings, having the trust of hearing their comments and feedback

Examples:

In one class a non-native student who presented adversarial tendencies towards aboriginal students is now building a positive rapport with youth and learning about Aboriginal issues culture and identity

Students who are new to Thunder Bay are talking about their transition and relating to the PhotoVoice, going on the site specific shoots and then they share.

A student was asked; do you go to the cafeteria? "NO! She said, I come to class and I leave. I just moved here, I don't know where anything is, I just go home everyday."

Seeing the efforts of teachers and guidance counselors make Photo Voice happen in the school by facilitating spaces for Aboriginal youth, at all three schools it is evident that there are high numbers of Aboriginal students but the physical separation of non Aboriginal and Aboriginal students

At St. Patrick's High School, representatives from the Board of Education are coming to see what is taking place and CBC Radio is asking to interview the youth about their project.

Youth Input:

Churchill High School Poetry and words:

Life is a Game everybody got to play it
Life is just a dream flowing down a stream of life
A dream that you can never get out of
Life is full of surprises
Life is full of bones

Words of my Elders

Keep in school
Don't put off tomorrow what you can do today
Don't buy cigarettes with that money
Look up stop looking down
Over confidence is the greatest enemy
If you don't be true to your teeth now they will be false to you later

The Places Where I Am From:

I am from an island that does not have to worry about pollution
I am from where you need a pill that you pay \$450 to feel normal
I am from where the water is clear and fresh and the trees are tall and proud.

Pictures and Learnings:

Churchill High School

Once day at school two students were on hand to film a fight. These fights happen daily in this school. The discussion around the photos follows:

Student safety;
How many Aboriginal students go missing (Young Women?)?
How many Aboriginal students are assumed to be gang members are treated as such;
How many Aboriginal students are caught into conflict?
And how import it is to walk away
Aboriginal students spend at least 500 hours on a bus
Aboriginal female students get mistaken for hookers!
People throw object on girls who are mistaken for hookers on Simpson Street
Aboriginal students are always being watched at Brodie Terminal
There are fights every day at our school.

“Starting conversation about things that are important to them....what is the next steps” what can youth do?

Appendix C

GROWNING A PROJECT: Sadie Krezonoski **Learnings from a Youth Mentor who is a youth.....and learning**

My name is Sadie Krezonoski. I am a twenty year old university student working with YouthScape as a placement student. A group of students and a teacher from Hammarskjold high school first approached YouthScape through a proposal application which asked for an estimated \$25,000 to build a bike garage on the school grounds. They want a bike shelter to be built so they could have a safe place to store their bikes which would encourage more students to ride their bike to school. It would be an eco-friendly idea if more students were to bike to school instead of driving, it would also encourage student exercise as well as make after school and before school activities more available for students who cannot drive or don't have a ride.

Although YouthScape could not fund a one-time structure, the Manager decided YouthScape would work with the group of students to get them more involved in further developing the idea, talk about ways of fundraising, and get other community groups involved.

Youthscape helped bring in a board representative to the group to explain the best way to approach the school board to ask for help with funding. Once they have gathered the extensive amount of research needed to formulate a proposal it will be brought to the school board.

The group would also like to re-do their proposal for YouthScape. This proposal will be more focused to helping the group with fundraising initiatives so the group can be more involved with the project. The group hopes to contact local construction companies and local businesses for donations and discounts.

Working with this group as a youth mentor I have faced a few challenges. One of the biggest challenges was keeping the youth involved without making too many suggestions of my own. Also, there was not a particular strong youth leader in the group who could get the others motivated and moving. I feel this could be why the group was struggling. I overcame these problems by stepping back in the meetings and appointing a student to be the chair of the meeting. The students were asked what they thought was most important to discuss during the meetings. This helped them to take ownership of the project and determine where they would like to see the project go. The group decided that they would like to focus first on fundraising for the building as well as applying for "green" grants.

From the six meetings we have had, I've found that they have a lot of great ideas for the initiative towards what they would like it to look like, how it could enhance the school community and things they would like to do for fundraising. During my last meeting with the group I asked them what they feel that they have accomplished and how they have changed. Although there have

not been any fundraising initiatives yet, the group feels they have solid ideas that they can implement in the near future. They also said they feel as if they have direction and feel more confident moving forward as a group. I feel that this reflection was important for the group to think about the positive things they have done. I feel that they were beginning to become discouraged and feeling as though nothing was getting done.

Often it is hard for groups to focus on positive things if there are negative things present as well. I certainly think that other projects can benefit from asking their group to think about strengths instead of always focusing on barriers and struggles they are having. I believe that once the group has a formal proposal for YouthScape they will feel even more confident in moving forward with fundraising initiatives. They have determined that they would like to wait until they have a more solid financial base before they approach the school board with a proposal. This will show the school board that they are committed to the project.

Appendix D

BUILDING A “TRULY” YOUTH LED PROJECT

Rose Nicholson – Confederation College Student Placement

The purpose of this report is to examine the development of the YouthScape project OYSC (**O**gden **Y**outh **S**upporting **C**ommunity). The goal of this project is to bring a group of neighbourhood youth together to implement youth-led activities in their underserved community.

The group is comprised of seven youth who are between the ages of fifteen and sixteen years of age. There are three youth who have taken on the leadership roles within the group. They display a level of maturity beyond their years. At the beginning of the project they felt that their age was a challenge. They spoke of how adults, in particular city officials, didn't listen to them because they were “just a bunch of kids and we don't pay taxes, so who cares about us” This was in response to their efforts of trying to contact various city councilors to put the boards up at their neighbourhood rink. Their repeated phone calls were never returned. As stated above, this area has very limited youth activities and/or services available.

Learning how to connect with the city, businesses and neighbourhood association was made possible with the guidance, support and trust of adult allies. This has been an important part to the success of the group. Even though it has been youth-led and their decisions have been solely left to the group, the need for adult allies is to keep them on track and provide them with direction when asked. I believe this has been a key factor in their continuation of the project.

This challenge has led them to collaborate with the neighbourhood association who is also trying to revitalize the area. As a result, the youth are in the midst of partnering with the neighbourhood association and the City of Thunder Bay. This “ripple” is starting to produce results in the area. The youth have hosted two skate days which were both well attended. They want to take ownership of the space at Minnesota Park to create a youth hub for activities for all youth to participate and engage in. In the initial meeting with the city representatives, the youth spoke of their vision for obtaining the use of that space and how they want to “take back the community and not be known as the slum neighbourhood anymore.”

With the support of the city and neighbourhood association, the youth are embarking on a venture to offer programs and engage youth in helping to build capacity within themselves and within the neighbourhood. The city has already committed to weekly teen swim nights at the park during the summer months. This offer was given after having only one meeting with the youth. They are a young, passionate group of youth that want to be involved in their community and want to have their ideas heard.

This has not only been a learning experience for the youth but the city as well. By the youth showing such energy and enthusiasm while articulating their needs, priorities and vision, the city is taking notice. The city is seeing that young people have different views and perspectives on issues and are taking an interest in listening to what the youth voice is telling them.

Another positive learning experience for these youth is being involved in the YouthScape Learning Forum. They have stated that this has been a necessary tool for the development of their project. In particular, the connection to other YouthScape groups has been invaluable. They want to continue attending forums to “learn off of one another and use each other’s resources”

YOUTHSCAPE PROJECT	RESOURCE	REASON FOR USE
Comparison and Contrast	Video Equipment	To film Concert in Park
Greenhouses for a Greener World	Seedlings and/or Gardening Information	Design a garden at Park To support them by buying plants from group Seek information on gardening issues

This is only the beginning of connecting with other groups. The more forums that will be offered will allow for more networking amongst groups.

The OYSC YouthScape group is a strong-willed, enthusiastic and creative group of young people who are committed to developing an action plan for their neighbourhood and for the youth who reside there. They have already made huge strides in bringing about positive change. With the continued support of adult allies and partnerships with other groups, this group of youth will not only make a difference to their neighbourhood, but to the community as a whole.

Following please find a diagram that portrays the growth of the OYSC Project:

