YMCA Civic Action Project (CAP) Playbook

June, 2021

Table of Contents

NOTE: Some photos in this Playbook were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction Letter

Our YMCA is a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities because we know that a sense of belonging is almost as critical to the well-being of an individual as clean water and oxygen. By teaching young leaders how to take meaningful action and have an impact on key community issues, this initiative will develop skills that will contribute to the well-being of their communities, and to their ability to navigate their futures.

The development and launch of this Civic Action Playbook continues our YMCA's investment in young people, integrating the best of our learning over the past decade. Civic engagement involves "working to make a difference in the shared life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference."

The top ten civic issues, developed through our YMCA's annual impact surveys and seminal work of Professor John Freeman from Queens University, include youth unemployment, systemic racism, inadequate public transportation, youth homelessness, community safety, mental health, physical health, food insecurity, climate change / environmental issues, and insufficient education. In this program, young leaders will choose the issue of greatest concern to them and work in teams to address these locally.

While some of our programs focus on intervention and the provision of programs to young people in crisis, we make every effort to work along the continuum toward supporting young people in the development of their leadership skills, sense of agency and capacity to take action on issues. By working inter-generationally toward a shared goal, young leaders acquire the wisdom of their more experienced mentors, and in turn, adults find themselves re-charged and re-engaged because of the next generation's insight, commitment and passion. It is this reciprocity that gives us hope for a better future for more GTA residents.

If there was ever a time when our communities have needed the insight, commitment and energy of the next generation, this would be it as we begin to set a path for a more equitable future.

Wishing all our young leaders and their mentors every opportunity to learn and succeed!

Shine on!

Medhat Mahdy

President & CEO

YMCA of Greater Toronto

SECTION 1:
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Acknowledgments

2021 Civic Action Pilot (CAP) Youth Leaders

Sahana Thangathurai

Toronto Scarborough Town Centre YLD & YMCA of Greater Toronto Teen Council, Co-chair

CAP Advisory Committee Member, YLD Youth Leader

Sahana is currently 15 years old and currently goes to Agincourt C.I. She has been volunteering with the YMCA and has been participating in YLD for over a year. Some of Sahana's hobbies include doing puzzles, reading books and trying new foods. At school, Sahana is an active member of the Student Administrative Council. Sahana enjoys being involved in her community but in her spare time, she mainly enjoys reading books and watching movies on Netflix. Sahana works to balance school and her extracurricular activities. She hopes to work with others to create a better community for tomorrow.

Radiyah Tasneem

Toronto Scarborough Lester B. Pearson YLD

CAP Advisory Committee Member, YLD Youth Leader

Radiyah is currently a Grade 11 student from Toronto and has been a part of YMCA since joining YLD-Pearson in 2019. She is involved in extra curricular activities such as DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) where she is an executive, YLD-Pearson where she is the leader and the Pearson robotics club prior to Covid-19. She occasionally volunteers at the Malvern community centre and the Youth Gravity virtual summits. During her free time, Radiyah enjoys reading, writing, sketching and painting. Radiyah's hope for the future is to become a more integral part of society by committing her time into civic action.

Karthika Nagendram
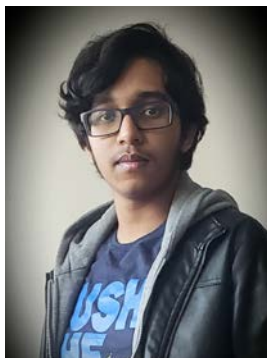
CAP Advisory Committee Member, YLD Youth Leader

Karthika is currently in grade 9 studying at Saint John Paul II C.S.S. She was born and raised here in Toronto, Canada by two Sri-Lankan immigrants. Karthika has been attending YLD for almost one year and is having a blast. She is very active, loves to dance, talk to friends and watch TV. In addition, she enjoys helping people and is willing to give advice when needed. She is passionate about the things she loves and is a hard worker. Karthika is a perfectionist, so for her to be satisfied, it must be perfect. This is only the beginning of Karthika's life and hopes she can succeed in the future with the help of her allies.

Aryan Rajagopal

CAP Advisory Committee Member, YLD Youth Leader

Aryan was born in Markham, Canada and is currently 14 years old. He is in Grade 9 at Pierre Elliott Trudeau HS, and he has been a YMCA member since March 8th, 2011. He has been a volunteer at the Y for about 2 years, helping with a youth basketball class before the COVID-19 pandemic. He has been a YLD member for over 3 years, and he has attended 2 Cedar Glen conferences and 2 Peace by Piece conferences (which he got the opportunity to host). Aryan's hobbies include basketball, hanging out with friends, playing the latest NBA 2K game and playing Among Us. He also enjoys talking to others and speaking in general (maybe a bit too much). Aryan hopes that the pressure of the entire universe doesn't absolutely obliterate him, but he also enjoys meeting new people and having new challenges.

Tazwar Ridwan

CAP Advisory Committee Member, YLD Youth Leader

Tazwar is a grade 11 student from Bangladesh who currently lives in Toronto and attends Lester B. Pearson CI. He enjoys listening and playing music on the piano, occasionally baking, watching anime and playing chess. He has volunteered as a French tuition assistant, at a large community event, at the YMCA by shadowing a program facilitator and most recently at the Youth Leadership Development program Pearson. Tazwar is highly studious and although nervous initially always takes the lead or opens the path to interactions between people. Patience, the ability to reflect on oneself and to go into an argument without a bias are a few of the skills he has, is currently trying to gain and even master. Tazwar wishes to meet and build more positive connections with new people, acquire a variety of knowledge and always be an active member in whatever community he is in

Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Advisors

Brampton YLD

Michaela Toohey, YLD Lead Advisor

Michaela.toohey@ymcagta.org

Leyondra Lobert, YLD Advisor

Leyondra.lobert@ymcagta.org

Samara Brown, YLD Advisor

Samara.brown@ymcagta.org

Markham YLD

Robert Ramdeen, YLD Advisor

Robert.ramdeen@ymcagta.org

Oshawa YLD

Renee Bell, YLD Advisor & CAP Advisory Committee Member

Renee.bell@ymcagta.org

Scarborough Town Centre YLD

Lorenzo Freeman, YLD Advisor

Lorenzo.freeman@ymcagta.org

Toronto Etobicoke YLD

Andrea Gutierrez, YLD Advisor

Andrea.gutierrez@ymcagta.org

Kelly Dieleman, YLD Advisor

Kelly.dieleman@ymcagta.org

Scarborough Lester B. Pearson YLD

Ellah Mangwiza, YLD Advisor & CAP Advisory Committee Member

Ellah.mangwiza@ymcagta.org

Toronto Scarborough Milner YLD

Jennifer Cheng, YLD Advisor & CAP Advisory Committee Member

Jennifer.cheng@ymcagta.org

Delany Kandiah, YLD Advisor & CAP Advisory Committee Member

Delany.kandiah@ymcagta.org

Mississauga YLD

Cecilia Barber, YLD Advisor

Cecilia.barber@ymcagta.org

Toronto Central YLD

Dwayne Campbell, YLD Advisor

Dwayne.campbell@ymcagta.org

Toronto Sheppard YLD

Pearl Agustin, YLD Advisor

Pearl.agustin@ymcagta.org

Toronto Cooper Koo YLD

Ryan Machado, YLD Advisor

Ryan.machado@ymcagta.org

Gwothaman Seevaratnam, YLD Advisor

Gowthaman.seevaratnam@ymcagta.org

MDB Insight Curriculum Design Consultants

Trudy Parsons, Executive Vice-President

tparsons@mdbinsight.com

Tehseen Rana, Research Analyst

trana@mdbinsight.com

Natasha Apollonova, Research Analyst

napollonova@mdbinsight.com

SECTION 2:
CONTACTS

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Contacts

Dedric Nelson, YMCA of Greater Toronto

General Manager, Teen Strategy

Phone: 416-315-4430

Email: Dedric.Nelson@YMCAGTA.ORG

Trudy Parsons, MDB Insight

Executive Vice-President

Phone: 1.855.367.3535 / 237

Email: tparsons@mdbinsight.com

SECTION 3:
PREAMBLE

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Preamble

June 2021

Approximately 26% of youth aged 12-19 years old report a weak sense of belonging (Statistics Canada, 2010-2011). Factors such as youth disengagement, the lack of adequate civic knowledge and a feeling of disempowerment all contribute to the feeling of disenfranchised.

"A sense of isolation can lead to mental health issues, teen suicide, trouble with the law, poor school performance and homelessness. Belonging is strongly related to these relationships but is also affected by poverty, cultural identity and other factors. Widening income inequality has contributed to more difficult and disconnected relationships" - warns UNICEF's One Youth initiative."

The YMCA of Greater Toronto's Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program aims to empower young leaders with the awareness, knowledge and skills to help. The Civic Action Project (CAP) initiative and Playbook curriculum have been designed to help address this gap.

The initiative has proven successful. Youth working in project teams will take meaningful action to help mitigate an identified community challenge. Youth will gain valuable employability skills, but they will also have a space to discuss democracy and politics, generate ideas to improve political engagement, develop a political voice, and discuss how to improve their communities and lives.

In Soccer, a cap is a term used to show how many times a player has appeared for their national team. A player is awarded a cap for every international game. In our case, we hope that the term will come to represent the number of times a youth leader participates in the Civic Action Project (CAP) initiative working to address a community gap.

Dedric Nelson

General Manager, Teen Strategy, YMCA of Greater Toronto

SECTION 4:
YMCA MISSION, VISION, VALUES & YOUTH HEALTHY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

YMCA Mission, Vision, Values & Youth Healthy Adolescent Development Guiding Principles

Youth in Canada and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) face significant challenges, including barriers to employment, access to post-secondary education, mental health concerns, and other poor socio-economic conditions. Over the past 150 years, the YMCA of Greater Toronto has been working with youth to fulfill their dreams by developing them as resilient leaders in their communities and equipping them with transferable and adaptable skills for future jobs. This section outlines the YMCA of Greater Toronto's Vision, Mission, Values [1] , and guiding principles for healthy adolescent development that laid the foundation for the goals and objectives of the Youth Civic Action Project (CAP) initiative (the initiative) as part of the Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Program. YMCA Civic Action Project (CAP) Playbook (Playbook) aims to formalize and structure the initiative.

YMCA of Greater Toronto Vision

Vibrant communities where everyone can shine.

- Now more relevant than ever.

- Making a strong case that complex economic realities underpin this vision for youth in the Toronto Region. According to Vital Signs reports (2019 and 2020), poverty is persistent for specific populations, including youth.

- The pandemic has even more accentuated problems such as mental health, motivation, and resilience among youth.

Connecting the initiative to the Vision

- Almost seven times, many people believe that people working together can make a big difference (55%) versus those who think it can make little or no difference (8%).

- To incubate a generation of changemakers who are optimistic about the future's possibilities, undaunted by the challenges that we face today, and are ready to find a community and a team of individuals to go after these dreams.

---

[1] Updated in June 2020.

YMCA of Greater Toronto Mission

YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities.

- Vibrant communities can thrive if employment opportunities exist for everyone in the community and youth has been positively deployed and engaged in living, working and playing.

- Community is where everyone shines with high youth engagement, low youth unemployment, youth homelessness, and mental health issues well under control and other socio-economic factors concerning youth in check.

Connecting the initiative to the Mission

- Engage diverse youth of all ages and interests from a social, mental, and physical perspective.

- Embrace a holistic approach to motivation, development, and well-being.

- Help youth to find a sense of connection and belonging as a result of joint projects and activities.

- Focus on developing employability and life-learning skills and works to enable access to post-secondary education due to its programing.

YMCA of Greater Toronto Core Values

The initiative is grounded in these six core values as these were considered in each stage of the initiative's development process:

- **Kindness:** We are caring and compassionate.

- **Well-being:** We are dedicated to people's physical, social, and mental health.

- **Integrity:** We are truthful, trustworthy and take responsibility for our choices, actions, and commitments.

- **Inclusiveness:** We create welcoming places and programs where everyone feels they belong.

- **Respect:** We treat every person with dignity.

- **Optimism:** We believe in the strengths and potential of people and communities.

Connecting the initiative to Core Values

Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Youth participants first learn about YMCA of Greater Toronto's core values and how they help shape community wellness, inclusion, and equity. Once they find a cause they are passionate about, they can connect with others by developing a plan of action and building their activity consistent with YMCA of Greater Toronto's six values.

> "The pandemic has taught us all some tough lessons, but it has also shown us the importance of truly coming together (although staying apart), with common purpose, for the greater good. By embracing each other — whether virtually or, when it is once again safe to do so, in person — we can build up each and every one of us, and ensure that no one is left behind when we rebuild and recover from the pandemic." Medhat Mahdy, YMCA CEO*
>
> *'Strength of our community' helping us weather pandemic". YMCA President and CEO Medhat Mahdy. March 27, 2021. www.toronto.com.

YMCA of Greater Toronto Youth Healthy Adolescent Development Guiding Principles

YMCA of Greater Toronto's guiding principles and practices shape the foundation of all youth programming at the YMCA of Greater Toronto. These principles enhanced the development of this initiative, including the program overview, modules, youth projects, and evaluations.

These principles include the following:

1. A Common Approach

▪ Use of a common Healthy Adolescence Development (HAD) approach when working with youth.

2. Teen Engagement

▪ Engage Teens in meaningful volunteerism and philanthropic experience to develop leadership skills.

3. Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

▪ Collaborate with Teens to create a Teen-supportive environment.

▪ Involve participants with adults who have come to understand and experience young people as capable, gifted, and collaborate to create a more inclusive and peaceful society.

4. Capacity Building – Within Y and Community

▪ Build a strong community support network through partnerships, collaboration, and advocacy.

5. Encourage Voice

▪ Implement a Teen engagement strategy that will continually provide voice and influence to create, develop, and implement Association practices and programs.

6. Diversity & Social Inclusion

▪ Work to eliminate barriers associated with marginalized Teen groups (BIPOC, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+, early school leavers, homeless, those with disabilities, and mental health challenges).

7. Evidence-Based Impact & Advocacy

▪ Become thought-leaders by conducting evidence-based research and advocacy related to Teens' needs in our community.

SECTION 5:
CAP INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

CAP Initiative Overview

The Playbook guides the CAP initiative and delivers the YMCA of Greater Toronto's Mission as part of the Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program. Over the past 150 years, YMCA of Greater Toronto has been working with youth to fulfill their dreams by developing them as resilient leaders in their communities and equipping them with transferable and adaptable skills for future jobs.

This initiative is focused on teamwork and activity-based service learning over four months to help youth aged 11-18 develop a sense of community and engage in civic action while developing essential life skills. This Playbook builds on the success of the previous 2020 YLD Civic Action Project (CAP) Initiative Pilot while staying aligned with YMCA of Greater Toronto's mission, vision, values, and youth healthy adolescent development guiding principles. Moreover, it is an extension of YMCA of Greater Toronto's "Vote Pop-up" learnings, including understanding key community issues and their root causes. CAP also gives youth a better sense of community belonging, and youth project teams will learn, plan and take action designed to have a meaningful impact on key community issues.

The vision of the Playbook is to see engaged youth who are connected to their community and working together to influence positive change and civic action, make a meaningful impact, and communicate their learnings. During the initiative, youth project teams composed of four to six members will learn, plan and take action on a civic issue of their choice. The initiative builds life skills, civic issues and action knowledge through weekly activities that lead to self-directed work on the main civic action project. These activities are described in detail in Section 7 on Modules. It is important to note that advisors have flexibility in their facilitation of these modules and should keep in mind the general age of youth in the cohort when walking through activities. While youth are given the tools and experience to lead civic action in their communities during this program, project teams are encouraged to continue their civic action initiative after the end of the initiative. A detailed list of opportunities has been included in Section 10.1 - Post CAP Civic Action Opportunities.

Life Skills Development

Given the diverse backgrounds of youth participants and evolving challenges communities will face in the future, this Playbook focuses on ten life skills to support youth development and future leaders in their communities. The playbook builds these life skills and has weekly lesson plans followed by a self-directed service-learning path for CAP teams. The teams follow this path every week as they work on their civic action projects. Section 7 on Modules shares more details about the approach.

The life skills that the modules focus on include the following [2]:

1. Focus and Resilience:

This skill includes paying attention, exercising self-control, remembering the rules, thinking flexibility, and exercising mindfulness.

- Youth need this skill to achieve goals and live a healthy, productive life. Focus and resilience are significant in a modern world filled with distractions, information overload, and adverse or ambiguous circumstances.

2. Self-Motivation and Drive to Take on Challenges

Youth who take on challenges instead of avoiding or simply coping with them achieve better in school and life.

- Youth need this skill to become healthier physically and mentally and develop the confidence to impact their community. Taking on challenges also helps build resilience capacity.

3. Self-Directed, Engaged Learning

Youth can set goals and strategies for learning and be in touch and better prepared for the consistent changes in the modern world.

- Youth need this skill to foster their innate curiosity to learn and helps them realize their potential.

---

[2] Informed by the 2021 Civic Action Project, Consultation with YMCA and Youth, Mind in the Making (mindinthemaking.org/life-skills) and the Conference Board of Canada (conferenceboard.ca/edu/employability-skills.aspx)

4. Project Management

Youth can create a plan and manage the implementation of a project while balancing priorities, providing leadership, and overseeing resources.
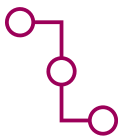
- Youth need to develop this skill to be able to manage project flow and meet their set goals

5. Critical Thinking

This skill helps youth analyze and evaluate information to guide their beliefs, decisions, and actions.

- Youth need this skill to make sense of the world around them and to solve problems.

6. Making Connections

This skill helps youth figure out what's the same, what's different, and sort elements into categories.

- Youth need this skill because making unusual connections is at the core of creativity and helps youth obtain information and use it well.

7. Research Skills Research and Data Management

The ability to gather information about a topic, review that information and analyze and interpret the information in a manner that brings a clear and concise conclusion.

- The quality of research and evidence of data were vital attributes judges of the 2021 Civic Action Project submissions found among submissions that progressed to the finals or ultimately won the contest.

8. Communication

Much more than understanding language, reading, writing, and speaking, communicating is the skill of

determining what one wants to communicate and realizing how others will understand it.

- The structure and clarity of the written report was a critical attribute during 2021 Civic Action Project submissions. This element helped progress submissions to the final stage and was essential in winning the contest.

9. Teamwork

Understand and work within the dynamics of a group to plan, design, or carry out a project or task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes.

- Youth learn this skill to be flexible and open to and support the thoughts, opinions, and contributions in a group for successful project delivery.

10. Planning and Decision Making

Using a step-by-step decision-making process helps youth make deliberate and thoughtful decisions.

The modules in this playbook focus on the following decision-making process [3].

Step 1: Define Your Question (Problem Statement) - Awareness

Start by becoming aware of and defining the problem you are trying to solve by defining your question. This question is related to a civic issue and becomes the basis of civic action.

Step 2: Develop an Action Plan - Preparation

Develop a plan that lays out the implementation of data collection, analysis and results sharing. The plan sets clear measurement priorities to decide what and how the impact of a civic action project will be measured related to the problem statement.

Step 3: Collect Data - Taking Action

The action plan in step 2 would have clarified what data needs to be collected, including quantitative (numeric) data, e.g., sales figures or qualitative (descriptive) data. This stage includes conducting primary research and gathering relevant data points from third-party sources.

Step 4: Analyze and Interpret Data – Maintain or Adapt

Sort and manipulate the data to uncover relevant trends, correlations, or variations in the data related

---

[3] Informed by Big Sky (bigskyassociates.com/blog/bid/372186/The-Data-Analysis-Process-5-Steps-To-Better-Decision-Making) and Career Foundry (careerfoundry.com/en/blog/data-analytics/the-data-analysis-process-step-by-step/)

to the problem statement. Interpret the data and connect it back to the problem statement. Maintain or adapt the action plan as needed based on findings.

Step 5: Visualize and Present Results - Communicate

Present the conclusion from the data in a manner that's digestible for all types of audiences. It's important that the insights you present are 100% clear and unambiguous. It's also important to highlight any gaps in the data or flag any insights that might be open to interpretation.

Civic Action – What is it and Why is it Important

Civic Action Definition

Civic engagement involves "working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference."

Why Civic Action?

- Civic action fosters community involvement, making an impact on an important issues, call to action, positive change, and making a difference.

- Helps youth connect with one another and their communities to function in society and improve their well-being to make a meaningful community contribution.

Examples of Civic Issues

- The community issues list is available based on youth learnings and discussions with community members from several previous federal, provincial and municipal Vote Pop-Up rounds since 2015.

- The top ten civic issues have been developed based on YMCA annuals impact surveys and seminal work of Professor John Freeman from Queens University. The list includes youth unemployment, systemic racism, inadequate public transportation, youth homelessness, community safety, mental health, physical health, food insecurity, climate change / environmental issues, and insufficient education.

- For example, the mental health of youth was declining pre-COVID-19 and is only getting worse. This issue needs immediate attention from an early prevention standpoint.

Benefits of Civic Action

By empowering youth to make a difference in their community through civic action, several benefits typically occur, including:

Youth Benefits:

- Youth see themselves as agents of change
- Youth demonstrate and share their voice
- Youth develop practical life and leadership skills resulting in better education and employment outcomes
- Youth enhance their community knowledge and sense of belonging

Community Benefits:

- The development and capacity building of community leaders
- The promotion of civic engagement & participation
- Raises awareness of critical community issues & potential solutions
- Promotes equality, equity, and inclusion for all community members
- Better socio-economic outcomes for the community, including lower youth unemployment rate, lower crime rates, higher property values in the community

Goals and Objectives of the Initiative

Goals

Goals function as general guidelines for what this initiative plans to achieve. They are informed by the 2020 YLD Civic Action Project (CAP) Initiative Pilot and consultation goals.

CAP Initiative's three goals include:

- Development of skills and healthy habits through service learning opportunities (1)
- Take meaningful action & having an impact on key community issues (2)
- Help create a greater sense of community, social inclusion, and equity (3)

Alignment with YMCA of Greater Toronto's Mission Statement

These three goals link back to the three parts of YMCA of Greater Toronto's mission statement, which states YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities. By developing skills and healthy habits through experiential learning opportunities, the initiative ignites people's potential. By teaching youth how to take meaningful action & having an impact on key community issues, this initiative is helping them grow and lead. By creating a greater sense of community social inclusion, this initiative supports youth in becoming a part of and giving back to their communities.

Objectives

Objectives function as implementation steps to attain the identified goals. They are informed by the goals of the 2021 Civic Action Program and consultation with youth and YMCA of Greater Toronto Staff.

- Youth develop social interaction skills (in-person and virtual) and increase their leadership capacity (1)

- Inspire & empower both youth and the community to take self-directed civic action (2)

- Promote equitable access to health & wellness in the community by helping youth develop a sense of identity, foster meaningful connections, and engage in community service (3)

Alignment with YMCA of Greater Toronto's Mission Statement

These three objectives link back to the three parts of YMCA of Greater Toronto's mission statement, which states YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities. By helping youth develop in-person and virtual engagement skills and increase their leadership capacity, the initiative ignites people's potential. By inspiring and empowering both youth and the community to take self-directed civic action, the initiative helps individuals grow and lead. This approach includes the growth for YLD advisors due to facilitating and guiding the overall youth learning process. By promoting equitable access to health & wellness in the community and helping youth develop a sense of identity, foster meaningful connections, and engage in community service, the initiative supports youth in becoming a part of and give back to their communities.
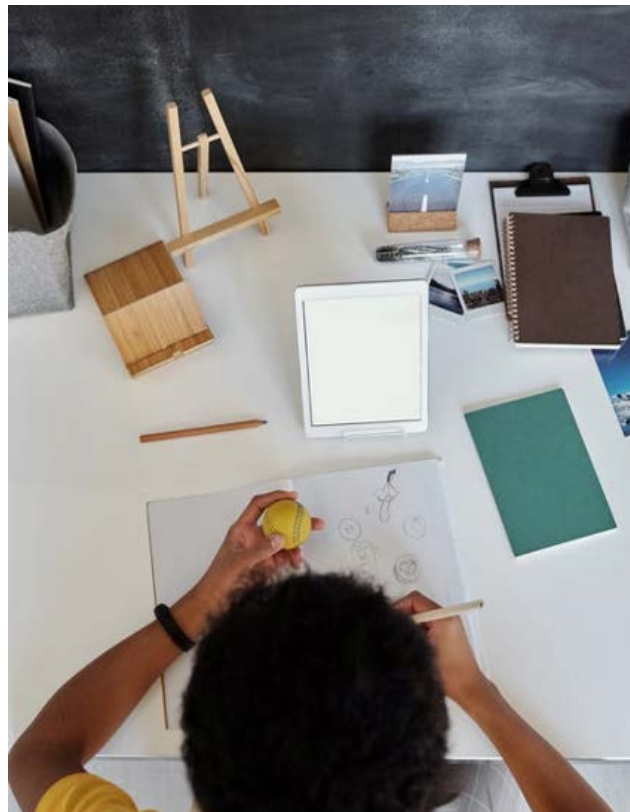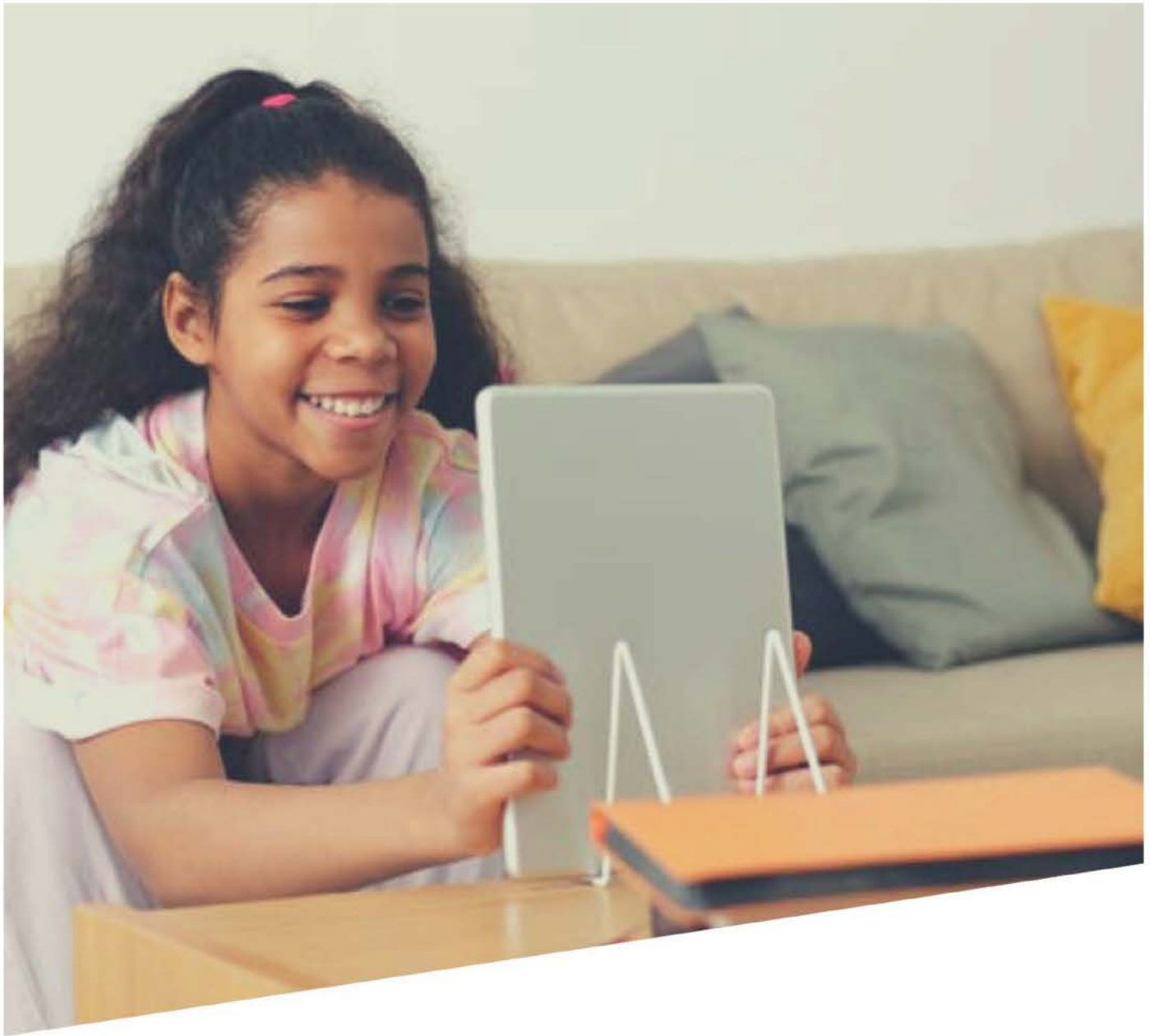
SECTION 6:
CAP CURRICULUM AND MODULE OVERVIEW

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK
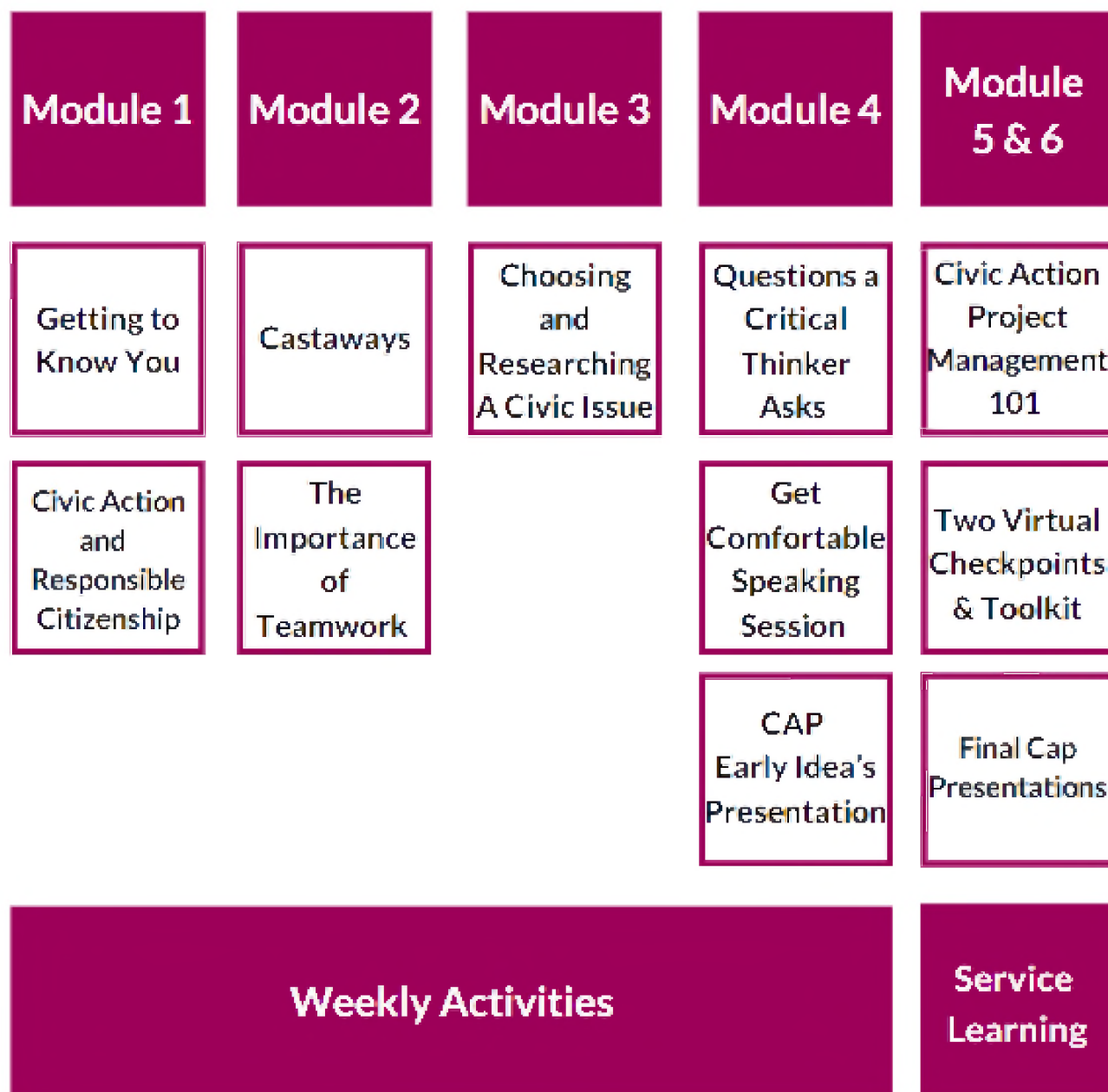
CAP Curriculum and Module Overview

The following outline provides a detailed guide to the approach to facilitating modules. The modules are designed to give an advisor the flexibility to use the questions and worksheets in this outline or develop their own. They follow the theme of a given activity. Advisors can also change the order or edit any modules to enhance youth's engagement and learning. Advisors can also promote each module by including a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be working towards. Furthermore, the curriculum is designed to be flexible as it related to in-person and virtual meetings. Each activity is marked as in-person, virtual, or both, which denotes the preferred implementation, but all activities have been designed to adapt to either setting quickly.

The following is a list of resources that CAP facilitators will require.

Virtual - Resources	In-Person – Resources
- Mentimeter, PowerPoint, and Kahoots - Video conferencing software (Ex. Zoom) - Online communication platform (Ex. Slack)	- Mentimeter and PowerPoint - Castaways' worksheet - Project Planning Worksheet, Project Team - Charter and Project Health Checklist files - Large paper and markers, notebook - Laptops with Microsoft Office (Participants bring their own)

The outline of the Playbook Curriculum includes a high-level summary of modules 1-6. It is important to note that CAP advisors have the flexibility to facilitate these modules to accommodate the specific youth cohort. For example, a younger cohort (11-14 years old) may need activities tailored differently than an older cohort (15-18 years old).

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5 & 6
Getting to Know You	Castaways	Choosing and Researching A Civic Issue	Questions a Critical Thinker Asks	Civic Action Project Management 101
Civic Action and Responsible Citizenship	The Importance of Teamwork		Get Comfortable Speaking Session	Two Virtual Checkpoints & Toolkit
			CAP Early Idea's Presentation	Final Cap Presentations

Weekly Activities

Service Learning

Weekly Activities (Modules 1-4)

Module 1 (Weeks 1-2): Civic Action Defined and What It Means to Be a Responsible Citizen

Advisors can include a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be developing during Module 1.

Week 1 Activity [4]: Getting to Know You Activity (In-Person)

This activity focuses on open-ended icebreaker questions to give youth and advisors a chance to get to know each other better and get comfortable presenting. Questions are related to the following topics.

1. What do you love to talk about and teach others?

2. When are you happiest?

3. What comes easier to you than most people?

4. What do you do when you have meaningful free time?

5. What do you feel passionate about?

6. Tell us about your cultural background and where you would like to travel the most?

7. What are you most excited about during the Civic Action Project (CAP)?

At the end of this module, youth are assigned a take-home reading, "The History of Democracy," and two successful global examples of civic action initiatives touching on Tiananmen Square and Apartheid in South Africa. Links are included below.

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/democracy-ancient-greece/

https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Tiananmen-Square-incident/609276

https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/apartheid/272908

Life Skills Development

▪ Communication

Week 2 Activity: Lesson on Civic Action and Why It Is Important to Be a Responsible Citizen (Virtual)

The lesson starts with a quick game of Kahoots Trivia to reflect on points from the assigned article reading at the end of week 1. This activity is followed by an overview of the answers to the Kahoots trivia in the form of a lesson on the history of democracy in Ancient Greece [5]. The lesson explains the

---

[4] 2020/2021 YMCA Civic Action Project

[5] National Geographic - nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/democracy-ancient-greece

origin of democracy, its implementation, and what it meant to achieve. The Ancient Greeks' version of democracy, including their definition of a "citizen" and direct democracy process, is also explained. This activity is followed by breaking down the difference between direct democracy and the representative democracy we have in Canada today and how the federal, provincial, and municipal political process functions in Canada, Ontario, and Toronto.

Week 2 also discusses two successful civic action initiatives, such as Tiananmen Square and Apartheid in South Africa. The lesson explains why these events occurred and what were key outcomes. Mentimeter questions test participants' understanding of civic action initiatives and touches on what civic action means to them, examples of critical civic issues in their communities, examples of civic actions participants have been involved with in the past, have seen in their community, and aspire to do so in the future. An open-ended discussion follows and is focused on examples of successful and unsuccessful civic action projects and how these initiatives can be improved for the next time.

Examples of Civic Actions [6] include:

- Voting in an Election
- Going to a protest
- Writing an e-mail or letter to a politician
- Blogging/tweeting/Facebooking about an issue you care about

- Volunteering with an organization
- Creating a petition
- Meeting with a political
- Running for Political Office

There is an option for a guest speaker such as a community member or previous CAP finalist to speak about civic action. Week 2 ends with youth being put into breakout rooms and asked to pick a civic action topic from the previous discussion and brainstorm its impact and why it was essential to the community. Groups have the opportunity to write a statement or draw a scene visually showing a civic action's impact. Once everyone returns from the breakout rooms to the main session, teams present their conclusions on their chosen civic action topic.

The focus of this activity is on an active discussion that helps youth connect with and understand CAP's rationale and start developing a rooted understanding of the importance and relevance of Civic Action.

Life Skills Development

- Communication
- Self-Motivation, Stress Management, and Drive to Take on Challenges
- Making Connections and Networking

---

[6] Ryerson Vote Pop-Up:
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/democracy_talks_2018_booklet.pdf

Module 2 (Weeks 3-4): Teamwork, A Key Element of Successful Civic Action

Advisors can include a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be developing during Module 2.

Week 3 Activity: Castaways [7] (In-Person/Virtual)

Castaways is an experiential learning activity that simulates a plane crash somewhere in the South Pacific, forcing group members to work together to survive before they are rescued. The groups will be different than the groups for CAP.

The activity allows youth to work in teams to learn what it means to be a leader and work with different leadership styles among team members. On the other hand, it's also an opportunity for the advisor to facilitate youth project teams. Note that the Castaways activity requires the youth to use either a notebook or a standard letter size sheet of paper for note-taking. This activity promotes resilience and not being afraid to fail as there is no competition involved between teams at this stage. After completing this activity in groups, Mentimeter is used to ask youth about their key take-aways and learnings to build upon in the context of their CAP initiative.

Life Skills Development

- Teamwork

- Focus and Resilience and Not Being Afraid to Fail

- Critical Thinking

- Communication

Week 4 Activity: The Importance of Teamwork and CAP Teams Announcements

The activity builds on the experiences and reflection from Castaways and dives into a quick lesson on what effective teamwork looks like and the outcomes of effective teamwork. The lesson is based on work by the Centre for Education Innovation at the University of Minnesota [8] . It intends to help youth get excited about working as a team during the CAP and learn what effective teamwork looks like. The lesson goes over the following areas:

- **Responsibility and Accountability:** Through team projects like CAP, youth learn to follow through on commitments to and expectations of team members.

- **Independence and Inter-dependence:** A well-designed CAP will allow youth to work individually and as an interdependent team.

- **Goal Orientation**: By providing project milestones and scaffolding the project steps, youth learn how to plan, stay motivated, and accomplish a meaningful goal.

---

[7] 2020/2021 YMCA Civic Action Project

[8] Centre for Education Innovation. University of Minnesota: https://cei.umn.edu/faculty-guide/supporting-students

- **Self Awareness:** Team projects can help youth identify and build upon their strengths.

- **Resilience:** When the team hits a bump on the road while working on their project, it is important to encourage each other to keep working towards the goal, taking risks, and not being afraid to make mistakes.

- **Appreciation of Differences and Inclusion:** Each team member brings his/her unique working style, background, and interests to the team. CAP provides youth with the setting to learn how to work effectively with others with different approaches.

- **Communication:** Each team member is encouraged to communicate with another team member using online engagement platforms. For example, online tools such as Slack offers many Internet Relay Chat-style features, including persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging.

Following the lessons, advisors announce CAP Teams. This activity is followed by a series of Mentimeter and open discussion questions, including the following:

a. On a scale from 1 (poor experience) to 5 (great experience), describe your experience working as a team during Castaways. This is a ranking question in Mentimeter.

b. What went well, and what did not go well? This is a word cloud question in Mentimeter.

c. What are the learnings you can build on going forward? This is an open discussion question.

d. What experiences can you draw upon to make you a better **team member** during CAP? This is an open discussion question.

e. What experiences can you draw upon to make you a better **team leader** during CAP? This is an open discussion question.

The development of a team charter follows these open discussion questions. The team charter is a document that will help advisors keep project teams motivated and accountable throughout the project. Though advisor facilitation, the team charter will include the following:

- **Purpose statement:** Explain why the team is formed and what each team member is most excited about achieving through CAP

- **Objectives:** What the team hopes to achieve (Ex. Create a lasting impact of their project, become a finalist, etc.)

- **Team member strengths:** This helps the team better understand the strengths and talents of individual team members (ex. Creative design, math skills, writing skills, etc.)

- **Availability during modules 5 & 6:** This helps the team better understand and plan for touchpoints once weekly lesson plans are over.

There is a significant emphasis that effective teamwork does not end in module 2 and is a vital element of an effective CAP.

Life Skills Development

- Teamwork

- Focus and Resilience, Self-Management & Stress

- Critical Thinking

- Communication

- Making Connections and Networking

Module 3 (Weeks 5): Identifying Our Issue and Conducting Initial Research

Advisors can include a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be developing during Module 3.

Week 5 Activity: Choosing and Researching an Issue for CAP

The module starts by recapping the importance of Civic Action from the last module and walks through ten common civic issues from Ryerson University Democratic Engagement Exchange's Vote Pop-up Toolkit [9]. These issues speak broadly to Canadian democracy, citizenship, and community challenges.

The ten civic issues include the following:

- Youth unemployment
- Systemic Racism
- Inadequate public transportation
- Youth homelessness
- Community Safety

- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Food insecurity
- Climate Change / Environmental Issues
- Inadequate Education

Using Mentimeter, youth ranks the topic that matters most and adds any other civic issues they want to add to the list. Youth are then walked through the basic steps of the research process and asked to research the causes of a civic issue and its effects on a specific group [10] or society at large.

The following research steps [11] by North Hennepin Community College guide youth groups through the research process.

- **Choosing a civic issue of interest** can either be from the list mentioned earlier or a new civic issue and then researching its cause and effect.

---

[9] Ryerson University: https://www.engagedemocracy.ca/vote-popup

[10] For example, lack of public transportation options in Scarborough can make it difficult for new immigrants in the area to get to work in a reasonable amount of time and they chose to forgo employment opportunities altogether.

[11] North Hennepin Community College - https://www.nhcc.edu/student-resources/library/doinglibraryresearch/basic-steps-in-the-research-process

- **A preliminary search for information:** Complete preliminary research to determine whether there is enough information available and set the research context.

- **Locate Information:** After confirming the civic issue, the team wants to locate information on your topic from credible sources. (Example of non-credible resources include Wikipedia).

- **Make notes:** A meaningful way to keep track of information found from various sources.

- **Write Out the Causes and Effects:** Begin by organizing the information that has been collected. The next step is the rough draft, wherein teams get their ideas on paper in an unfinished fashion. This step will help teams organize thoughts and determine the form the statement will take. After this, teams revise the draft as many times as necessary to create a final product to present to everyone. Youth is encouraged to write out the causes and effects, keeping in mind that it's best to think globally and act locally. A three-step approach helps youth think in the context of global issues, social determinants of health - factors that affect the health and wellness of individuals and at a community level, and impact at a local community level.

  - Step 1: Think about top-of-mind global policy issues building on 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

  - Step 2: Reflect upon primary factors that shape the health of Canadians. These factors are called Social Determinants of Health that highlight living conditions in which people live and work and how these conditions directly affect the quality of people's health.

  - Step 3: Connect steps 1 and 2 above to local context and think about immediate action and impact that can be achieved on a local community.

Life Skills Development

- Self-Motivation and Drive to Take on Responsibility

- Research Skills / Research and Data Management

- Teamwork

- Critical Thinking

- Communication

Module 4 (Weeks 6-8): Advocating for Our Chosen Issue

Advisors can include a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be developing during Module 4.

Week 6 Activity [12]: Questions a Critical Thinker Asks and Visualizing our Ideal Democracy

The activity starts with a brief lesson on the importance of critical thinking related to CAP, which leads to reading through a piece of literature on a topic of the advisor's choice. The youth then break up into

---

[12] 2020/2021 YMCA Civic Action Project - https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=225

their CAP teams to brainstorm answers to the following questions:

1. What's happening? Gather the essential information and begin to think of questions.

2. Why is it important? Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree.

3. What don't I see? Is there anything important missing?

4. How do I know? Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed.

5. Who is saying it? What's the position of the speaker, and what is influencing them?

6. What else? What if? What other ideas exist, and are there other possibilities?

After this, CAP teams are brought back to the main room and present their answers to everyone. CAP teams are then asked to critically think about fundamental principles in their ideal democracy in Canada and our local community. Teams can pick from the list below or add a principle of their own.

- **Open:** People can find out what the government is doing.

- **Shared values:** Politicians share my values.

- **Fast:** Government makes decisions quickly

- **Money-Smart:** Government spends money in a smart way.

- **Fair:** Government does not favour one group of people over another group of people.

- **Inclusive:** People feel included in politics.

- **Understandable:** People understand what government does and how it works.

- **Available:** People can talk to politicians if they want to.

- **Participation:** People can participate in politics

Advisors then split up CAP teams and ask them to walk through the following 5-step process [13].

- **Step 1:** Individual - youth individually choose the four principles (or add a new principle) that they believe are most important for a strong and healthy democracy. Youth are encouraged to ask themselves questions such as What else? What if? What other ideas exist? What don't I see? and Is there anything important missing?

- **Step 2:** In pairs discuss the four principles that you believe are most important for a strong and healthy democracy.

- **Step 3:** As a group – CAP teams choose the four principles that their group believes are most important for a strong and healthy democracy and write these four principles on the list.

- **Step 4:** CAP teams draw a scene that encompasses their ideal democracy using their four chosen principles.

- **Step 5:** CAP teams are then brought back together and asked to present their drawing in the context of the team's ideal democracy and walk through how they chose the critical principles of their ideal democracy.

At the end of this activity, youth are made aware of the 10-minute presentations on their dream

---

[13] Informed by Ryerson University, Democracy Talks: https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/democracy_talks_2018_booklet.pdf

vacation and two 5-minute presentations next week.

Life Skills Development

- Teamwork
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Debate and Conflict Resolution
- Value Different Opinions

Week 7 Activity: Get Comfortable Speaking Session (My Dream Vacation, My Community and My School)

The lesson starts with a quick game of Kahoot Trivia to reflect on the importance of critical thinking from week 6. This is followed by an overview of the answers to the Kahoot trivia to recap what critical thinking is, why it is necessary, what a critical thinker does, and how a critical thinker identifies, analyzes, and solves problems. All of these elements of critical thinking are discussed in the context of CAP.

Week 7 is focused on youth building their confidence, presentation, and communication skills. The activity starts with youth participants giving a 10-minute talk on their dream vacation. This activity is followed by two brief 5-minutes presentations related to their community (city, neighbourhood, or community of interest) and the third presentation about a 5-minute description of their school. Presenters will be given feedback from the advisor and youth after each presentation round. At the end of the activity, youth groups are given time to prep for their early idea presentation.

Life Skills Development

- Communication
- Self-Motivation and Drive to Take on Responsibility
- Confidence with Oral Presentation

Week 8 Activity: CAP Early Idea's Presentations

The presentation is meant to be an opportunity to share the team's project concept, idea generation, potential work plan ideas and gain helpful feedback. The process of presenting ideas to the local YLD youth and advisor is to solicit input and opinions. Teams also can record their presentation and share it with the entire YLD and local community for more feedback. After this activity, project teams are encouraged to review week nine activity materials, input, and meet outside formal YLD time offline to start planning their CAP Workplans and touchpoints in modules 5 and 6.

Life Skills Development

- Self-Motivation and Drive to Take on Responsibility

- Teamwork
- Communication

Self Guided Learning (Modules 5-6 + Toolkit)

Advisors can include a short video and/or flyer highlighting key goals and objectives, sequence of activities and life skills youth will be developing during Module 6.

Module 5 (Weeks 9-12): Researching our Issue and Planning our Action - the Decision-Making Process

This module starts with a final weekly activity that transitions groups into the self-guided learning portion of the CAP. After this activity, YLD advisors and youth project teams continue working on their projects while following their project planning worksheets. They also have access to the toolkit (Appendix C) to help guide their learning as they work on their projects. There is a virtual checkpoint meeting during week 12 where each project team presents their project health checklist and completed work to date. YLD youth, the advisor, and community stakeholders have an opportunity to give feedback to CAP Project Teams related to the effectiveness of their implementation of the five-step decision-making process.

Five-Step Decision-making Process

Step 1: Define Your Question (Problem Statement) - Awareness	• Start by becoming aware of and defining the problem you are trying to solve by defining your question
Step 2: Develop an Action Plan - Preparation	• Develop a plan that lays out the implementation of data collection, analysis and results sharing
Step 3: Collect Data - Taking Action	• Including quantitative data and qualitative data. This stage includes conducting primary research and/or gathering relevant data points from third-party sources
Step 4: Analyze and Interpret Data – Maintain or Adapt	• Sort and manipulate the data to uncover relevant trends, correlations, or variations in the data related to the problem statement. Interpret the data and relate it back to the problem statement
Step 5: Visualize and Present Results - Communicate	• Present the conclusion from the data in a manner that's digestible for all types of audiences

Week 9 Activity: Civic Action Project Management 101 [14] (In-Person)

This activity starts with a lesson on the importance of project management and the five step-decision making process. After that, advisors facilitate youth groups filling out their project work plans and plans to complete the project health checklists throughout the next few weeks.

Project Workplan: Informed by the decision-making process and designed to help clarify the teams' goals and identify the deliverables and requirements to achieving them. The project work plan also helps team members stay accountable for their contributions to the project. During this activity, teams can assign co-chairs to provide accountability and oversight of the project management process. Below is the work plan template with some examples of work items.

Project: "CAP Example 1"					
Co Chairs: Mark and Karen					
	Co-Chair Responsibilities	**Team Responsibilities (What are other team memebers doing)**	**Due Date**	**Status**	**Notes**
Module 5 & 6 Ongoing Meetings					
Weekly Update Meetings	Example: Mark and Karen - Develop meeting agenda + Mark take meeting minutes + Karen complete project health checklist	Example: Attend Meeting, take notes and present deliverables if on agenda	Ongoing	Ongoing	
Module 5					
Ex. Establish Project Team Logistics				Complete	
Ex. Review and incorporate feedback from early ideas presentation				Ongoing	
Ex. Define our Question/Problem Statement					
Ex. Develop an Action Plan					
Ex. Analyze and Interpret Data					
Ex. Visualize and Present Results					
Ex. Prepare for Week 12 Checkpoint					
Module 6					
Ex. Outline steps to completing civic action					
Ex. Prepare for Week 14 Virtual Checkpoint					
(…)					
Ex. Submit CAP by Due Date					

Project Health Checklist: A form to help the completion of regular project health checks. These should be done at least once a week to ensure your project is on track and heading toward success. This checklist can either be a task for a specific team member or circulated every week.

---

[14] Project Management Institute: https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/empowering-kids-through-project-skills-7220

Date:

Step 1 – Progress Checklist

❑

Update schedule with new or changed activities and tasks.

❑

Check off completed tasks on planning worksheet.

❑

Review previous week's Project Health Check for any unresolved issues.

❑

Step 2 – Project Health Check Questions

1. Will the project finish on time? If not, figure out how to get back on schedule.

2. Are there any big problems or issues you're stuck on? If so, how will you resolve them?

3. Are there any changes that you need to consider making? If yes, evaluate the change and decide what to do.

4. Are you on track to achieve your goal? If not, figure out why and how to proceed.

At the end of this activity, teams are provided with the CAP rubric.

Life Skills Development

- Project Management
- Focus and Resilience
- Self-Directed, Engaged Learning
- Planning and Decision Making

Module 6 (Weeks 13-16): Taking Action

YLD advisors and youth project teams continue working on their projects and access the Toolkit in Appendix C to help guide their learning.

On week 14, there will be another virtual checkpoint session where each project team will present their project health checklist and completed work to date. Similar to the week 12 checkpoint, YLD youth, the advisor, and community stakeholders have an opportunity to give feedback to CAP Project Teams related to the effectiveness of their progress towards community service action.

CAPs are due at the end of week 16. The week after, CAP finalists are identified and are scheduled to deliver their CAP finalist presentations to the T-GTA Teen Council. All other project teams to schedule & delivery presentations to community stakeholders.

SECTION 7:
CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESS

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Celebrating Our Success

Living by the mantra "what gets measured, gets managed," it is essential to properly evaluate youth's success towards achieving their goals and objectives for the CAP initiative. Facilitators should keep in mind two elements: project evaluation criteria (i.e., CAP rubric) and youth competition and awards to celebrate youth's success.

CAP rubric evaluates six areas of achievement and assigns a score in each of these areas on a scale from 1 (lowest score) to 5 (highest score). The Y-GTA Teen Council does final judging. While Y-GTA Teen Council members can participate in the contest, they are prohibited from judging their project submission. Finally, teams will lose 3 points per day for late submissions.

Six areas of achievement include:

8. **Impact:** the civic action project significantly impacted achieving equity within the community on the identified issue.

9. **Achievement of project goals and objectives:** there is documented evidence that the initiative addresses all four of the CAP objectives.

10. **Quality of data and evidence:** all the data/evidence is logically organized and supports the project findings.

11. **Community engagement:** There is evidence of a significant amount of community engagement in the action stage of the project.

12. **Final written report:** the final written report was exceptional concerning following project instructions & achieving expectations.

13. **Final presentation:** the final project team's verbal presentation demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the issue and the proposed civic solution impact.

The maximum total score is 50, with each area evaluated as follows:

- Impact (out of 15, this is a triple value area)
- Achievement of project goals and objectives (out of 5)
- Quality of data and evidence (out of 5)
- Community engagement (out of 10, this is a double value area)
- Final written report (out of 5)
- Final presentation (out of 10, this is a double value area)

The second element is related to youth competition and awards, which showcase how youth have been celebrated through their participation in the CAP initiative. The intent behind competitions and awards (ex: 2018 Youth Leadership Democracy Award) is to help advisors celebrate youth's successes. The selected finalist teams will be asked to make a verbal report presentation, and the Y GTA Council will select winning projects. A total of $2,400 in prizes will be shared equally among teams who will receive the following cash prizes via Visa Gift card plus HST:

- 1st Place = $1,000

- 2nd Place = $ 800

- 3rd Place = $ 600

On a separate note, youth keeps track of their community service hours. Typically, these hours are collected as shown in the table below. Youth service hours are yet another way to demonstrate youth's commitment to the CAP initiative.

2020 Pilot Community Service Hours by Centre

YLD	Teams	Youth	Hours	Average
Brampton	3	14	204	15
Central	2	8	80	10
Etobicoke	1	4	48	12
Milner	5	28	148	5
Mississauga	3	17	220	13
Oshawa	2	9	123	14
Pearson	2	10	200	20
Total	**18**	**90**	**1022**	**88**

Post CAP Civic Action Opportunities

Advisors must encourage youth to continue their learning post CAP. Youth should explore the following programs that re-emphasize life skills such as critical thinking, team and project management, research skills, engagement, and impact. Youth may also work to refine their projects in anticipation of the next annual CAP initiative rollout.
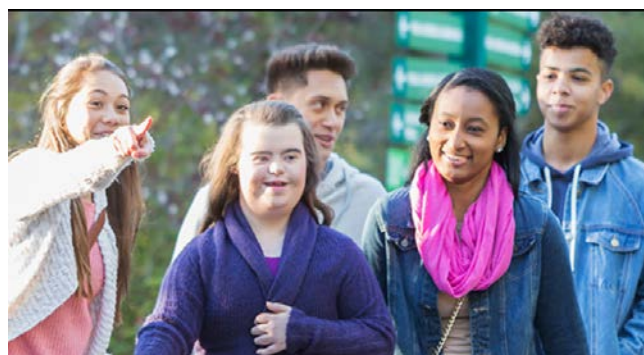
The YMCA Canada Community Action Network

Description of Opportunity:

The YMCA Community Action Network (YCAN) is a national program that engages youth leaders ages 15 to 30 across Canada to address community needs through service projects. The program, which is part of the Canada Service Corps initiative, supports youth with opportunities to identify and execute a local service project that is meaningful to them. Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program targeting

youth ages 11 to 18 is particularly relevant to the CAP initiative.

Connection to CAP:

- YLD program helps youth become the leaders of tomorrow. YLD combines leadership training, teamwork, self-government, and volunteer placement to help build confidence and networks.

- The program can help youth participate and get involved with their communities, earn volunteer hours, build connections and develop leadership skills.

References

https://ymcagta.org/youth-programs/action/ymca-community-action-network

The YMCA World Youth-Led Initiative

Description of Opportunity:

The YMCA World Youth-Led Solutions Initiative empowers young people aged 15 to 35 years old to put resources – knowledge, network, funding – into contributing to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative focuses on three key challenges facing youth today: the climate crisis, the jobs crisis, and a growing mental health crisis. YMCA believes that these challenges are inter-connected with other SDGs and that youth has many of the skills and answers to bring their local solutions to the challenges their communities face.

Connection to CAP:

- This initiative helps youth develop critical thinking skills and connects their project to UN SDGs that set expectations and critical metrics around critical issues worldwide.

- Youth has access to influencers from a wide range of sectors and can build their networks globally.

References

- https://www.ymca.int/youth-led-solutions/

Apathy is Boring

Description of Opportunity:

Apathy is Boring helps youth become active and engaged in their communities via a signature initiative called "RISE," taking place in seven cities across Canada. RISE is designed for young people aged 18-30 with little or no previous experience in volunteering. RISE typically runs two cohorts every year. As a RISE Ambassador, participants develop skills, learn about community engagement and work with their peers to build something meaningful together for 22 weeks.

Connection to CAP:

- Students develop life skills such as having clear expectations in terms of required time commitment to the project.

- The project offers a balance of in-person and virtual learning opportunities for students. Students learn how to work as part of a team and on an individual basis.

- The project focuses on highly relevant topics to ensure Canadian communities can build and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

- https://www.apathyisboring.com/

The Canada Service Corps (CSC) has launched the Civic Participation Pilot – a Youth Leadership Initiative

Description of Opportunity:

The Civic Participation Pilot, a **Youth Leadership Initiative, is** offered by the Canada Service Corporation (CSC) at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and targets Canadian youth ages 18-30. This initiative is a new civic service-learning opportunity and will be delivered to approximately 200 youth participants from across Canada in groups of 10-15 students.

Connection to CAP:

- The program presents exciting topics for consideration in module development. These topics align well with the goals and objectives of the CAP playbook.

- Program participants learn how to identify challenges at the community, regional, national and global levels; develop practical skills to support their initiatives, including accessing funding and developing partnerships; understand the roles of different levels of government and how government makes policy to address societal challenges, and connect with other like-minded youth from across the country.

- The program only presents students with online learning opportunities as a result of its pan-Canadian scope.

References

- https://www.canada.ca/en/services/youth/civic-participation.html

SECTION 9: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Recommended Resources

The following section provides a list of resources (with links) and materials provided by YMCA of Greater Toronto and additional supplemental resources identified through the research process that informed the development of the playbook.

YMCA Resources

YMCA of Greater Toronto

- YMCA of Greater Toronto Teens blog - https://blog.ymcagta.org/
- Youth Civic Action Project. November 10, 2020, and YMCA CAP Presentation
- CAP pilot Survey Monkey feedback

YMCA

- Engaging Teens with Their Community, YMCA of the USA. https://s3.amazonaws.com/ymca-ynet-prod/files/service-learning-resource.pdf
- YMCA World Youth-Led Solutions Initiative - https://www.youthsolutions.ymca.int/about

Additional Supplemental Resources

Health Wellesley Institute

- Making the Connections: Our City, Our Society Our Health - http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MakingTheConnections-Booklet-Wellesley.pdf

United Nations

- Sustainable Development Goals. United Nations. 2015 - https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/

University of Minnesota

- Faculty Guide to Effective Teamwork Projects - https://cei.umn.edu/faculty-guide

Social Determinants of Health

- Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives. Raphael, D. 2009
- Social Determinants of Health. Public Health Agency of Canada. 2012

Ryerson University

- Democratic Engagement Exchange "Democracy Talks" Guide - https://www.engagedemocracy.ca/democracytalks

Search Institute

- Service Learning in Community Based Organizations - https://www.search-institute.org/downloadable/8543_CBO_Toolkit_2009.pdf

Apathy is Boring

- RISE Program - https://www.apathyisboring.com/

Northwestern University

- Leadership and Service-Learning Programs - https://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/service-learning-and-leadership

Generation Citizen

- Action-Civics Curriculum - https://generationcitizen.org/our-programs/our-curriculum/

4-H Youth Development

- 4-H Citizenship, Government is US: A Civic Engagement Curriculum for Youth Groups - https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/4_h_citizenship_government_is_us_a_civic_engagement_curriculum_for_you

Constitutional Rights Foundation

- Civic Action Project (CAP) - https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=205
- Civic Action Project (CAP) Toolkit - https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=225

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND REVIEW

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Appendix A: Background Review

The following is a review of the data, reports, and other documents, alongside qualitative and quantitative feedback/data that takes a perspective on the 2020 YLD Civic Action Project (CAP).

The documents included in this review include the following:

- YMCA of Greater Toronto New Mission, Vision & Values (April 2021)

- YMCA of Greater Toronto Healthy Adolescent Development Guiding Principles (September 2010)

- Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Program Theory of Change (June 2014)

- Pilot – Civic Action Project (CAP) Initiative PowerPoint (November 2020)

- Pilot – Civic Action Project (CAP) Rubric (November 2020)

- Pilot – 6 Examples of CAP Submissions (February 2021)

- Castaways Team Building Activity (March 2013)

- Post CAP Pilot Survey Data and Feedback from YLD youth participants and Advisor (February 2021)

- Post Pilot Feedback from YLD Advisors

- YLD Youth CAP Pilot Participants and Advisors – Surveys and Interviews

Document Review Methodology

Program Goals and Objectives

The program goals and objectives section of the document review focuses on the Civic Action Program. These common themes are also connected to the mission statement and will support consultation with YMCA to finalize the **Playbook's program overview section**.

Module Development and Programming

The module development and programming section review the CAP's activities focused on building skills which are then applied to an action-focused project. Together with feedback and survey data, and consultation with YMCA, these details will support the development of the **Playbook's modules**.

Youth Projects (Overview of Cap Submissions)

The review of youth projects helps better understand the topics and tactics youth leaned towards in the CAP program. This analysis, alongside consultation with YMCA, will help uncover skill development focus areas, a crucial part of the **Playbook's modules and Youth Projects and Reporting sections**.

Youth, CAP Pilot Advisory Committee, and Advisor – Feedback Surveys and interviews

The Youth and community feedback uncovered that at least 80% of the resources and pilot process are already working. An analysis of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks, and results was conducted to summarize themes from the feedback. This analysis will be used alongside consultation with YMCA to build on CAP's success with the Playbook.

Program Goals and Objectives

The YGTA: Mission/Vision/Values document outlines a vision to see vibrant communities where everyone can shine. The mission is to be a charity that ignites the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities. The vision and mission statements are backed by values including kindness, well-being, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, and optimism. The following four documents include information about youth development and civic engagement at the YMCA in greater Toronto. They have goals and objectives that fit with the organization's mission and work towards its vision.

- Pilot – Civic Action Project (CAP) Initiative PowerPoint
- Youth Leadership Development (YLD) Program Theory of Change
- YMCA of Greater Toronto Healthy Adolescent Development Guiding Principles

Figure 1 shows the goals and objectives stated in each document alongside the analysis of common themes to highlight the aligning points from YMCA's relevant work to date. These common themes were also linked back to the three parts of the YGTA's mission statement.

These three parts include:

- Igniting the potential in youth (Part 1 of Mission Statement)
- Helping youth grow and lead (Part 2 of Mission Statement)
- Youth becoming an active part of the community (Part 3 of Mission Statement)

The common goals included taking meaningful action & impacting key community issues by increasing leadership capacity and developing leadership skills and healthy habits that prepare youth for higher education and future employment. Another goal was to promote equitable access to health & wellness in the community by helping youth develop a sense of identity, foster meaningful connections, and engage in community service.

The common objectives include Inspiring & empowering youth to take civic action and increasing their leadership capacity by encouraging them to take the initiative and use their voice for advocacy and positive community change. Supporting skills development for Improved education and employment capabilities was also mentioned. Another common objective was to create a greater sense of community social inclusion through community service and by developing deeper social ties with other youth and adult allies.

The criteria in the Civic Action Project Rubric aligns with these goals and objectives through its evaluation of impact, achievement of project goals and objectives, quality of data/evidence, community engagement, and how well the final CAP reports and presentations showcased youth groups understanding of their chosen issue and project instructions.

YGTA: Mission, Vision, Values	**Vision Statement:** Vibrant communities where everyone can shine.
	Mission Statement: The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity that ignites the potential in people [1], helping them grow and lead [2], and give back to their communities [3]
	Values: Kindness, well-being, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, optimism

Civic Action Project Initiative	YLD Theory of Change	YMCA Key Principles of Youth Programming	Youth Leadership Development- Program Theory	Common Themes
Goals				**Common Goals (High Level)**
Taking action & having a meaningful impact on key community issues (2) Promoting overall community health & wellness [3] Equity for all community members [3]	Development of youth leadership skills through experiential learning opportunities [1] Youth need help with preparing for employment given the high rates of youth under/unemployment [1] YLD fosters meaningful relationships with other youth and adults [3]	Support young adults who are first in their family to attend post-secondary education [1] Teens meaningfully engage and influence programming (2) Teens co-create opportunities to build their sense of identity, competence, confidence, connectedness, and well-being [3] Teens feel safe and welcome in our programs [3]	Improve their education and employment opportunities [1] Develop healthier habits [1] Build greater awareness and demonstration of YMCA values [1] Increase leadership capacity (2) Foster deeper social ties Engage in more community service [3]	Development of skills and healthy habits that prepare youth for higher education and future employment [1] Take meaningful action & having an impact on key community issues by increasing leadership capacity (2) Promote equitable access to health & wellness in the community by helping youth develop a sense of identity, foster meaningful connections, and engage in community service [3]
Objectives				**Common Objectives (High Level)**
Teach youth how to use virtual engagement ideas to deliver a project [1] Civically engage both youth and the community (2) Inspire & empower youth to take civic action (2) Help create a greater sense of community social inclusion [3]	Greater awareness and demonstration of YMCA values [1] Improved education and employment capabilities [1] Knowledge about healthier habits [1] Increased leadership capacities (2) Increased community service [3] Deeper social ties with other youth and adults [3]	Evidence-Based Impact & Advocacy (2) Teen Engagement (2) Encourage Voice (2) Diversity & Social Inclusion [1] A Common Approach [3] Create a Supportive Environment [3] Capacity Building – Within YMCA and Community [3]	Youth participants increased communication skills [1] Youth participants increase critical thinking and decision making skills [1] Youth participants Increased Leadership capacity (2) Youth participants take the initiative and self-direction (2) Youth participants Build on relationships and collaboration [3]	Support skills development for Improved education and employment capabilities [1] Inspire & empower youth to take civic action and increase their leadership capacity by encouraging them to take the initiative and use their voice for advocacy and positive community change (2) Create a greater sense of community social inclusion through community service and developing deeper social ties with other youth and adults [3]

Module Development and Programming

The **2020/2021 Civic Action Initiative Project** is focused on experiential and team project-based learning. For youth project teams to be successful, there are three activities and weekly reflection questions, and the YLD advisors facilitate and guide the learning process of participants.

Focused on three developmental activities and weekly reflection questions that lead to a significant civic engagement project (CAP).

The four activities are as follows:

- Activity 1: Youth question the basis of an argument using critical thinking skills.

- Activity 2: Youth share information about themselves

- Activity 3: Castaway assignment: this is an example of a community service learning project that allows youth to work in teams to learn what it means to be a leader and work with different leadership styles among team members. On the other hand, it also is designed to help guide the Advisor on the degree of facilitation required to support the youth project team. Knowing when to guide and what the group needs is as much an art as a science.

- Activity 4: Apply the skills and knowledge developed between activities 1-3 and weekly reflection questions in a civic engagement project of their choice.

  - Examples of civic engagement projects include awareness campaigns (ex. human right violations), policy advocacy, and education materials (research create and distribute)

2020 CAP Pilot Project Submissions

Participants in the Civic Action Projects (CAP) included youth from Scarborough (55%), Markham (17.5%), Oshawa (17.5%), Central (5%), Mississauga (2.5%), and Brampton (2.5%). Among the 20 submitted CAPs, Mental Health was the topic that resonated the most with the participants. 50% of all projects focused on this topic. This ranking was followed by climate change and issues of racism, making up 20% and 15% of CAP submissions, respectively. The remaining project teams picked domestic abuse, food insecurity, and body shaming as topics.

6 out of 20 projects were nominated for a final competition with three cash prizes. The pandemic has increased the overall awareness and interest in the area of youth mental health. As a result, it is interesting to note that all six projects focused on mental health with a clear call to action and measurable impact on the community. All six projects activated a robust social media strategy for outreach due to pandemics where in-person communication with community members was limited.

Common elements among these top submissions included the following:

- Projects focused on developing skills including conducting desktop research, teamwork/collaboration, project management (e.g., allocating responsibilities among team members), digital skills such as participation in online meetings, and activating digital tools.

- There is an opportunity to address analytical and research skill gaps. This skill would help youth develop better community insights such as demographics, socio-economic factors, and prevalence

of various social determinants of health, including mental health, homelessness, access to nutritious food, etc. How to measure impact/KPIs is another area for consideration. Effective use of social media platforms to reach more community members, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While standalone websites were almost as prevalent, the web was not used as an engagement platform. It was there primarily for reference/static data purposes.

- Surveys were utilized to a great extent and were influential in engaging the target audience to collect and analyze the data.

- There is an additional opportunity to enhance other community voices, engagement/feedback, impact, and the community of the projects, including final results back to all issue stakeholder groups.

- Pandemic vs. non-pandemic context learnings: the Playbook will promote other non-virtual engagement, outreach, involvement methods.

2020 CAP Youth Participants & Advisors – Surveys & Post-Pilot Interviews

A 15-question survey with 5 quantitative questions and 10 qualitative questions for the Civic Action Project (CAP). 43 program participants (including 7 advisors) took part in the survey, and close to 80% responded positively to the quantitative questions.

The main takeaways from qualitative feedback included the following.

Strengths

- Value of teamwork and collaboration. CAP project teams worked well together and understood the value that different perspectives and skillsets bring to the table.

- This project allowed for a great degree of creative freedom, and many participants appreciated that.

Opportunities

- Most of the teams focused their engagement efforts exclusively on the youth demographics. Since the problems they are trying to tackle are broad, it creates an opportunity to expand the engagement profile to other stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, adults in general, etc.).

- The vast majority of projects chose to have social media as a primary mode of engagement. While undoubtedly effective, there is an opportunity to explore other creative ideas, which only a minority of teams chose to do. Things like talent shows and musical performances could help to engage broader audiences.

Aspirations

- It was apparent that most of the participants are very passionate about their projects and the issues that they chose to focus on. They deeply care about those issues and want to make sure that their voices are heard.

- They aspire to be the difference makers in their communities and want to be agents of change for a better future.

Risks

- Many participants mentioned that the most significant risk for the successful completion of their CAP project was a lack of clarity on goals and objectives, and evaluation criteria.

Results

- For many participants, the objective measure of success sees real community engagement. What started like just an assignment turned into something bigger when teams began to interact with people impacted by the issues they were working on.

- Seeing the real-world application of their projects was very fulfilling for the youth. For example, helping someone have a more positive outlook on life because they interacted with the team's content made these projects real and satisfying.

APPENDIX B:
BEST AND PROMISING
PRACTICES

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Appendix B: Best and Promising Practices

The following section focuses on eight best and promising practices related to the Civic Action Project that helped inform curriculum development and module activities. Each best and promising practice is broken down by an overview of the initiative, its programming structure, and key takeaways that helped inform this playbook's development.

Constitutional Rights Foundation – Civic Action Project (CAP)

Overview

A project-based learning initiative focused on civics and government that encourages high school students to identify an issue or problem that matters to them most. The program is centered around lesson plans leading up to the start of the CAP. Additional modules are also available as needed.

Programming Structure

The curriculum starts with lessons that provide content students will need to begin their CAP projects. The objective of these lessons is for students to apply what they have learned to the real world and impact an issue that matters to them. There is also a bundle of additional lessons for students to choose from, based on their needs and interests as they complete their projects.

Pre-CAP Lesson Plan

Five core lessons provide students with key content and skills they need to choose an issue and begin taking civic actions. Lessons that stand out include the following:

- **Lesson 1:** Help students understand CAP's rationale, first discuss why it's important to understand government, and then brainstorm knowledge, skills, and actions of influential, productive citizens.

- **Lesson 3:** Gives students a further background in problems, policy, and civic action to prepare them for CAP. Students analyze situations in terms of causes and effects. Then they list possible civic actions that can be taken when working on a problem.

  - After this lesson, students propose an issue of interest and convince their instructor that this issue is worthy of a CAP project. This lesson also launches the project-based learning component of CAP.

Supplemental Learning Resources During CAP

Supplemental lessons provide additional skill-building Civic Action content as students continue their projects. Supplemental lessons that stand out include the following:

- Explanation of what democracy means. Democracy is the idea that the citizens of a country should take an active role in the government of their country and manage it directly or through elected representatives. In addition, democracy supports the idea that the people can replace their government through peaceful transfers of power rather than violent uprising or revolution. Thus, a crucial part of democracy is that the people have a voice.

- For example, in Canada, there is a representative democracy. This type of democracy gives each Canadian citizen the right to elect representatives at each level of government (federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal). These representatives create and change laws that govern the people rather than vote directly on the laws themselves.

- **Civic Action Survey:** Provides students with an opportunity to discuss and examine the importance of surveys to measure public opinion about their CAP problem or issue.

  - Students form pairs and take turns conducting/responding to a sample survey. Next, students learn about the types of questions that should be included in a survey. Finally, students convene in their groups to brainstorm different kinds of questions for their civic action survey.

  - Persuading: Students first read about and discuss the three types of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos, first conceived by a Greek philosopher Aristotle. The first kind of **ethos** depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second **pathos** on putting the audience into a specific frame of mind; the third **logos** on the proof or apparent proof provided by the words of the speech itself.

  - Students then have to relate these persuasion principles to modern-day governments, think through how these persuasion principles relate to their CAP, and figure out an optimal balance of ethos, pathos, and logos that CAP project teams should be considering.

  - This knowledge relates well to the current political environment/climate with examples including 1) Analysis of the federal, provincial, and municipal government in terms of handling the pandemic; 2) The role of government and responsible citizenship; and 3) Identifying real versus fake news.

Then students prepare two-minute persuasive talks on why the issue they have chosen to address in CAP is essential. Finally, in pairs, students present and critique each other talks.

Students also have access to an online toolkit that provides a step-by-step guide through the civic action process for students. This toolkit is designed for students to access as needed and enforce self-teaching and initiative. The toolkit includes the following topics.

- Research
- Create Awareness
- Building Support
- Use Media
- Connecting with the Community
- Influencing Policy

Key Takeaways

- CAP lessons make content relevant to students by using real case studies and examples of other students' issues through previous CAP's.

- The toolkit provides a way for the youth project team to take responsibility for their learning journey to have an effective CAP.

- The toolkit components, headings, and module structure can inform the basic Playbook module structure and a part of the project action taken.

- The program engages community leaders [15].

- There is also a semi-annual contest for students to participate in and get awards.

- Project teams can obtain feedback related to moving forward with their CAP project planning by:

  - Presenting their two-minute case to support the CAP project and work plan to their local youth cohortand Advisor for feedback.

  - Recording their two-minute case for support presentation and sharing with the entire Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program and local community for more timely feedback.

Sources

- About the Program: https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=205

- CAP Toolkit: https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=225

4-H Citizenship, Government is US: A Civic Engagement Curriculum for Youth Groups

Overview

The initiative was designed for 13 to 19-year-old youth by Michigan 4-H Youth Development, a Michigan State University youth program. The goal is to have teens develop the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to be active citizens and practice what they learn in their local communities. There is also a focus on life skills development

Programming Structure

The 4-H program consists of six units arranged sequentially, and each contains activities designed to lead youth through the process of becoming active in the local political process. Each activity within a unit specifies the age group it's intended for between 13 to 19 year-olds.

Details on the six units include

- **Unit 1: Citizenship Defined** – Youth learn what it means to be a responsible citizen, a good citizen's competency, including their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The unit finishes by breaking down five principles of citizenship that all future units connect to.

- **Unit 2: Diversity and Inclusion** – Youth learn what it means to stand up for what they believe in, as well as the rights of others, by building trust, listening, and respecting other people's ideas, experiences and realities.

---

[15] https://www.theday.com/local/20160401/civic-action-projects-puts-ledyard-sophomores-on-path-to-changing-policy

- **Unit 3: Issues Identification** – Make the ideas of government, community service, and citizenship more real and meaningful by beginning to think about citizenship in the context of issues and problems that affect our lives and the lives of people around us.

- **Unit 4: Local governmental Knowledge** – Demystify government and exposing youth to the human side of politics by breaking down government structures and processes and engaging young people in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

- **Unit 5-6: Taking Action** – Youth learn how the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they learn in previous units can help them improve our communities. This unit includes a Five-Step Community-Based Service Learning Model.

Key Takeaways

- Noteworthy content models focus on important topics.

- This program integrates life skills development. Life skills are defined as skills needed for effective living. Examples of life skills include communication, problem-solving, healthy lifestyle choices, and goal setting.

Sources

- https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/4_h_citizenship_government_is_us_a_civic_engagement_curriculum_for_you

# Generation Citizen (GC) Action-Civics Curriculum

Overview

The curriculum promotes long-term civic engagement and builds collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills among middle and high school students. The result is passionate civic participation that will help create a more active citizenry and a more responsive government of our future.

Programming Structure

Students choose an issue they care about during the program, develop a focused, strategic plan to address the issue, take real action, and then reflect on their successes, challenges, and plans moving forward. This process is facilitated through five units in the GC's curriculum framework. Each semester culminates in a Civics Day. Students present their plans to other students, community members, and public officials, celebrating their work and gaining feedback to further their efforts. The following figure breaks down the program curriculum.

Figure 1: Generation Citizen Curriculum framework [16]
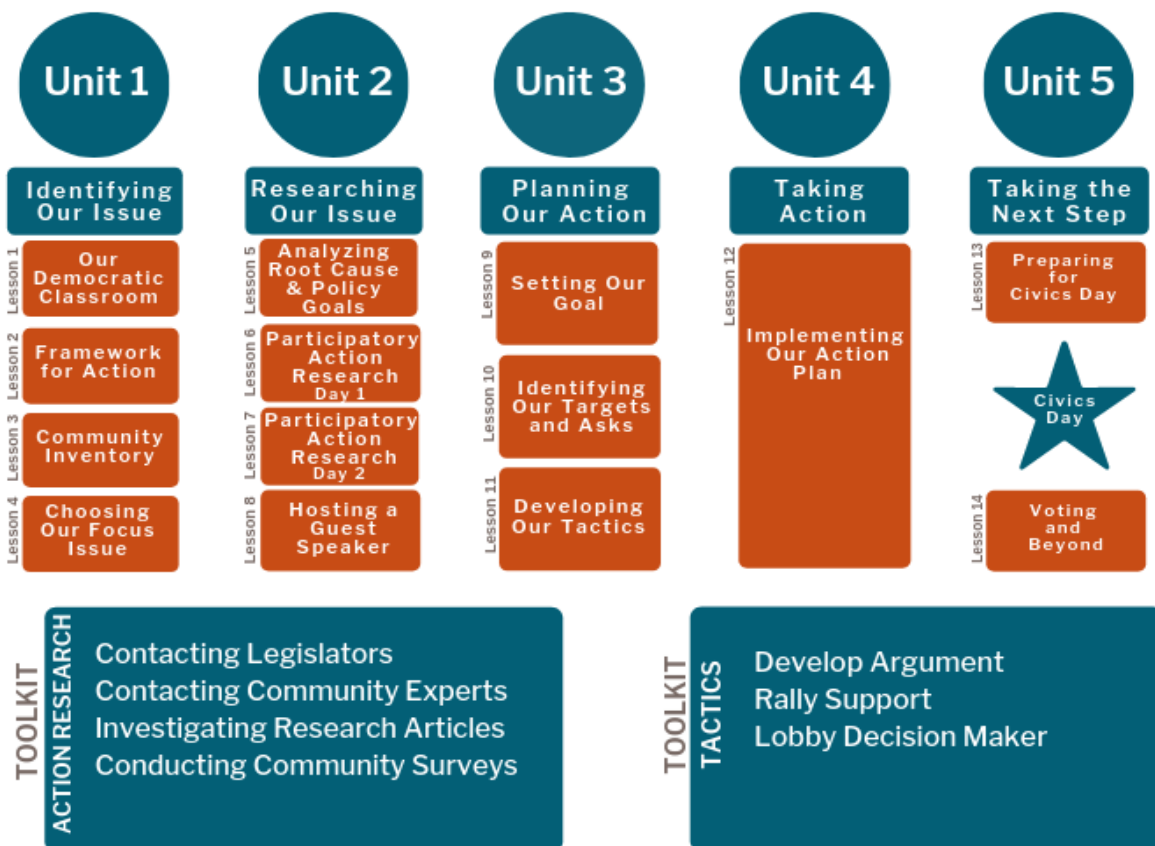
Key Takeaways

- The curriculum framework, including the 5-unit programming structure and content, represents a critical element that can build on the 2020/2021 CAP and aligns well with the goals of the playbook.

- Civics Day is a chance for students to explore ways to continue their civic engagement after the program ends.

- In the past, Civics Day included keynote speeches from governors, mayors, members of Congress, and other politicians.

- Although elements can be learned from the Civic Day model, it does not fit the overall Youth Leadership Development (YLD) program design.

- Demonstrating the impact of the curriculum on youth by publishing survey results on their website.

- At the culmination of each project, teams should present back to their YLD and local communities.

Sources

- https://generationcitizen.org/our-programs/our-curriculum/

---

[16] https://generationcitizen.org/our-programs/our-curriculum/

Ryerson University Democratic Engagement Exchange

Overview

The Exchanges two flagship events, Democracy Talks and Vote Popup, provides a platform for successful community-based initiatives for youth over eight years old.

- **Democracy Talks:** Designed to strengthen participants' political voice by motivating involvement, increasing knowledge, and enhancing the skills required to be involved in Canada's democracy.

- **Vote Popup:** A unique voter simulation focused on demystifying the voting process, connecting people's concerns and hopes to an election, and building a culture of engagement.

Programming Structure

Democracy Talks

The program focuses on video guides that begin the conversation about political leadership and active citizenship. These activities help youth develop a meaningful full connection to democracy and sparks that introduce ideas related to political participation as part of other activities. These activities include

- **Play Dough's Republic:** Participants' gain interest in Canadian politics and democracy

- **Where is Your Voice Loudest?:** Participants understand how to use their voice to address issues

- **Rank the Power:** Participants explore how political power is distributed in our democracy

- **Political Activism:** Participants practice different ways of getting involved in politics (acting out)

- **Political Spectrum:** Participants learn about and consider their positions on political issues

- **Wants and Needs Spaceship:** Participants learn how our needs are connected to our rights

Vote Popup

During elections, The Exchange creates a toolkit for community organizations and civic leaders and offers training for staff and volunteers interested in hosting a Vote Popup in their community. Organizing a vote popup involves preparing a location, time, and place, running the activity, and then sharing vote results.

Key Takeaways

- "Democracy Talks" have been used by over 175 community-based organizations in 25 communities across Canada and have been incorporated into youth, language, and newcomer programs. –

- "Democracy talks" speaks to Canadian democratic systems, citizenship, and civic change.

- Vote PopUp is a practical toolkit that over 500 people have downloaded in over 100 towns and cities across Canada. Since July 2015, over 300 community groups held a Vote PopUp, attended a training session, or accessed the kit.

- Significant outputs from previous Vote PopUp rounds (mock vote) identified the top ten local community issues.

Sources

- Democratic Engagement Exchange: https://www.engagedemocracy.ca/

Northwestern University - Leadership and Service-Learning Programs

Overview

Northwestern University developed leadership and service-learning programs under the umbrella of Civic Education Project (CEP). CEP targets students in grades 7-12 and complements classroom-based academic learning with service-learning principles. CEP targets communities in Chicago, Illinois, and helps youth develop leadership skills around civic engagement in a community-based setting. This study focuses on CivicHybrid courses.

Programming Structure

CivicHybrid course structure includes an engaging nine-week online curriculum and a four-day service-learning weekend to apply knowledge and serve others. Students have flexibility in completing their course work, and instructors provide weekly pacing guides to help students stay on track with their course material. Students are engaged in academically stimulating and engaging activities designed to develop higher-level thinking skills.

CivicHybrid curriculum includes the following six components:

- **Academic Seminars and Online Course Work**: Students examine issues through a critical lens and absorb and engage in academic research and topic-focused presentations by instructors. Students are also encouraged to have a dialogue with peers to identify diverse viewpoints and consider new ideas.

- **Meetings with Community Partners**: Students learn from inspiring partners about their work, career path, and ideas about innovative approaches for meaningful change.

- **Reflection:** Students process course material through guided questions and activities that broaden their perspectives and build critical thinking skills.

- **Service Projects**: Students partner with a local non-profit or community organization and get an orientation to their mission and support their cause with hands-on projects or tasks while earning service hours.

- **Speakers**: Students meet with government, business, and not-for-profit leaders at the top of their fields to hear their experiences and path to making change.

- **Team-building**: Students build communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills with classmates through instructor-led activities.

CivicHybrid courses offer live online class sessions every other week during the course. Instructors make every effort to schedule real-time class sessions around students' busy schedules, and class sessions are

recorded for later viewing if a student can't attend. All students receive a detailed evaluation after completion of the program. The assessment provides feedback on the student's achievements during the course and outlines areas for further growth. Student evaluations include certification of service hours earned.

Key Takeaways

- CivicHybrid courses emphasize students' ability to manage their time and adjust their efforts accordingly to ensure success in the program.

- CivicHybrid emphasizes the built-in peer dialogues and learning opportunities.

- CivicHybrid courses offer a model of engaging students in a virtual learning model and combining it with in-person learning experiences.

- Course instructors provide weekly pacing guides to help students stay on track with their course materials.

Sources

- https://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/service-learning-and-leadership

Learn and Service America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse – Prepared by the Search Institute

Overview

The program focuses on how to best engage with community-based organizations in service-learning practices and activities. The guide emphasizes starting and sustaining high-quality programs that advance the life skills of various participants such as underprivileged youth, families, faith-based groups, and healthcare organizations.

Programming Structure

- The guide includes a framework and course structure emphasizing six phases as follows:

- **Investigate phase**: Explores community priorities and teaches youth research and analysis skills.

- **Prepare phase:** This phase ensures that project goals, objectives, and processes for evaluation are well-established before the project advances to the next step.

- **Act phase**: During this phase, students collect data, artifacts, pictures, and other documentation for reflection, demonstration, celebration, and evaluation.

- **Reflect phase** focuses on integrating learning from the service experience. This phase encourages youth to see the experience in a broader context of civic, policy, and community life. This phase cultivates more robust thinking and reasoning processes.

- **Demonstrate and Celebrate phases**: Participants use information, artifacts, stories, and data from the project as the basis for demonstration and celebration and share the successes with community leaders, the media, and other stakeholders.

- **Sustain phase**: This phase encourages youth to find opportunities to pursue their passions and interests through individualized projects or other networks, particularly if they are graduating from this program.

Key Takeaways

- The guide presents a framework for launching, planning, implementing, and sustaining service-learning efforts in a community-based setting.

- The program offers participants resources to ensure the successful completion of each phase. This program includes an overview of the stage, explaining each step of what it is and why it matters, how to execute each phase, including practical tips and guidelines based on experiences of many practitioners in community-based organizations, a comprehensive list of online resources, and real-life examples.

- Each phase offers a check-up list to encourage evaluation against eight standards, including meaningful service, link to the curriculum, reflection, diversity, youth voice, partnerships, progress monitoring, duration, and intensity. This check-up list helps guide participants towards the completion of each phase.

Sources

- https://www.searchinstitute.org/downloadable/8543_CBO_Toolkit_2009.pdf

Apathy is Boring: RISE

Overview

Apathy is Boring helps youth become active and engaged in their communities via a signature initiative called "RISE," taking place in 7 cities across Canada. RISE is designed for young people aged 18-30 with little or no previous experience in volunteering. RISE typically runs two cohorts every year. As a RISE Ambassador, participants develop skills, learn about community engagement and work with their peers to build something meaningful together over 22 weeks.

Programming Structure

Apathy is Boring's standard approach to support and educate youth typically follows three steps: Gather Knowledge, Experiment & Innovate and Maximize Impact.

- **Gather Knowledge:** This step identifies the scope of the program and the activity that needs to be completed.

- **Experiment & Innovate:** This Step gathers data for each program and activity, identifies key performance indicators and impacts.
- **Maximize Impact:** This Step includes an "open source" approach for sharing knowledge and successful strategies with various youth engagement stakeholders and forging partnerships with organizations.

Youth ambassadors are expected to commit to six hours a week of volunteering: three hours at an in-person hub night and three hours online. There is also a mandatory all-expenses-paid weekend retreat at the beginning of each cohort. Ambassadors from across Canada come together to meet each other, build skills and get inspiration for their projects. The next cohort of the "RISE" initiative will focus on advancing practical solutions for Resilient Cities to help communities and cities across Canada to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Takeaways

- Students have clear expectations in terms of their required time commitment to the RISE project.
- RISE project offers a balance of in-person and virtual learning opportunities for students both as part of the team and individually.
- The RISE project focuses on highly relevant topics to ensure Canadian communities can build and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sources

- https://www.apathyisboring.com/

YMCA World Youth-Led Solutions Initiative

Overview

The YMCA World Youth-Led Solutions Initiative (YLSI) was launched to empower young people aged 15 to 35 years old to put resources – knowledge, network, and funding – to contribute towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative focuses on three key challenges facing youth today: the climate crisis, the jobs crisis, and a growing mental health crisis. YMCA believes that these challenges are inter-connected with other SDGs and that youth has many of the skills and answers to bring their local solutions to the challenges their communities face.

Programming Structure

- Through a series of interactive global virtual Summits and periods of intense community, implementation youth learn, share, and take action to drive change in their communities and help the world achieve the SDGs.
- The initiative helps empower young leaders to create local solutions to the challenges their communities are facing by assisting them in the following three areas:
  - Accessing seed funding to help turn their solutions into a reality

- Connecting with peers around the world and receiving support from a leadership coach to help their solution team develop the project

- Gaining access to industry experts, panelists, and speakers

Typically, young leaders follow a 4-step process:

- **Attend a Summit:** A Summit inspires and shares content about a critical global issue, during which attendees have a chance to expand their knowledge, build networks, explore innovative new solutions and enrich and scale existing ideas.

- **Design:** After the Summit, young leaders join a growing community of people worldwide who are developing solutions. They form a Solution Team of 5-10 people and meet with a local YMCA and support coaches (virtually or in-person). The process continues with the design of new or the scaling up of existing solutions. For example, one of the recent initiatives by the YMCA of Greater Long Beach in the US sought to reduce food waste and increase food security. The solution team came up with a way to reduce waste and combat hunger by distributing leftover food that grocery stores would otherwise have wasted.

- **Pitching:** Solution Teams refine their pitch with support from global experts and partners to initiate and scale their solutions and ultimately submit a proposal for seed funding.

- **Implementation:** With support from a local YMCA, teams that have been awarded funding for their solutions start undertaking to initiate or scale their actions.

Key Takeaways

- The Summits typically attract a diverse audience, including youth, educators, activists, business leaders, policymakers, indigenous communities, philanthropists, artists, influencers, NGO staff, volunteers, and community members. Youth has access to all of these influencers from a wide range of sectors and can build their networks globally.

- This initiative connects to UN SDGs that set expectations and critical metrics around critical issues around the world.

- The Youth-Led Solutions initiatives guiding principles are underpinned by the fact that young people need to be leading the change.

- Many youth-led solutions aim to partner with the YMCA at local and global levels, government, the private sector, or other community organizations and receive funding for their work.

- Each Solution Team is encouraged to identify a leadership coach (either independently or with support from their local YMCA or Area Alliance of YMCAs) to assist them in working towards their goals. They also use a Solutions Team support package to guide the development of their solution.

- Opportunities exist to move forward CAP work and capture promising practice learnings from CAP into local YMCA Canada since the YMCA World Youth-Led Solutions Initiative already exists.

Sources

- https://www.youthsolutions.ymca.int/about

APPENDIX C:
CAP TOOLKIT - A
SERVICE LEARNING
GUIDE

YMCA CIVIC ACTION PROJECT (CAP) PLAYBOOK

Appendix C: CAP Toolkit - A Service Learning Guide

The following toolkit has been created for use by youth during modules 5 and 6. Thirteen research tools were identified to help youth with their Civic Action Project (CAP). These tools fall under four main areas:

1. Learning About the Importance of Democracy
2. Understanding Civic Action and its Impact on the Community
3. Developing Project Management Skills
4. Importance of Teamwork
5. Building Research Skills
6. Persuading Others
7. Communicating with Your Audience
8. Building Support for your Project by Connecting with the Community

Learning About the Importance of Democracy

Tool 1: What is Democracy and Why is it Important?

What is it?

The ancient Greeks were the first to create a democracy. The word "democracy" comes from two Greek words that mean people (demos) and rule (kratos). Democracy is the idea that the citizens of a country should take an active role in the government of their country and manage it directly or through elected representatives. In addition, it supports the idea that the people can replace their government through peaceful transfers of power rather than violent uprising or revolution. Thus, a crucial part of democracy is that the people have a voice.

What to watch out for?

Canada is a representative democracy. This type of democracy gives each Canadian citizen the right to elect representatives at each level of government (federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal). These representatives create and change laws that govern the people rather than vote directly on the laws themselves.

- **Federal representation**: There are 338 ridings in Canada. Every riding has one Member of Parliament (MP), and voting is voluntary. The Prime Minister heads the federal government based in Ottawa. Federal responsibilities include national defense, foreign affairs, employment insurance, banking, federal taxes, the post office, copyright law, criminal law, railways, pipelines, and aboriginal lands and rights.

- **Provincial/Ontario representation:** There are 124 Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) in Ontario. They are elected to represent the concerns of their constituents regarding provincial responsibilities at the Legislature and in their ridings. A Premier leads each province and territory. The provincial and territorial governments have the power to change their laws and manage their

public lands. Provincial responsibilities include education, health care, road regulations, provincial taxes, prisons, marriage, property and civil rights, and age of majority.

- **Municipal/City representation:** The Toronto region includes 25 lower-tier municipalities such as Oshawa, Mississauga, Markham, Brampton, and Toronto. Each city has a local Council with residents in that municipality able to select their preferred representative for their ward. The City of Toronto Council is among the largest municipalities in the Toronto region and includes 26 members. Municipal governments run cities, towns, or districts (municipalities). They are in charge of things, such as parks, parking, libraries, city roads, and sidewalks, local police, local land use, fire protection, public transportation, and community water systems, building permits and zoning, city parks, collection of garbage and recycling, water and sewer services and licensing and control of pets.

Understanding Civic Action and its Impact on the Community

Tool 2: What is Civic Action?

What is it?

Civic engagement involves "working to make a difference in the civic life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference." Based on input from Youth Leadership Development (YLD) advisors, civic action is referred to community involvement, making an impact on an important issue, call to action, positive change, and making a difference. CAP is an extension of ''Vote Pop-Up'' learnings, including understanding key community issues and their root causes. Keep the big picture in mind that communities are a place where everyone shines with high youth engagement, low youth unemployment, youth homelessness and mental health issues well under control, and other socio-economic factors concerning youth in check.

For more insights, see:
Vote Pop Up
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/vote_popup_organizer_guide.pdf

Ryerson Democracy Talks
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/democracy_talks_2018_booklet.pdf

In selecting which civic action issue to work on as part of CAP, it's essential to answer the following questions: what is your issue; why is this issue important to your group; what changes do you want to see; how could things be better; what action will you take; what roles will each group member play in addressing this issue.

What to watch out for?

The top ten civic issues have been developed based on youth learnings and discussions with community members from several previous federal, provincial, and municipal "Vote Pop-Up" rounds since 2015. This list includes the following issues:

- **Youth unemployment:** Vibrant communities will exist if employment opportunities exist for everyone in the community and youth has been positively deployed and engaged to live, work and play.

- **Systemic racism:** All levels of government acknowledged that racism exists at a systemic level in Canada. Canada's federal Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022 recognized the need for the Government

of Canada to combat racism and discrimination that is anti-Indigenous, Islamophobic, antisemitic, anti-Black, or homophobic. The strategy will help fund community-based projects that address barriers to employment, social participation, and justice for Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and religious minority communities. At the local level, the City of Toronto developed its anti-racism initiative. It established Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit to manage the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. Although last year the City of Toronto committed $1.2 million in cultural and economic investments to confront anti-Black racism, significant investment opportunities exist to address the systemic economic, social and cultural exclusion facing Black communities in Toronto.

- **Inadequate public transportation:** The Toronto region is known for its traffic congestion due to insufficient public transportation options. For example, Scarborough is an area in Toronto known for a high concentration of transit deserts that are underserved by public transportation. In these areas, rapid transit is non-existent, and residents must rely on bus service often late.

- **Youth homelessness:** Statistics show that 20% of Canada's total homeless population is comprised of youth. This fact means that to up to 40,000 homeless youth in any given year. Youth is also one of the fastest-growing segments of homelessness in the country. A homeless youth is anyone between the ages of 13-24. [17]

- **Community safety:** is the use of skills, knowledge, and techniques to prevent and reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime and develop safer communities to live, work and visit. [18] For example, the City of Toronto is currently working on a Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Plan that aims to shift from a focus on emergency response to a prevention culture. The plan will prioritize four challenge areas: community trauma, community violence, harm and victimization, and community justice to help bring about a safer Toronto.

- **Mental health:** Mental Health is like physical health. Our state varies throughout our life. It is critical to create awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health. It is also essential to increase self-care, improve resiliency, build a community agency support network, improve access services for yourself, or help others access service.

- **Physical health:** Physical health represents one dimension of total well-being. The term refers to the state of your physical body and how well it's operating. [19] Mental and physical health is fundamentally linked. According to World Health Organization, there is no health without mental health.

- **Food insecurity:** Food insecurity refers to inadequate or insecure access to food due to lack of money. It affects almost 1 in 5 Toronto households accounting for 18.5 % and is a serious public health issue because it is closely linked to adverse health outcomes. [20]

---

[17] https://www.fredvictor.org/2020/01/21/young-and-homeless-facts-about-homeless-youth-in-canada/

[18] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/community-safety-1e2.pdf

[19] https://www.projectschoolwellness.com/wellness-basics-what-is-physical-health/#:~:text=Physical%20health%20represents%20one%20dimension,and%20how%20well%20it's%20operating

[20] https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/nutrition-food-basket/#:~:text=Food%20insecurity%20refers%20to%20the,linked%20to%20negative%20health%20outcomes.

- **Climate change / environmental issues:** "Climate change" is a change in the average conditions — such as temperature and rainfall — in a region over a long period. To avoid the worse impacts of heating — including more severe and frequent wildfires, droughts, floods, and species extinction — we must keep the global average temperature from rising more than 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. [21] According to one study [22], Toronto is projected to experience the fourth largest climate shift by 2050 if nothing is done to curb global carbon emissions. Toronto's average temperature is expected to rise 3 C compared to that metric from 1970 to 2000.

- **Inadequate education:** A lack of education is a state where people have a below-average level of common knowledge about basic things that they would urgently need in their daily life. For instance, this could include basic knowledge in math, writing, spelling, etc. Several low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto experience high educational inequality as there is a high correlation between household income and education in Toronto.

Developing Project Management Skills

Tool 3: What is Project Management?

What is it?

Project management is the process of leading the work of a team to achieve goals (i.e., an impact-full civic action) and meet success criteria (i.e., CAP Rubric) at a specified time (i.e., checkpoints and due dates). The primary objective of project management is to achieve all of the project goals within the given constraints (i.e., time, resources, scope, etc.). Project Management skills can help your team to save time and resources; improve internal communication, and make better decisions, among other elements.

The program logic model is a useful technique to apply project management principles to visualize what success looks like. The program logic model is defined as a picture of how your organization does its work – the theory and assumptions underlying the program. A program logic model links outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program. [23]

What to watch out for?

- **Save Time and Resources:** With the proper planning, CAP teams can ensure that an impactful project is delivered on time and with limited monetary resources. Using project management methods, teams can map the remainder of the CAP journey and create internal deadlines that lead

---

[21] https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/what-is-climate-change/?gclid=CjwKCAjwtJ2FBhAuEiwAIKu19h5nK93-_E_J7u4WSnyxTUS3PeEJijw-rX81DbWlT10sL2vZ3rxmPhoCqecQAvD_BwE

[22] https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/climate-change-toronto-cities_ca_5e2b4774c5b6779e9c326896#:~:text=Out%20of%2085%20major%20cities,by%20Nestpick%2C%20based%20in%20Berlin.&text=Toronto's%20average%20temperature%20is%20expected,that%20metric%201970%20to%202000.

[23] https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/LogicModel.pdf

to virtual checkpoints and the final CAP presentations. Project management allows teams to more efficiently allocate their time, helping to avoid delays and overcome hurdles.

- **Improve Internal Communications:** Working together can be challenging. With an established project management process, teams can reduce the complexity of collaboration, increase transparency, and ensure accountability, even when you're working in a virtual environment.

- **Make Better Decisions:** With more precise records of how the project is progressing, your team gets a deeper understanding of where your time and efforts are being spent, what you need to prioritize and when, and if you're at risk of going off track. Good project management means that you can forecast issues before they become issues, prevent bottlenecks, and make smarter decisions.

- **A Program Logic Model:** youth should be encouraged to use this model to visualize what success looks like and have a high-level view of the project.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
Planning – Implementation – Evaluation

Program Action - Logic Model
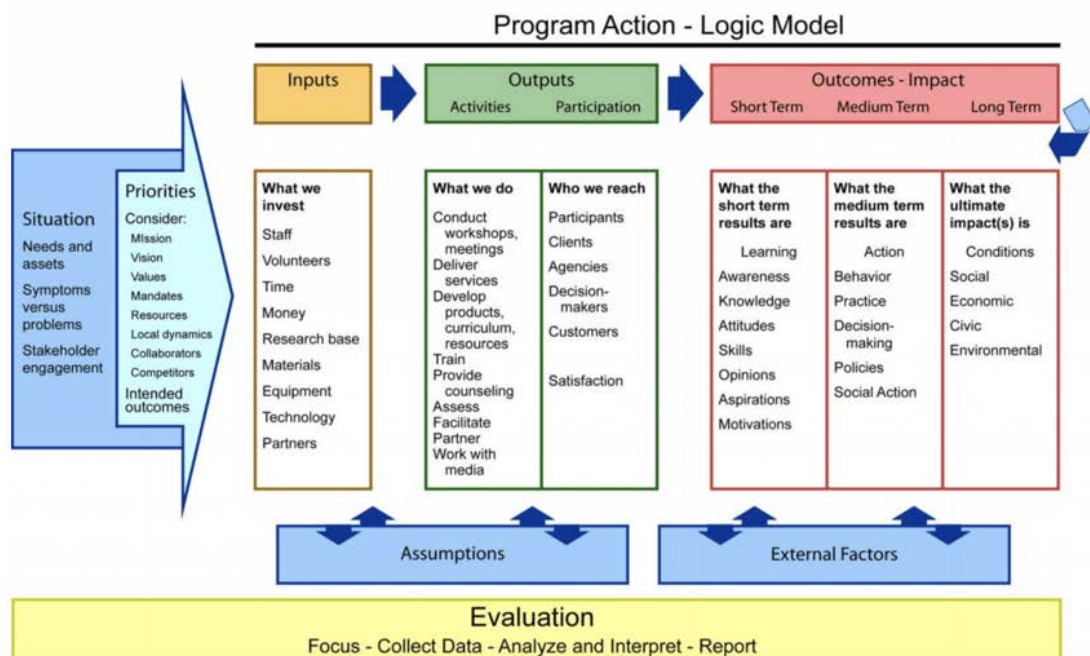
Importance of Teamwork

Tool 4: Why is teamwork important?

What is it?

Teamwork skills are the qualities and abilities that allow you to work well with others during conversations, projects, meetings, or other collaborations. Having teamwork skills is dependent on your ability to communicate well, actively listen and be responsible and honest. Many other additional soft skills can help you be an exceptional team member. As a result of teamwork, students develop better reasoning skills and influence each other informally. They also produce better leadership skills, exhibit more willingness to take on different tasks, and persist in executing these tasks. Moreover, employers identify teamwork and leadership as core career competencies.

> For more insights, see:
> The University of Minnesota, Centre for Educational Innovation
>
> https://cei.umn.edu/faculty-guide/supporting-students

What to watch out for?

- As a result of teamwork as part of CAP, youth will typically develop the following set of skillsets:

- **Responsibility and Accountability:** Through team projects like CAP, you will learn to follow through on commitments to and expectations of team members.

- **Independence and Interdependence:** A well-designed CAP will allow you to work both individually as well as as part of an inter-dependent team.

- **Goal Orientation:** By providing project milestones and scaffolding the project steps, you learn how to plan, stay motivated, and accomplish a meaningful goal.

- **Self-Awareness:** Team projects can help you identify and build upon your strengths.

- **Resilience:** When the team hits a bump on the road while working on their project, it is important to encourage each other to keep working towards the goal, taking risks, and not being afraid to fail.

- **Appreciation of Differences:** Each team member brings his/her unique working style, background, and interests to the team. CAP provides you with the setting to learn how to work effectively with others who have different approaches.

- **Communication:** Each team member is encouraged to communicate with another team member using online engagement platforms.

Building Research Skills

Tool 5: Why is building research skills Important for your Project?

What is it?

If a problem is serious, people may already be working on it. Imagine that your concern is traffic congestion in your community. For example, traffic congestion in Toronto costs commuters and businesses $6 billion in lost productivity every year. You may want to look at four significant domains— government, business, the media, and not-for-profits—to see what they are already doing about it.

What to watch out for?

If you find that other people are already working on the problem, issue, or policy you chose, then you can use them as resources to answer questions. Think about government, business, media, and not-for-profits in your community. The more you learn about the problem, issue, or policy you are working on, the more specific your questions will become, and you will want to contact people who have knowledge and expertise. Typically, a researcher follows the following process [24]:

> For more insights, see:
> Vote Pop Up
> https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/vote_popup_organizer_guide.pdf
>
> Ryerson Democracy Talks
> https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/arts/documents/democracy_talks_2018_booklet.pdf

- **Choose a civic issue of interest**: this can either be from the list mentioned earlier [25] or a new civic issue and then research its cause and effect.

- **Conduct a preliminary search for information:** Complete preliminary research to determine whether there is enough information available and set the research context.

- **Locate Information:** After confirming the civic issue, focus on locating information on your topic from credible sources (see Toolkits 2 and 3 about how to conduct an Internet search and about credible sources).

- **Make notes:** this is a crucial way to keep track of information obtained from various sources.

- **Write Out the Causes and Effects:** Begin by organizing the information that has been collected. The next step is the rough draft to get your ideas on paper in an unfinished fashion. This step will help teams organize thoughts and determine the form the statement will take. After this, teams revise the draft as many times as necessary to create a final product to present to everyone.

---

[24] North Hennepin Community College - https://www.nhcc.edu/student-resources/library/doinglibraryresearch/basic-steps-in-the-research-process.

[25] Ten common civic issues from Ryerson University Democratic Engagement Exchange's Vote Pop-up Toolkit.

Tool 6: How to Conduct Internet Search?

What is it?

The Internet may have answers to many of your basic questions about the issue, problem, or policy you are working on. The trick is finding reliable solutions. As you search for answers to your general inquiries, note the people, departments, etc., to contact as your questions become more specific. Use keywords on search engines. If you are searching about traffic congestion in the Toronto region, use "traffic" as a keyword. If you get too many results, try adding more keywords one at a time (e.g., "congestion," "causes of," "effects," "solutions"). You can even add your location, e.g., "Toronto region," as a keyword. Other keywords can also include: "inadequate public transit," "pedestrian and cyclist safety."

What to watch out for?

The Internet is filled with great information, but also with junk. You have to sort the good from the bad. As you conduct your search, watch out for:

- **Who sponsors the website?** The most reliable sites are from the government, the mainstream media, colleges, and universities.

- **Who created the web page? What are their qualifications? Is the web page credible?** Examples of non-credible resources include Wikipedia.

- **Does the site contain any apparent errors**—names, dates, historical facts?

- **Does the site advocate a particular position?** Try to detect bias. If a controversial issue is presented, does the site provide other points of view or counterarguments?

- **Does the site have links to other sites? What are their nature and quality? Do the links advocate the same view presented on the site?**

- **Is the information accurate?** Use at least two additional sources (books, periodicals, or other websites).

Tool 7: How to Identify Credible Sources for Your Project

What is it?

As you answer your research questions and address your issue, you should keep track of your sources. Before you complete CAP, you will be asked to share the best sources you came across and describe why these sources helped you. Watch for sources that gave you a different perspective on the issue, policy, or civic actions you planned. Those are usually valuable sources. You will be asked to share your top five sources. These sources need to be from at least two of the categories below.

What to watch out for?

14. **Interviews:** Face-to-face or phone interviews.

15. **Correspondence:** Letters and emails.

16. **Articles:** Newspaper, magazine, and website articles.

17. **Editorial:** Blogs, editorials in newspapers, letters to the editor.

18. **Documents:** Policies, laws, photographs, and other documents that were not attached to an article or editorial.

19. **Video:** Videos include newscasts, videos housed on a website, movies, etc.

20. Books.

21. **Surveys:** Surveys you and your team conducted.

Persuading Others

Tool 8: Reasoning, Emotional Appeals, and Gaining People's Trust

What is it?

For your project, there are many things you might want people to do. How can you persuade people to do them? The Greek philosopher Aristotle laid down the three basic methods of persuasion more than 2,000 years ago: reasoning (what Aristotle called logos), emotional appeals (pathos), and gaining people's trust (ethos).

What to watch out for?

Reasoning (logos):

All your persuasive efforts rest on it. You have good reasons for what you're doing. By sharing these reasons, you may persuade others to support you.

- Present evidence: facts, statistics, expert opinions, survey results.

- Cite the source of your information. Make your facts understandable.

- Tailor your arguments for your audience.

- State your conclusion in a straightforward sentence.

- Make sure your reasons support your conclusion.

- You should be able to say, "I want you to do X for the following reasons: A, B, and C."

Emotional appeals (pathos):

People make important decisions—whom to marry, where to live, and what kind of car to buy—based on emotions or feelings. You probably have strong feelings about your project. If you share them in the right way, you may persuade others.

- Link your proposal to basic human needs (food, shelter, security, belonging, esteem, power, shared beliefs, self-fulfillment, etc.).

- Tie your proposal to self-interest. Show people how it benefits both them and the community.

- Entice them: Show how interesting it is.

- Be complimentary. Find something you like or that impresses you and comment on it.

Gaining People's trust (ethos):

If people don't trust you, it doesn't matter how well-argued or emotion-rousing your message is. They just won't buy it. If you're going to persuade people, you have to gain their trust.

- Listen to what people have to say.

- Be fair. Tell the truth without exaggerating. Be able to state your opponent's positions fairly.

- Know what you're talking about. Study up as best you can. If you don't know something, don't try to fake it.

- Be friendly. You are not going to persuade anyone who dislikes you.

Communicating with Your Audience

Tool 9: Communicating Via Website

What is it?

Creating a website is one way to educate your audience about your issue. The benefit of creating a website is that it's accessible to anyone who can get to the Internet.

What to watch out for?

- **Protect your privacy:** always consult an adult and review the privacy policy before creating a page and making it live.

- **Decide how you want to use the website**: Is the website a resource for those interested in learning more about the issue? Do you want to include links to other pages, Facebook, Twitter, etc.? What about other electronic publications and sites that help your cause? Are there ways to have them on your new website?

- **Build a constituency for your issue with friends and others**: Once you have your page created, how do you let others know about it? How do you draw traffic to your page? Are there ways to make interactions on your website? Keep these questions in mind as you move forward.

- **Need help creating a website?** Below are links to help you make your website:

  - 4 Creating a Website: http://www.4creatingawebsite.com

  - Google: www.sites.google.com

  - Weebly: http://www.weebly.com

  - Webs: http://www.webs.com

Tool 10: Communicating Via Social Media

What is it?

A hundred years ago, the "media" meant the print media—newspapers and magazines. Then along came the broadcast media—radio and television. With the rise of the Internet, traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television are now online and have become more and more interactive. New media have also emerged on the Internet. Among them are blogs, micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter), podcasts, Internet forums, email, video-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), and social networking sites (e.g., Slack, Discord).

What to watch out for?

- **Tumblr, Blogger, and WordPress:** Blogs can give you freedom in controlling the content and visibility of your civic action project. Creating a blog is easy, and several complimentary services enable you to do so, including Tumblr, Blogger, and WordPress. Blogs give you a chance to be creative in presenting your project. Remember, creating the blog itself is a civic action.
- **Twitter:** There are over 300 million Twitter users worldwide. Microblogging means users share small bits of information quickly and easily with as few or as many people as they want. A post on Twitter is called a "tweet," and it is limited to 140 characters. Maintaining a Twitter page about your civic action project is itself a civic action.
- **Facebook:** Across the globe, more than a billion people use Facebook. Using Facebook, you are using something familiar to millions of people to raise awareness and share your civic actions. Creating a group page for your project is a civic action, and it's free.

Building Support for your Project by Connecting with the Community

Tool 11: Opinion Polls and Surveys

What is it?

An opinion poll can tell you how people feel about the community, its problems, and particular policies. Surveys are helpful at all stages of citizen action.

What to watch out for?

- **Creating a Survey:** Keep the survey short and simple. Make sure your questions are easy to understand. Keep your survey concise because a shorter survey allows you to reach more people in a shorter time. Create questions that do not force particular answers. They must be unbiased; otherwise, your survey results will be open to criticism.
- **Survey Questions:** Surveys are made up of two types of questions: closed-choice and open-ended. Make most of your questions closed choice. Avoid too many open-ended questions

because it is more difficult to score the surveys when people answer in their own words. Use open-ended questions to ask responders to clarify their answers.

- **Selecting the Sample:** You don't have to poll everyone in the community. Most professional polls try to get a random sample of respondents. This step means that every person in the population had the same chance of taking the survey. If the goal of your survey is to conduct a representative scientific study for a specific age group (11 to 18 years old), you will use the following approach:
    - A general population survey would involve using a telephone survey with random digit dialing utilizing a landline and cell sample combination.
    - The survey would screen the household for respondents between the ages of 11 and 18, understanding that parental permission will need to be obtained for those under 18.
    - However, an online panel could provide a targeted sample for these age groups if a convenience sample is preferred. This approach would be a far less costly option.
    - Sample size would be determined according to the analysis and objective of the study. Although you would need more information to help choose a sample size, somewhere between 200-500 responses should be sufficient.

- **Conducting the Survey:**
    - Practice a brief introduction.
    - Don't be too persistent.
    - Tell respondents the survey is anonymous.
    - Be organized. Use a clipboard to hold the surveys and bring extra pens or pencils.
    - Be polite. Ask for clarification if the response is not clear.
    - Check each survey. Make sure all the information is complete.

- **Calculating the Results of Your Survey:**
    - Count the number of completed surveys.
    - Tabulate the survey results on one of your blank survey forms. Be able to explain how your sample was chosen. People will want to know this.
    - Include undecided respondents. Dropping the unsure responses can seriously distort the results.
    - Write down significant findings. You may also want to report on any unusual comparisons of demographic characteristics.
    - Decide how you will present your data. The choices related to the analysis of the data and presentation of the results are critical. For example, the "Key Findings" section should describe survey results and show data visually, as demonstrated in several examples below.

- Research was conducted via Computer-Assisted-Telephone-Interviewing (CATI) methodology of randomly selected residents in the City of Mississauga that were 18 years of age or older.

- A total of 1,115 interviews were conducted, each approximately 29 minutes in length.

- Ward coverage ranged between 99 and 106 people per Ward

- Surveys were conducted from March 28 to April 9 (evening and weekend calling only).

- The margin of error is +/-3.0%, 19 times out of 20.

- 2015 survey data was used as a point of comparison for all applicable survey questions.

Ward Coverage

Ward	Coverage
Ward 11	102
Ward 10	105
Ward 09	101
Ward 08	100
Ward 07	99
Ward 06	101
Ward 05	100
Ward 04	100
Ward 03	106
Ward 02	100
Ward 01	101

Respondents Living/Owning Property in RMOW for 5 Years or More

Year	Permanent Residents	Second Homeowners
2006	65%	95%
2007	66%	85%
2008	67%	85%
2009	65%	82%
2010	69%	85%
2012	76%	88%
2013	69%	87%
2014	66%	86%
2015	87%	80%
2017	67%	80%

■ Permanent Residents ■ Second Homeowners

Demographics			
	Permanent Residents (n=300)	Seasonal Residents (n=213)	Second Homeowners (n=200)
	%	%	%
EDUCATION			
Less than grade 12	3	1	1
Grad 12 graduation	24	17	7
Some technical or vocational school	3	5	1
Some college	7	10	5
Some university	9	9	10
Diploma or certificate from a trade	5	6	3
Diploma or certificate from college	11	11	4
Bachelor or undergraduate degree	21	35	36
Post-graduate degree	17	5	32
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Employed	72	89	24
Self Employed	17	7	22
Student	2	0	0
Retired	6	0	49
Unemployed: Not Working (not seeking work)	3	0	6
Unemployed: Not Working (seeking work)	1	5	0

Tool 12: Petition

What is it?

A petition is a formal document that people sign to show that they want a person or organization to do or change something. Think of it as a letter with a thousand signatures. A petition can help spread the word about your CAP issue and project. A petition can be a paper petition, or you can create an electronic petition.

What to watch out for?

- **Give your petition a clear, simple title.** Let me know what you want to achieve.
- **Include your group's name on the petition.**
- **Address the petition to an individual or group who can help you with your problem.**
- **Write your petition like a short letter.** Briefly describe the problem, your plan, and your reasons.
- **Provide numbered spaces for people to write their signature, address, and telephone number.** The numbers will help you count the signatures you have collected.
- **Make every page a separate petition.** This way, more than one person can gather signatures. It also makes it clear that people know what they were signing.
- **Get permission to set up a table at school, your local mall, or a community center.** If you have an electronic petition, post a link to it using social media. You can also send out a notice of your petition in an email.
- **Be able to tell people about the problem and your strategy in clear, simple language.** People will want to know more before they sign.
- **Let people make up their minds.** Deliver your message and let your ideas speak for themselves.
- **Get your friends to sign first.** People will feel better if a lot of other people have already signed your petition.

- **Set a deadline.** Energy for the drive will last a short time. Make the drive quick. You can then claim, "In only a week, we collected 500 signatures."
- **Make copies of the petition before you deliver it.** You may want to contact the people who signed it.
- **Do something special to deliver the petition.** Present it at a public meeting or invite the media or post the results on social media.

Tool 13: Panel Discussion

What is it?

Hosting a panel discussion on a community issue can alert and educate people about the problem. Invite experts from government, business, and not-for-profit organizations to take part in the debate.

What to watch out for?

- **Set a date, time, and place.** Make sure everyone attending has directions and parking instructions.
- **Identify the purpose of your panel discussion.** Determine what you want to accomplish by conducting the debate and what general questions will be answered.
- **Focus on one or two main topics.** This activity will help to direct the panel discussion in an organized way.
- **Invite experts to take part in the panel.** Choose individuals who are knowledgeable or who are involved in the focus of your discussion. Invite panellists at least two to three weeks before the debate to give them time to clear their schedule and to prepare.
- **Invite guests to attend the discussion.** You might create a flyer to publicize the event or post it on social media. Help educate and spread awareness about your issue. This activity may even build more support from your community.
- **Call and email the panellists to confirm the date days before the discussion.**
- **Create a short introduction for each panellist and questions to ask.** Questions should be open-ended and require more than yes or no answers. They should need the person to expand on the question. Ask about the problem, policies, resources, and possible actions.
- **Practice before the panellists arrive.** Consider holding a mock panel discussion to practice the format.
- **Thank the panellists.** Thank them before they leave, and mail or email personal thank you notes.

Tool 14: Letters to Officials

What is it?

Most people in power keep close track of letters and emails written by the public. It's one of the ways they gauge public opinion. Although a CEO or the head of a not-for-profit may not personally read your letter, they have assistants who read notes and tally opinions. Your letter or email will be read, and it might be answered.

What to watch out for?

- **Please tell me who you are.** Give your name, address, phone, and email address. The people who read your letter want to know who you are, why you care, and how to reach you.
- **Focus on one issue.** Don't try to fight crime, air pollution, and unemployment all in one letter.
- **Keep it short and straightforward.** State your ideas in the first paragraph. Get your entire message across in a page or less. People who read many letters don't have much time and will appreciate a short, clear letter.
- **Be polite.** You can disagree but never threaten or insult in a letter. Let your ideas do the talking.
- **Include supporting material.** If you have any newspaper articles, letters to the editor, websites, or social media helping your position, include them.

Tool 15: Fundraising

What is it?

Fundraising is a way to receive financial support for the issue you are working on. People tend to be generous if they believe their donations are going to a good cause.

What to watch out for?

- **Plan ahead:** What do you want to do? What are the tasks? Who do you need to ask for help? How much money do you need to raise? Look at your budget.
- **Create a budget:** Before you create a fundraising plan, create a budget. What do you plan to do with the money? Make a list of goods and services you need and separate things donated to you from the things you need to buy yourself.
- **Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of your fundraising options:** Which is easiest? Which takes the least amount of time? Which will raise the most money? Which will get your group publicity?
- **Stage your fundraising events:** Throw a dance or organize a concert. Hold a walkathon, yard sale, or a bottle and aluminum can drive. Sell t-shirts, bumper stickers, or buttons. Wash cars. Screen a movie. Raffle off prizes at any event. Fundraising events can be fun to put on, and they can spread the word about your CAP project.
- **Make the event as fun as possible:** Fundraising is hard work. Choose a project you will enjoy.

- **Who can help?** Begin with personal contacts. Do you know people who would be willing to make a private donation to your cause? Please create a list of individuals you learn and develop a plan to approach them.
- **Just ask**: If you don't bother to ask, you probably will not receive. Pass the hat at meetings so that everyone can contribute what they can afford. Put information on how to donate on flyers, websites, or social media.
- **Create a timeline:** Set out tasks and deadlines. Allow plenty of time. Nothing spoils the party as quickly as a hectic pace.
- **Figure out the costs:** It may take money to make money, but don't plan a monster event that will eat up all your earnings.
- **Use your fundraiser to introduce your project to new people:** Ensure that newcomers can find out what you are doing, why you are doing it, and where you are doing it.
- **Record the name, address, e-mail, and phone number of people who give you money:** You will want to thank them, and you may want to ask them for support later.
- **Be sure to follow the law on fundraising:** For fundraising at school, get permission. If you are fundraising in the community, ask the local government.

Tool 16: Phone Interviews

What is it?

Getting more insights on your CAP project can be done via phone interviews with key stakeholders you will impact through your project.

What to watch out for?

- **Make an appointment over the phone or via email:** Explain the purpose of the interview and how long the discussion will take. Set an exact date and time. Be sure you have the correct phone number.
- **Confirm the interview appointment:** A day before your interview, call or email the person to confirm the time. It is a good idea to send the questions ahead of time, so the person has a chance to prepare.
- **Rehearse the interview with a partner:** Go through the introduction, questions, thank you, and goodbye. Make sure there is a smooth transition between the different parts of your interview.
- **Prepare your questions in writing:** Conduct research to create your questions. Develop thoughtful questions that will cover everything you need to know.
- **Be on time:** Have your interview materials ready and in front of you at least 10 minutes before your phone interview. Find a quiet place without interruption to place the call.
- **Take Notes:** Have your questions in front of you with space to take brief notes. Remain attentive to the speaker. If you are recording the interview, you must first ask permission from your speaker. It is illegal to record an interview or conversation without informing your speaker that they are being recorded and getting their permission. Afterward, make complete notes.

- **Cover each point before moving on to the next:** If you do not understand a response to a question, ask for an explanation.
- **Ask for literature and names of other experts:** Be sure that one of your questions asks for more information, suggested reading material, or other experts who you should contact.
- **Say "Thank you":** Within three days of the interview, send a short note thanking the person for his or her time.

Tool 17: Face-to-Face Interviews

What is it?

Getting more insights on your CAP project can be done via face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders you will impact through your project.

What to watch out for?

- **Make an appointment over the phone or email:** Explain your visit's purpose and how long the interview will take. Set an exact date and time. Be sure you have the proper address, phone number, and directions to the site.
- **Confirm the interview appointment:** A day before your visit, call or email the person to confirm the time.
- **Be on time!** Add at least 15 minutes to your estimated travel time so you will not be late. If your interview is by phone, make sure you have a quiet place without interruption to place the call at the agreed time.
- **Look presentable:** People make judgments based on how they look and act. Dress appropriately and make sure you speak clearly.
- **Rehearse the interview with a partner:** Go through the introduction, questions, thank you, and goodbye.
- **Prepare your questions in writing:** Make sure the questions cover everything you need. Know something about what you're asking. Research if necessary.
- **Cover each point before going on to the next:** If you do not understand something, ask for an explanation.
- **Take notes:** Keep your notes brief so that you can remain attentive to the speaker. Afterward, make complete notes. If you want to tape-record the interview, ask for permission.
- **Ask for literature and names of other experts:** Be sure that one of your questions asks for more information, suggested reading material, or other experts whom you should contact.
- **Send a short thank-you note within a few days:** Within three days of the interview, send a quick note thanking the person for his or her time.

Tool 18: Organizing a Protest March or Rally

What is it?

Protests are an excellent way to raise awareness and demonstrate support for an issue. They can also help people feel they are part of a more significant movement and inspire them to action. The goal of protesting is to inspire change and influence your community. However, protests can be controversial, so you should consider the pros and cons before organizing them.

One recent example of a protest is on the topic of global climate change. The rally was started by a Swedish 17-year-old, Greta Thunberg, who was concerned about the inability of the Swedish government to meet the carbon emissions target agreed by world leaders in Paris in 2015. In August 2018, Greta held a sign that read "School Strike for Climate" and began regularly missing lessons to go on strike on Fridays, urging students worldwide to join her. Her protests went viral on social media, and as support for her cause grew, other strikes started around the world, spreading with the hashtag #FridaysForFuture. By December 2018, more than 20,000 students worldwide had joined her in countries including Canada, Australia, the UK, Belgium, the US, and Japan.

What to watch out for?

- **Protest rallies involve people making speeches about an issue.** You can invite someone to act as an emcee to lead protest chants, songs, and other community members who support your topic. Rallies should be creative to bring attention to your cause.

- **Use your protest as part of a more extensive campaign.** Depending on your issue, you should make sure that you have also used other methods to create change. If you are protesting a law or policy, let the people responsible know your complaint and give them a chance to respond. Since not everyone will be comfortable with protesting, make sure you are inclusive by encouraging other ways for people to show their support, such as making phone calls, writing letters, or organizing a boycott. Holding a protest where not enough people show up might not help your campaign as much as other tactics, so you should make sure you have enough people to participate.

- **Decide on a time and place.** Protests can happen anywhere, but you should arrange your demonstration whereas many people will see it as possible. Some options include the sidewalk in front of a business, government offices, your school, or a park. If you are protesting on private property without permission, the owner can ask you to leave and call the police to remove you if you do not. You should also pick a time when you can get the most people to attend the protest (like a weekend) unless you want to specifically target someone (such as a legislator) and pick a time when they will be around. Obtain a permit, if needed.

- **Publicize your protest.** Make brightly colored flyers and posters about the rally and put them up around town and your school. Hand out pamphlets. Publicize in your school newspaper and on social media. Make a press release and send it to local newspapers, websites and blogs, and other organizations that may support your message. Call local newspapers and radio stations and ask them to promote the protest. Be prepared to talk about your issue in case you are asked for an interview. Even if people do not come, they may be curious and research it.

- **Make a visual impact.** Make brightly colored posters and banners with catchy slogans and bring some extras. Have pamphlets to help spread your message information on what you are protesting

to interested parties. Put the name of your chapter or group with your contact details so that people who are new to the issue will know who to contact to find out more.

- **Be vocal.** Learn or create some chants so that everyone knows what you are protesting and why. For example: What do we want? Voting Rights! When do we want them? Now!

- **Document your event and have fun.** Even if you are protesting something serious, you can make your protest entertaining. Take pictures and post them on social media. Live stream or record your protest. Keep the people energized and make sure they are having fun.

Tool 19: Mentimeter and Kahoot!

What is it?

Getting more insights on your CAP project can be done via interactive engagement tools with critical stakeholders you can impact through your project. Two interactive tools can facilitate timely real-time feedback to inform your project.

Kahoot!: Kahoot! is a cloud-based quiz platform that is ideal for students and teachers. This game-based platform allows you to create new quizzes from scratch and help obtain feedback from key stakeholders you need to consult for the CAP project.

Mentimeter: The app focuses on online collaboration, allowing stakeholders to answer questions anonymously and for the user to aggregate responses to analyze the responses visually.

What to watch out for?

- Kahoot! It offers more than 40 million games already created that anyone could access, making it quick and easy to get started.

- Kahoot! is free and requires an account to be created to get started. You can use Kahoot! across most devices from any location with an internet connection.

- Kahoot! offers a question and then optional multiple-choice answers. This action can be accompanied by rich media such as images and videos to add more interactivity.

- Once you're signed up, you can get started making your quiz or using one of the many options already created. You can also build a new quiz but use the half a million question options available on Kahoot!

- Mentimeter app enables users to share knowledge and real-time feedback on mobile with presentations, polls, or brainstorming sessions in classes, meetings, gatherings, conferences, and other group activities. This tool is also free, and you can access this tool across most devices from any location with an internet connection.

Sources:

Toolkit 1: [Democracy (Ancient Greece) | National Geographic Society](#)

Toolkit 2: [www.Youth.gov](#)

[https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-black-racism-strategy](#)

Toolkit 3: [https://www.teamwork.com/project-management-guide/why-is-project-management-important](#)

Toolkit 4: [https://cei.umn.edu/faculty-guide/supporting-students](#)

Toolkit 5: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_Searchingcommunity.pdf](#)

Toolkit 6: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPtoolbox_internetsearch.pdf](#)

Toolkit 7: [https://crfcap.org/mod/page/view.php?id=301](#)

Toolkit 8: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_BasicsPersuasion.pdf](#)

Toolkit 9: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_Website.pdf](#)

Toolkit 10: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_SocialMedia.pdf](#)

Toolkit 11: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_Surveys.pdf](#)

Toolkit 12: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_Petitioning.pdf](#)

Toolkit 13: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_PanelDiscussion.pdf](#)

Toolkit 14: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_LetterstoOfficials.pdf](#)

Toolkit 15: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPToolkit_Fundraising.pdf](#)

Toolkit 16: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPtoolbox_phoneinterveiw.pdf](#)

Tool 17: [https://crfcap.org/images/pdf/CAPtoolbox_interviewing.pdf](#)

Toolkit 18: [https://www.youthrights.org/action/toolkit/organizing-a-protest/](#)