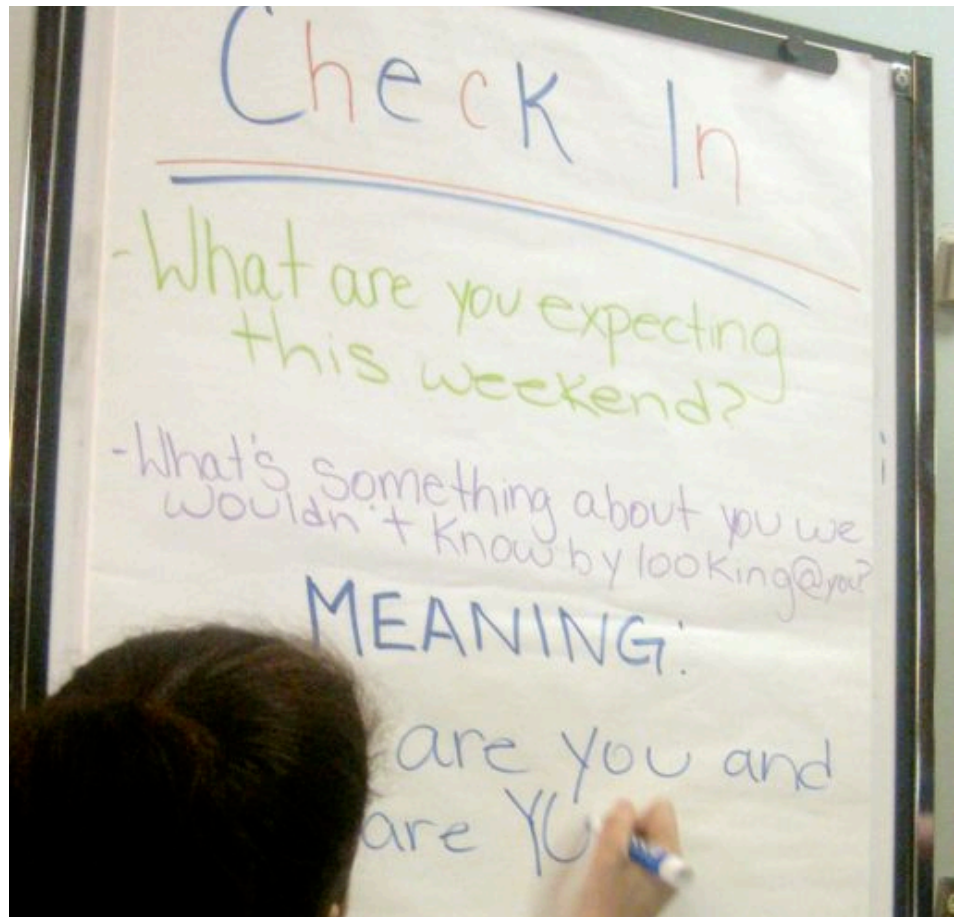


# Leaders of Today 3

November 27-29 2008  
Debert Hospitality Centre



## Youth, Adults Serving Youth and Government met for 2 days ...

... to explore together the future of a provincial network of youth organizations called 'Leaders of Today' ...

This was the third in a series of Leaders of Today gatherings. The first established the need for a youth network, the second built a proposal and this meeting was to decide on concrete next steps now that it has some financial support.

We revisited the proposal, explored what we could not compromise and moved into planning our steps ahead. All this hard work balanced with lots of fun and a brilliant talent show!

Please find some of the key insights in the boxes on the following pages and a more in depth record in the text and evaluation of our programs is also included.

Many thanks to all those who attended, helped organise and lead the three days. Particular mention to

those who have stepped forward onto the core team to lead the ongoing work of LOT: Alvero Wiggins, Brianna Miller, Elizabeth Boittiaux, Lameia Reddick, Linda Atkinson, and Tyler Shanohan.

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## Leaders of Today



# 2008

## What's next?

- \* **Organising the first Core Team meeting** - Lameia Reddick
- \* **Developing a Website Directory of Youth Organisations** - Elizabeth Boittiaux
- \* **Youth members at Child and Youth Strategy Table** - Brianna Miller, Robin England, John Ure and Elizabeth Boittiaux
- \* **Developing a Partners Bureau** - Tyler Shanohan, Heather Christian and Jay Miller
- \* **Clarifying Cultivators Role and Job Description** - Alvero Wiggins, Leighann Wichman and Isabelle Levert Chiasson



## What can we not compromise from our 2008 proposal for LOT?

### Need and Assumptions:

Need to let go of our own agendas, Youth involvement in decision making, Include accountability/ accessibility, Develop allies, Positive assumptions, Can't do it alone, Connect cool things in NS, Youth are experts on youth, This process is needed, We will not compromise, This will happen (LOT) - it needs to, Education for youth and adults on how to work together (language, structure, space), Letting go of agendas (protective & defensive of them) gatherings are essential, Trust, Diversity- we've got it covered, Ask, Listen and respond in an authentic way.

### Purpose

Define a clear purpose of what we want to become, Go deeper into themes (skills and education), Define what is a youth

### People

Re-approaching the name (Leaders of Today: does the title shy youth way from the program?) Broadening represented horizons (Schools, cultures, religious groups, youth not on the grid), Youth empowerment- equality, More government, More invitations, Maintaining communication, Network where youth can trust that they are being heard, Committing to our own piece

### Concept/Structure

a core team and a small LOT council to represent various organizations across Nova Scotia. they can be called LOT reps, Commitments from organizations, Way to pass the torch in organisations, Other forms of communication: web casts etc. , Not just

youth focused, get the word out to everyone in the community, adults, etc, Youth involvement at every level of LOT, Independence from government but partnership supported, Paid employees, youth Determine goals, Meetings a must, maybe not all the time, Long term plan 1 - 5 years, All organizations across N.S. represented; make sure they're aware and connected

### Plan

database of networks, Involve people that are present at LOT3, Make sure everyone is busy with tasks, engagement, keep Relationships on going with government, need to hire a LOT cultivator and establish administrative functions, need to find a LOT home, Clearly define tasks and LOT council

### Additional Comments:

A group of messengers spreading the word, getting others involved and working towards a positive future for everyone,

A network of youth who advocate/lobby on behalf of themselves and other youth and youth organizations,

We wish to become a strong voice that collaborate, share ideas, successes, and challenges while mobilizing around issues that matter to youth,

Seeing discussion and group networking move to action beyond conversation,

A web of communication that pools our strengths and resources, which accents and support the work we are already doing,

the old way of doing things is dying

## Culture and Values

- \* Build path as we walk it
- \* Cherish each organization
- \* Fun
- \* Embrace differences, acceptance
- \* Focus on strong foundation
- \* Trust
- \* Speak with intention and courage
- \* Equal contribution equal value
- \* Reduce repetition; get to the point and connect what were doing

“Don't ask my opinion unless you are willing to do something with it”

“teach youth to succeed and teach adults the skills they need to positively engage with youth”

“Don't do anything for me, without me”

## Flow of the Days

### Day 1 “Getting on the Same Page”

Story so far / Gifts we bring / Dreaming in the Future / Organisational Market Place

### Day 2 “Figuring it Out”

Child and Youth Strategy Update / Revisit the Proposal / Fears / Actions / Decisions / Talents

### Day 3 “Getting on With It

Commitments / Work areas action planning / Evaluation / Closing

## World Cafe Topics:

These are the issues that came up again and again in the world cafe

### Intercultural Learning:

Assumptions from Government to youth and youth to government  
Plan/Commitment rooted in youth, adult and government partnership  
Training for adults in youth - crossing the intercultural divide  
acceptance, equality, safety, open mindedness  
A real youth voice - not token

### LOT Core and Action

Speedy decision making is essential for youth  
Using LOT as a everyday tool  
Tangibility: less conversation, more reality. Action please!  
Working towards youth centered spaces in every community  
Human body at LOT (paid to support outcomes)  
Action Plan beyond LOT 4  
Provincial focus, local support action plan and timeline  
Individual commitments from LOT members and organisations

### Accessibility:

transportation, network in schools, don't exclude rural areas

### Communication and Networking:

Connect to schools, Create Database, Use mechanisms to connect (facebook, Blog, Newsletters etc.)  
Web based communication forum to do business pictures, stories etc.  
Engagement: youth need different levels of engagement, productive things to do, frequent contact  
Internet is our major tool to stay connected to each other and the work



## Other in depth notes from the World Cafe ...

No more tokenism - **No more "Us" and "Them": a body of youth and government that are one** - People doing kick-ass work should be supported and should know about each other - **trust between funder and agency: Just because you can't measure it doesn't mean it isn't there** - Friendship encouraged - total transparency - pay us for the work we do - People in network could focus on various areas (health, educations) issues that need attention all the time - **Youth audit government**- "this service is busted- need to fix this and that" then government fixes it - Nova Scotia Centered- not metro centered - Anyone with a portfolio that involves youth. gets trained by youth - Staff managed by youth: hired, evaluated, reviewed, etc. - **Cultural Shift in how youth work happens in the province** - Change how we go about working with youth - What's working? Trenton youth center, Model youth center - Who is willing to do the work? - Moneyyyy?? - Free Education - Educational Trips - Recreation and Sports - **No More working in isolation** - Bringing Youth Culture Mainstream - experimenting - More Youth Centers and Soup Kitchens - Gypsy Caravan - Regular Provincial Youth Gatherings - Anything and everything is possible - **Instead of Knocking on fifty doors, it would be nice to only have to knock on one to get help** - We want Government to care about us, and invest in us - WebSite - Regional Branches - Every youth in N.S to feel valid, supported, and have hope that anything is possible - **Action = Results - Give youth the decision making Power** - Find a way to communicate on a large scale - Create solidarity while respecting individuality - ability to respond/give input FAST - Strong voices on the inside - Child and youth strategy takes the lead in ensuring youth at all stages are heard and served - If you need help just ask us - More paid jobs for youth: young people can probably do a better job at running things than adults! - Space and time just to hang out - **HUGE YOUTH SUMMIT** - Lot Centers: they will create jobs for youth - Trips to help in other countries - No pressure, no limits - Let us learn our lessons - **Government should stop wasting so much money on youth work that doesn't work** - Lot leadership training - Trust Us! - Job Placements - Let us learn from our mistakes and failures - Connect to the Masses - 80-10-10 theory - Nothing relating to youth should pass without first going through the network - Just do it. don't wait for fame or blame - **Bigger projects: Go big or go home** - Don't let ideas die - **Keep LOT alive** - What does success mean to us? - Celebrate Success - If they gave us a chance, people would see how much youth have to contribute ....

# Open Space Notes



## Spending Money

Liz. Fan. Kristie. Isaelle. Robert. Linda.  
Develop a decision Making Council/  
Panel/Group etc.  
Remain conscious of Time, Resources  
and Purpose

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## Culture and Values

- 1.) Need to make value statements more to the point and "punchier". We should make the statements more alive.
  - 2.) Reduce repetition
  - 3.) Connect our values to what we're doing. (don't just state them, live them)
  - 4.) Missing Celebrating Success that we've gained along the way.
- 

## Some Clarity

Who is LOT? A Network of youth, youth organizations, youth serving organizations, community, government, Youth supporters, allies.

What does LOT do?

- Advocate
- Lobby
- Education
- Voice
- Pool Resources
- Training
- Networking
- Mentor
- Support

How? Youth Engagement within Government. Youth want a chance to sit on the committees. Youth and Youth Orgs learning from each other.

---

## Purpose

Alison. Alvero, Ursulla.  
Define a clear purpose and ESTABLISH A PURPOSE STATEMENT.  
(What do we want to become?)

- "Unjumble" our current purpose statements made up of tactics, how-to's, goals and purposes, core themes
  - Go more deeply into the core themes... "What do you mean by...?" (e.g. Education, Skills)
  - Youth Voice is meaningful
  - Youth Engagement: What are our standards from a range of tokenism to leaders?
  - Be prepared to act and actually act...
- 

## The Plan - next steps

The Plan... next steps.  
-Need to have more of a Conversation about how to create a NETWORK DIRECTORY...  
-We need a committee of "HARVESTERS"  
-Build a Partners Bureau  
- use L.O.T as a "Go-To"  
- create a Formal Relationship between Gov. and Youth  
-Make a recommendation that youth be on the CHILD and YOUTH Strategy Committee  
-We need to figure out what we are looking for in a "LOT CULTIVATOR" who, what, when, where, how much?

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## LOT Language

Alex. Meagan. Robin. Kristy. Shawn. Mairi Beth. Marine. Tonya. Archie. Chrissy.

Problem: Short Attention Spans  
Answer: No more 1000000 minute speeches. Make it Catchy!

Problem: too Serious, keep us AWAKE!  
Answer: keep it fun through the whole thing. don't go back and forth

Problem: Agenda's, strong opinions, not being open minded.  
Answer: Realize what your doing. We are trying to speak up.

Question:  
-We didn't know what to expect when we first came, but then it got even harder with all the crazy words! please make it more inviting.

-Your questions are super deep, lots of hard thinking scares us away. Please tone it down ... Examples:  
-Networks? Are we talking about the cyber world or something?  
-What the F is Government? Where is Obama .?. He's not here.  
-HPP? Health Promotion Protection... Is law somehow connected? We don't get the protection part...

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## Education and Training

Sarah. Lindsay. Kris. Fadi. Andrew. Heather.

Nuggets: Letting go of responsibility feels good. Always thinking about the kids off the grid that we cannot reach.

Decisions: Would you like to join a group to form a Partners Bureau?  
Commitment: To come to a meeting to design the invitation to government?

Invitation: are we interested in having youth involved? youth voice? youth engagement? Does your department serve youth? "Buddy" System.

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## Advertising

Our Problem: no one knows what L.O.T is or what youth networking is...

WEBSITE: Floating around in cyber space with no one really knowing how to get to it. Why not post the site in all 42 youth centers in N.S? Get more well - known sites to link L.O.T. site from theirs. Too many complex words on site. need more simpler info. We need to better our Advertisement.

Create a small advertising budget  
Commercials? Short 30 seconds. get sponsors to lessen the cost. Magazine Adds! Blogs

No cost ideas:  
The Chronicle Herald could be here right now, writing a little blurb under a photograph about how awesome this experience is.  
Print out posters, stick them in malls, poles, anywhere there is a youth population.  
Word of mouth

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## Step by Step

-Making our existing networks a spring board to create a data base of info.  
-If Data Bases exist, is it accessible?  
-Defining mandate to determine " off the grid" and respect all Networks.  
-Show grant info to eligible youth.  
- We have the recipe and ingredients...  
**Mix it Up!**

## **An Evaluation of the Leaders of Today (LOT3) Weekend**

November 28-30, 2008

Debert, NS

This report provides an evaluation of the LOT3 weekend. LOT3 is the result of three years of work by youth, youth organizations and government to develop a provincial youth network that will help youth organizations coordinate and work better with each other and government. The success of the weekend was evaluated by its ability to meet three broad objectives and deliver three specific outputs. The weekend was evaluated through feedback from the participants and the observations of an evaluator present during the weekend and its planning. Overall, LOT3 was successful in meeting each of its predetermined objectives and outputs. More work needs to be done to better ensure full regional representation in the Network. However, the weekend brought together a diverse group of representatives and delivered a strong action plan that built on the previous work done by LOT and included concrete mechanisms through which the Network can engage with government and the Child and Youth Strategy.



December, 2008

# Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

## **Introduction: A Network Three Years in the Making**

LOT3 represents the culmination of three years of work by the Leaders of Today Network. The Network first met at LOT1 in the fall of 2006. This initial meeting brought together youth representatives from organizations across the province to examine ways youth organization could better coordinate with each other. This gave rise to the idea of establishing a diverse provincial youth network that would connect youth organizations across Nova Scotia and also provide an important interface between youth and government. The idea for a network gained further momentum and support through the second LOT meeting, LOT2, which took place last fall with representatives from 25 youth organizations. Participants in that weekend came to the conclusion that the real benefit of establishing a Youth Network was its potential to provide a place for youth and government to come together and work in unison, building trust and respect, dissolving assumptions and learning from each other. The LOT2 meeting laid the ground work for the Network, examining its purpose, principles, structure, action plan and budget issues. This work was gathered together into a proposal that went to government in February 2008. The government was enthusiastic about the work and impressed with the proposal. It responded through the Child and Youth Strategy and the Youth Secretariat with financial support of approximately \$85,000 for 2008 - 2009.

The purpose of LOT3 was to continue and expand the work of LOT2, by developing a structure around the conceptual work done last year and obtaining commitment from youth organizations and government to the Network.

## **Objectives and Outputs**

LOT3 was evaluated against its ability to meet three overall objectives and three specific outputs. The three objectives are to guide all the work done through the LOT Network. They are:

- i Provide a means to inform government policy and the Child and Youth Strategy
- i Foster intercultural learning between government and youth
- i Amplify the collective power and voice of youth
- i In addition to these broader objectives, LOT3 had three specific outputs it was expected to achieve as a result of the weekend.
  - i Involve a diverse group of youth, adult supporters and government representatives.
  - i Develop an action plan for establishing the Youth Network that: Builds on the work and proposal from LOT 2
  - i Provides recommendations for concrete mechanisms through which youth can engage with the Child and Youth Strategy
- i Includes a method for incorporating regional representation into the Network
- i Seek commitment from organizations to become involved in the Network to the extent they are able

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the success of the weekend to meet each of these objectives and outputs.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

### **LOT3 Participants**

There were 45 participants in the LOT3 weekend, including youth and adult representatives from a wide variety of youth organizations, as well as representatives from both the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick governments. Other organizations and government departments were involved in the consultation and lead up to LOT3, but were unable to send representatives to the weekend. Of the participants present at the weekend, 25 were youth representatives, 12 were adult supporters and 8 were government representatives. The organizations and departments that sent representatives to the weekend are listed below.

#### Youth Organizations

Centre for Entrepreneurship Education & Development (CEED): Youth Employability Project

Conseil jeunesse provincial de la Nouvelle-Ecosse

Heartwood

IWK Health Project

Kitpu Youth Centre

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Youth Project

Leave Out Violence

The Shire and the Split Rock Leaning Centre

Springhill Teen Health Centre

Students For Teaching Peace

Trenton Youth Centre

VOICE - Youth in Care Newsletter Project

YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs

Youth Advisory Council (VOX)

Youth Advisory Council of the IWK

YouthScape

#### Government Agencies

Department of Community Services - Child & Youth Strategy

Department of Community Services- Youth Secretariat

Department of Education

Department of Health

Department of Health Promotion & Protection

New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth

### **Evaluation Method**

The work of LOT3 was evaluated using both the observations of an evaluator present throughout the planning stages of the weekend and the weekend itself, and through the feedback of the participants. Participant feedback was gathered through a questionnaire and a self-essay. The responses to both the questionnaire and the self-essay were anonymous.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire was made up of eight questions and included both open and close ended questions. Each question was designed to assess how well participants felt LOT3 was able to achieve its predetermined objectives and outcomes during the weekend. A copy is provided in the appendix of this report.

### Self-Essay on Diversity

Participants were also asked to complete an open ended, one page self-essay where they were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the diversity of the Network. The responses to the self-essays were categorised based on participants' descriptions of how they believed they added to the diversity of the Network.

### **Results**

As mentioned previously, the work of LOT3 was evaluated against three objectives and three outcomes. Each of these 6 criteria will be examined in turn to assess the degree to which LOT3 was able to accomplish what it set out to achieve.

Of the 45 participants present at the weekend, 38 completed the questionnaire and 25 completed the self-essay. The questionnaire asked respondents to identify themselves as either a youth representative, a member of the host team, a government representative, or an adult support. Most of the members of the host team were also youth representatives, however some identified themselves only as host team members, while others identified themselves as both youth representatives and host team members. Of the 38 people that responded to the questionnaire, 16 identified themselves as youth representatives, 9 as host team members, 7 as government representatives and 8 as adult support.

### Objective 1- Provide a means for youth to inform government policy and the Child and Youth Strategy

Question 4 in the questionnaire asked participants, "*How well do you feel your voice and input were captured in the processes used this weekend to develop the Network*". The purpose of the question was to gauge how well members in the Network felt they had been able to provide input into the development of a network designed to help inform government. Respondents were asked to use a 5 point scale to rate how much input and voice they felt they had in the process. Their responses are in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Participants rating of their input into the development of the Network.**

|            | Not at all |        | Somewhat |        |          | Very Well |
|------------|------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|-----------|
|            | 1          | 2      | 3        | 3.5    | 4        | 5         |
| Result (%) | 0          | 2 (5%) | 9 (24%)  | 1 (3%) | 15 (39%) | 11 (29%)  |

Most of the respondents felt they had significant input into the development of the Network, with over two thirds rating their input as 4 out of 5 or higher. In addition, representatives of youth organizations were given the opportunity to sit with representatives of government departments and agencies during a lunch time session and directly inform some new policies and programs. Three departments/agencies participated in the session: the Department of Health Promotion and Protection sought advice from youth on questions to ask candidates for a new position in the Department coordinating Youth Health Centres, the Youth Secretariat got feedback from participants on a youth grant making program it is developing, and the IWK asked youth for help and advice on some work it was doing related to its Youth Advisory Council.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

Finally, it was also decided by consensus at the weekend that a pilot project should be developed through the Network to look at how youth organizations can work better with government by piloting a Partner's Bureau between government departments and youth organizations. Further, the participants also decided to approach the Child and Youth Social Policy Committee (CYSPC) to ask about having a youth presence on the Committee and its regional tables. Working groups of LOT3 participants were then created to develop an action plan and next steps to put these decisions into action. Both decisions will work to directly meet the objective of building a means for the Network to inform government policy and the Child and Youth Strategy.

### Objective 2- Foster intercultural learning between government and youth

The third question in the questionnaire asked both youth and adult representatives if they felt they had learned more about government and government culture through the weekend, and asked government representatives if they thought they had learned more about youth and youth culture. Thirty youth and adult representatives answered this question, 19 said they had learned more about government, and 11 said they had not. Of those that said they had not learned more about government, two said that they dealt regularly with government and so already had a good understanding of government. All 7 of the government representatives that responded to the question said they had learned more about youth through the weekend. These findings are summarized in Table 2 and 3 below.

**Table 2. Youth & adult representatives' learning about government**

| <b>Did this weekend help you learn more about government and government culture?</b> |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                           | <b>No</b> |
| 19                                                                                   | 9         |

**Table 3. Government representatives' learning about youth**

| <b>Did this weekend help you learn more about youth and youth culture?</b> |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                 | <b>No</b> |
| 7                                                                          | 0         |

In a follow up question, both groups were asked to identify the most useful thing they learned about the other group. Some common responses from youth and adult representatives about the most useful thing they learned about government included:

- i That government cares
- i No youth sit on a board representing youth
- How the government wants to hear from youth, to help youth
- That there are some members from government that really care and want to make change
- A better understanding to what exactly they do
- I did not learn more about Government culture...just that youth are missing in action
- The most useful thing I learned is that not everyone from the government is all defensive about youth and against working with them. - there are some here to help and I really like that

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

Government representatives reported that the most useful things they learned about youth and youth culture were:

- ï To see up close how youth serving organizations substantially engage youth to do real work!
- ï Resiliency of youth! Passion! Insight!
- ï The tremendous talent that the youth in LOT have for working to build a more just society. We need to work with youth in partnership to make a real difference to our society. Government and youth/ youth serving organizations working together could change so much.
- ï Using youth-friendly processes, we achieved agreement on a number of items, did quite a bit of work to move ourselves forward - so, those processes are just as effective as anything adults can come up with
- ï Constant reminder of the vitality, capability and wondering of young people
- ï Grassroots movement! Grassroots direct instead of inferred or second hand

Intercultural learning between government and youth is also likely to be improved through the two projects developed during LOT3 discussed earlier, the youth-government Partner's Bureau pilot project and the work to get youth representation on the CYSPC. Both of these projects will increase interaction and partnership between youth and government, and present significant opportunities for intercultural learning. Looking at the comments from participants in the weekend, it is clear that simply creating an opportunity for youth representatives and government representatives to interact as equals and partners goes a long way to help improve intercultural learning.

### Objective 3: Amplify the collective power and voice of youth

The LOT3 process included several measures designed to help amplify the power and voice of youth. Question 2 of the questionnaire was designed to assess this process by asking participants if they felt their organization would have a stronger voice by being part of the Network. The response was overwhelmingly positive, as can be seen in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. LOT3 participants' views of how being part of the Network will impact their voice**

| <b>Do you think your organization will have a stronger voice by being part of this network?</b> |           |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                                      | <b>No</b> | <b>Not Sure</b> |
| 32                                                                                              | 2         | 3               |

The participants also decided by consensus to develop a permanent website and database of youth organizations to help serve the Network, increase the awareness of the Network in the province and increase the coordination and influence of Nova Scotia's youth organizations. A working group was set up during the weekend to move forward on developing the website. The website and database should further help amplify the collective power and voice of youth in the province.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

### Output 1: Involve a diverse group of youth, adult supporters and government representatives

Diversity has been a strong priority for the LOT Network from its beginning. A significant effort was made throughout the design process of LOT3 to ensure that the participants at the weekend represented a diverse range of youth organizations and perspectives across the province. Both the self-essay and the questionnaire addressed the issue of diversity. Question 5 of the questionnaire asked participants if they felt that the groups gathered for LOT3 represented the diversity of youth in the province. The response was strongly positive (see Table 5).

**Table 5. LOT3 participant self-assessment of the diversity of the Network**

| <b>Do you feel that our membership represented the diversity of Nova Scotian Youth?</b> |           |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Yes</b>                                                                              | <b>No</b> | <b>Not sure</b> |
| 33                                                                                      | 2         | 2               |

The questionnaire then asked participants if they felt any perspectives were missing from the weekend. Participants provided several useful suggestions for ways to expand the Network's representation. Their suggestions are summarized below:

- i Youth off the grid / not involved in organizations
- i Religious groups, more government, ethnicities
- i Youth with disabilities
- i Organizations such as Guides, Scouts, Military, Laing House, Phoenix, etc
- i I feel some groups were more tokenized
- i Junior high youth, provincial geographic representation
- i A representative from the Department of Justice
- i Didn't see anyone pushing or identifying with the sporting community
- i Rural youth, government at several levels
- i 50 cannot speak for 300,000, however, the diversity with 50 was incredible!
- i There are always those who are missing but this was the most diverse group I have been a part of
- i

The self-essay also asked participants to identify the various perspectives they brought to the Network that would help its diversity. The self-essays revealed a wide range of perspectives and confirmed the strong diversity of the Network. Participants identified themselves as belonging to several different race/ethnic or linguistic groups, including: Acadian, Francophone, Aboriginal, Black/African Nova Scotian and mixed race. Several youth reported having experienced confusion or struggles with their sexuality, while others identified themselves as being gay, lesbian or transsexual.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

Participants identified a variety of living arrangements. Several participants said they lived in rural communities, well many others lived in urban centres, primarily in the Metro Halifax area, one participant reported having grown up on a Reserve. Some of the challenges related to living arrangements that participants identified having experienced included, homelessness, absent parent(s), divorce and living in Department of Community Services supported semi-independent living.

Several participants also reported having experienced mental health challenges including depression, anxiety, feelings of suicide, low self-confidence, anger issues, feelings of isolation, self-harm and struggles with addictions. Some participants also reported having experienced the loss of a family member through a variety of tragic circumstances including, suicide, a drunk driver and violence.

A variety of socioeconomic backgrounds were identified, ranging from those having lived in deep poverty and needing government assistance right to though one participant who identified her or his self as coming from an “overprivileged” background. Many participants identified themselves as students at either the secondary or post-secondary level and some reported having used a government employment program. Finally, one participant reported having had experience with law-enforcement and the justice system, but did not elaborate on what that involved, only that it was a negative experience.

In addition to the diversity of experiences that the participants themselves brought to the Network, they also reported working for organizations that served youth from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including homeless youth, youth living on assistance or whose parents are on assistance, youth in care, youth who have had legal problems and young entrepreneurs.

### Output 2. Develop an action plan for establishing the Youth Network

One of the primary outputs expected from LOT3 was the development of an action plan for the establishment of the Network. This action plan was to build on the work of the proposal that came out of LOT2, provide recommendations for concrete mechanisms to engage youth with the Child and Youth Strategy, and include a method for incorporating regional representation into the Network. LOT3 was able to deliver on most of this output.

First, the action plan that was developed did build on the proposal from LOT2. Participants were given a review of the LOT2 proposal. The proposal was then broken into sections and groups of participants were assigned to review each piece and determine what should be included from it in the action plan. These findings were then presented back to all the participants. From this work further discussions were held to better refine the Network’s action plan. With the major components of an action plan in place, the participants made 6 key decisions that would form the foundation of the Network. Those decisions are listed below. All decisions were made on the consensus of the entire group.

1. The Network will have a core team
2. The Network will have a cultivator (i.e. a paid person to support the work of the Network)
3. The Network will have a functional website
4. The Network will establish a pilot project to look at ways to help government and youth work better together
5. The Network will approach the Child and Youth Social Policy Committee to ask for a youth presence on that committee and its regional tables
6. The Network will have a directory as part of its website that builds on the work that already exist

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

Second, the action plan included recommendations for concrete mechanisms for youth to engage with the Child and Youth Strategy. Specifically, as decision 5 above mentions, it was decided at LOT3 that a youth presence should be established on the Child and Youth Social Policy Committee and its regional tables. If the Committee is open to this suggestion, it would provide a significant avenue for youth to engage directly with the Child and Youth Strategy.

Finally, the action plan did make an attempt to incorporate regional representation into the Network by trying to get youth representation on the regional Child and Youth Strategy tables. However, more work needs to be done to better ensure the Network has a more formal method to ensure full representation of youth organizations across the province. As it stands now, LOT already has fairly good regional representation, with support from youth organizations in all regions except Eastern. It is also important to note that a significant effort was made during the planning of LOT3 to include youth organizations from all regions. Youth organizations were invited from all regions in the province, but unfortunately no representatives from youth organizations in Eastern Region were able to attend the weekend.

### Output 3. Seek commitment from organizations to become involved in the Network

Question 6 in the questionnaire asked LOT3 participants if they felt their organization could commit to the Network. Only one participant was unsure if her or his organization could commit. All the other representatives committed to be part of the Network. Table 6 provides an overview of the kinds of support participants felt they could offer and the number of participants that committed to each type of support.

**Table 6. LOT3 participants' commitments to support the Network**

| <b>What kind of support can your organization offer the Network?</b> |                              |                        |                                        |                      |                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                      | <b>Circulate information</b> | <b>Attend Meetings</b> | <b>Respond to information requests</b> | <b>Provide input</b> | <b>Take responsibility for a specific part of the Network</b> |
| <b>Participants committed to offer the support</b>                   | 28                           | 25                     | 27                                     | 31                   | 6                                                             |

In addition, participants were given the opportunity to offer other kinds of support. Participants offered to commit to these additional supports:

- ï Word of mouth
- ï On call
- ï Possibly some leadership role - would have to go back to my organization but, maybe budget
- ï Communications
- ï Non-Metro leadership
- ï Support for the group wanting to include youth on CYSPC and regional advising committees
- ï Provide funding, provide leadership support as invited to do so

Thus, there was strong commitment from the participants in LOT3 to offer a variety of supports to the Network.

## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

### Conclusion

LOT3 was a big step forward in the development of a diverse and effective provincial youth network that will improve cooperation between youth organizations and government. Participants in the weekend laid out a clear action plan for the establishment of the Network that built on the work of previous LOT meetings and provided concrete mechanisms for youth to engage with the Child and Youth Strategy. There was a strong commitment from participants to work with their organizations to support the development of the Network and a real belief that the Network would help strengthen the collective power and voice of youth in the province.

There is certainly still work to be done. The Network needs to take a more specific look at how it incorporates regional representation into its membership in order to ensure that it has strong links all across the province. However, the progress made through the weekend is undeniable. Getting youth and government representatives together, working as partners, will have an impact well beyond the establishment of the Network. Participant feedback from the weekend was overwhelmingly positive. Youth reported surprise at the willingness and interest of government representatives to listen to them and work with them, and government representatives commented on the talent of the youth involved in the Network and the importance of government-youth partnerships.

Increasing youth engagement in the province and building new models of effective adult-youth and government-community partnerships are both long term tasks, but the work of LOT3 and the Network it has developed represent significant movement on the road to accomplishing those tasks. The participants in LOT3 delivered on all major requirements asked of them. It is now crucial that government and community partners follow through on their commitments to the Network in order to create lasting change in the province and help build a truly *New Nova Scotia*.

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# Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

## Appendix

### Participant feedback questionnaire

LOT 3  
Building Our Youth Network  
November 28-30, 2008  
Debert, NS

#### Feedback - How did we do?

Thanks for sharing this exciting weekend with us. We would really appreciate your feedback on how the weekend went for you and what you feel you got out of it. Your answers will help us continue to build cooperation between youth and government and organize future sessions.

You do not need to put your name on this sheet. All responses are confidential.

To fill out this form circle your answer or add your comments in the space provided.

1. Which category below best describes your role this weekend:

Youth Representative                      Host Team Member  
Government Representative              Adult Support

2. One of the goals of this Youth Network is to strengthen the collective voice of youth in the province. Do you think your organization will have a stronger voice by being part of this network?

Yes/No

3. Another of the Network's goals is to build understanding between government and youth.

a. If you are a youth representative or an adult support person, did this weekend help you learn more about government and government culture?

Yes/No

If yes, what was the most useful thing you learned?

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b. If you are a government representative, did this weekend help you learn more about youth and youth culture?

Yes/No

If yes, what was the most useful thing you learned?

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## Leaders of Today 3 - Evaluation

4. How well do you feel your voice and input were captured in the processes used this weekend to develop the Network?

Not at all                      Somewhat                      Very Well  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. Do you feel that our membership this weekend represented the diversity of Nova Scotian youth?  
Yes/No

- b. If you think there were any perspectives missing, please tell us what those might be.

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6. Is your organization able to commit to be part of this Network?

Yes/No

- b. If yes, please check the kind of support(s) you think your organization could offer.

Circulate information

Respond to information requests

Attend meetings

Provide input to the Network

Take responsibility for a specific part of the Network (i.e. holding the budget, communications, leadership etc.)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- c. If you can't commit at this time, what do you think your organization would need to help it be able to commit in the future?

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7. This year our team of youth hosts played a large role in leading the weekend. Do you have any feedback on their performance or suggestions for things they can build on in the future?

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8. Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to share with us?

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