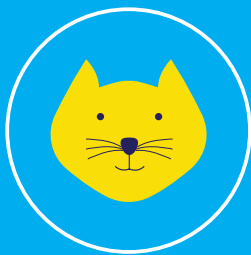# MY CAT MAKES ME HAPPY

What Children and Youth Say about Measuring their Well-being

As a UN agency, UNICEF is active in 190 countries and we have saved more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization. UNICEF Canada is a Canadian non-governmental organization (NGO) established 60 years ago and is the representative of UNICEF in Canada. We work tirelessly as part of the global UNICEF family to do whatever it takes to ensure that children and young people survive and thrive, and have every opportunity to reach their full potential. Our global reach, unparalleled influence with policymakers and diverse partnerships make us an instrumental force in shaping a world where the rights of all children are realized. For more information about UNICEF, please visit www.unicef.ca.

The Students Commission of Canada was founded in 1991 on the recommendation of young people to put their ideas for improving themselves and their communities into action. An independent, charitable, non-governmental organization, The Students Commission listens intently to young people and works in partnership with them. It exercises its influence by sharing those ideas with organizations, policy makers and institutions across Canada. It supports young people to participate in the activities of local, provincial, national and international organizations and governments. It leads research into effective youth programs through the Centre of Excellence and the Sharing the Stories (StS) research and evaluation platform. It supports organizations and governments to use the research and the voice of young people to develop youth engagement strategies.

To cite this document, we suggest the following form:

UNICEF Canada and Students Commission of Canada (2017). My Cat Makes Me Happy: What children and youth say about measuring their well-being. Toronto, ON: UNICEF Canada.

www.unicef.ca

Contents

Foreword

In 2014, UNICEF Canada set out to gain a deeper understanding about why Canada lags behind many industrialized nations in fundamental aspects of child and youth well-being; why young people themselves rate their life satisfaction so poorly; and why there are gaps between data, action and results for children in Canada. Our action was motivated by stasis – the mediocre position of Canada at a rank of 17 of 29 affluent countries in the UNICEF Index of Child Well-being – a rank that has not substantially shifted since we measured it a decade ago. More frustrating and perplexing still is the low rating children and youth give their own sense of well-being - Canada's ranking drops to 24 of 29 countries. Why is overall child and youth well-being persistently mediocre based on "objective" indicators like infant mortality, bullying and unhealthy weight? Why is young people's "subjective" sense of well-being much lower? Why has it eroded over the past decade? Is this as good as it gets? Is it good enough?

> "Our biggest challenge in Canada is growing income inequalities. Kids pick up on the dynamics of society."
>
> **Research Informant, Canada**

> "I feel a lot of pressure from those around me to act 'perfectly' and get good grades and scores on tests. I don't want to let anyone down, but sometimes, I don't want to always be the kid who is 'a model student.' I want to act like a kid."
>
> **Youth Informant, age 11, Canada**

The above statements were shared by informants in our discovery process. The first is an expert view of one of the fundamental determinants that explains Canada's middle position in child and youth well-being among rich nations – widening inequality. The second is a young person's description of one way this broad social inequality is shaping childhood in Canada.

UNICEF's latest Index of Child Inequality provides new data to explain "17" and "24", and the things we heard through the discovery process. On this Index, Canada ranks 26 of 35 countries, a measure of the disparity between the average experiences of Canada's children and the experiences of those trailing farthest behind in resources, health, education and sense of well-being. But the new data show that inequality dampens the potential of many, not only the children and youth furthest from opportunity, as the quoted youth above is telling us. The stress and anxiety that come with greater social inequality spreads across childhood. As Canada pivots from its 150th birthday to a new era of nation-building and reconciliation, what kinds of childhoods are we providing? How will this affect our progress as a country? What might we do to live up to our common belief – that Canada is the best place to grow up – and move up the UNICEF Index of Child Well-being?

What we can learn from the top-performing countries, and areas of child and youth well-being in Canada where we are having success such as educational achievement, is that large gaps are not inevitable. Countries at the top of the league tables achieve great outcomes and have more equality among their kids, because fairness does not come at the expense of greatness. In education, Canada has relatively great and relatively equal outcomes. They could be better if other important aspects of children's lives were as good. As a country, we need to reconsider the metrics we use to define our success, because we will not achieve number one in any league table as long as we are leaving some children and youth so far behind in health, protection, development and opportunity.

On our 150th birthday, Canada should not be able to consider itself a successful nation without measuring itself by the well-being of its children and the equality of their experiences. But how to chart the way forward?

We know that we're not measuring everything we need in order to understand how children and youth experience and feel about their lives, today, in a rapidly evolving and more unequal nation. We don't have or use some of the data we need to pay attention to important influences and outcomes. So UNICEF Canada asked young people how to build a better Index of Child and Youth Well-being. What is influencing their sense of well-being? What would a uniquely Canadian Index look like that measured the things that matter the most?

> "My cat makes me happy."
>
> **Research Informant, Canada**

> "It's important for youth to flourish as youth from their own perspectives. Not only about building successful adults but understanding better what it takes to flourish as children and youth. This is different than what adults think matters... Children demonstrated the importance of pets to their well-being, which no one had considered before."
>
> **Research Informant, USA**

The children and youth we spoke to across the country, who fearlessly and sensitively shared their views on what well-being means to them, are telling us what they need and what we should be paying attention to. The physical health and educational achievement outcomes we place a premium on have to be balanced with the mental, emotional and spiritual well-being that young people tell us is critical to their progress. Young people placed priority on a sense of belonging, equity and opportunities to engage in the world around them. Some are lonely, with too few caring relationships. Some are over-structured inside and outside school, confining the normal space for child and youth development. These conditions are influenced by families, communities, the private sector and public policy choices. What young people asked us to pay attention to is documented in this report. It will help us lead an initiative this year to build a better Index of Child and Youth Well-being – and then climb up it. Should the Index measure the access of young people to cats, in order to support their mental and emotional health? Maybe – it comes up over and over again. We're listening.

Background

As children go, so goes our nation. The well-being of children is perhaps the single most important indicator of the well-being of a society. Yet, in Canada, the well-being of our children and youth is lower than we should expect from a nation of our economic and social capacity.

Compared to the richest 29 countries in the world, Canada ranks 17 in overall child and youth well-being. While we rank well on some indicators in the UNICEF Index of Child Well-being such as educational achievement and the youth smoking rate, on balance our outcomes in different aspects of young people's lives are mediocre. In aspects of health such as low birthweight and unhealthy weight, Canada trails behind our peers.

Despite the widespread belief that Canada is one of the best places to grow up, it has remained a middle-ranking country in child well-being for more than a decade. In UNICEF's Index of Child Well-being, young people in Canada rated their well-being and happiness even lower, yielding a rank of 24 of 29 countries. Just as concerning, their sense of well-being has plummeted over the past decade. And as the children and youth tell us in this report, their sense of well-being is the predominant influence on how well they live their lives – mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically, in connection with others and with the places they live. So we listened to young people to help explain "24".

Over the last three years, UNICEF Canada has been exploring with many stakeholders what it would take to get to the top of the UNICEF Index. Together we articulated a framework to describe what child and youth well-being should be. UNICEF Canada has a vision of the future in which Canada is number one for children in league tables of child well-being, and more importantly, in the eyes of children and youth. In 2030, this will be a Canada in which people no longer tolerate the inequality that holds so many of our young people back from great futures. It will be a Canada where children dream about futures they can realize, and their dreams stay as big as our country. On Canada's 150th birthday, we are ready to disrupt the status quo and inspire change by measuring to understand and describe children's lives, support innovation and demonstrate that change is possible. Dreams are possible.

If this sounds like an audacious or improbable goal, it is because Canada is comfortable with a balanced and practical approach to most things. But this is the dream for the nation's children that we heard in our roundtables and stakeholder consultations across

"I feel good because I feel like the ideas discussed will be taken to UNICEF, and they will do their part to make a larger-scale difference."

Youth workshop participant

the country, unalloyed by "ifs" or "buts", cautions or conditions - and UNICEF Canada intends to play our part. We won't really know if Canada is the best place in the world for children unless we measure it, and fine-tuning how we measure and monitor child well-being will help us better understand children's lives and give direction to effective investment and action. With a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being, we will curate the data to show what matters to kids, where the greatest challenges lie and how well Canada is providing what they need to thrive.

We hope that decisions about child and youth policy, services, research, parenting, investment and innovation will have a better compass in our Index, and that "number one" is a shared north star for all of our communities, our governments and our country. As you will see from the views documented in this report, young people are optimistic and are keen to play their part. Surely we can do the same.

Executive Summary

In UNICEF's Index of Child Well-being[2], young people in Canada rated their well-being and happiness low in relation to children and youth in other affluent nations, yielding a rank of 24 of 29 countries for children's self-reported life satisfaction (UNICEF Office of Research, 2013). The reasons for Canada's ranking appear to be linked to lower performance in child health indicators, difficult relationships with peers and others in their lives, and poverty and inequity. However, there is much we do not understand behind this barometer of children's sense of well-being – much we lack data to measure and act upon. One of the best ways to understand it is to ask children and youth. Existing surveys and indicators of child and youth well-being have been developed largely without the benefit of young people's perspectives on what they believe is important to track and address.

UNICEF Canada is exploring approaches to better measure, monitor and understand child and youth well-being in Canada. This process began in 2014 with listening to young people, leading to the recognition that the indicators and data we rely on as governments, organizations and societies to make decisions affecting their lives leave out important aspects that should be considered. We reviewed reports to see what young people had to say about their well-being. Then we engaged young people to identify additional domains, themes, and indicators to contribute to the development of the Canadian Index for Child and Youth Well-being. This report represents the views of more than 25,000 young people in Canada and outlines the process and results.

Part I: Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices

Part I of this report reviews research commissioned by UNICEF Canada in 2016, *Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices.* The Students Commission of Canada reviewed reports documenting the views on well-being of more than 25,000 young people in Canada over the past two decades.

Young people in Canada have shared crucial insights to better understand their well-being, in consultations and other gatherings convened by organizations led by or serving them. A review of these reports identified some key insights for measuring and monitoring child and youth well-being:

- Subjective experiences – that is, how young people feel about their lives and their perceptions of what they experience – are important for understanding their well-being. They influence and are influenced by the 'objective' markers that are usually relied on to measure well-being.

- Well-being needs to be understood as a whole. We need a broad concept of well-being to encompass the aspects that are important to children and youth, and to understand that doing well in one or just a few areas of their lives may not mean youth are experiencing well-being. For instance, the pressure to compete and achieve good grades in school may come with more anxiety and a lack of unstructured time for learning and development.

- Poverty and discrimination are often, but not always, root or underlying causes of young people's poor sense of well-being. Growing inequality across society is a major contributor.

- Feelings of belonging and inclusion – the presence and quality of relationships – are directly related to youth well-being and cross-cut many domains of well-being including health and education. They are important to all children and youth.

- Transition to adulthood – young people worry about life beyond childhood and adolescence, including their employment prospects. But they want meaningful ways to engage and contribute now. If we take better care of their present lives, young people might be better prepared for transition to adulthood.

Additionally, this review validated domains that are important for youth well-being and identified new dimensions that could be tracked (see Figure 1). The domains young people have said are important are fairly congruent with the domains in the international UNICEF Index of Child Well-being. As well, domains and potential indicators of well-being were identified to reflect the priority youth placed on belonging, equity and engagement. The table below compares the domains identified in the *Measuring Youth Well-Being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices* Report and the domains used in the international UNICEF Index of Child Well-being.

Figure 1: Domains of child and youth well-being based on literature review of youth perspectives

Youth-identified domains	UNICEF Index of Child Well-being domains (2013)
1. **Affordable living conditions:** Food, housing and transportation	1. Material well-being 2. Housing and environment
2. **Health:** Mental health, access to appropriate healthcare, and sexual and reproductive health	3. Health and safety 4. Behaviours and risks
3. **Education and employment:** Inclusive education and employment	5. Education
4. **Relatedness:** Belonging, permanent and caring relationship with an adult, and friendship	6. Relationships and life satisfaction
5. **Youth engagement:** Youth activities, youth voice in decision-making, youth spaces and youth contribution	
6. **Equity:** Discrimination and diversity	UNICEF Index of Child Inequality

These findings provide a foundation to further explore how to measure and monitor child and youth well-being in order to understand children's lives and support decision-making. By honouring young people's views about their lives and focusing on the things that are important to them, we may support more young people to achieve a greater sense of life satisfaction and well-being.

Part II: What Children and Youth Say About Measuring their Well-being: Youth Well-being workshops

In Part II, we tested the six domains of well-being identified in *Measuring Youth Well-Being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices* with youth in cross-Canada workshops. The Youth Well-being workshops provided an opportunity for young people from six communities across the country to build on this research and contribute to the development of a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being. These young people participated in semi-structured discussions and identified priority themes and indicators to more comprehensively and meaningfully measure the well-being of children and young people. Their views will inform the next steps to prototype and iterate the Index.

The Youth Well-being workshops were held in: Toronto, Ontario; Manawan, Quebec; Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario; Victoria, British Columbia; Whitehorse, Yukon; and a youth closed custody facility in the Atlantic region (to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, the name and location of this facility is not included). Each workshop ranged in length from three hours to six hours and included between 8-25 participants between the ages of 11-21 from diverse experiences, backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures. The workshops were facilitated with a minimum of one adult and one youth facilitator and included more than 80 young people in total.

The goals of the workshops were to: **1)** engage young people and involve them in discussions about what is important to their well-being; **2)** identify domains or areas of well-being that are priorities from their perspectives; and **3)** generate and prioritize potential indicators to measure these aspects of child and youth well-being. The experiences also supported the child and youth participants to share, reflect on and learn about ways to move forward in well-being in their lives.

The young people who participated in these workshops have very different backgrounds and experiences: they live on a First Nations reserve, in urban settings of different sizes, in a closed custody youth facility and in an isolated northern community; some are newcomers, some have a variety of learning and physical abilities, some live with mental illnesses. Each workshop was adapted to ensure relevance and meaningful engagement of the youth we were working with.

Despite these differences in backgrounds and circumstances, there was consistency in the fundamental influences the young people identified on their well-being, and in the domains and indicators of well-being they want us to pay better attention to. Some domains and indicators were more important to some communities, but it is clear that young people's sense of well-being – their mental, emotional and spiritual well-being – is a predominant concern. It is a critical aspect of well-being that interacts with the ways we have traditionally measured well-being, which have focused on physical health, risk behaviours, educational achievement and material resources. These are incomplete markers of well-being among young people today living in an affluent, diverse and more unequal nation. Their insights made clearer that existing surveys and indicators of child and youth well-being have been developed largely without the benefit of young people's perspectives on what they believe is important to track and address.

The young people in these workshops validated the domains of well-being developed in the preliminary review but identified a new domain, Space and Environment. Space and Environment refers more broadly to the contexts within which youth live including the natural environment (e.g., are young people's homes, schools and communities supportive and positive spaces? Is there space for free, unstructured, and outdoor leisure and play for all ages?). The seven domains prioritized by young people are:

Figure 2: Domains of child and youth well-being based on youth workshops

1. Health (34.5%)
2. Relatedness (18.2%)
3. Equity (12.8%)
4. Education and employment (12.3%) *tied
5. Youth engagement (12.3%) *tied
6. Affordable living conditions (6.7%)
7. Space and environment (3.3%)

The priority afforded to health is consistent with the focus of much of the available data about children and youth, but the young people have a rich and broad view of health that includes physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions. **They deepened our understanding of what the domains of well-being should encompass by identifying twelve themes: physical health, spiritual health, respect, material resources and economic opportunity, public resources, future opportunities, love, online community, social interaction, nature/environment, positive environment/living conditions, and supportive community.** The fact that the themes are highly interrelated echoes the medicine wheel approach to balance in well-being that young people in the Yukon session used, and supports UNICEF's approach to construct non-weighted indices of well-being. Making more visible the connections between domains, between themes and between indicators will be a challenge in the construction of an Index.

The rough indicators identified and prioritized by the youth will help decide on how to measure the domains and themes. For these indicators, data is partially available from existing surveys in Canada. The gaps present a challenge and will require innovation as we move forward to design the Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being and develop innovative ways of generating data with children and youth.

The young people identified twelve themes over the course of their discussions. The frequency count reflects the number of times young people included these themes in their quote cards. Suggested indicators are linked to themes, and themes to domains; however, there are considerable interrelationships among them. Many of the suggested indicators would be challenging to develop and measure but provide direction for further consideration.

Figure 3: Domains, themes and indicators of child and youth well-being based on youth workshops

Domain	New themes	New indicators	Frequency
Health	Physical health	Access to physical activities and spaces, access to nutritious food, sleep, knowledge about their bodies	61
	Spiritual health	Beliefs, faith, religion, cultural values and ceremonies	23
Equity	Respect	Respect for women, respect for children, respect from professionals, respect for children's rights	27
Affordable living conditions	Money and economic opportunity	Access to money, no material deprivation, poverty, financial literacy	21
	Public resources	Access to Wi-Fi, parks, free public spaces, books	3
Education and Employment	Future opportunities	Optimism about the future, youth-friendly employment opportunities	14
Relatedness	Love	Self-love, interpersonal love, love from your community, connection to your passions and interests	12
	Online community	Cyberbullying, access to internet and social media	9
	Social interaction	Isolation, loneliness	5
Space and environment	Nature/ environment	Healthy natural environment, access to nature	12
	Positive environment and living conditions	Abusive home environments, feeling good and safe where you live, stable homes, clean living conditions	7
	Supportive community	Accepting, close, and welcoming community, sense of community	6

What We Learned

Domains, Themes and Indicators

Young people identified 7 domains, 30 themes, and generated over 130 rough indicators to measure child and youth well-being in Canada.

Figure 4: Domains of child and youth well-being based on literature review of youth perspectives

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Youth Engagement	Youth activities (41)	• Accessible, free activities • Opportunities for new experiences (e.g., youth conferences) • Resources for youth-led programs • Time to relax and take care of yourself • Availability of structured activities • Opportunities to develop and nurture cultural, ethnic, racial, spiritual and linguistic identity • Diversion from incarceration
	Youth participation in decision-making (40)	• Autonomy/independence • Access to information about decisions and their implications • Access to information about our rights
	Youth spaces (27)	• Accessible (free) safe spaces on- and off-line for youth • Freedom from discrimination and racism • Culturally relevant places • Gender- and sexuality-inclusive spaces • No authoritarian surveillance • Anti-discrimination policies • Feeling respected and valued
	Youth contribution (21)	• A sense of purpose • Opportunities to share and express our stories and experiences • Youth peer counseling and youth leadership opportunities • Youth who train adults • Opportunities to contribute meaningfully

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Relatedness	Belonging (48)	• Connection to culture and culturally relevant supports • Understanding of one's own culture and the cultures of others • Visible representation in key decision-making roles • Inclusive media that reflects our cultures (e.g., Indigenous media networks) and that does not make youth feel bad about who they are and what they do not have • Timely family reunification (e.g., immigrant and refugee youth, youth taken into care)
	Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults (40)	• Permanence • Someone who is available whenever needed • Someone who makes us feel loved • Someone to see us graduate
	Friendship (15)	• Opportunities to meet people with similar issues/experiences • Quality friends and peer mentors
	Love	• Self-love • Interpersonal love • Love from your community • Connection to your passions and interests
	Online community	• Cyberbullying • Access to Internet and social media
	Social interaction	• Isolation • Loneliness

"I'll try to be more aware and help others to understand what I learned with similar gravity.."

Youth workshop participant

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Education and employment	Inclusive education (25)	• Small classrooms • Free post-secondary opportunities • Free graduation activities • History of colonization integrated into curriculum, Aboriginal history month • LGBTTQ-inclusive curriculum • Curriculum that decenters Eurocentric worldviews, integrates histories of their/other peoples • Education that has an application component outside of school • Schools available on reserves and equity for Indigenous youth • Recognition of cultural/linguistic knowledge (e.g., credits for multiple languages) • Parents' education level
	Employment (18)	• Parents'/caregiver's employment status • Youth as family wage earner • Feeling informed about career options • Accessible and inclusive employment programs • Hands-on opportunities to explore work/career options • Career-building jobs • Livable minimum wage (e.g., no 'training wage') • Financial independence that does not put youth in riskier situations • Safe employment (e.g., no late night shifts) • Jobs near home • Unionized work for youth, youth informed about their rights
	Future opportunities	• Optimism about the future • Youth-friendly employment opportunities

"I will use the factors of healthy well being in my own life. Breaking habits and creating new positive ones.."

Youth workshop participant

13

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Equity	Discrimination (23)	• Ageism, racism, classism, ability discrimination, homophobia, transphobia • Discrimination and exclusion as a result of living in poverty • Assumptions and stereotypes (e.g., about youth in government care, about refugee and immigrant youth) • Targeting by police and the justice system • Jurisdictional loopholes that underserve Indigenous youth (e.g., education and health services) • Difficult immigration processes • Inappropriate healthcare for trans youth • Intergenerational pain • Lack of awareness of non-Eurocentric, non-heteronormative histories
	Diversity (14)	• Diverse opportunities for diverse youth • Youth are exposed to adults from diverse backgrounds and experiences • Preservation and validation of languages, traditional ways of life, land • Access to essential services including education, health, justice (e.g. equity for Indigenous youth and jurisdictional clarity of services) • Exposure to a diverse representation of people in media and key decision-making positions (e.g., more people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds in governance)
	Respect	• Respect for women • Respect for children • Respect from professionals • Respect for children's rights

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Health	**Mental health (20)**	• Coping strategies (e.g., access to music, access to nature, having a pet) • Hope, positive outlook • Motivation and direction for the future • Self-confidence and self-esteem • Abuse • Parent's use of substances • Resiliency as defined by a positive outlook, self-confidence, feeling loved and a desire to triumph over challenges • Positive self-esteem • Rates of extreme stress or depression • High-risk substance use (e.g., binge drinking, early use) • Use of mental health services • Rates of bullying, harassment and discrimination • Parent/caregiver substance use
	Access to appropriate health care (7)	• Programs/services with harm reduction and prevention focus, early identification • Affordable prescription medication • Responsive support • Support for parents regarding substance abuse • Accessible • Non-judgmental and compassionate • Knowledgeable and relevant • Timely
	Sexual and reproductive health (6)	• Sex education for young children • Non-judgmental sex education about consent, gender expectations, emotional/relational changes • Easy access to birth control/condoms
	Physical health	• Access to physical activities and spaces • Access to nutritious food • Sleep • Knowledge about our bodies
	Spiritual health	• Beliefs, faith, religion, cultural values and ceremonies

Domain	Theme (frequency count)	Suggested Indicators
Affordable living conditions	Food (11)	• Access to affordable, healthy food • Free breakfast programs at schools • Clean water • Poverty
	Housing (11)	• Access to affordable, safe housing • Transition support for youth exiting care
	Transportation (8)	• Access to transportation • Affordable transportation
	Material resources	• Material deprivation
	Economic opportunity	• Access to money • Financial literacy
	Public resources	• Access to Wi-Fi, parks, free public spaces, books
Space and environment	Nature/ environment	• Healthy natural environment • Access to nature
	Positive environment and living conditions	• Abusive home environments • Feeling good and safe where you live • Stable homes • Clean living conditions
	Supportive community	• Accepting, close, and welcoming community • Sense of community

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE THINK INFLUENCES THEIR WELL-BEING THE MOST?

Top Three Domains

Young people highlighted three key domains that were important to measure: health, relatedness and equity.

Young people emphasized the importance of not only measuring physical health; but effectively measuring spiritual, emotional and mental health, and striving for balance in these four areas. This is instructive, because a singular focus on one can create unintended, negative impacts on others. There is a recognition, for instance, that a singular focus on injury prevention may be constraining free, unstructured, outdoor play (among other factors), influencing physical health and development. The young people also highlighted how important relatedness and equity were to their sense of well-being. These are difficult but not impossible to measure; some community-based surveys in Canada include indicators such as the presence of a caring adult in a young person's life, drawing on child development research, and UNICEF has developed an approach to measuring equality. The challenge will be to calibrate new indicators sensitively and appropriately to the themes young people are concerned with – and then to have the data for them.

Health

Health was one of the most frequently discussed domains across the groups. For all but the Toronto and Manawan groups, health-related themes were the most frequently mentioned, with 34.5% of the well-being themes raised across the workshops relating to health. Health was conceived holistically including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

The discussions on health included:

- The importance of connecting mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health to well-being through the lens of Indigenous culture and the medicine wheel in Whitehorse;

- The significance of sexual and physical health for youth in the closed custody group;

- Access to various forms of health care and drug prevention and rehabilitation programs in Victoria.

Youth in the workshops discussed physical health in terms of access to the gym and physical activities, nutrition, education about their bodies, spending time outdoors, adequate sleep, energy and life expectancy. It may be that these aspects of physical health are rising concerns as free outdoor play and leisure time and space have shrunk, food security and food culture are changing, and technology use is rising.

Relatedness

Relatedness was another priority domain, accounting for 18.2% of the suggested themes. Like health, relatedness was described differently by youth in the six sites across the country:

- In the sessions with Indigenous youth, their sense of belonging was very connected to nature, outdoor activities and connecting to their Elders and culture;

- The youth in the Toronto session most frequently noted relatedness and described their sense of belonging as rooted in connection to peers and having positive social interactions where they felt like they were valued and they mattered;

- The Kitchener group discussed the importance of love and belonging and how it connected to their mental and emotional health.

Equity

Equity accounted for 12.8% of the suggested themes and most youth indicated it was important to their well-being to feel like they were treated with respect, were afforded access to equal opportunities and did not experience discrimination.

The graphs below show the breakdowns and comparisons of how frequently each domain was mentioned during the workshop sessions, at a national youth conference, and in the review of 25 years of youth voice.

All Workshops (856)

- 3.3%
- 6.7%
- 12.3%
- 12.3%
- 12.8%
- 34.5%
- 18.2%

Legend:
- ■ Youth engagement
- ■ Education and employment
- ■ Equity
- ■ Relatedness
- ■ Health
- ■ Affordable living condition
- ■ Space and environment

YDM national youth conference (242)

- 2.1%
- 13.4%
- 18.4%
- 11.3%
- 19.7%
- 17.2%
- 18.0%

Review of 25 years of youth voice (367)

- 6.0%
- 9.0%
- 35.1%
- 28.1%
- 11.7%
- 10.1%

"I have learnt that the youth in Canada do not feel adequately supported by government and their communities. And if our communities are to progress this support from within our communities (leaders, parents, friends) is instrumental."

Youth workshop participant

18

Top 10 Themes

Young people across the sites used different methods to select the top themes that affect their well-being. Some used dotmocracy, while others used consensus models to make their decisions. When the results from all of the groups were collated, their top 10, highest ranked themes in descending order were:

1) Mental health (121) (Health Domain):
stress, suicide rates, access to youth-friendly mental health support

**2) Youth activities (72)
(Youth Engagement Domain):**
access to activities and resources (e.g., music, books, parks)

**3) Inclusive education (70)
(Education and Employment Domain):**
control over education, graduation, grades

4) Physical health (61) (Health Domain):
access to healthy food, access to physical activities

5) Discrimination (58) (Equity Domain):
exclusion and unfair treatment as a result of living in poverty, ageism, racism, homophobia, and targeting by the police and justice system

6) Belonging (49) (Relatedness Domain):
connection to culture, a sense of purpose, feeling welcome and accepted

**7) Access to appropriate healthcare (32)
(Health Domain):**
access to medical professionals, access to mental health professionals, access to various harm reduction resources

8) Friendship (31) (Relatedness Domain):
positive social norms, accountability, support, intergenerational relationships

9) Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults (30) (Relatedness Domain):
Someone who is available whenever needed, someone who makes them feel loved, culturally relevant mentors; e.g., Two-Spirit Elders

10) Respect (27) (Equity Domain):
Respect for women, respect for children, respect from professionals, respect for children's rights

"I've learned that youth struggle with more than just mental health, school and money."

Youth workshop participant

"That youth are diverse in thought but at the core, we all have the same issues that affect us."

Youth workshop participant

Key Insights

Part I identified four key insights to better measure and monitor child and youth well-being:

Subjective experience is important to well-being

Young people identified that how they feel about their lives and the qualities of their experiences are crucial for their well-being. Objective measures alone will not capture whether young people are doing well. For example, the high school graduation rate is a commonly employed measure of well-being that marks an important developmental milestone but may not be experienced as a marker of transition to positive post-secondary education or employment by young people. For instance, for youth in care, high school graduation may coincide with transition out of a supportive care environment into a challenging period of autonomy. For youth without a caring adult, high school graduation is a milestone associated with despair rather than a positive transition. Well-being involves not only having opportunities, but also how young people experience them.

> "Health doesn't [just] mean what you eat, if you smoke or not, or exercise a certain amount of time per day. Health goes much deeper, down to who your friends are, how you feel about yourself, and the conditions in which you are living."
>
> Youth contributor – Youth Vital Signs, 2013

Well-being is holistic

Doing well in one area of their lives does not mean that young people are experiencing well-being. Young people identified that they often "fall through the cracks" and lack support because they are perceived to be functional and doing well in one area of their lives (e.g., academic achievement or living independently), while other parts of their lives are suffering. In many cases, young people described sacrificing important aspects of their well-being and living in dangerous situations in order to stay functional in others. The way services and policies are organized, according to issues and sectors, often fails to address the interconnected way young people conceive and experience well-being.

> "I think that people assumed that because I was functioning, I was going to school, that I didn't need support. I was a capable young person. And that's where I think the system failed. Just because I was doing well in school or doing well in certain parts of my life does not mean that I don't need other supports."
>
> Youth contributor – On Their Own, 2014

Poverty and discrimination are detrimental to well-being

Young people highlighted again and again that poverty, inequality and discrimination are root causes underlying poor well-being. Young people focused predominantly on the ways they are treated and excluded from opportunities as a result of living in poverty. Poverty may be experienced not only as having relatively low income, but also as being excluded from opportunity considered normal or attainable in Canadian society. On the other hand, some youth living in low income did not perceive themselves to be 'poor'. This underlines the important influence of broad social inequality on young peoples' sense of well-being, and how they perceive their lives in relation to the society around them.

> "Child poverty is not only related to a lack of material possessions and financial stability, but encompasses emotional suffering."
>
> "This includes abuse, isolation, abandonment, self-hatred, hopelessness, lack of resources and lack of opportunity. Child poverty is the lack of rights, communication, understanding and support."
>
> Youth contributors – Sharing Resources Conference, 2000

Well-being is directly related to relationships and a sense of belonging in their society

Young people consistently identified belonging and inclusion as key themes across all systems and areas of their lives. Belonging was a particularly strong theme for youth who are chronically excluded (e.g., Indigenous youth, LGBTTQ youth, immigrant and refugee youth, etc.) but is a widespread concern for young people across the spectrum of income and opportunity. Belonging is a feature of systems, processes (e.g., services), spaces and individual relationships.

> "Creating a safe environment that youth feel they can run to, instead of run from, and a sense of belonging is crucial."
>
> Youth contributor – Breaking Through Barriers, 2014

Measurement Gaps

There are key aspects of well-being youth have identified that are not measured fulsomely or with pan-Canadian coverage which could be developed in surveys and other approaches. See Appendix B for an indicative comparison of youth-identified domains of well-being and existing surveys of well-being.

Belonging: According to young people, belonging involves feelings of inclusion and welcome; connection to culture and community; and system-level policies, services and representation that promote and demonstrate inclusion. Belonging has been poorly covered in existing measures and often does not take into account connectedness to and understanding between cultures, nor system-level conditions. It most often appears as a subjective indicator (e.g., asking the survey respondent if they feel a sense of belonging), and focuses on individual relationships. It is critical to develop measures of belonging not only in relationships but also in spaces and systems, to understand and monitor the well-being of youth in Canada's culturally diverse context.

Diversity/equity: Young people in Canada identified that diversity is important to support their sense of inclusion and belonging. They describe diversity as exposure to a range of experiences and people; protection and support for diverse languages and traditions; diverse representation in key public roles, such as media and leadership; and equity of access to services for all children and youth. Diversity, defined in this way, is not measured in current population-level surveys and is not consistently monitored in statistical data. Implications for surveys and data include not only greater disaggregation of data to identify groups of children and youth that may require specific approaches to policies, services and substantive equitable outcomes, and measuring distribution gaps or gradients, but also the consideration of different indicators that are sensitive to the aspects of diversity young people value.

Youth participation: Young people in Canada placed great importance on feeling valued, having a sense of purpose, and having opportunities to make meaningful contributions. Young people want to be involved in accessible and culturally relevant activities in their communities. When measuring young people's involvement, however, most indicators in population-level surveys focus mainly on the act of participation (e.g., volunteer rate) rather than the subjective experiences and qualities of engagement activities. There are several existing measures that attend to subjective experiences and qualities of youth engagement that have yet to be implemented in population-level surveys. These may provide the basis for more nuanced youth activities measures.

Developing approaches to measuring and monitoring their well-being that are accountable to the views of young people will provide important information we need to better support young people in Canada, as policy makers, service providers, community members and caregivers.

"I'll make a voice for myself."

Youth workshop participant

Our Process

PART I: Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices

Part I of our research addressed the following questions:

1. How have young people in Canada defined well-being and future aspirations?

2. What have young people in Canada identified as important domains and indicators of their well-being?

3. How well are we currently measuring the things that are important to young people, and what are the gaps?

Phase I

The exploratory phase involved gathering reports and other multimedia products produced mainly over the past decade in Canada that document youth perspectives about their well-being. Products were gathered in three ways:

1) Search of The Students Commission's archives

2) Invitations to and website searches of key stakeholder organizations (see list of key stakeholders in Appendix X)

3) Grey-literature search targeting specific demographic populations.

The Students Commission has an archive of 25 years of reports from national youth conferences and programs developed and led by young people from across the country. In addition, a number of key stakeholders and organizations from across the country contributed reports that chart a strong history of young people's experiences and recommendations.

The exploratory phase generated 148 reports and 13 videos. Of those, 110 reports and all 13 videos were prioritized for this report (see a full list of selected reports in References). They were selected based on two criteria demonstrating the extent of authentic youth voice: young people's contributions were clearly central to the report, and youth quotes were included.

Despite these criteria, it is important to note that the reports represent varying levels of youth engagement. A team of young people at the Students Commission reviewed most of the reports and collaborated to identify emerging themes, quotes, recommendations and indicators.

The selected reports include the contributions of 25,308 youth from across Canada, ranging in age from 6 to 24 and coming from a diverse array of cultures, living conditions and experiences. They live in rural and urban settings and in northern and remote communities. Some are street-involved and at risk of homelessness; some live in care and independently; and some are out of school. Contributors include youth who are Indigenous and newcomers; LGBTTQ-identified; have different abilities; and face multiple barriers. A thematic summary of their contributions about what defines and affects their well-being and future aspirations, as well as their recommendations for indicators of their well-being, is included in this report. Their voices, in quotes, illustrate the comprehensive nature of their definitions of well-being.

A few notes about the report gathering process
There is a perceived need to synthesize and amplify young people's voices about what is important for

their well-being. Many stakeholders responded immediately to our request and have shown interest in the findings and a potential of fresh approaches such as a "domesticated" UNICEF Index of Well-being for children and youth. There is interest in having guidance based on young people's input about how to best focus their work. However, not all important stakeholders responded to our request nor were all youth reports available in the public domain, so there are likely omissions in this analysis.

In several instances, youth forums, for which we would expect to find reports of young people's voices, instead reported only about the process or offered abstract comments about the event. In some cases, there were no reports at all from youth forums. Many of the youth reports we relied on were not easily found on organizational websites; they were either only included in a 'youth website' or were relegated to a less prominent part of the main website or in the archives. Although this does not necessarily indicate that these reports are not considered important, accessing the contributions of young people seemed unnecessarily difficult. Often, this was indicative of organizations for which only part of their work involves engaging youth.

Most of the reports were adult-initiated or written by adults. Some were written by youth or had youth co-authors. It is not clear in most of the reports whether young people were directly involved in identifying and deciding on the key topics for discussion. Factors such as organizational mandates and funding priorities play a role in the topics that were covered and likely influence some of our findings.

Phase II

The second phase of our research focused on two objectives:

1) Identify existing indices and surveys that demonstrate an approach to measuring the key areas of young people's well-being identified by youth.

The targeted search for existing indices and surveys focused on well-known, population-level Canadian surveys, national surveys from other countries, and international surveys about children and youth well-being. These were identified by UNICEF Canada and through the Students Commission's network of research partners, including Dr. John Freeman. Seventeen key population-level youth surveys were gathered and examined (see Appendix B). This list is not comprehensive but indicative.

2) Identify examples of gaps where new indicators are needed.

Through a review of indicative surveys, we identified aspects of well-being important to young people that are already being measured and gaps where data is insufficient or unavailable.

This research provided a preliminary framework for understanding and measuring young people's well-being based on their views. It formed the basis for workshop discussions with young people across Canada to expand our understanding of the dimensions of their lives that are important to understand and, potentially, to track through better measurement and data.

"Being in this youth meeting connecting with their young people made me feel a sense of hope, there are so many bright young minds that can do a lot to bring progress.."

Youth workshop participant

24

PART II: What Children and Youth Say about Measuring their Well-being

About the youth well-being workshops

Our Approach

Our youth engagement approach is participatory, with young people working together with support from young adults and adult allies. Our process is grounded in the Students Commission's Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate. These pillars helped to guide the process for the Youth Well-being workshops, and set a foundation for a safe space for sharing throughout the sessions.

Recruitment

The Students Commission recruited young people through their extensive national networks of youth, adult allies and youth-serving organizations. In addition to online invitations on social media, we initiated engagement through direct invitations to young people. We intentionally engaged a diverse group of children and youth to bring different experiences, perspectives and backgrounds together. Included were young people who do not often have an opportunity to have their voice heard, and youth furthest from opportunity. Diversity of experience is a key characteristic of positive youth engagement activities. Our workshops in Quebec and in the Yukon took place in primarily Indigenous communities, and in the Atlantic region we held a workshop in a youth closed custody facility. We prioritized young people between the ages of 11 and 18, but workshops included slightly older young adults as well (18+) to account for the extended transition into adulthood.

Toronto:
Students Commission youth group

Manawan:
Youth networks connected to the Students Commission national annual conferences

Kitchener/Waterloo:
Youth recruited with the support of the City of Kitchener's Community Programs and Services

Victoria:
Youth recruited with the support of Project Respect and the Quadra Village Community Centre

Youth closed custody facility:
Existing partnership with a youth program that works with youth in the facility

Yukon:
Youth recruited with the support of the Council of Yukon First Nations

Format

The format of the sessions was developed by the Students Commission in collaboration with UNICEF Canada, with advice and inspiration from the McCreary Centre Society, British Columbia, which undertook a similar process to inform the domains and indicators of child and youth well-being used in the Growing Up in BC framework (2015). The workshop prototype was tested and revised based on the first workshop in Toronto.

All workshops were co-facilitated by a youth-adult team in accessible youth program settings (e.g., youth drop in centre, individual drop-in learning centre) to ensure that young people felt safe and comfortable and could easily participate. Where possible, workshops were at locations and during times that young people already have regularly scheduled program activities. We informed young people about the process and that their participation was voluntary; the purpose of the workshop; how their input would be shared; terms of confidentiality and privacy; and the availability of an honorarium, before they decided whether they would like to participate.

Facilitators opened the workshops by providing context for the workshop, reviewing the "Four Pillars" of participation and convening icebreakers as opportunities for young people to get to know each other and get comfortable in the setting. Using the Four Pillars as a foundation, they built a set of ground rules that evolved throughout the workshop to ensure that everyone had space to contribute and feel heard. A variety of community-builders were used throughout the sessions to give young people breaks and re-energize the group.

See here for a video of the Toronto session:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BJLHhYFgbNW/?taken-by=stdntscmmssn

Young Decision Makers Model

The Young Decision Makers (YDM) model and the process conducted by the McCreary Centre Society in Measuring Our Health helped to frame the sessions. The Young Decision Makers Process and Toolkit were developed collaboratively by youth and adults over several years. The process is designed to ensure that youth meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them and is embedded in a cyclical action research model. Each stage involves small and large group discussion/activities as well as individual reflection on quote cards to ensure that young people have multiple ways to engage.

The YDM model starts with an issue being identified by young people, organizations, governments or systems. In this case, we began with young people's well-being: what is important for young people's well-being and how can youth well-being be measured and monitored to improve understanding and action?

Studying issues

Facilitators introduced the topic and explained that in UNICEF's Index of Child Well-being, young people in Canada rated their well-being and happiness low in relation to youth in other industrialized countries. In response, UNICEF Canada has initiated the development of a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being to better understand and monitor young people's well-being in our society. Youth first examined what well-being is and how it is shaped, starting from their own experiences, then the experiences of peers and insights from existing research, including the findings documented above. During this phase, young people reflected on their own experiences related to their well-being, explored what well-being means to them and what contributes to or harms their well-being, and they started to think about what they would suggest as indicators of well-being. Facilitators also engaged young people in conversations about the importance of measuring and monitoring well-being.

Discussing issues

Moving from reflecting to building ideas, youth discussed and identified themes and indicators to describe well-being, comparing and contrasting their experiences with peers. The themes the young people generated were based on a variety of different experiences over the course of their lives. Based on their experiences, the young people modified some of the domains in the international UNICEF Index of Child Well-being and the preliminary research documented in Part I of this report*, and added new ones, to create seven domains. They identified themes and indicators under these domains (see figure 3).

The youth participants in Whitehorse, Yukon did not categorize their indicators in this way. See Adaptations section for more information.

Decision making

Facilitators used dotmocracy as a decision-making tool for young people to prioritize themes and indicators (see Top 10 Themes). Dotmocracy is a decision-making tool where all choices brainstormed in a discussion are laid out on paper. Individuals are given time to vote on their preferred choices through some visible means like stickers or markers. Votes are then tallied and the group uses this process to make decisions.

Informing policy/decision makers

At the end of each session, young people had the option of writing a letter to policy-makers who make decisions that affect child and youth well-being and decisions about how youth well-being is measured and monitored in Canada. These messages provided a platform for youth who were not as vocal during the workshops to express their ideas. Common themes included needing more youth activities and spaces, better mental health support, and better and more accessible education and employment opportunities.

Youth also had the opportunity to complete a Sharing the Stories Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit evaluation survey to reflect and provide feedback on the session and any other comments they wanted to share about youth well-being.

Youth Profile

Overall, 84 youth from six sites participated in the workshop. In addition, 145 youth participating in a national youth conference contributed their input in a workshop:

Toronto, Ontario

Twenty young people participated in this workshop. The young people were a diverse group including youth from different schools, neighbourhoods, ages and gender with varied experiences and backgrounds in an urban context.

Manawan, Quebec

Twenty young people participated in this workshop. All young people identified as Indigenous and live on a First Nations reserve. Manawan is a remote community with a population of approximately 2,000 people, and is only accessible by a dirt road

Kitchener, Waterloo

Eighteen young people participated in this workshop. Their ages ranged from 12 to 17. Five young people had newly immigrated to Canada and spoke English as a second language. They represented a diverse set of backgrounds, cultures and life experience.

Victoria, British Columbia

Eight youth participated in this workshop. They represented a diverse group, including youth from different schools, ages, gender, Indigenous youth, youth who speak English as a second language, youth in care, youth with mental illness and youth with different abilities - mostly urban/suburban. Some young people in this group faced literacy challenges.

Whitehorse, Yukon

Eight youth participated in this workshop. All young people identified as Indigenous and live in the north. The workshop took place in an Individual Learning Centre, a drop-in learning centre for youth looking for an alternative to the regular school system; all participants had faced challenges with the mainstream school curriculum and environment. There were also young people in care in the workshop.

Youth Closed Custody Facility

Ten male-identified youth participated in the workshop: seven were incarcerated in a closed custody facility and three were pro-social facilitators. This was a very diverse group: there were young people with mental illness, Caucasian, Indigenous, and African Canadian, ages 15-19.

National Young Decision-Makers conference

145 young people from every province and territory, including 69 Indigenous youth and 21 youth who identified as having diverse abilities, shared what was important to their well-being.

Adaptations

Since the workshops were delivered in a variety of communities, with a diverse group of young people, the Students Commission adapted the workshop and used different processes to ensure meaningful youth engagement and relevance for the youth participants.

Cultural Inclusion

The facilitators made four significant adaptations to the workshop for Indigenous youth in Whitehorse, Yukon: 1) organized the workshop using the medicine wheel; 2) invited a local Elder to support the discussions and the young people; 3) extended the workshop to allow time for storytelling; and 4) opened the workshop with a prayer delivered by the Elder, followed by a discussion about their history, culture, and sacred medicines to ground the discussion. The group also decided to write their 'Dear Policy Maker' letters to the Grand Chief, Peter Johnston, and the facilitators hand-delivered these letters to him after the workshop. These adaptations were made to ensure cultural relevance, and created a space where young people were able to relate to the content of and meaningfully participate in the workshop. The outcome of these adaptations was significant; the young people were engaged, had meaningful discussions and developed remarkable indicators that reflected the experienc of northern young people and factors that contribute to the well-being of Indigenous young people, such as access to land, language and culture.

The following are some questions the facilitators asked the group:

"**What impacts your mental health?**",
"**What impacts your emotional health?**",
"**What impacts your spiritual health?**",
"**What impacts your physical health?**", and
"**How do you find balance?**".

http://connectability.ca/2010/11/10/wikwemikong/

Inclusion of Different Abilities

As there were many activities that involved writing, in cases where young people were not interested in writing and/or faced literacy challenges, the facilitators adapted the workshop. There were a couple of ways their thoughts were captured: the young people would verbally share their thoughts and the facilitator would write for them, and for individual reflection youth had time to think on their own and then paired with another participant who wrote down their ideas. In addition, a verbal checkout rather than a written evaluation was facilitated at the end of the session to ensure that everyone could participate comfortably.

Inclusion of Youth in a Closed Custody Facility

The workshop was adapted to fit within institutional time requirements: Activity A was shortened from a full group activity to a quick explanation of UNICEF Canada's intentions and indicators, and an informal discussion about young people's personal experience of health and well-being in small groups was conducted while completing activity B.

Inclusion of Francophone Youth

The workshop was translated into French and the facilitators were Francophone to ensure the workshop was tailored for youth participants in Manawan, Quebec. These young people are Indigenous, therefore there were also adaptations made to ensure the workshop was culturally relevant. The facilitation team offered a gift to the young person who helped organize the workshop, following cultural protocols.

Final Thoughts

Young people who participated in the youth well-being workshops were excited that their contributions would help shape the development of a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being. They are looking forward to hearing about the results and expressed an interest in continuing the conversation. These young people reported very positive experiences participating in the workshops, and stated insights and plans to suggest that they came away with new ways to support their own well-being, their peers and their communities. As we develop new approaches to measure and gather data about child and youth well-being, UNICEF Canada is committed to designing experiences that are respectful of and positive for the youth who participate.

Overall, the young people agreed with and validated the domains to describe their well-being that were used in the 2013 UNICEF Index of Child Well-being, and modified based on our review of youth consultations over the past 25 years. These resonate and are relevant to their well-being and future aspirations. In their discussions, children and youth identified an additional domain, Space and Environment, encompassing the health of the natural, social and built environments within which they live. Furthermore, they suggested twelve thematic areas to inform the choice of indicators in the domains, prioritizing mental health (which was closely related to emotional and spiritual health). They gave importance to two domains that are more commonly the focus of surveys and reports on child and youth well-being: physical health and material resources. However, they emphasized some aspects such as sleep that reflect evolving conditions influencing well-being. The young people gave priority to the importance of relationships, belonging and engagement. They were clear that diversity and equity are critical to all dimensions of well-being. In an urbanizing and diversifying society growing more unequal, the nature of family and community relationships and equality are changing, and are far from adequately measured and monitored.

Each community had its own priorities to support well-being. Designing an Index of Child and Youth Well-being that works for each of them "on a wet Wednesday", to paraphrase the sporting analogy, is a challenge. However, there were more shared priorities than differences. By and large Canada's children and youth need, want and certainly have rights to the same things to support their well-being. The domains, themes and indicators of well-being they prioritize are highly interconnected and suggest that UNICEF's current approach to balancing domains and indicators in an index rather than weighting them continues to make sense. It is also culturally consonant with the Indigenous medicine wheel which turns on "balance". However, representing the interconnections between the domains, themes and indicators presents a challenge.

Many of the indicators youth recommended are complex and point to multiple methods of measurement (quantitative and qualitative) and multiple sources of data (objective and subjective). They will require innovative approaches to gather and interpret population-level data with children and youth, and render them in ways that help decision-makers. Most of these indicators are policy-relevant, but they also require individual and community support. They require us to consider whether to focus on outcomes or to include influences (an ecological or human rights approach to indicators that takes into account conditions and influences on outcomes that are observable in children and youth).

Together with stakeholder consultations convened by UNICEF in 2014 to identify a shared, pan-Canadian framework to describe child and youth well-being, the identification of domains, themes and indicators by young people documented in this report provides the basis for prototyping, testing and iterating a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being that will be relevant for different communities, provinces and territories, and a collective national vision.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Stakeholders in Literature Review

The reports of following organizations were researched to identify domains and themes of well-being that young people discussed:

Alberta Office of the Child and Youth Advocate	McCreary Centre Society
Amadeusz	National Alliance for Children and Youth
Antidote: Racialized and Indigenous Girls and Women Network	National Youth In Care Network
Aspen Foundation for Labour Education	Native Youth Sexual Health Network
Assembly of First Nations (AFN)	Office of the Ombudsman Nova Scotia
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Ontario Children's Advocate office
BC First Call for Children	Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
BC Representative for Children and Youth	Partners For Youth New Brunswick
Big Brothers Big Sisters	PeerNetBC
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada	Penticton YES Project
Canadian Council for Refugees	Project Respect
Child and Youth Advocate New Brunswick	Positive Space Network
Child and Youth Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador	R.I.S.E.
Children's Advocate Manitoba	Regional Multicultural Youth Council
Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse Quebec	Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth
Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op	Saskatchewan Youth In Care Network
Egale Canada	Save the Children Canada
Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks	Scouts Canada
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society	Vancouver Foundation & BC Representative for Children and Youth
Girl Guides of Canada	YMCA (national)
Girls Action Foundation	YMCA GTA
Grassroots Youth Collective	YOUCAN Youth Services
Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development	Youth Centres Canada
Leave Out Violence (L.O.V.E.)	Youth Voices of Nova Scotia Society (Youth In Care Network)
Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights	YouthCAN
McConnell Foundation	Yukon Child & Youth Advocate office

Appendix B: Comparison of Youth-identified Domains of Well-being and Selected Surveys of Well-being

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Youth Engagement	Youth activities	Accessible, free activities	AHS, HBSC, Youth Vital Signs	Poorly covered	International and national surveys	Funding for youth programs and youth-led initiatives Time use (daily/weekly) Subjective and objective qualities and subjective experiences of engagement (e.g., Sharing the Stories
		Opportunities for new experiences (e.g., youth conferences)				
		Resources for youth-led programs				
		Time to relax and take care of yourself				
		Opportunities to develop and nurture cultural, ethnic, racial, spiritual and linguistic identity				
		Diversion from incarceration				
	Youth voice in decision-making	Autonomy/independence		Partially covered	National surveys	Perception of voice and influence in decision-making (e.g., home, institutional settings, etc.)
		Access to information about decisions and their implications				
		Access to information about their rights	What Young People Think, Good Childhood Indicators, Children's World indicators			
		Access to opportunities and mechanisms to be heard at all levels of decisions	YAP, Youth Vital Signs			
		Young people's decisions and input are honoured				
	Youth spaces	Accessible safe spaces on- and offline for youth	Tell Them From Me, Youth Vital Signs	Partially covered (school contexts)	Provincial and municipal surveys	Anti-discrimination policies and legislation Use/access data disaggregated by gender, culture, age, etc. Perception/experience of different spaces
		Free from discrimination and racism				
		Culturally relevant				
		Gender- and sexuality-inclusive				
		No authoritarian surveillance				
		Anti-discrimination policies				
	Youth contribution	Feeling respected and valued	YAP	Poorly covered		Self-reported opportunities to contribute Sources of respect and perception of value Description of purpose
		A sense of purpose				
		Opportunities to share and express their stories and experiences				
		Youth peer counselling and youth leadership opportunities				
		Youth train adults				
		Opportunities to contribute meaningfully				

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Relatedness	Belonging	Inclusion, feeling welcome and accepted	Youth Vital Signs, Tell Them From Me, NLSCY, YAP, COMPASS	Poorly covered	National and municipal surveys	Relationship mapping – youth and adult perspectives and actions
		A sense of purpose				
		Connection to culture, culturally relevant supports				
		Understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth				
		Visible representation in key decision-making roles				
		Inclusive media that reflect their cultures and do not make youth feel bad about who they are or what they do not have				
	Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults	Someone who is available whenever needed	HBSC, AHS, Stepping Up	Generally well-covered	National and provincial surveys	Family reunification and culturally relevant adult allies

Permanence

Self-reported experiences, quality of relationships |
		Someone to see them graduate				
		Someone who makes them feel loved				
		Timely family reunification (e.g., immigrant and refugee youth, youth taken into care)				
		Permanence				
		Culturally relevant mentors; e.g., Two-Spirit Elders				
	Friendship	Opportunities to meet people with similar issues/experiences		Generally well-covered		Belonging to affinity groups
		Quality friends and peer mentors	HBSC, NSLCY			

34

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Education and employment	Inclusive education	Small classrooms	Tell Them From Me	Partially covered	Provincial surveys	Inclusive curricula markers Participation in diverse opportunities/activities Equity/accessibility of schools on reserve
		Free post-secondary opportunities				
		Free graduation activities				
		History of colonization integrated into curriculum				
		LGBTTQ-inclusive curriculum				
		Curriculum that decenters Eurocentric worldviews, integrates histories of their/other peoples				
		Education that has an application component outside of school				
		Schools available on reserves and equity for Indigenous youth				
		Recognition of cultural/linguistic knowledge				
		Parents' education level				
	Employment	Parents'/caregivers' employment status	Children's Worlds, CWI	Partially covered	National and international surveys	Subjective and objective qualities of youth experiences in jobs
		Youth as family wage earner				
		Feeling informed about career options				
		Accessible and inclusive employment programs				
		Hands-on opportunities to explore work/career options				
		Career-building jobs				
		Liveable minimum wage (no 'training wage')				
		Financial independence that does not put youth in riskier situations				
		Safe employment (e.g., no late night shifts)				
		Jobs near home				
		Unionized work for youth, youth informed about their rights				

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Equity	Discrimination	Ageism, racism, classism, ability discrimination, homophobia, transphobia	What Young People Think, HBSC, NLSCY, National climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia	Partially covered	National and international surveys	Disaggregated data on youth representation in justice and child welfare systems

Perceptions of 'poverty', drivers and exits |
		Discrimination and exclusion as a result of living in poverty				
		Assumptions and stereotypes (e.g., about youth in government care, about refugee and immigrant youth)				
		Targeting by police and the justice system				
		Jurisdictional loopholes that underserve indigenous youth (e.g., education and health services)				
		Difficult immigration processes				
		Inappropriate healthcare for trans youth	National climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia			
		Intergenerational pain				
		Lack of awareness of non-Eurocentric, non-heteronormative histories				
	Diversity	Diverse opportunities for diverse youth	Children's Worlds, CWI	Poorly covered		Perceptions of service availability and quality
		Exposure to peers and adults from diverse backgrounds and experiences				
		Understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth				
		All children and youth have access to essential services (e.g., education, health, etc.)				
		Seeing a diverse representation of people in key decision-making positions (e.g., more people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds in decision-making)				
		Preservation and validation of languages, traditional ways of life, land				

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Health	Mental health	Coping strategies (e.g., access to music and nature, having a pet)		Generally well-covered	National and provincial surveys	InParents'/family's mental health and substance use Presence of non-medical mental health supports that address the indicators youth identify (e.g., coping strategies) Mental health service use Levels and sources of optimism, motivation, self-esteem Access to medicines
		Hope, positive outlook	NLSCY			
		Motivation and direction for the future				
		Self-confidence and self-esteem	HBSC, NLSCY			
		Abuse				
		Parents' substance use				
		Programs/services with harm reduction and prevention focus, early identification				
		Affordable prescription medication				
		Responsive support				
		Support for parents regarding substance abuse				
		Rates of extreme stress or depression	HBSC			
		High-risk substance use	HBSC			
		Use of mental health services				
		Rates of bullying, harassment and discrimination	HBSC, What Young People Think, NLSCY			
	Access to appropriate healthcare	Non-judgmental and compassionate	Children's Worlds, CWI	Partially covered	National and international surveys	Subjective and objective qualities of youth experiences in jobs
		Knowledgeable and relevant				
		Timely care				
		Affordable prescription medications				
		Affordable therapies				
	Sexual and reproductive health	Sex education for younger children		Poorly covered	Provincial surveys and curricula	Perceived quality and availability of sex education curricula
		Non-judgmental sex education about consent, gender expectations, emotional/relational changes				
		Easy access to birth control/ condoms				

Domains	Themes	Potential Indicators (structure, process and outcome)	Surveys	Coverage	Sources	Suggestions for data collection (examples)
Affordable living conditions	Food	Access to affordable, healthy food	HBSC	Partially covered	National and municipal surveys	Experiences and perceptions of food and food services (e.g., school programs)
		Free breakfast programs at schools	HBSC			
		Clean water				
	Housing	Access to affordable, safe housing	HBSC, Good Childhood Indicators, Youth Vital Signs, UNICEF International Index	Partially covered	National and municipal surveys	Experiences and perceptions of housing

Outcomes for youth exiting care and access to support |
| | | Transition support for youth exiting care | | | | |
| | Transportation | Access to affordable, effective transportation | Youth Vital Signs | Partially covered | Municipal surveys | Experiences and perceptions of transportation |

Appendix C: Youth Well-being Workshops Analysis and Limitations

There are three main data sources analyzed for this report:

1) young people's decisions about the top themes that describe influences on their well-being;

2) frequencies of mentions of each theme; and

3) facilitators' notes from each workshop.

The top 10 list of ranked themes is based on young people's decisions about the themes that are most important for their well-being. Due to the different decision-making approaches in each group (e.g., some groups used dotmocracy while others used consensus; some groups selected top three themes in each domain while other groups selected the top three themes across the domains), the top 10 list may have biased weighting towards the selections of groups that used dotmocracy, which may have influenced the order of the top 10 list. However, because the top priorities of each group overlapped significantly, we have confidence that they represent the highest ranked priorities across the groups.

At the end of each session, young people organized their suggested themes into the six domains identified in the *Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices* research. An "other" domain was included for themes that did not fit in the existing six domains. The analysis in this report is built upon this initial coding by youth, using the existing domains and themes as the coding framework. A count of the frequency of these themes and domains was calculated for each location, as well as for the aggregate of all of the locations.

The frequency counts were converted to percentages to indicate how often each theme was mentioned (out of the total mentions of all themes) for each workshop location and for the overall total frequencies of each theme from all of the workshops. In addition, percent frequencies were calculated for the themes identified

during the National Young Decision-makers conference and the themes gathered in the Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices research to calculate their respective percentage breakdowns. As a result, this report provides comparisons of the aggregate of all six workshop locations to the YDM National Youth Conference UNICEF Canada activity and the *Measuring Youth Well-being in Canada: A synthesis of youth voices* research.

These percentages have been used to attempt to minimize weighting bias introduced by different sizes of groups and different levels of writing skills in each workshop. However, the process for calculating the percentages is limited by the assumption that all suggested themes and domains are of equal significance. Due to this limitation, the percentages should be taken as supporting data used in conjunction with the facilitator session notes and results from each workshop's decision-making approaches.
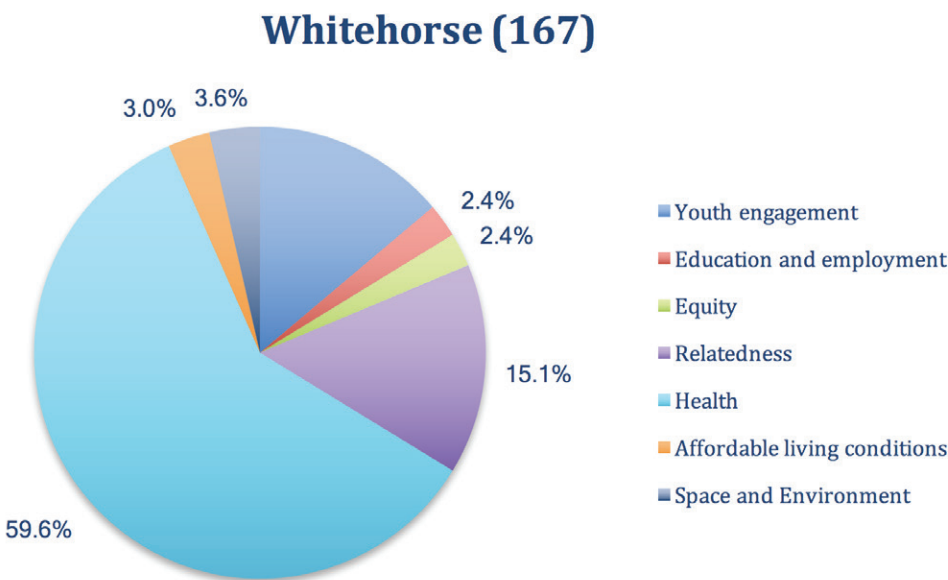
The use of these three sources of data (youth decision-making results, theme frequency percentages, and facilitator notes) provides a useful comparison and examination of differences and similarities across sites. These data sources strengthen workshop findings and illustrate patterns and trends between and across sites.

Appendix D: Youth Well-being Workshops Differences Across Sites

There are many factors that contributed to the differences in results across workshops, such as geographic location, life experience, culture, etc. Young people from each site identified a variety of things to consider when developing a Canadian Index for Child and Youth Well-being, and each young person and each group prioritized different areas in their decision-making processes. For example, 59.6% of the themes and indicators prioritized by the Whitehorse group fell within the Health domain, whereas only 9.6% of the Toronto group's priorities fell within the that domain. The graphs below highlight what each group prioritized and spent the majority of their time discussing.

Whitehorse

The Whitehorse group decided not to choose top indicators because they felt all the voices and opinions should be taken with the same amount of importance and weighting.

Whitehorse (167)

- Youth engagement
- Education and employment
- Equity
- Relatedness
- Health
- Affordable living conditions
- Space and Environment

Facilitator Findings: All participants in the Whitehorse group identified as Indigenous and highlighted the importance of balance within the four elements of the medicine wheel: mental health, physical health, emotional health and spiritual health, with an emphasis on physical health. They described that achieving balance in all four areas was crucial to their well-being. The young people in this group also identified that having access to their history, culture, language, and land were important to their well-being.

Interestingly, the youth in the group talked about how the quote they read about substance use as "the only thing to do" available to youth in remote communities did not resonate. They talked about how they have a lot to do, such as hunting and activities outdoors, and having access to and connecting with their ancestral land. This is a reminder that every community in Canada has a somewhat different profile in terms of how well-being is supported.

This group came to the decision to make emotional health and mental health separate themes due to the cultural framework of using the medicine wheel as a lens from which to understand child and youth well-being. Emotional and mental health are interconnected and youth in the workshop described them as follows:

- Mental health was related to the capacity for mental functions with examples such as stress, lack of sleep and activities to relieve pent up energy;
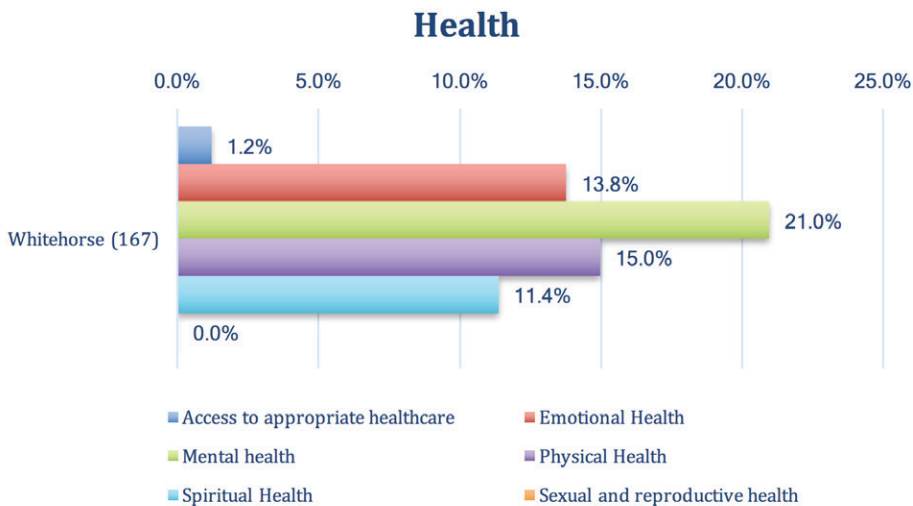
- Emotional health was related to feelings and affect with examples such as love, being there for each other, feeling successful and bravery.

This type of nuance is useful to consider in indicators for well-being, ensuring that all aspects of health are measured. The following graphs include this distinction; however, emotional health and mental health have been combined in the final results table.

Health

Group	Percentage
Closed custody (81)	27.2%
Manawan (41)	16.7%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	29.1%
Toronto (94)	9.6%
Whitehorse (167)	59.6%
Victoria (94)	37.2%

Takeaway: Participants in Whitehorse had the largest focus on health, but health was conceived broadly according to the four parts of the medicine wheel (59.6%).

Health

Whitehorse (167)
- Access to appropriate healthcare: 1.2%
- Emotional Health: 13.8%
- Mental health: 21.0%
- Physical Health: 15.0%
- Spiritual Health: 11.4%
- Sexual and reproductive health: 0.0%

Legend:
- Access to appropriate healthcare
- Emotional Health
- Mental health
- Physical Health
- Spiritual Health
- Sexual and reproductive health

Takeaway: The Whitehorse group felt that child and youth well-being is directly related to physical (15.0%), mental (21.0%), emotional (13.8%), and spiritual health (11.4%).

Relatedness

Whitehorse (167)

- Belonging
- Friendship
- Love
- Online Community
- Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults
- Positive Influences

Takeaway: The majority of the relatedness themes for the Whitehorse group were based on their connection to their culture and Elders.

Toronto

The Toronto group used dotmocracy to decide which of the themes from their discussion were the most important to their well-being. They were:

- Equality (6)
- Opportunities (5)
- Better grades (4)
- Youth agency (4)
- Family (4)

Toronto (94)

- Youth engagement
- Education and employment
- Equity
- Relatedness
- Health
- Affordable living conditions
- Space and environment

Facilitator Notes: The majority of the discussions in the Toronto workshop were associated with relatedness, the impact of societal pressures, access to opportunities and having their voices heard. The context of living in a very populous, widely unequal and heavily urban society may influence these priorities. The young people highlighted the importance of being listened to and taken seriously, and feeling like their voices mattered. A lot of these young people were engaged in youth activities in their communities, valued these opportunities and wanted other young people to have access to these opportunities.
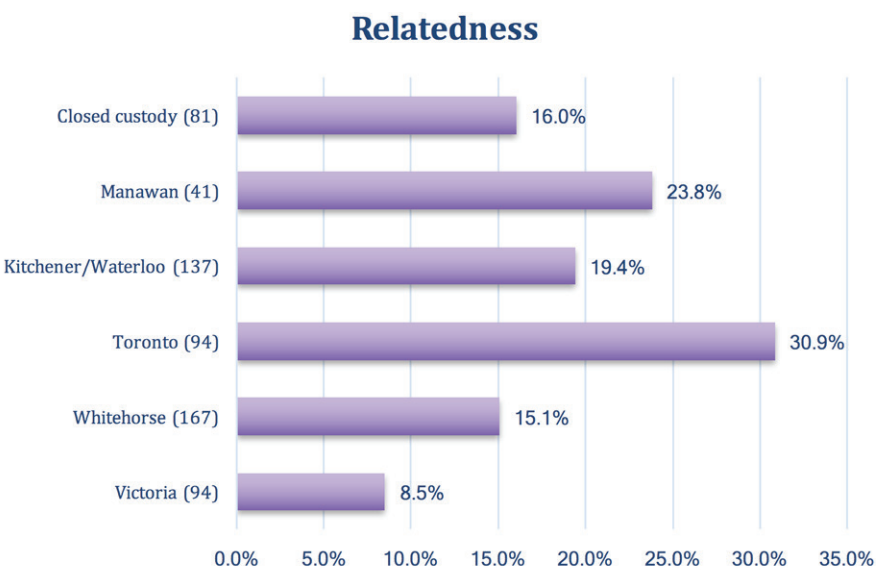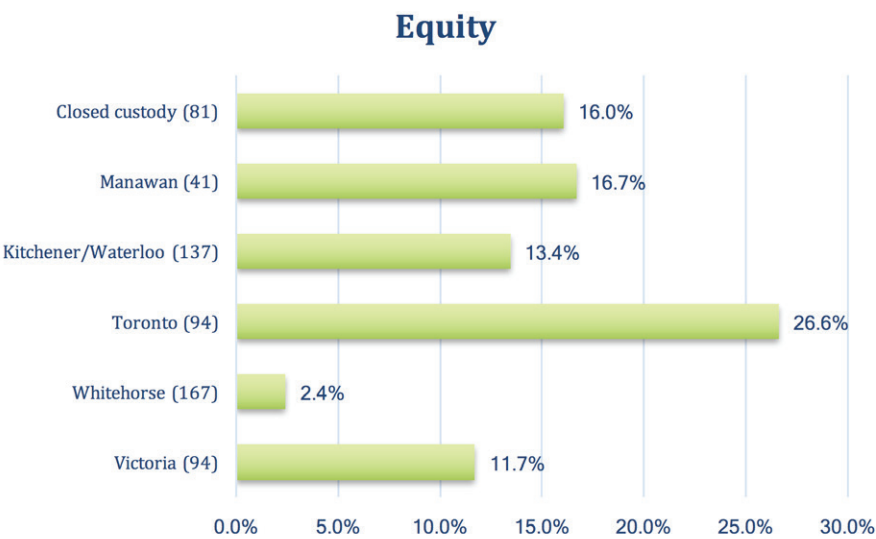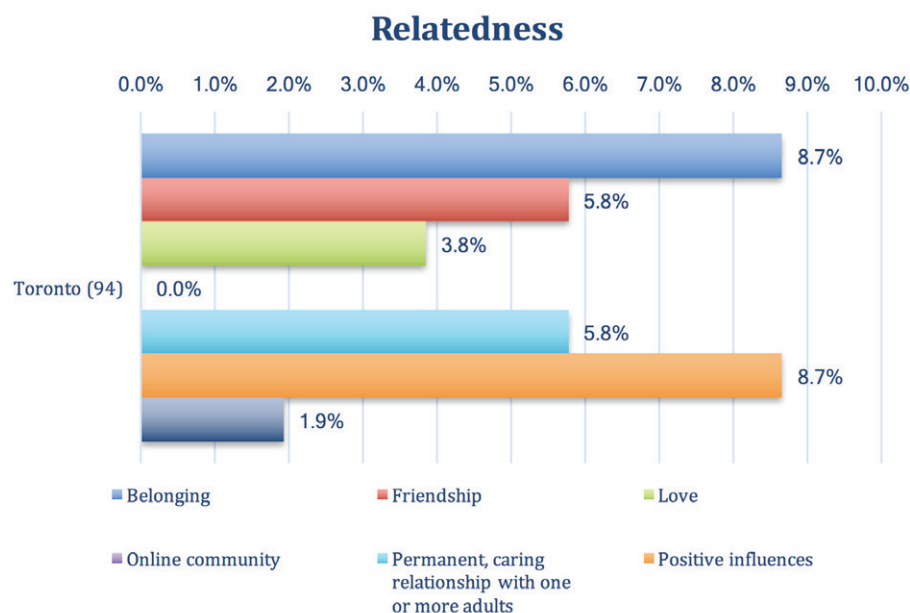
Relatedness

Location	%
Closed custody (81)	16.0%
Manawan (41)	23.8%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	19.4%
Toronto (94)	30.9%
Whitehorse (167)	15.1%
Victoria (94)	8.5%

Takeaway: 30.9% of the Toronto group's themes and indicators of child and youth well-being were linked to relatedness. This was the most frequent of all the locations.

Equity

Location	%
Closed custody (81)	16.0%
Manawan (41)	16.7%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	13.4%
Toronto (94)	26.6%
Whitehorse (167)	2.4%
Victoria (94)	11.7%

Takeaway: In addition to relatedness, the Toronto group had the highest frequency of themes and indicators that fell under equity (26.6%). Youth in the Toronto group discussed various ways in which social norms and interactions can influence your sense of belonging:

Relatedness

Takeaway: The Toronto group had a focus on belonging and positive influences. Youth discussed how family members, peers and other community members can influence your sense of belonging and they might be positive or negative influences.

Kitchener-Waterloo Themes

The Kitchener-Waterloo group used dotmocracy to decide which of the themes from their discussion were the most important to them. They were:

- Money (20)
- Stress (19)
- Lack of opportunity (18)
- Love (16)
- Mental state (16)

Kitchener/Waterloo (137)

Facilitator Notes: The youth in the Kitchener-Waterloo workshop discussed and highlighted the importance of money, love, mental health and access to equal opportunities and safe spaces. They felt that having access to learning opportunities, engagement opportunities and opportunities to enjoy their hobbies were important contributions to their well-being. They also highlighted that having access to safe spaces was important for young people in their communities:

"If some one is involved they
have good mental health."

Youth workshop participant

"Lots of homework without time to do it is
stressful, which affects my well-being."

Youth workshop participant

Youth engagement

Takeaway: Although Kitchener/Waterloo and Whitehorse ascribed similar levels of priority to youth engagement, the breakdown of these domains for the two locations were different. Kitchener/Waterloo placed less of an emphasis on youth activities and more emphasis on community involvement, contribution and youth spaces.

Health

Takeaway: In the health domain, young people in this session most frequently noted emotional health (15.2%) and mental health (8.0%). They described different influences on their mental and emotional health.

Manawan

The Manawan group used dotmocracy to decide which of the themes from their discussion were the most important to them. They were:

- Le respect (26) (respect)
- L'environnement (22) (environment)
- Études (22) (education)
- Le support de la famille (20) (family support)
- Meilleurs alimentations (18) (better nutrition)

Facilitator notes: The youth in the Manawan workshop emphasized the importance of a sense of belonging as well as connection to the environment. They described that having time to go and enjoy nature was really connected to their sense of belonging as well as their well-being. They also highlighted the impact of unaffordable living conditions on their physical health because healthy food is often more expensive than unhealthy alternatives in their community.

> "Plus que tu es en santé, plus tu as une meilleure espérance de vie (The healthier you are, the better your life expectancy)"
>
> **Youth workshop participant**

Affordable living conditions

Location	Percentage
Closed custody (81)	8.6%
Manawan (41)	14.3%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	10.4%
Toronto (94)	6.4%
Whitehorse (167)	3.0%
Victoria (94)	3.2%

Takeaway: Youth in the Manawan session had the highest frequency of themes and indicators which pertained to affordable living conditions. Much of their discussion focused on unaffordable food options and lack of access to extracurricular activities. For example, some of the participants mentioned that their community did not have a basketball court.

Space and Environment

Site	Percentage
Closed custody (81)	2.5%
Manawan (41)	7.1%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	4.5%
Toronto (94)	3.2%
Whitehorse (167)	3.6%
Victoria (94)	0.0%

Takeaway: The Manawan site had the highest frequency of themes related to Space and Environment (7.1%), predominantly rooted in being immersed in nature.

Relatedness

Manawan (41):
- Belonging: 8.3%
- Friendship: 8.3%
- Love: 2.8%
- Online community: 0.0%
- Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults: 11.1%
- Positive influences: 0.0%
- 0.0%

■ Belonging   ■ Friendship   ■ Love

■ Online community   ■ Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults   ■ Positive influences

Takeaway: Manawan had a strong focus on belonging, friendship and having a permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults in their lives. Many of the Manawan participants described their connection with their parents and culture as examples of how relatedness affects their well-being.

> "Beaucoup se compare aux autres et trouvent le moyen de se rabaisser eux-mêmes ce qui met leurs humeur au plus bas. (Lots of people compare themselves to others and find a way to put themselves down, which puts them in a bad mood.)"
>
> Youth workshop participant

48

Victoria

Victoria used a shared decision making process to decide their top three indicators:

• Mental health: More access to youth-friendly mental health support

• Education: Provide students with more control over their education
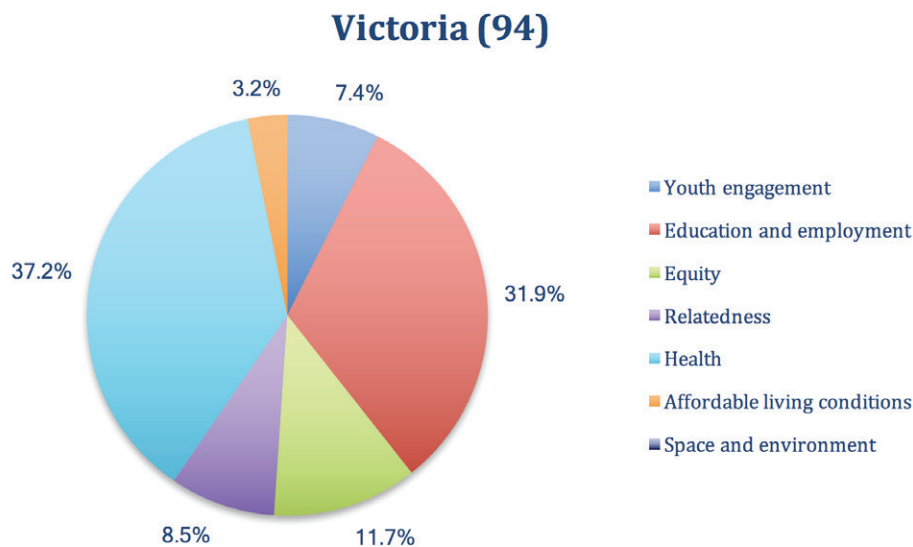
• Substance use: More education on safe substance use

Victoria (94)

Legend:
- Youth engagement
- Education and employment
- Equity
- Relatedness
- Health
- Affordable living conditions
- Space and environment

Values: 3.2%, 7.4%, 31.9%, 11.7%, 8.5%, 37.2%

Facilitator notes: The youth in the Victoria session focused on inclusive education and mental health. They discussed the quality of education and educators (e.g., policies that protected some teachers who are not effective) and the lack of timely, accessible and youth-friendly mental health services that left young people on their own to deal with mental illnesses or mental health issues. They spoke about self-medicating as a way to cope. They also had the most discussion of inclusive education.

Education and employment

Location	Percentage
Closed custody (81)	9.9%
Manawan (41)	7.1%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	9.7%
Toronto (94)	18.1%
Whitehorse (167)	2.4%
Victoria (94)	31.9%

Takeaway: Victoria had the highest number of mentions of education (the nature of relationships and inclusion at school) as having a major influence on their well-being, related to 31.9% of their themes.

Education and employment

Takeaway: Victoria had a large focus on inclusive education with 11.6% of their themes and indicators related to inclusive education.

> "Teachers and other professionals stigmatize and treat youth with mental illness as "sick" or think it's problem behavior."
>
> **Youth workshop participant**

Health

Takeaway: Victoria had a lot of discussion about mental health, substance use and the impact it can have on your physical health. This was supported by discussion about access to appropriate healthcare in the context of substance abuse and mental health. This focus is illustrated in the graph above with access to healthcare, mental health and physical health appearing within 2.8%, 5.2%, and 7.2% of their themes and indicators. Some of the examples of health suggestions included:

"Education about my body – self care, hygiene."

Youth workshop participant

"More access to mental health support."

Youth workshop participant

"Comprehensive sexual, gender education (safety, relationships, abuse, loneliness, co-dependence)."

Youth workshop participant

Closed Custody

The closed custody group used dotmocracy to decide which of the themes from their discussion were the most important to them. They were:

• Correctional officer brutality (13)   • Working out (7)   • Youth engagement activities (7)

• Employment (7)   • Learning life and job skills while in custody (6)

Closed custody (81)

- 2.5%
- 8.6%
- 19.8%
- 9.9%
- 27.2%
- 16.0%
- 16.0%

Legend:
- Youth engagement
- Education and employment
- Equity
- Relatedness
- Health
- Affordable living conditions
- Space and environment

Facilitator notes: The youth in the closed custody facility focused predominantly on equity with respect to justice and law enforcement. They spoke passionately about the ineffectiveness of probation, the lack of flexibility in probationary orders and the lack employment opportunities for young people with records. These conditions make

it difficult to find alternatives to crime as a means to live and many of the youth described feeling as though the criminal justice system sets them up for perpetual failure. The young people voiced a sense of hopelessness:

"What is this actually going to change."

Youth workshop participant

"This doesn't matter because it's not going change."

Youth workshop participant

Healthy and safe sex was another major topic of discussion (e.g., safe sex, STIs).

Note: Due to the strong and specific subtheme of justice and law enforcement within this group's discussions, it was separated from discrimination in the following graph. Law enforcement and justice was included under the theme discrimination for the final results tables in the appendices.

Youth engagement

Location	Percentage
Closed custody (81)	19.8%
Manawan (41)	14.3%
Kitchener/Waterloo (137)	13.4%
Toronto (94)	5.3%
Whitehorse (167)	13.9%
Victoria (94)	7.4%

Takeaway: Youth in the closed custody facility had the largest focus on youth engagement (19.8%). They cited having access to youth activities such as working out, gym time and youth programming inside the facility as very important.

Equity

Closed custody (81)

- 2.9%
- 14.7%
- 0.0%
- 0.0%
- 0.0%

■ Respect ■ Justice & law enforcement ■ Diversity ■ Discrimination ■ Access to equal opportunities

Takeaway: The majority of the closed custody group's equity themes and indicators pertained to justice and law enforcement (14.7%). Examples of things they felt affected their well-being included a desire to be treated better by the correctional officers and feeling like the laws that apply to those who have served time set them up for failure.

Health

Closed custody (81)

- 5.9%
- 1.5%
- 2.9%
- 10.3%
- 0.0%
- 1.5%

■ Access to appropriate healthcare ■ Emotional health

■ Mental health ■ Physical health

■ Spiritual health ■ Sexual and reproductive health

Takeaway: For the closed custody group, they identified that working out played a large role in their health. This can be seen in the graph above, which illustrates that their health-related themes were primarily focused on physical health.

The closed custody group described health as:

"Fitness + mental health & wealth + friends."

Youth workshop participant

They also suggested that in working to improve health for young people,

"Young teens should not pay for clinical treatment."

Youth workshop participant

Appendix E: Youth Well-being Workshops Overall Results by Site

Domains & themes	Victoria (94)	Whitehorse (167)	Toronto (94)	Kitchener/ Waterloo (137)	Manawan (41)	Closed custody (81)	All Workshops (856)	YDM national youth conference (242)	Review of 25 years of youth voice (367)
Youth engagement	**7**	**23**	**5**	**18**	**6**	**16**	**75**	**32**	**129**
Community involvement and contribution	2	0	1	5	0	0	8	1	21
Youth activities	2	23	2	9	5	12	53	19	41
Youth spaces	1	0	0	2	1	0	4	10	27
Youth voice in decision-making	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	8	40
Education and employment	**30**	**4**	**17**	**13**	**3**	**8**	**75**	**27**	**43**
Employment	1	0	3	1	1	5	11	11	18
Future opportunities	0	2	7	3	0	0	12	2	
Inclusive education	29	2	9	8	2	2	52	18	25
Equity	**11**	**4**	**25**	**18**	**7**	**13**	**78**	**41**	**37**
Discrimination	3	1	11	5	1	10	31	27	23
Diversity	3	0	1	1	0	0	5	9	14
Respect	4	3	6	3	3	2	21	6	
Relatedness	**8**	**25**	**29**	**26**	**10**	**13**	**111**	**43**	**103**
Belonging	5	12	9	5	3	0	34	15	48
Friendship	1	3	6	7	3	4	24	7	15
Love	0	1	4	3	1	0	9	3	
Online community	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	6	
Permanent, caring relationship with one or more adults	0	3	6	5	4	1	19	11	40
Social interaction	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	1	
Health	**35**	**99**	**9**	**39**	**7**	**22**	**211**	**47**	**33**
Access to appropriate healthcare	7	2	0	1	1	4	15	17	7
Mental health	13	57	7	27	1	3	108	13	20
Physical health	18	25	1	3	3	7	57	4	
Spiritual health	0	19	0	3	0	0	22	1	
Sexual and reproductive health	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	11	6
Affordable living conditions	**3**	**5**	**6**	**14**	**6**	**7**	**41**	**44**	**22**
Food	1	4	0	3	3	1	12	12	11
Housing	1	0	0	2	0	1	4	12	11
Money and economic opportunity	1	0	6	6	1	4	18	3	
Public Resources [Wifi, parks,etc.]	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	
Transportation	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	11	
Space and environment	**0**	**6**	**3**	**6**	**3**	**2**	**20**	**5**	**0**
Nature/environment	0	5	0	2	3	2	12	0	
Positive environment /living conditions	0	0	0	3	0	1	4	3	
Supportive community	0	1	3	0	0	0	4	2	

Appendix F: Youth Well-being Workshop Facilitator Guide

Workshop length: 3 hours

Facilitator Best Practices

The following are some best practices on how to create a safe space to keep in mind throughout the workshop with additional resources to help guide you.

A few preparation questions to ask yourself and keep in mind while you are running your workshop:

1) Does everyone already know each other and are you familiar with the group dynamic?

2) Do most participants know each other and are there a few participants who are new to the group that could feel isolated?

3) Is this a brand new group where a few may know each other but most are meeting for the first time?

Learning Names: It is important before any workshop to get to know your participants. A big part of that is learning their names. Before beginning the workshop, make sure to informally introduce yourself and have each participant introduce their name. Find ways to have the youth do the same; try playing quick, fun and engaging name games.

Reveal: Ask the members in the group to introduce themselves by saying their names and telling what one (visible) article of clothing/object reveals about them. (For example, I'm Robin and these sneakers reveal how boring I am because I wear them every single day, or I'm Max and this shirt reveals how organized I am because I knew I would be wearing it four days ago.)

The Story of my Name: Where does your name come from? Each member of the group says their name and shares the story of where your name comes from and what it means. The story could be true or made up. Everyone has to guess if it's true or not. (e.g., My name is Layla and my name means night. I was named after a song my mother loved.)

Name Roulette: To play this game you need to form two equal circles, one inside the other. Set the circles up so one person from each circle is physically standing back to back to one member from the other circle. (Use a spot on the ground to mark the spot

for each circle.) These circles both start moving in clockwise motion, ensuring each member of the circle passes through the "spot". Facilitator will call stop. At that point the people on each spot must turn around and face each other. The person who names the other first wins that round and the "loser" joins the other circle.

Name & Action: Go around the circle and say your name and an action that starts with the first letter you your name (e.g., Louis Laugh). Then the next person will say their name and action. To make it harder, the next person can say their name and the names of the previous people introduced.

Alternative ways to participate: Providing participants options to write things down ensures that everyone's voice is heard. Some people aren't comfortable voicing their experiences, thoughts and opinions out loud; providing them with an alternative platform for their voice to be heard is a great way to ensure they feel safe and accepted.

Fidget tools: You can put together bins that have fidget tools such as playdoh, slinkys, etc. to give participants something to do with their hands, while still staying focused at their tables.

Additional Resources:

- http://www.studentscommission.ca/blueprint/fourpillars_e.php
- http://www.studentscommission.ca/blueprint/safespace_e.php
- http://www.studentscommission.ca/blueprint/pdf/PosDevSettings_e.pdf
- http://amandafenton.com/2015/03/what-creates-safe-enough-space/
- https://sty.presswarehouse.com/sites/stylus/resrcs/chapters/1579229743_otherchap.pdf
- http://geneq.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/Brave%20Space%20Guidelines.pdf
- Getting to Yes and Difficult Conversation

Introduction, Check-In, 4 Pillars, Group Guidelines

Introduction

- Introduce all the facilitators, the organization(s) and the purpose of today's activities.
- Facilitators must introduce themselves in a respectful manner and show that they are on the same level as participants and that this is a partnership.

Check In

Using a check-in is a great way to get young people to feel comfortable with the people in the room. It provides a platform to express feelings, needs, etc. and ensures that everyone in the room is on the same page. Here are some examples of check-in questions:

- How are you feeling?
- Preferred gender pronouns
- Accessibility needs
- Something interesting about yourself
- Rose, bud, thorn
- Highlight/lowlight
- Something you're looking forward to
- What are you hoping to get out of today's workshop?

An interesting question, examples may be:

- Favourite food
- Most adventurous thing you've ever done
- Favourite summer memory
- (Create own)

4 Pillars

Introduce the four pillars (feel free to customize how the pillars are presented to your comfort).

The Students Commission operates on four pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™. These are our core values and our core process.

Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™ create the foundation for taking action to improve lives and society.

Respect: The Students Commission of Canada begins with respect. First, respect for young people, their idealism, their hope and their capacity to improve the world. Second, respect for the gift that each person carries within. We believe that by creating conditions of respect we enhance the capacity of people to work together and improve their lives and the lives others. Respect means respect for diversity and an effort to strive for diversity of people and experiences and expertise in we do. Respect means actively seeking and valuing the gifts and experiences of all those with whom we work and live. Respect means reciprocity - that each person is an equal partner in our work respect means youth and adults working collaboratively as equals. Respect means that we have "commissioned" youth to carry out their hopes and dreams for a better world, and that as an organization we will facilitate, support, and assist them to our best capacity.

Listen: With respect as our foundation, we learn to listen. We listen not just with our ears, but with our heads, hearts and all our senses. We listen actively, intensely, not just to words, but to silences, to deeds, to experiences. We listen to the spoken word, the written word, the image. We listen to learn, to gather information, to enhance our capacity to give and to receive. We listen to learn, to gather information, to enhance our capacity to give and to receive. We listen to youth as experts, and we gather other information, other voices to ensure diversity. We listen because we are curious, because as people and as organization we are constantly growing and changing through the input of others. We listen to truly understand who others are.

Understand: To understand is to go beyond listening, to process what we have heard. Understanding creates new knowledge, new skills. If we truly understand who others are, and who we are, we can work together as equals, valuing difference and building upon similarities and common goals. We understand the problems each of us face, and the hopes and aspirations each of us has. Understanding creates the conditions for working effectively together.

Communicate: If people really understand each other, they can communicate – our fourth pillar. When people truly communicate, the obstacles fall away. Communication is the first action and creates the process for developing and taking all the actions we need to take, as individuals and as an organization to achieve our goals and dreams. With communication, we create action plans and implement them with practical projects that make a positive difference.

With communication, we continue to reaffirm the respect and trust we have for each other and create the relationships with others who can help us achieve our goals.

So the expectations for all of us, no matter what our ages, are:

- That we take care of each other and work together so that all participants have a great time! That we ensure that all participants get an opportunity to contribute.
- That all participants and facilitators be treated with respect.
- That we understand that our personal conduct will affect the forum outcome, positively or negatively.
- That the use of alcohol and/or mind-altering drugs by anyone of any age gets in the way of true communication and action and is not acceptable while at the forum.
- That we wear our name tags where they are visible so we can get to know each other better.
- That we respect our hosts and leave the facilities as we found them on arrival.
- That we report all sickness, injury and concerns to our facilitators.
- That we abide by the Students Commission's four pillars: **Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™**

Group Guidelines
This is an opportunity for the group to build a set of guidelines for the engagement opportunity. Remember that group guidelines are not an ¬enforced set of rules, but should serve as "community norms" to help safely guide the discussion. There are many ways to build group guidelines; some examples include:

a. A facilitator records on a piece of chart paper and asks the group, popcorn style what they would like to have as group guidelines.

b. Pass around quote cards and have participants write/draw what they would like to see as group guidelines and build a group guideline wall. The Facilitator would read them out and have the participants do a gallery walk of the guidelines.

Some Questions to help guide the discussion building group guidelines may be:

- Thinking about the 4 pillars, what are some guidelines that we will need so that can we work together today?
- What does Respect look like?
- What does Listen look like?
- What does Understand look like?
- What does Communicate look like?

Ice Breaker

Giants, Wizards and Elves
Split the group into 2 teams, designate 2 safety zones - one on each team's side- and designate a middle area.

Each team then gets in a huddle and picks what they want to be as a team - a giant, a wizard or an elf.

Giants put their hands up over their heads & growl, wizards put their hands our straight in front of them wiggling their fingers & casting a spell, and elves make pointy ears on their head with their pointer fingers.

Once the teams have decided their character they want to be, they come up to the center spot and line up face-to-face, then on a count of 3, everyone does whatever action their team picked. Giants beat elves, elves beat wizards and wizards beat giants, so the team that beats the winning team chases the other and tries to tag as many members on the other team as possible before they reach the safety zone. The members from the team that get tagged become a part of the other team. Repeat until all players are on one side.

Knight, Horses and Claviers
Have the group pair up.

The partners split off to opposite sides of the playing area. One side forms a circle, then their partners stand behind them in an outer circle.

The inner circle rotates clockwise, and the outer circle rotates counterclockwise. The leader yells out either "knight", "horse", or "cavalier".

"Knight" means that one partner gets down on one knee and the other partner sits on his/her exposed knee. "Horse" means that one partner gets down on all fours and the other partner sits on his/her back.

"Cavalier" means that one partner picks the other partner up in the style of a groom carrying the bride over the threshold, or they can just lift one leg.

When one of these positions is called out, the partners have to scramble to find their partners and assume said position. The last pair to do so is out, and so it goes until there is a winning team.

Step 1: Studying Issues (Activity A)
Youth first examine what they know about the issue starting from their own experiences, then the experiences of peers and from existing research. During this phase, young people will participate in activity-based reflection about their own experiences related to their health and well-being. They will explore what well-being means to them, what contributes or harms their well-being, and what they would suggest as indicators, through group activities, brainstorms and discussion. Once they have had a chance to contribute from their own experiences, they will also have the opportunity to review the well-being domains identified by young people over the past two decades, and/or existing UNICEF child well-being indicators. Facilitators will engage young people in conversations about the importance of measuring and monitoring well-being.

Introduction
In UNICEF's Index of Child and Youth Well-being, young people in Canada rated their well-being and happiness low in relation to youth in other rich countries. In response, UNICEF Canada has initiated the development of a Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being to better understand and monitor young people's well-being. Existing indicators have been developed, but we wanted to provide young people with an opportunity to have their voices heard and be a part of this process. This workshop gives youth an opportunity to tell us what indicators they believe should be used to measure well-being in Canada.

Group Discussion
Divide participants into 5 groups and give each group an Activity A Handout.

Group Instructions:
- Read quotes
- Discuss using discussion questions
- Record answers
- Prepare to share back in a creative way

Participants will have approximately 15 minutes to discuss and then they will share back their thoughts with the large group in a creative way. Walk around the room, ask questions, and support groups when needed.

Large Group: Present Back
Once each group is finished, have them present back their findings creatively.

Large Group Discussion Questions:
1. What are some things that contribute to well-being that weren't in the quotes?
2. Do you notice any similarities or differences in the quotes?
3. Did anything about this activity or your discussions surprise you? Why?

Step 2: Discussing Issues (Activity B)
Youth then discuss the issue, identifying common themes and comparing and contrasting their experiences with others'. While the first stage is reflective, this stage builds ideas. Based on their own experiences, youth might agree or disagree with existing domains and indicators, adapt some or add new ones to reflect their realities.

Large Group:
Explain that in small groups, participants will discuss and generate a list key indicators of youth well-being. These key indicators will come from a variety of different experiences throughout different peoples' lives. Having different points of view will make it easier to identify different types of indicators.

Facilitator Notes:
By "health" we mean much more than physical health, we mean overall well-being. This includes community, engagement, education, our environment, access to leisure activities, living standards, etc.

Indicator: something that…
- Affects how well a young person is doing, how happy a young person is, or;
- Something that can help us measure youth well-being
- Examples: money, food, education, racism, etc…

Small Group Discussion

1. Split participants up into 5 groups

2. Hand out Activity B Handout to each group

3. Hand out markers, an assortment of coloured quote cards, and 3 RED quote cards

4. Ask participants to discuss the questions and generate a list of factors related to youth health and well-being

5. Remind participants to use ONE quote card per indicator

6. Each group will choose and record their TOP THREE indicators on red quote cards

7. Each group will share back their top three indicators, making a pitch to "sell" their indicators to the group

8. We will use the remaining indicators in Step 4

Large Group

On the wall, set up the **7** Categories and discuss where they came from with the group

1. Youth Engagement

2. Relatedness

3. Education and Employment

4. Equity

5. Health and Safety

6. Affordable Living Conditions

7. Other

Explain the following to ensure participants understand the purpose of the activity:

• These domains and indicators emerged from research from the past 20 years

• This research involved various ways of collecting youth voice on what was important to their wellbeing

• The reason we are doing these workshops is to make sure they are still relevant and that they resonate with youth today…and add/remove some if needed

Each group will pitch their top three indicators and post them on the wall under the appropriate heading

If one doesn't fit into a category, they can post it in the Other category

Step 3: Decision Making: Dotmocracy

The decision making process will help turn the discussions that were had into recommendations that will then be used to inform policy makers in our communities. We will use dotmocracy as a decision-making tool so young people can prioritize the indicators (e.g., top 10 list), and build recommendations.

1. Hand out 10 dot stickers to each young person

2. Ask participants to use their dots to vote on which red indicators they think are the most important

3. They can put them all on 1 because they really like it or they can scatter their dots

4. Once all dots are done, tally up the results to determine the top 10 indicators

Step 4: Organize Index

1. Have the large group determine which category the remaining indicators from Step 2 go

2. If an indicator doesn't fit under a theme, they can group them in the "Other" category

3. If debates arise, facilitate the conversations until the group comes to an agreement as to where the indicator fits

Facilitator Questions to support the discussion:

Imagine that we're tracking these indicators, and that we want to see improvement over time…

• What do we want to see change?

• What do we want to track over time?

• Is there anything missing?

Facilitator Note:

What is on the wall represents the Index that your group came up with. Please capture this Index effectively.

Step 5: Inform Policy Makers: Dear Policy Maker

At the end of each session, young people have the option of writing a letter to policy makers who make decisions that affect youth well-being and/or decisions about how youth well-being is monitored in Canada. Youth will also have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation survey hosted on the Sharing the Stories website to provide some basic information about themselves, feedback about the session and any other comments they want to share about youth well-being.

Young people have the option of writing a letter to policy makers who make decisions that affect youth well-being and/or decisions about how youth well-being is monitored in Canada.

1. Ask participants to write on top of their letter Dear Policy Maker,

2. Have them express their recommendations about how policy makers can make the best decisions on youth well-being or about how youth well-being is monitored.

3. Collect the letters.

Check-Out, Honoraria, Evaluation

Checkouts are a good way to see how people are feeling at the end of the session. It is also an opportunity for reflection on the day. Some examples of a check out question are:

• Share your name and:

• How are you feeling?

• Something new you learned?

• What will you be taking back with you?

• Something interesting you learned today?

Young people at the community sessions will be compensated for their time and contributions with an honorarium ($20/person).

Please have them fill out and sign the honoraria forms and a Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit sheet.

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