



Summary of Recommendations & Next Steps

Friday, October 27, 2017

Notes

The following report has been prepared for the Youth Futures Council based upon the information gathered from participants of the YDAY activities and discussions. Trends and key topics which were discussed over the course of the day have been combined to reduce duplication within the report.



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Youth Participant Profile

- Largest age group was 21 - 25 year olds (43% of all registrants), those aged 31 to 35 made up the smallest group (12%).
- Only 16% registered for YDAY 2017 had attended YDAY 2016.
- 63% of registrants live in Charlottetown, remaining 37 % from across PEI
- 21% self-identified as newcomers to Canada, 27.5% as a visible minority, 5% as member of the Indigenous community, 20% as a member of the LGBTQ community and 8% as a person with a disability.
- 51% indicated they were not currently a student, 22.2% said they were full-time post-secondary students, 14.5% were high school students
- 68% had completed/ were pursuing a Bachelor's degree, 17% had completed/were enrolled in a college program, 15% had completed/were pursuing a Master's degree.
- 36% of participants were employed full-time, 29% employed part-time and 13% self-employed. 10% indicated they were unemployed, 3% identified as being underemployed.

Government Programs and Services

- 25% were unaware of the 32 programs/services listed in the survey
- 50% had not accessed 81% of the programs/services designed for youth
- The programs/services that the MOST registrants were UNAWARE of but wanted to learn more about were: Adventure Group (35%), New Graduate Employment Guarantee Program (31%), SYnC Youth Internship Programs (30%) Program, Futurpreneur (29%), and Skills PEI's Training PEI Program (27%)

Youth Involvement & Perceptions

- 47% indicated they were not currently involved with an organization that had a youth-focus. The PEI Newcomers Association of Canada had the largest percent of involvement from participants (14%)
- The top 3 themes youth wanted to get involved in were: Education to employment (50%); Entrepreneurship (43%); Newcomers and Diversity (37%)
- 72% do not believe that there are enough job opportunities in different fields in PEI.

Issues That Matter to Youth

- Lack of Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Lack of career development
- Curricula is outdated
- Lack of exposure to the entrepreneurial mindset and risk aversion
- Lack of mentorship opportunities in entrepreneurship
- Unaffordable housing for youth in PEI
- Limited infrastructure in rural PEI
- Young newcomers finding it difficult to obtain meaningful employment in government
- PEI Cultural Strategy
- Lack of LGBTQ identity; services are not inclusive enough.
- Improving processes within Efficiency PEI
- Place of youth in society and representation in decision making
- Underrepresentation of youth in decision-making
- Government information is not reaching youth - style and manner not adapted to youth
- Youth Repatriation
- Youth are not sufficiently healthy in our schools
- Youth Poverty
- Youth Mental Health



Education to Employment

Lack of Experiential Learning Opportunities

Students are unprepared for the workforce and are lacking the practical experiences that help to ease the transition into career-oriented jobs. Experiential learning incorporates lectures and course material into applicable skills and hands-on experience. This style of learning allows students to apply their knowledge and skills dynamically.

Recommendation #1: The government should create and establish an experiential learning framework for the Province that would provide experiential learning opportunities to high school and PSE students, in every field of study.

"I think there needs to be more support to youth transitioning out of care. They need more support with life skills, planning and motivation. They need to know that they do have a bright future and the steps they can take to get there."

Proposed Next Steps:

- Expand co-op program through placement coordination and wage subsidies
- Create a mentorship matchmaking program
- Flexible learning opportunities
- Soft skills and real life experiences taught in school
- Collaboration between stakeholders, including community organizations, government, education institutions and industry

Education to Employment

Lack of Career Development

“We need to bridge the gap between the real world and the school world.”

Youth feel as though there is limited connection to employers within the workplace. Students lack the resources and mentorship to assist in career planning and professional development and do not know where to find programs/resources. Youth want to see a new narrative about the relationship between education and careers.

Recommendation #2: Build a pilot program that focuses on potential future fields of employment, in order to build new narratives about the relationship between education and career. Develop job fairs directed towards young adults and to better promote the programs and services already available for youth.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Curate a list of programs to be distributed to students.
- Incentivize employers to hire graduates in the private sector
- Create mentorship program that includes mentee/mentor matchmaking.
- Deliver information sessions on how to be a mentee/mentor.
- Explore best practices of mentorship programs.
- Better promotion of programs/services that support youth employment.

Education to Employment

Curricula is outdated

The current public school curriculum does not provide resources on soft-skills and other applicable professional traits that students need to succeed when entering postgraduate programs or the workforce.

With Millennials making up a large percentage of the workforce and continuing to enter the workforce, curriculums should be emphasizing the knowledge gaps in professional skills and personal development.

Recommendation #3: A curricula change. Use technology to increase collaborative learning. Increase professional development to ease transition to employment. Teachers and students need to adapt to technological changes.

“Our curriculum is not relevant to the modern realities nor is it reflective of our diversity.”

Proposed Next Steps:

- Regular review of curriculum by department of education and Workplace and Advanced Learning on an ongoing basis while integrating labor market and industry input.
- A regular review of curriculum, to implement changes on the curriculum - such as technology advances, emphasis on soft skills, cultural acceptance in classrooms
- The curriculum should integrate future planning into learning, so that every student has a tentative plan when they graduate from high school. This will increase perceived preparedness and students will be better equipped to manage the transition.
- To instruct teachers on the value of collaborative learning through technological advances in the classroom, by using PO days to educate teachers.
- Increase emphasis on life skills (financial literacy, communication, and professionalism).
- An introduction to computer science within a two year time frame, implemented for primary and secondary curriculum.

Entrepreneurship

Lack of exposure to the entrepreneurial mindset and risk aversion.

“I want to live in a Province that celebrates entrepreneurial thinking and creativity because that’s the world I’m heading into.”

Youth feel discouraged from taking risks in the entrepreneurial space, because they lack exposure to alternative career paths and options. Youth often view failure as a negative consequence and not a learning experience, therefore are discouraged from pursuing unconventional careers that produce uncertainty. Expectations of measurements of success need to be adjusted and to be instilled and reinforced through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.

Recommendation #4: To promote calculated risk-taking through K-12, by celebrating failure as a learning experience and connect entrepreneurs with students.

Proposed Next Steps:

- To promote risk taking to students through workshops, classes, seminars, mentorship programs, etc.
- Create entrepreneurship classes.
- Integrate entrepreneur lectures into the current high school curriculum. Create a mentorship program for young entrepreneurs with existing organizations (e.g. PEIBWA, Startup Zone, Island advance, etc.)
- Create a scholarship for young entrepreneurs immediately after graduating high school with funding from donors and government.

Entrepreneurship

Lack of mentorship opportunities in entrepreneurship

We need to ensure youth have the skillset to adapt to a dynamic environment. PEI's youth lack the professional resources to have an entrepreneurial mindset and are not introduced to innovative thinking. Youth require mentors who are entrepreneurs, which would instill confidence, self-efficacy, and reinforce entrepreneurship as a viable career option.

Recommendation #5: Increase investment into introductory entrepreneurial training programs to develop professional skills and entrepreneurship.

Proposed Next Steps:

- A reciprocal mentorship program for young entrepreneurs put on by a collaborative group of entrepreneurs/business organizations (e.g. the chambers, PEIBWA, Startup Zone, Island Advance, etc)
- To create programs and events to connect young entrepreneurs and businesses looking for succession plans
- Create a "startup" accelerator during the summer with financial compensation upon program completion
- Hold pitch competitions to engage youth



Infrastructure/Urban & Rural Development

Unaffordable housing for youth in PEI.

“There needs to be affordable housing options for young people to live. It is a basic need that everyone should be entitled to.” - YDay Participant

Livelihood is negatively impacted by poor housing due to the lack of affordable options. Alongside high student debt, youth in PEI face challenges in accessing affordable housing. With the cost of living at a high level, youth are forced to settle with unsafe, unacceptable housing. Safe, affordable housing is a basic necessity that must be addressed. The high cost of housing maintains youth poverty.

Recommendation #6: Increase safe, affordable housing options for youth in PEI.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Review of the tenant/landlord act
- Incentives to be developed and offered to landowners and developers to create affordable housing as soon as possible.
- Create a centralized registry (online & physical office) of available rental property options and resources by private landlords, government and realtors
- Provide more options for safe housing for those in recovery of mental health and addictions
- Government should provide housing subsidies

Infrastructure/Urban & Rural Development

Limited infrastructure in rural PEI

There is tremendous economic and cultural value in rural Prince Edward Island to the province as a whole. Many challenges are facing our rural regions and endangering the future well-being of the province and the perception of PEI.

In particular, Rural PEI is in need of better infrastructure in different areas, such as internet, education, roads, transit, health care, etc. For example, internet offered in rural PEI is of poor quality with high costs.

Recommendation #7: Improvements to infrastructure (internet, schools/education, healthcare, transportation, daycares, roads, lighting and signage).

“People do not want to live in a community where schools could be closed anytime.”

Proposed Next Steps

- Improved internet for rural PEI, offering subsidies for rural businesses to get high quality of internet
- Offer subsidies to companies to improve services - schools, health care, transportation, daycares - in rural areas
- To improve the conversation in rural PEI
- Focus on a rural health plan, with education on what Islanders in rural areas really need
- Better roadways, with lighting and signage in rural areas in order to help tourists and newcomers to find their way.
- Renew support for schools and daycares.
- Expand education offered in rural schools (seek instructors who could encourage employment opportunities in rural PEI)
- Improving conversations on rural PEI by promoting notable stories and community events.



Diversity & Newcomers

Young newcomers finding it difficult to obtain meaningful employment in government

According to information gathered by the table discussions, newcomers programs are not well advertised, they are also not taking the jobs that are in demand, and there is a lack of connections between newcomers and potential employers.

Recommendation #8: The government of PEI should take measures to include diverse populations in the decision-making culture, cultural projects, investments, etc.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Task force to identify employers
- Initiatives to encourage employers to get on board to support and hire immigrants
- To encourage newcomers to work and invest in primary industries
- More internship programs focused on youth
- Continue government programs which foster experiential learning



"We need to do a better job of ensuring our "newcomers" are treated like "Islanders" and have equal access to opportunity."

Diversity & Newcomers

PEI Cultural Strategy

According to information gathered by the table discussions, our current approach to culture is stale/dated/shallow, our creative industries (arts + culture) are not given same weight, credit, merit, investment as other industries.

It was also mentioned that the Island culture isn't reflective of enough diversity.

Recommendation #9: The government of PEI should take measures to include diverse populations in the decision-making culture, cultural projects, investments, etc.

"We want to see the Cultural Strategy immediately."



Proposed Next Steps:

- Release the cultural strategy immediately
- Empower new, different people to take part in the decision making process, including youth and diverse cultural voices.
- Invest more in all sorts of cultural, arts projects.
- Calculate and recognize the economic output of the creative industries
- Provide funding to relevant organizations and groups.
- Support and facilitate involvement, engage new groups

Diversity & newcomers

Lack of LGBTQ identity; services are not inclusive enough.

According to information gathered by the table discussions, participants feel that the population will not grow if the LGBTQ population keep leaving the province.

There's a concern that the bullying and the homophobia will not get better, unless there is a change. Another issue highlighted is that people do not feel included.

Recommendation #10: There's a need for the government to put a LGBTQ lens on front line services, by offering diversity training, and reviewing existing policies.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Create a LGBTQ identity on PEI by implementing a LGBTQ secretariat
- Diversity training for frontline service providers
- Incorporate LGBTQ culture into education system
- To change and standardize the curriculum in school systems



“We have to stop lumping LGBTQ with “other minorities”. We need to look at what the LGBTQ community’s specific needs are and address them.”

Civic Engagement

Improving the process of Efficiency PEI

Youth in PEI care about reducing the Province's carbon footprint by reduction in Co2 emissions and energy consumption. The PEI Office of Energy Efficiency is one way in which this can be achieved.

However, one of the main issues that youth (and the broader population) face is that the programs are too difficult to access notably because of the technical format of the website and overly bureaucratic processes.

Recommendation #11: Increase accessibility to programs and services offered by the Office of Energy Efficiency.

"The process for applying to Efficiency PEI is not accessible and not simple. I would like to see a more streamlined process."

Proposed Next Steps:

- Improve accessibility to PEI Energy Efficiency programs
- Make application easier
- Ability to apply online
- Talk to youth

Civic Engagement

Underrepresentation of youth in decision-making

“I think it’s time that we break the stereotypes around youth's age and what they bring to the table”

Even though they have a different perspective on the world and on issues than older generations, youth's opinions are often undervalued. Youth want the opportunity to express their solutions in a safe environment where they can be key contributors to building the PEI of tomorrow.

PEI's youth have yet to find their role in society and how they are perceived is detrimental to how they are viewed in formalized positions. Youth have diverse backgrounds, which adds meaningful points and value to discussions.

Recommendation #12: Increase access to formal positions in which youth can contribute to productive discussion around issues.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Add more voting seats for youth on existing agencies, boards and commissions
- Better youth involvement and input to the development of youth-related programs
- Youth Futures Council to invite more youth to council meetings.
- Conversations between young entrepreneurs/leaders and leading thinkers of the past generation.
- Continue creating initiatives like YDAY, organizations like YFC.
- Bring local youth council/groups together for a united voice.
- Connect youth with mentors, promoting the value of youth to employers/organizations.

Civic Engagement

Government information is not reaching youth; style and manner not adapted to youth

There's a gap between the programs the government is offering and the programs youth are accessing, due to communications issues.

25% of YDay participants did not know about the 32 programs listed on the survey.

50% haven't accessed 81% of the programs.

Recommendation #13: The PEI government should review and modify communications practices to best meet the information consumption habits of youth.

"PEI has so many opportunities, but like stats said not many people knew about them, so clearly there needs to be more publicity"

Proposed Next Steps:

- Change the way the government interacts and communicates with youth
- More focus on social media movements.
- More apprenticeships and youth councils.
- Create an accessible/easy to use hub of information - one platform for all involvement info.

Foundational Issues

Youth Repatriation

According to information gathered by the table discussions, youth that have left PEI have little intention of returning because they are not aware of the benefits of living on PEI.

Also, when youth are leaving PEI to pursue post-secondary studies they are not being encouraged to return after they've completed their education.

Recommendation #14: Update strategy for youth retention and repatriation.

Connectivity is key. PEI is full of opportunities and awareness is easier to foster

Proposed Next Steps:

- Create a formal, robust, honest campaign to encourage people to return home to PEI! Give people the push they need to repatriate
- Position PEI as a desirable place for youth in a genuine, positive way that builds on the strengths of the Island (e.g. its smallness)
- Improve communication of existing programs and supports available to encourage the return of youth to PEI after their studies. A lot of off-Island youth are unaware of supports and services that already exist.

Foundational Issues

Youth are not sufficiently healthy in our schools

“There needs to be More awareness of links between mental and physical health”

Youth in the province should be healthier. Knowledge of nutrition is lacking at a young age, mental and physical health initiatives. Throughout school years, there is not enough emphasis on mental health and addictions issues. It is important to take into consideration that mental and physical health influence each other.

Recommendation #15: The government needs to provide the right tools for mental health issues.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Create more opportunities for physical activities that are non-sports related
- Expand definition of physical activity, offer alternative activities (yoga, cycling, rowing)
- Provide more food and nutrition education earlier in the school curriculum, bringing nutritionists into schools



Foundational Issues

Youth Poverty

Without sufficient financial resources, youth have greater difficulty achieving their potential and are often excluded from many extracurricular activities and often have trouble accessing post-secondary education. This can affect youths' sense of self-worth and social inclusion. Youth need stability and access to services. Currently, the demand exceeds availability .

It was brought up that issues include breaking down silos and navigating the system. A better educated workforce equates to a more prosperous economy.

Recommendation #16: Provide more resources for students to access to encourage post-secondary education.

Proposed Next Steps:

- Joint approach to be initiated by various government levels to counteract the effects of poverty
- Implementing a needs-based program system to support students from lower-income families - see models of New Brunswick and Ontario in providing grants to students under a certain family income level as a model for PEI
- Differentiated aid amounts for students going into Universities/Colleges in a low income household through George Coles Island Awards, with it being effective in the next two years.
- Contact all stakeholders and initiate a joint-approach on topics specified @ YDAY.

“Underemployment is a major concern when you have a crippling student debt - It will likely take me double or triple the time to pay it off because I am underemployed.”

Foundational Issues

Youth Mental Health

Youth are suffering from undiagnosed mental health issues which is limiting their ability to live a productive and fulfilling life, as they may be unable to keep a job or unable to maintain professional and personal relationships, etc.

Many students have trouble accessing services off-campus. Part of the issue is that they are unaware of programs and services. The programs are not accessible enough.

There is a stigma attached to mental health. Normalizing the need for mental health support is key.

There are issues specific to International students as well. They are scared to come forward with mental health struggles (fear of being sent home). Mental health should get equal attention as physical health.

Recommendation #17: Improve access to mental health and improve mental health support services.

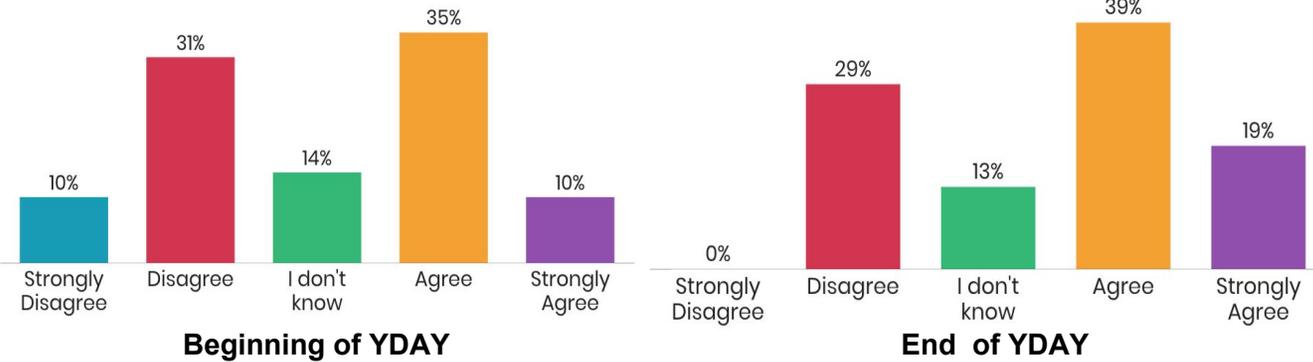
“We need much more mental health support. We feel PEI is a place where you cannot live, work and thrive. We need more programs for people with mental health or addictions to further their education”

Proposed Next Steps:

- Implement "stepped-care" approaches to mental health services (efficient and more affordable)
- More addictions programs for youth
- Fund technological advances in mental health services (24/7 - 365 days online/telephone services, apps, etc)
- Fund on-campus services for students
- Fund AAU (Student mental health action plan endorsed by Atlantic universities including UPEI)
- Advertise the services better
- More clinics in rural areas
- Develop an integrated communication strategy to bring awareness about available mental health programs for youth (including government and non-government programs)
- Create an information systems that can be accessed by individuals and healthcare providers (website)
- Develop an app to provide awareness of mental health/addictions services. Either developed by the government or funded by them
- Develop curriculum-based learning on mental health and addictions topics in classrooms Island-wide..
- Support the mental health of international students by starting anonymous peer-support groups

Youth Perceptions of PEI Pre & Post YDAY 2017

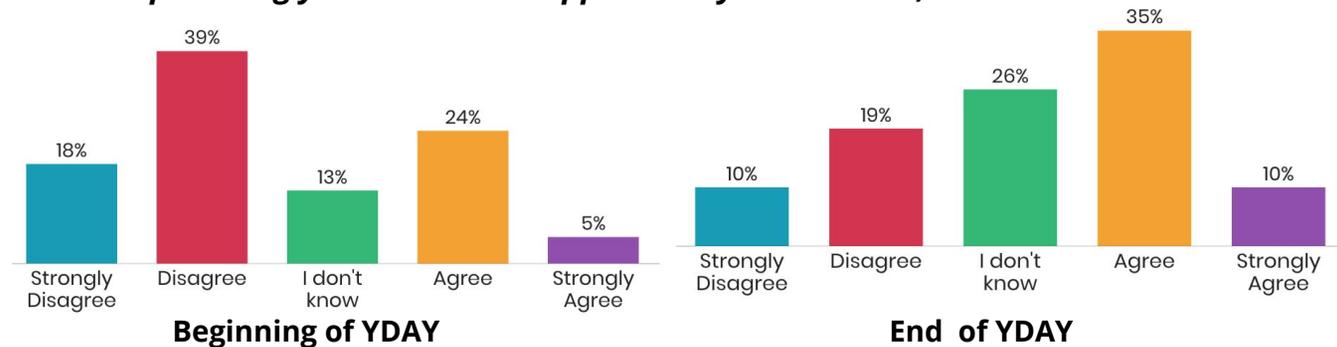
PEI offers enough resources for me to grow professionally and personally.



“PEI provides a relaxing and competitive (potential) atmosphere where it is easier to reach out in a small community”

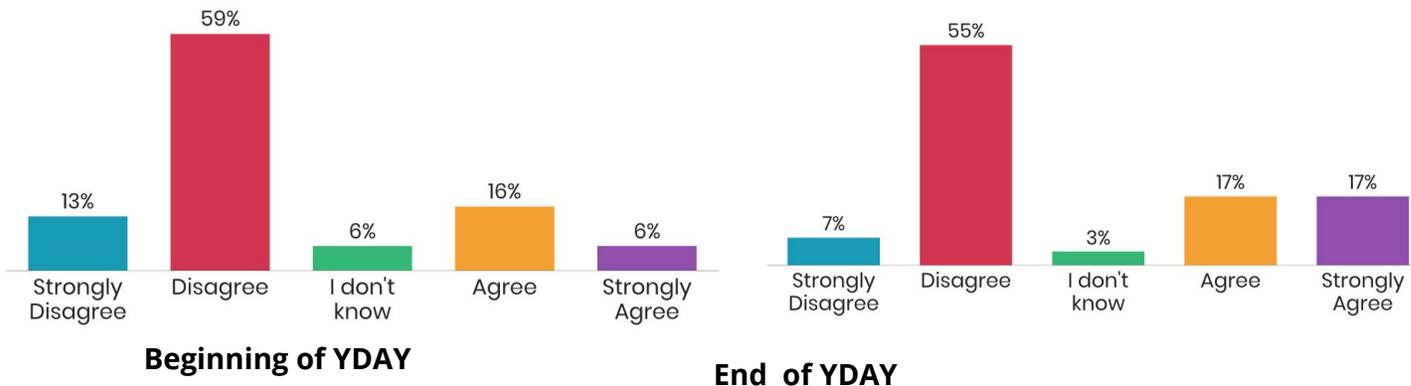
I believe the PEI government is providing youth with the supports they need to live, work and thrive in PEI

“Feels like there is a ceiling on professional + personal growth.”



Youth Perceptions of PEI Pre & Post YDAY 2017

There are enough job opportunities in different kinds of fields in PEI.

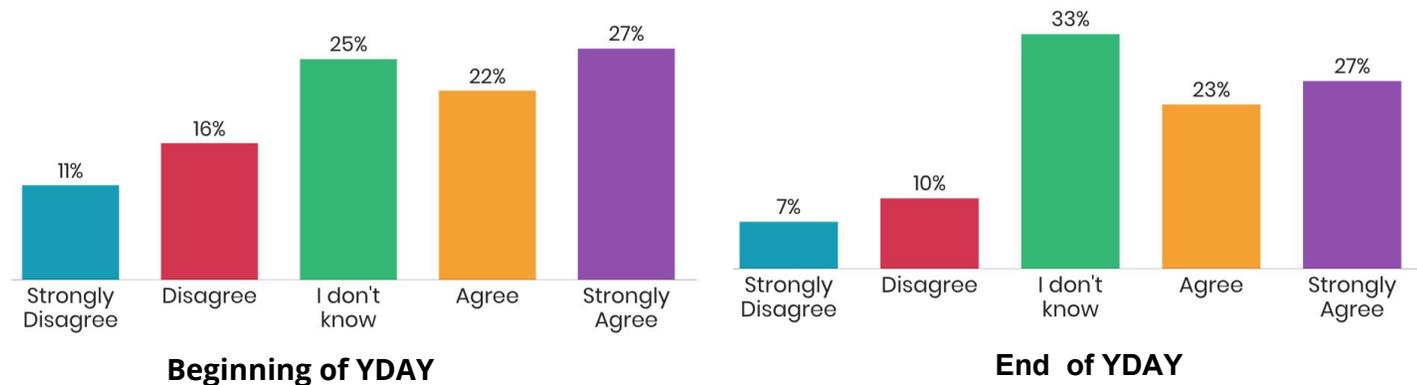


“PEI is a place where I could maybe live and work but no opportunities for advancement, lack of openness to change” - YDAY Participant

*Providing input of the different opportunities in different fields was not a primary objective of YDAY 2017. However, this is useful information for the government to consider.

I see myself living in PEI five (or ten?) years from now?

“PEI has many people who are motivated and open to new ideas. The government is showing a very valiant effort to listen to youth and take their opinions into account” - YDAY Participant



*Data collected from Mentimeter and post-YDAY survey



What the participants said about YDAY

An eye-opening experience for any youth that seeks opportunities on PEI, a boost of youth culture on PEI.

I feel as if hearing the opinions/suggestions of each individual present was a priority, which is crucial in moving forward in a positive direction.

Helping me realize that I can make a positive impact in my community and my own life.

Gave me insight into what others are going through/need.

Good networking + mix of focus groups and speakers.

Good first sessions, well laid out, good topics. Nice to have government + community groups in the room.

It is a great way to talk to all kinds of people about issues you care about and feel like others are actually listening.

YDay presents such a great atmosphere and environment and it really empowers you and inspires new ideas.

The information that is really valuable and the conference was very well-organized, thank you.

Really awesome experience, that was very useful and extremely engaging.

It really opened my eyes to the different issues affecting youth in PEI, and I found that I could express my thoughts and opinions to people in the government that valued my input.

Great way to get your brain thinking in new ways.

Great opportunity for youth's voice to be listened to by the government and community.

Government needs to show it cares between YDays.

Positive energy, truth telling and creative solutions are a great start to innovation in our ways of making PEI a nice place to live for youth and youth adults.

YDAY really brought to the forefront all of the issues presently facing youth in Prince Edward Island. Although I went in knowing 5-10, seeing the wall covered in potential improvements to our Island community really made me want to get involved as much as possible and make a difference.

The people involved were sincere. There were multiple opportunities for individuals to be heard.

Great chance to network and learn new opportunities.

Great opportunity to find your voice because you are heard within the talking circles.

YDay Calls to Action

Run for municipal council and kickstart a Millennial revolution!!

Get more involved in youth-led groups to strengthen their voice within the community.

Build my business and hire some young people.

Be a mentor to someone.

Continue voicing issues and talking about them.

We collected over 30 calls to action, here are some highlights of what PEI's youth will do moving forward!

Promote inclusivity and embrace diversity!

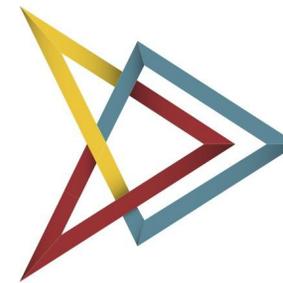
Make meaningful connections and speak out about issues.

YDay was facilitated by Sally Ng at The Triple Effect

**This report was curated by Sally Ng, at The Triple Effect
&
Mathieu Arsenault, at Think Forward Solutions**



**Sally@TheTripleEffect.com
506-292-7786**



**Think Forward
Solutions**

**consultant@thinkforwardpei.com
902-314-5550**

