

LAB 03

Far and Farther: Equitable Access to Programs, Services, and Opportunities for Youth Living in Rural and Remote Communities



Collaborative Designing for Youth Wellbeing

The Story of Our Design Day
10.29.2016



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ABSTRACT

The Design Day brought together youth sector stakeholders – youth, youth workers, policy makers, researchers, funders and citizens – to collaboratively tackle four ‘thorny’ challenges, that youth and youth workers experience. This event was hosted in collaboration with the Youth Opportunities Fund at the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This report is a snapshot of this Design Day and focuses on the Far and Farther: Equitable Access to Programs, Services, and Opportunities for Youth Living in Rural and Remote Communities Lab. It shares the two prototype pitches that participants co-developed in response to the challenges identified in the Lab. It also includes reflections on the collaborative process along with resources and case study examples that can inspire our youth work.

KEYWORDS

innovation, design, idea lab, collaboration, strategic planning, community-based design, participatory process, youth outcomes, youth development, systems change, rural youth, Indigenous youth, racialized LGBTQ2SIA youth, youth work, collective self-care

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Foreword

The Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) at the Ontario Trillium Foundation eagerly accepted YouthREX's invitation to co-host a Design Day on October 29, 2016. Together, we tackled four 'thorny' challenges that Ontario youth and youth workers experience. This report is a snapshot of this Design Day. The report includes the four Idea Lab challenges that the Design Day focused on and the eight prototype pitches that participants co-developed in response to these challenges, along with resources and case study examples that can inspire our youth work.

The **Youth Opportunities Fund** is an annual program of the Government of Ontario, administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. YOF provides grants and capacity-building supports to youth-led grassroots groups and collaboratives serving young people. Funded initiatives improve outcomes for youth facing multiple barriers to economic and social wellbeing. Similar to YouthREX, our work is grounded in ***Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed***.

We recognize that in order to do our work effectively and responsively, we must take time to listen to and learn with and from, all youth sector stakeholders including youth, frontline youth workers, researchers, policy-makers and funders across Ontario. So often, we can end up working in silos or in pre-defined structures where engagement is confined to formal roles. YOF was pleased to co-host this Design Day with YouthREX to break down those walls, hear from each other, and connect deeply over what we can all agree we're working towards: improving the lives of youth.

Using design thinking to explore issues that matter:

We were also happy to share our own learnings with YouthREX, gleaned from hosting multiple YOF Ideas Lab days, where we welcome youth to use design thinking to explore issues that matter to them and bring their ideas to life, while also learning about the YOF. We find this approach to be engaging and meaningful both for us and the youth. Collaborating with YouthREX on this Design Day was an opportunity to experience the intersection of design thinking with youth sector challenges and wisdom in a nuanced way. It was also an opportunity to explore an issue we are particularly interested in: increasing our understanding and meeting the needs of rural Ontario youth (Lab 03).

As this report shows, very fruitful dialogue and ideas were shared and explored. Like youth work, there were moments of connection and tension, times when some of us broke away from the schedule or planned activities, and many valuable learning moments – both expected and unexpected.

We hope this report continues to breathe life into the important ideas that were seeded at this event. Thank you to everyone who participated or supported the execution of this day! We look forward to collaborating again.

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*YouthREX reached out to these individuals to facilitate the discussions in each Idea Lab. They helped to guide conversations and provide contextual information based on their extensive knowledge and experience, whether lived, practice and/or research-based.

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Thank you to everyone who participated in this Design Day. This report captures just a fraction of the wisdom that was shared; we are grateful for everyone who worked through the activities with a spirit of collaboration, patience, and a true commitment to youth wellbeing.

About the Design Day

OVERVIEW

The Design Day brought together youth sector stakeholders – youth, youth workers, policy makers, researchers, funders and citizens – to collaboratively tackle four ‘thorny’ challenges, or Idea Labs, that youth and youth workers experience. This event was hosted in collaboration with the Youth Opportunities Fund at the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Design Day participants were provided with ‘challenge briefs’ that provided participants with a summary of the context, key information, and suggested challenge questions to act as prompts for the day. Group of four to six individuals took on one of the Idea Lab challenges (two groups per challenge) and worked together to generate new ideas, or variations on existing innovations for advancing youth wellbeing on these issues. Everyone present was invested in the topic areas and had specific experience and knowledge to bring to the table, whether lived, practice or research-based.

This event was designed to provide participants with an opportunity to collaboratively work with peers from multiple vantage points in the sector to co-create recommendations on each Lab topic. The activities moved participants through developing a common understanding of the issue(s) at hand, ideation and prototyping solutions/recommendations. At the end of the day, each of the eight groups shared, or ‘pitched’ their idea/prototype to the larger group.

YouthREX committed to sharing the solutions and recommendations from the Design Day widely within the youth sector through a knowledge mobilization strategy crafted around the contributions and outcomes of each Ideas Lab. This report is part of this strategy.

DESIGN DAY GOALS

- Share knowledge
- Learn from other perspectives
- Collaborate to design uniquely tangible recommendations or solutions for advancing youth wellbeing

PROPOSED OUTCOMES

- Increased collaboration amongst diverse youth sector stakeholders around a ‘thorny’ issue
- Develop a common understanding of the problem
- Design and prototype solutions

IDEA LAB TOPICS

LAB 01 // Bringing Our Whole Selves: Inclusive Programs With And For Racialized LBTTQQ2SIA Youth

LAB 02 // Indigenizing Youth Work: Towards A New Relationship

LAB 03 // Far And Farther: Equitable Access To Programs, Services, And Opportunities For Youth Living In Rural And Remote Communities

LAB 04 // Beyond The Individual: Community/ Collective Approaches To Youth Worker Wellbeing

MaRS Solutions Lab facilitated this event, guiding participants through a collaborative process of discovery that included: problem framing, ideation, and prototyping of solutions. This approach, which included issues and stakeholder mapping, enabled participants to identify and design strategies and interventions for change.

Youth Opportunities Fund at the Ontario Trillium Foundation collaborated on this event with YouthREX, co-planning, engaging stakeholders to participate, hosting Idea Lab 03, *Far And Farther: Equitable Access To Programs, Services, And Opportunities For Youth Living In Rural And Remote Communities*, and participating throughout the day.

The Agenda

10 AM

Welcome + Introduction

Welcome by YouthREX and YOF
Introduction: The What & How of Design Jams
by MaRS Solution Lab (MSL)



10:15 AM

Icebreaker

Visualizing the Social Safety Net activity
by Youth Philanthropy Initiative



11:00 AM

Understanding the Problem: Mapping the Challenge



12:45 PM

Networking lunch

1:15 PM

Ideation

Generating ideas for interventions



2:15 PM

Break

2:30 PM

Prototyping

Building the pitches



3:20 PM



Idea Lab Pitches

Each of group had five minutes to present their prototype to the room and answer the following questions: What is the problem? What is the idea? How does your prototype change the user experience of your persona?

3:50 PM

Closing Remarks and Next Steps



4:00 PM

Close



01 // ICEBREAKER

Visualizing the Social Safety Net hosted by Rachel Paris, Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)

To start the day off, everyone gathered in a big circle to participate in an icebreaker called ‘Visualizing the Social Safety Net’. Participants were assigned a badge representing one of the following: 1) social institution, 2) type of social service, or 3) marginalized group/ social issue. They took turns tossing a ball of yarn across the circle, identifying relationships between people and parts of the system, while holding their section of yarn to create a visual trail or ‘net’ to represent those connections.

This activity gave participants a visual, thought-provoking, and hands-on way to explore how the social services system works. It was an interactive way to visually see and reflect on who, why, and how diverse members of the community may be served/underserved/not served by the system, how connections can be built, and where we can support youth to engage within this system.

Design Day Activities: A Step-by-Step Snapshot of the Day



02 // UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM: MAPPING THE CHALLENGE

Issues Map

Participants brainstormed issues and challenges associated with the challenge outlined in their Idea Lab brief.

The Stakeholder Map

This activity gave participants the opportunity to think through all the stakeholders involved in the issue outlined in the Idea Lab challenge at hand.

Experience Map

This activity had participants focusing on the experience of the key user/stakeholder they were designing for. The activity helped participants empathetically think through the issues and feelings of the user they were designing for, who this user interacts with, and what they experience/do when dealing with the challenge at hand.



03 // IDEATION: GENERATING IDEAS FOR INTERVENTIONS

Prioritizing Ideas

Participants brainstormed ideas for interventions on Post-It Notes and then mapped out all their ideas on a matrix based on feasibility and impact. This allowed them to see what ideas would have high impact and be feasible, versus those that were low impact and not very feasible.

04 // PROTOTYPING: BUILDING YOUR IDEA

The Prototype Idea sheet aided participants in thinking through key elements of the one idea they ended up choosing to prototype. The sheet outlines the idea, the user, the key problem, and how the creators could test the idea out. The second prototype sheet is a feedback sheet that gives space for the creators to write down useful feedback, assumptions, and potential changes to their idea.

Please see the Appendix for all worksheets.

LAB 03

Far and Farther: Equitable Access to Programs, Services, and Opportunities for Youth Living in Rural and Remote Communities



Hosted in collaboration with the Youth Opportunities Fund,
Ontario Trillium Foundation

In a **constantly urbanizing world**, how can we ensure that **young people** living in rural and remote communities are **not 'left behind?'**



In 2006, 14% of Ontarians under 25 years of age lived in rural areas.⁸ Due in part to the lack of access to quality programs, services, and opportunities in rural and remote communities, young people face the challenging decision to leave home and move to urban centres to seek access to programs, services, and opportunities. Of particular consideration in the context of rural and remote communities is the needs of Indigenous young people who face many additional challenges (i.e., underfunded schools, racism, intergenerational trauma, etc.). Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Canada.⁹ They make up 6% of the population in non-metro census divisions with a population under 100,000¹⁰ and 15% of the population in non-metro divisions with a population under 25,000.¹¹

a. Background

THE CONTEXT

We recognize that youth living in rural and remote communities do not have access to the same level of services and supports as youth in urban communities. There are fewer programs and services for young people to choose from. Where programs and services exist, distance and lack of transportation make it difficult for youth to participate. Rural communities can be defined as geographic areas, cultures, or ways of living.⁶ Rural [and remote] areas differ widely, and may include farming communities, resource-based communities (e.g. mining or logging), communities that are living off the grid or off the land, and communities that are supported by a tourism resource such as a natural or historical feature. Northern rural communities often describe themselves as “remote” rather than “rural”⁷ It is important to remember that vast differences exist between rural and remote communities. For the purposes of this discussion it may be helpful to think of rural and remote communities as follows:

- Rural communities tend to be within range of major roads and highways.
- Semi-remote communities tend not to be accessible by major roads or highways, but a secondary road is typically available and used for travel in and out of the community.
- Remote communities are typically accessible by air year around, and by road only during the winter on ice roads.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

There are many barriers to participation, including lack of transportation, lack of specialized supports and also gaps in the services and opportunities available to youth living in rural and remote communities. Although largely focused on physical infrastructure, the 2012 Roads and Bridges Review found that the per capita infrastructure gap for the northeast and west regions of Ontario to be double that of central Ontario.¹² It is clear that rural and

⁶ du Plessis, V., Beshiri, R., Bollman, R. D. (2002). Definitions of “rural”. www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-601-m/2002061/4224867-eng.pdf

⁷ Best Start Resource Centre (2010). How to Reach Rural Populations. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: author. <http://exchange.youthrex.com/report/how-reach-rural-populations>

⁸ Statistics Canada. 2006. “2006 Census of Population - Catalogue No. 97-558-XCB2006006.”

⁹ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. 2006. “Fact Sheet – Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada.” <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014298/1100100014302>

¹⁰ Rural Ontario Institute. (2013). “Focus on Rural Ontario – Aboriginal identity population.” <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/Focus%209%20Aboriginal%20identity%20population.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ministry of Transportation and Association of Municipalities of Ontario. (2012). Provincial-Municipal Roads and Bridges Review. <https://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2012/Provincial-Municipal-Roads-and-Bridges-Review-Fina.aspx>

remote youth often face additional difficulties in accessing programs, services, and opportunities. The Best Start Resource Centre identified specific challenges facing people living in rural and remote communities and organized these under 8 broad areas: employment, transportation, access to Internet and cell service, privacy and confidentiality, isolation, funding realities, being accepted, and meeting needs.¹³ Additionally, the overall health of rural, remote and northern communities is significantly poorer than urban communities.¹⁴ Addressing issues related to access and availability of services, programs, and opportunities in rural and remote communities can minimize risk factors related to health and wellbeing, foster connections and community development, and reduce outmigration. Research by The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement revealed that, “Youth who were engaged in structured activities were less likely to use cigarettes, marijuana, hard drugs and alcohol, less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour or become pregnant, less likely to engage in violent behaviour or be arrested, less likely to drop out of school, and more likely to complete a college degree, than youth who were not engaged in these kinds of activities.”¹⁵

THE CHALLENGE

The Ontario Ministry of Finance projects that the population of youth between the ages of 0 and 19 living in non-metro census divisions with a population under 100,000 will decrease in coming years.¹⁶ Despite this, we must seek solutions to the inequitable provision of and access to quality programs, services, and opportunities in rural and remote communities or we run the risk of further marginalizing those young people who continue to live in these communities. In a constantly urbanizing world, how can we ensure that young people living in rural and remote communities are not “left behind?”

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

How might we meet the specific needs and interests of diverse youth living in rural and/or remote communities?

How might we invest strategically and meaningfully in rural and remote communities to address inequitable access to programs, services, and opportunities for youth?

Do the current models of investment (e.g., per capita formulas) make sense in rural and remote communities?

How might we creatively engage youth in rural and remote communities, and facilitate stronger peer connections?

How might we address transportation barriers sustainably for youth living in rural and/or remote communities?



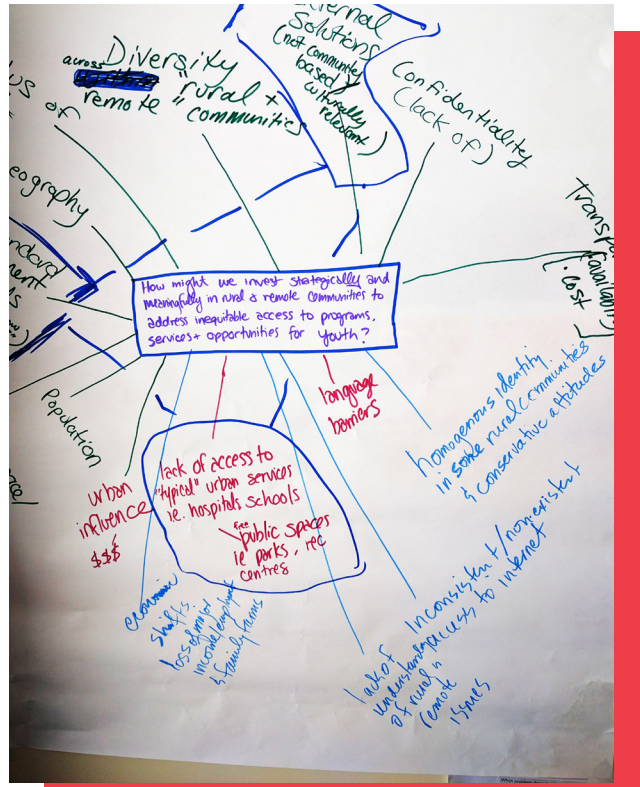
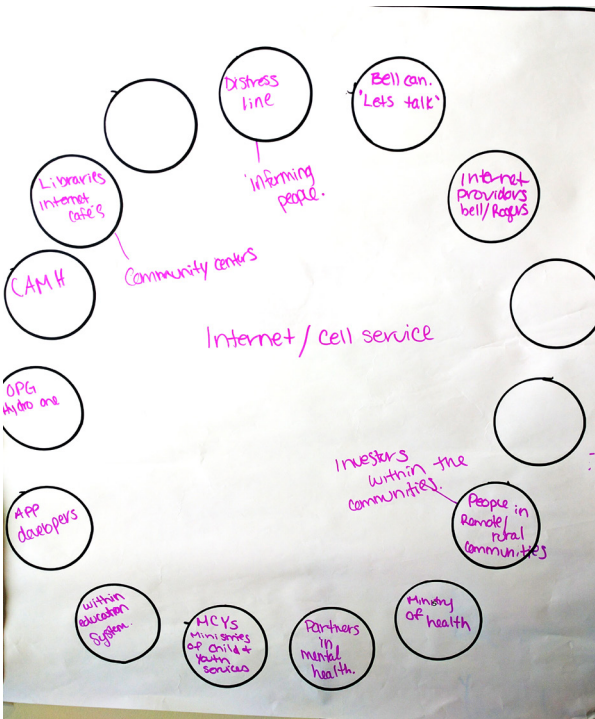
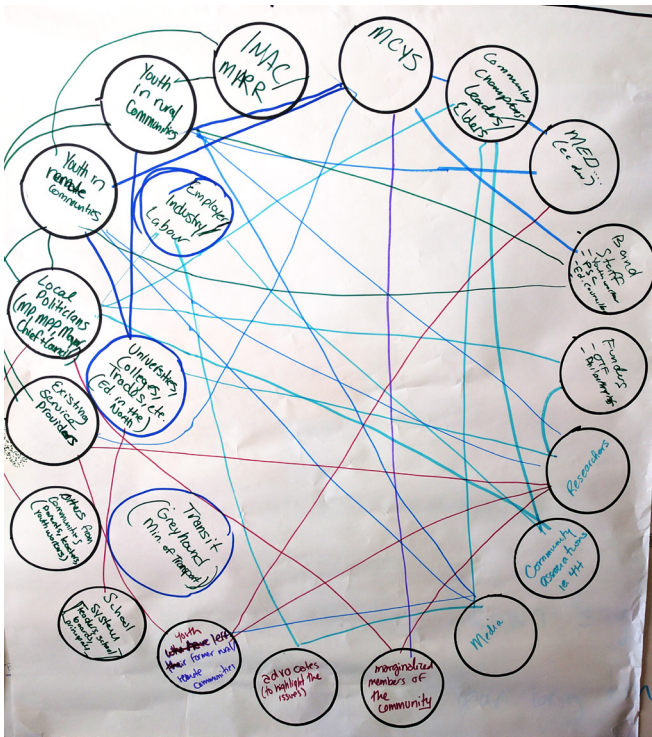
¹³ Best Start Resource Centre (2010). How to Reach Rural Populations.

¹⁴ Ministerial Advising Council on Rural Health. (2002). Rural health in rural hands: Strategic directions for rural, remote, Northern and aboriginal communities. <http://exchange.youthrex.com/report/rural-health-rural-hands-strategic-directions-rural-remote-northern-and-aboriginal>.

¹⁵ Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. (2003). Youth Engagement and Health Outcomes: Is there a link? http://www.engagementcentre.ca/files/litreview1_web_e.pdf

¹⁶ Ontario Ministry of Finance (2014a). Ontario's long-term report on the economy. <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/ltr/2014/ltr2014.pdf>

Thinking Notes from Lab 03



b. Exploring the Issue

Mapping the Challenge for Interventions

Rural and remote communities do not have the same levels of access to services and resources as urban communities. Both groups focused on the need to improve services and resources in order to respond to the mental health needs of youth living in rural and remote communities. Group participants represented a mix of people with urban, rural, and remote experience, as well as range of experiences in relation to the topic. Participants from rural and remote communities described how a lack of resources and services contributes to youth leaving the communities. For example, if a young person has a mental health need and services aren't locally available, they may need to travel significant distances, or even leave their community, to access services. If they cannot or do not want to travel or leave, they must stay and not receive services.

The groups discussed how because of population density standard investment models privilege urban areas for everything from services, like Internet access, to service workers like trained counsellors

and mental health professionals. Because resources are so limited, there is a need to invest strategically and meaningfully in rural and remote communities. Both groups sought to maximize local resources while at the same time identifying external stakeholders, like governments, funders and businesses that could help to develop essential infrastructure. Other issues that contribute to mental health challenges in rural communities include poverty, lack of employment and other opportunities, lack of transportation, stigma associated with mental health, and issues related to the need for confidentiality. Finally, the groups also emphasized that rural and remote communities are diverse and they should not all be painted with same brush. Strategies need to be locally and culturally grounded and relevant, most especially in the case of Indigenous communities.

c. Ideation

ISSUES

Lack of access to typical urban services
in hospitals and schools

Lack of confidentiality

Exodus of youth

Geography

Standard investment models

Physical space and infrastructure

Language barriers

Homogenous identity in some rural
communities and conservative attitudes

Lack of consistency/non-existent
understanding and access to Internet of
rural remote spaces

Diversity across remote rural
communities

External solutions (not community
based or culturally relevant)

Transportation (feasibility and cost)

Online services,
internet/cell services, and investment

Not enough research

Mental health

Lack of supports

IDEAS

Schools having more resources

Youth council

Brochure/library on local resources
in hospital

Education for hospital/medical staff

Regional Youth Worker

Community council

Change in hospital culture

Resources (high feasibility)

CAMH and MCYS involved in
decision making

Upgrading cell towers

d. Prototyping & Pitches



PITCH ONE

RURAL YOUTH VOICES NETWORK

How might we invest strategically and meaningfully in rural and remote communities to address inequitable access to programs, services, and opportunities for youth?

THE PROBLEM

This group focused on the mental health issues, and resulting negative outcomes that result when support isn't provided in a rural context.

THE PITCH

The Rural Youth Voices Network strategy will be directed at rural youth, 14-18 years of age, who live within an hour of a hospital. It will specifically target communities with a population of less than 10,000 people. The strategy will be a provincial network of rural schools. Each school will have a youth council, a community council, and youth workers on staff. The youth workers will be focused on youth barriers and challenges in each region. The network will provide training and grant writing support. The youth council meetings will occur in the schools, over lunch. Teachers will provide support to the youth council,

as well as connect with the community council. The youth will identify community and individual needs. The schools will work on housing more resources out of the school.

The group acknowledged that many young people, especially in rural and remote communities, feel isolated. The Rural Voices Network would help foster an environment where young people are making important decisions in their communities, are helping to strengthen youth supports in rural areas, and are working closely with other key community members and stakeholders.

Potential benefits as a result of this network include: active citizen engagement, skill building and education, reducing isolation and building a sense of community, structured activity, building capacity within existing structures, minimizing transportation barriers, building youth and adult relationships, giving youth a reason to be in school, building relationships between youth and communities and leveraging youth voices.

The group suggests testing the idea by piloting it in certain regions.



Teck John Baker Youth Leaders Program

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/community-health/project-examples/850>

WHERE: Rural Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska

WHO: Middle and high school students

WHAT: Teen suicide rates in rural Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska were 7 times higher than the statewide teen suicide rate. The Teck John Baker Youth Leaders Programs was created to train youth to provide support to their peers. They equip youth with tools and resources to support their peers. Their curriculum and philosophy is based on the Foundation for Healthy Generations Natural Helpers program. The goals of the program are to reduce school bullying and help peers support each other through challenging times. Youth are provided with training to provide comfort and seek adult aid for students having suicidal thoughts or ideation.

The youth leaders address a variety of issues, including suicide prevention, anti-bullying, and anti-domestic violence. Each year, the program selects middle and high school youth from villages in the rural Alaska area and provides leadership training. Youth leaders actively participate in and lead the training. They return to their village and share knowledge with their classmates about substance use, bullying, trauma, suicide, and other topics. They participate in planning school and village events, as well as student policy development and administration. They also work with school employees in implementing health promotion and prevention activities.

CASE STUDY



PITCH TWO YOUTH TALK APP

How might we invest strategically and meaningfully in rural and remote communities to address inequitable access to programs, services, and opportunities for youth?

THE PROBLEM

This group also focused on rural youth facing mental health issues, emphasizing the detrimental effects of teachers, youth workers and caregivers being stretched for time and capacity and unable to singularly provide the support needed. Moreover, because rural communities are smaller and often close-knit, issues of confidentiality, stigma, and safety are a significant concern for youth seeking mental health services.

STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCE SCENARIO

The group described a situation wherein a teacher or youth worker notices a difference in a student and becomes worried and calls their parent and doctor. The staff is looking for resources, including counselling. At the same time, they are trying to balance lesson planning and teaching the class. They begin to feel burnt out and tired. Meanwhile, the student is experiencing anxiety and panic attacks. The student sees a doctor it is unclear whether or not this is helpful. In the end, the student connects with a supportive friend.

THE PITCH

The Youth Talk app would address youth facing mental health barriers, linking them to crisis workers, mental health workers, doctors and peer support workers. The app would include a chat, education and support function. It aims to build community and help youth in need by providing a safe, confidential space that includes access to support.

The group's prototype focused on the development of a mental health app, developed in conjunction with Bell cell towers. Internet access is often limited so getting the providers on board is important. The plan involves persuading investors and deciding on a fair agreement. CAMH and an app developer/social media specialist would also be involved. The youth are the ultimate stakeholders and the ones that would benefit from this strategy.

The users of this app are youth and mental health professionals. This app will result in increased support for youth in rural communities, as well as provide educational supports and a safe cyber space. The app will allow for increased levels of confidentiality and provide a sense of community. The group would test the idea by having developers pilot the app with youth in the James Bay area. Some of the components the app include: crisis support services, psychiatrists, mental health workers, and peer support.

“There is no pressure to be ‘innovative’, just to meaningfully address the issues at hand.”

Conclusion

The Design Day was rich in ideas, connections and learning!

This was the first time YouthREX used design-thinking to frame an event of this kind, and we learned so much from the experience and from all the participants. We would like to conclude by highlighting five of the ideas that stood out to us based on feedback forms completed by designers and our team’s experiences of the day:

1. Innovation is not always about the new

At the end of the day, a designer prefaced their group’s pitch by saying “there is no pressure to be innovative, just to meaningfully address the issues at hand”. This comment resonated with the larger group, with many people nodding their head in agreement and thanking them for making that sentiment explicit. Most of the ideas that were pitched also reflected this notion – we don’t need to be inventing completely new programming or ways to support young people for the sake of “the new”. Innovation can include returning to models and strategies that already exist, and then designing ways to intentionally leverage and learn from them in order to fine-tune, and/or expand them where appropriate and as needed.

2. Foster connections and support each other

While the issues/challenges that each Idea Lab came up with were specific to the context of their particular topic, there were common issues and challenges across all eight labs such as a sense of isolation, invisibility, and the pressure to bear the burden of external forces – lack of funding, resources, staff and safe spaces. In response to these issues/challenges, the pitches that labs developed focused on facilitating and enhancing connections and communication between and among youth and youth sector stakeholders. Whether online or face-to-face, it is clear that the need for people to feel connected to one another, to be able to ask questions or find/give support and to be part of community, is vital; many do not feel these kinds of opportunities currently exist (in the context of their youth sector work). Designers further expressed a need to more broadly support youth sector work by creating opportunities and conditions for engaging with each other differently, and in a more meaningful way.

3. Engage the power of technology

The pitches also reflect the desire, and perhaps need, for the youth sector to integrate technology more effectively into our work. When designed and used respectfully, groups who prototyped digital spaces such as the Youth Talk App or the Online Platform for Youth Workers cited the importance of hosting a safe space for conversation, for knowledge sharing, for connecting youth and youth stakeholders to resources and support – all in an accessible and efficient way. Digital tools and platforms have the potential of greatly increasing accessibility to information, resources, and of course, the human connections that are so valued. At the same time, technological adoption cannot replace human face-to-face relationships. One designer suggested that we need to also reflect on the effects “technologicalization” can have on change and development work.

4. Leverage what already exists

Implicit throughout all the pitches is that there is valuable knowledge, resources, services and programming that already exists, but often in silos. As such, the pitches focus on creating ways to draw out this information, create conditions that allow for connection and access to information and resources. Designers recognized value in networking their assets to provide enhanced opportunities for youth. This is not to say that new or increased funding/resources are not needed –in order to create these spaces and opportunities for human connection, resources in terms of people, time, money and different skillsets are required.

5. Adapt tools and processes to your context

Youth sector stakeholders, including youth, strongly value building connections and learning through participatory and engaging activities/processes. This is why YouthREX thought that design-thinking processes/activities might be a good way to bring people together to brainstorm and work on ideas to address “thorny” issues. Reflecting on the feedback we received on how people experienced the day, we learned that although design-thinking processes work well at engaging people to focus on the “user experience” and to think through an issue in a focused way that is collaborative and highly generative, these processes might be too focused on moving forward to solutions. This may not align with the complexity of youth wellbeing/youth sector challenges, equity and intersectionality, or the work that stakeholders want or need to do together before arriving at ideas and solutions.

Design-thinking tools and processes clearly need to be better adapted to our youth sector context. We will need ways to create more space for rich, nuanced discussions to unpack the issues and challenges we experience in our sector. Many of the challenges that youth and the youth sector are facing are deeply rooted in complexity. While there is definitely

a need to collaboratively search for solutions and new approaches to addressing these challenges, there is also the need to take time to understand the situation, learn more about the system and find ways to create the conditions for change – all within an equity-focused frame of understanding.

As such, we will be asking ourselves:

- How we can use design-thinking tools and processes to support our work, but adapt them and integrate them with other processes that could better reflect and engage the youth sector?
- What kinds of opportunities will allow us to engage with complexity and systems thinking/ mapping in a way that is accessible and meaningful to youth sector stakeholders?
- How can we use design thinking and its processes to support engagement with complexity?
- How might we integrate tenants of equity and social justice within all of these processes?

Final Words

We would like to end this recap of the Design Day by expressing our deep gratitude and thanks to all the community designers who came out on a cold Saturday and brought their whole selves to participate and engage in sometimes difficult conversations about how we can tackle issues of importance to youth wellbeing. Although this recap doesn't quite do enough to capture the energy, excitement and tensions of the day, we hope it offers some valuable insights to youth sector stakeholders and affirmation of the work and experiences of our community designers.



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