

# TakingITGlobal

INSPIRE INFORM INVOLVE



## Engaging Rural Youth

*Survey Results and Recommendations*

Report prepared by

Jennifer Corriero  
Executive Director, TakingITGlobal  
[jenergy@takingitglobal.org](mailto:jenergy@takingitglobal.org)

&

Luke Walker  
Education Program Manager, TakingITGlobal  
[luke@takingitglobal.org](mailto:luke@takingitglobal.org)

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Survey: Rural Youth Opinions.....	2
Conclusions: Fostering Youth Engagement.....	7
Appendix 1: Compiled Survey Data.....	15
Appendix 2: The Role of Youth.....	19

## Executive Summary

This report presents the result of TakingITGlobal's recent *Rural Youth Opinions* survey of members from rural Ontario. The survey consisted of thirteen questions regarding youths' views on the status of their rural communities and what can be done to strengthen them. Rural youth opinions on the subject differed from those few non-rural respondents, reflecting the difference between perceptions of rural life and the actual status of rural Ontario. Even within the rural responses, those who identified themselves as rural youths expressed somewhat different (and often more positive) views about rural life than those who had lived in a rural community for some time but had not self-identified.

The second portion of the report presents the conclusions and recommendations delivered by Jennifer Corriero in her presentation at The Ontario Rural Council's annual conference on 18 October 2004. This section outlines ten different ways to engage youth in rural communities, from recognizing youth as stakeholders, valuable sources of input and action, and role models, to connecting with national programs and celebrating diversity.

The appendices present the compiled survey data and a brief overview of how youth see themselves influencing the future, taking from TakingITGlobal's *Role of Youth* research.

## Survey: Rural Youth Opinions

TakingITGlobal used an online survey to collect the opinions of youth from rural Ontario on the status of their communities, how they envision their future in their communities, and what it is that makes them ‘rural youth.’

The survey consisted of thirteen questions and was circulated to all members of TakingITGlobal in Ontario. This section of the report will briefly analyse the survey results, divided into three categories:

1. self-identified ‘rural youth’
2. rural youth who did not self-identify (i.e. lived in a rural setting, but answered no to question three)
3. non-rural youth.

The answers of categories one and two were analysed both separately and as a combined fourth category, rural youth. Of approximately 500 youth eligible to participate in the survey, 29 filled submitted responses, all of which were analysed and included in the following results. Compiled survey data can be found in Appendix 1.

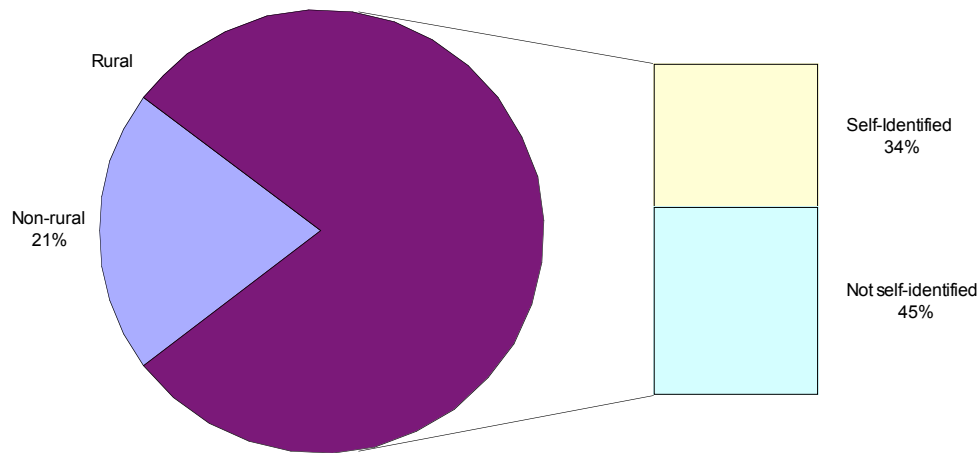
### *1-3. Differentiating respondents*

The first three questions were used to divide youth into these categories. Believing that there would be some difference between the experience of indigenous and non-indigenous youth, the first question on the survey was “*Are you a member of a First Nation?*” However, only one respondent identified him- or herself as a member of a First Nation, and that individual was a non-rural youth, so any analysis on this front is impossible.

Respondents answered the second question, “*How long have you lived in a rural area?*”, by selecting either <1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 10+ years, or ‘whole life.’ Any respondent answer anywhere from 1 year to his or her whole life was categorised as a rural youth. The sample was divided into 23 rural youth and 6 non-rural youth based on this.

The third questions asked respondents “*Do you consider yourself to be a rural youth?*” Of these, 10 answered yes and were classified as self-identified rural youth, and 19 answered no, six of whom were already classified as non-rural, and 13 of whom had lived in a rural area for one year or longer. The breakdown by percentage appears in the Figure 1: Rural vs. Non-rural. Non-rural respondents made up 21% of the sample, with rural respondents making up the remaining 79%. Of these rural youth, 43% were self-identified (34% of the whole sample), and 57% were not (45% of the sample).

Fig. 1: Rural vs Non-Rural



The remainder of the questions gathered respondents' views on the issues facing their communities, how to improve the future of rural communities, and whether or not they would be willing to stay in or return to rural Ontario in the future.

4. *Explain (i.e. what is your definition of rural? How is your community different from an urban centre?)*

Responses to this question, asked to determine the different definitions of "rural," varied between the categories of respondents. No responses were prompted, and respondents could provide as many answers as they wished. The top three responses from each category are provided in Table 1. All three categories identified small population, proximity to farms and countryside, and distance from amenities as important factors in differentiating a rural space from an urban one. Interestingly, it was only the self-identified rural respondents who did not at mention the limited ethnic, cultural or linguistic diversity as a factor in their definitions, while it was among the most common answers for the other two groups, with 40% of non-self-identified rural respondents and 33% of non-rural respondents mentioning it.

Other responses included lower crime rates, a sense of confinement, lower pollution levels, and a more close-knit community.

Table 1: Top 3 Q4 Responses by Category		% of respondents
<b>Self-identified rural</b>		
1	Surrounded by farms/countryside	40.00%
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	40.00%
2	Small population	30.00%
3	Less commotion	20.00%
3	More greenspace	20.00%
3	Close-knit community	20.00%
<b>Not self-identified rural</b>		
1	Small population	50.00%
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	50.00%
2	Limited cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity	40.00%
3	Close-knit community	20.00%
3	Surrounded by farms/countryside	20.00%
<b>Combined rural</b>		
1	Small population	34.78%
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	34.78%
2	Limited cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity	26.09%
2	Surrounded by farms/countryside	26.09%
3	Close-knit community	17.39%
<b>Non-rural</b>		
1	Limited cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity	33.33%
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	33.33%
1	Surrounded by farms/countryside	33.33%
2	Small population	16.67%
2	Close-knit community	16.67%
2	Fewer job opportunities	16.67%
2	More greenspace	16.67%

### 5. What are the challenges that you face as a rural youth?

Non-rural respondents were mixed as to whether or not rural youth would face more or less challenges than non-rural youth. Two responded “lots of challenges,” and one said answered with each of “none,” “wouldn’t know,” “same as urban,” or did not respond.

For all rural respondents, a lack of diversity in activities and cultures was the largest issue, with 34.78% of rural respondents mentioning it. Isolation was the second most common response, followed by peer pressure, a lack of educational and a lack of employment opportunities.

Other responses from rural respondents included transportation issues, drugs and substance abuse, and poverty, among others.

### 6. Can you see yourself working and living in rural Ontario in the long-term?

While non-rural respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in urban settings in the long-term, with 5 of 6 respondents answering “no,” Table 2 shows that rural respondents were much more divided.

Table 2: Rural Responses to Q6			
Self-identified		Not self-identified	
Yes	50%	No	53.85%
No	50%	Yes	38.46%
		Blank	7.69%

### 7. If so, what are your reasons for wanting to stay? If not, why not?

The top reason for wanting to stay or return to rural Ontario, among rural youth, was the lower pollution levels of rural areas. Noise was the second most important factor, with comfort and ability to raise a family both ranked third. The lower cost of living, reduced traffic and stress, and increased green space all received only one response.

The top reasons, among rural youth, for wanting to leave rural Ontario, or to stay in an urban area, was the greater number of job opportunities, from 7 of 10 respondents who gave reasons for wanting to leave. Also cited were opportunities to further oneself, love of urban areas, interest in the diversity and lifestyle of urban areas, intolerance and a lack of privacy.

*8. Do you believe that a strong sense of community and belonging, especially among youth, exists in your rural setting?*

While non-rural respondent felt that a strong sense of community must exist among rural youth, at 83%, rural youth were divided on the issue. Among self-identified rural youth, the split was even at 50% yes and 50% no, whereas non-rural youth responded yes 54% of the time, no 38%, and 8% did not respond. This really clarifies the existence of a difference between the urban perception of rural life and the rural reality.

*9. What are some ways to increase a sense of social cohesion and sense of belonging among rural youth?*

Both groups of rural youth agreed that creating more youth groups, sports and opportunities for group activities is the best way to improve social cohesion in the communities. Beyond this, however, answers varied. In particular, none of the rural youth who did not self-identified responded that social cohesion was 'already strong out of necessity.' See Table 3.

Self-identified rural youth			Not self-identified rural youth		
1	More youth groups/sports/opps	50.00%	1	More youth groups/sports/opps	46.15%
2	Already strong, out of necessity	30.00%	2	Create diversity in activities and cultures	15.38%
2	Create diversity in activities and cultures	30.00%	3	Community involvement through volunteerism	15.38%
3	More education	20.00%	3	Change old-fashioned ways	7.69%
4	In-school seminars	10.00%	3	Reduce poverty	7.69%
4	Community involvement through volunteerism	10.00%			

*10. Do you think that you are or will be able to reach your maximum potential as a leader, student, entrepreneur, etc. in your rural setting? Are the opportunities and tools you need available in your community?*

In this situation, it was the self-identified rural youth who were more strongly on the “no” side, with 60% of respondents feeling that they would not have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential in a rural community, 10% more than expressed the desire not to remain in their rural communities in the long term. Among non-self-identified rural youth, the split was approximately 54% no, 46% yes.

*11. What additional tools or opportunities could help you reach this potential without leaving your community?*

For both rural groups, the most common response was “easier access to social/cultural opportunities,” with approximately 30% of respondents from each group citing it. Other respondents called for more jobs, or different kinds of jobs (high tech), as well as easier access to internships and opportunities for skills enhancement. The second most common response from non-self-identified rural youth was “not sure.”

*12. Do you think that the loss of young people to larger urban centres is a problem for your community?*

Both non-rural and non-self-identified rural youth agreed that out-migration was a serious concern for rural communities, with 50% of non-rural youth and 70% of non-self-identified rural youth responding positively (versus 33% and 30%, respectively, responding negatively). Among self-identified rural youth, the responses were 60% no and 40% yes. The reasons become clearer when analysing the answers to question 13.

*13. If so, what solutions could help to overcome this problem? If not, why not?*

Among self-identified rural youth, out-migration seems inevitable, with the most common response to this question fitting in the category “youth will leave, focus on bringing back older residents,” which may link to the belief expressed that while there are more opportunities in urban centres, rural areas are preferable for raising families. The other responses from this group included a call for increased job opportunities in careers requiring higher levels of education, and more cultural/sporting opportunities.

Non-self-identified rural youth cited cultural and sporting opportunities as a primary factor, as well as increased mentorship opportunities, particularly with small-business owners/entrepreneurs, to bring to light alternative career options. Other responses included funding for entrepreneurship, online education, improved transit to urban centres, teaching art appreciation, and “solutions exist, youth just don’t take advantage.”

## Conclusions: Fostering Youth Engagement

This section of the report answers the question:

*“How can we foster youth engagement in rural communities?”*

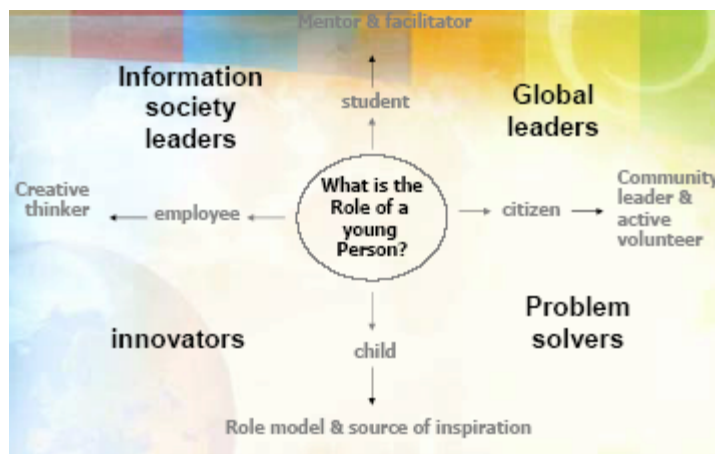
It was developed using a combination of survey responses, other research, and past experiences on the part of TakingITGlobal staff and members in inspiring youth engagement in different segments of society.<sup>1</sup>

### 10 Ways to Inspire Youth Engagement in Rural Communities

#### 1. Recognize youth as stakeholders

Young people play many roles across many sectors of society: as students; as children; as citizens; and as employees, just to name a few. Key to engaging students, however, is empowering them to take active roles in each of these areas: becoming creative thinkers rather than just employees; mentors and facilitators rather than students; community leaders and active volunteers rather than citizens; and role models and sources of inspiration rather than children. In other words, empowering youth to become:

- information society leaders
- global leaders
- problem solvers
- innovators



The importance of empowering the current generation of youth, the Net Generation, is clear. While the TV generation, those born from 1940-1959, count as the largest group in Canada, at 11.6 million individuals, the Net Generation, those born from 1978-2001, moving through the education system and entering the workforce are

nearly as numerous, and bring a different set of skills, competencies and perspectives—potentially those necessary to tackle our current global challenges.

*“Youth are resources to be developed, not problems to be managed”*

<sup>1</sup> This section of the report was developed based on a presentation to the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Rural Development Conference of the Ontario Rural Council.



- *Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University*

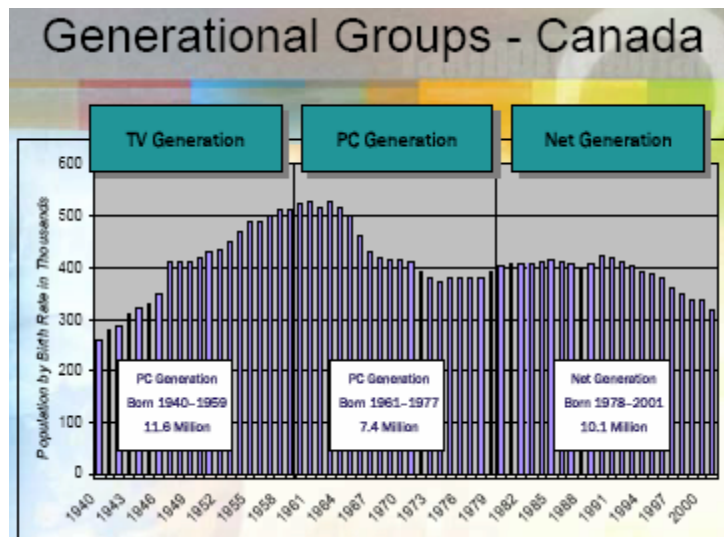
Taking into the needs and opinions of these young people into account as key societal stakeholders is essential, given that they will soon be key drivers, economically and socially, in both urban and rural communities. Giving young people the opportunity to help shape the communities of tomorrow

will give them more reason to stay in and contribute to these communities.

The UN's recent World Summit on the Information Society represented one opportunity for such involvement. TakingITGlobal organized a series of National Youth Campaigns in 21 countries, across five continents. This included 30 regional and national conferences, 200+ workshops, five television programs, 100,000 brochures, and coverage in 30+ media stories, all building up to the World Summit in Geneva. These campaigns gave youth around the world a chance to participate in as valuable stakeholders, adding their input to the issues that will define the generation, and society as a whole. This was done in only three months, with a budget of \$30,000—giving youth the opportunity to provide input as equals in any given process need not be expensive or complex.

## 2. Offer unique and challenging experiences

Several survey respondents noted the importance of offering a broader and more challenging experience to youth, be it culturally, through employment, or education. Rural youth are not alone in this respect: TakingITGlobal strives to create and/or foster opportunities for youth to expand their minds both within the organizations and among partners.



“Give youth opportunities to learn and do funky new and exciting things together as a group. Help them immerse with other cultures so they can see themselves from a different aspects.”

- Survey respondent

“Involve youth in projects that are fun and challenging like preserving the environment.”

- Survey respondent



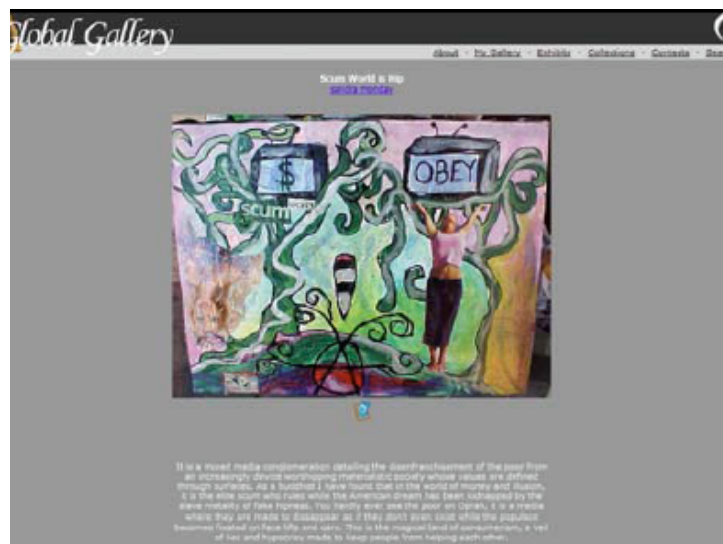
Within the organization, TakingITGlobal offers summer placements and co-op opportunities to high-school, college and university students that give youth the opportunity to have an impact on the organization, to participate in important projects, and to fill key roles in the organization. Externally, TakingITGlobal coordinates the placement of several recent university graduates at partner organisation abroad as a part of a Foreign Affairs Canada programme to provide young professionals with international work experience. This year, interns are spending their six-month terms at organisations like PeaceChild International in the UK, UNESCO in Paris, and the Global Youth Action Network in New York, to name a few. The profile on the left is that of Melina, who spent her internship in Brazil.

### 3. Showcase creative, artistic and alternative expressions

“Instead of building McDonalds and movie houses everywhere (homogenous planning with no sense of character) allow each community to grow itself. Bring in more art, cultural and musical events to different communities. Teach awareness of the environment and let youth paint walls artistically or something so they can see a difference!”

- Survey respondent

TakingITGlobal, in its efforts to empower youth to find their voices, has placed an emphasis on showcasing various forms of creative expression. The Global Gallery has become one of the world's largest online collections of youth art, with thousands of contribution from young people the world over. The Global Gallery gives young artists the opportunity to have their work seen, and for other members to comment, provide



feedback, or discuss the issues arising from the art. Panaroma, TakingITGlobal's online publication, affords young writers the same opportunity to publish and receive feedback on their poems, short stories, interviews and opinion pieces.

#### *4. Provide open spaces for dialogue, discussion & action*

Opportunities to discuss issues like those expressed in the survey are the first step to resolving some of the serious problems rural communities face. However, safe spaces to do so may not exist: youth may feel uncomfortable discussing issues like sexuality, religion or community traditions in everyday conversation.

“The loss of young talented people has created a problem as the community is no more diverse now than when I left. A big part of the problem lies in socializing and normalizing youth. It's pretty rare for an educator or community leader to up and openly state that difference is just fine or to challenge students to think outside of the box. Social structures are firmly entrenched in tradition and it will take a long time to change pervasive beliefs.”

- Survey respondent

Every month, TakingITGlobal members organise Open Forums, using TIG's framework and the TIG online community, to hold real-time meetings where youth can feel free to discuss potentially controversial issues in a safe space. The discussions can focus on TakingITGlobal's monthly theme, or any approved theme that participants select.

This form of offline engagement complements the TakingITGlobal.org online community, which opens a space on the internet for youth to discuss issues related to their communities. However, this simple discussion is not enough—action must emerge from the conversations and debates. This fourth principle is tied to the first: recognising youth as stakeholders. While youth can and have taken action without the support of their larger communities (see the TakingITGlobal project database for examples), real efforts to improve the status of rural youth and to stem the flow of out-migration are much more attainable with the backing of the other stakeholder groups and the recognition of youths as valuable members of society.

TakingITGlobal has several online and offline resources aimed to help youth understand how to take action and make their efforts more effective, including the TIG Guide to Action, a Workshop Kit, a guide to Open Forums, petitions, and many other external resources, all available at <http://www.takingitglobal.org/action>.

#### *5. Seek out youth input and advice*

Beyond empowering youth as stakeholders and encouraging them to discuss and take action on issues, actively soliciting their input when developing new programs and policy, again, helping to create institutions that meet the needs and best develop the skills and competencies of the leaders of tomorrow. This is becoming more and more common: Toronto has a Youth Cabinet to advise City Council, the City of Vaughan has a Youth Advisory Council, and in a rural setting, several hospital foundations on Prince Edward Island have established youth boards.

Such input is also becoming more common in the corporate world. Earlier this year, TakingITGlobal helped to coordinate Microsoft's Information Worker Board of the Future, which brought youth from around the world to Microsoft's Redmond headquarters to provide advice and input. This kind of process can be equally valuable, and very simple to achieve, in rural communities attempting to plan for their future.

#### *6. Connect with national youth programs & initiatives*

Providing youth a broader perspective and more diverse experience was one of the oft-cited survey responses. However, bringing diversity into a rural community is not always possible. An easy way to give youth the opportunity to experience diversity on many levels is through national youth programs and initiatives.

The Council for Canadian Unity offers several such programs. Experience Canada links youth from around the country with youth from 15 other nations for three weeks to learn about globalization, share athletic and cultural experiences with other youth from a variety of cultures, and develop leadership skills. On a purely domestic level, the Council offers week-long programs throughout the year called Encounters with Canada, centred on a variety of topics and combining youth from across the country in a bilingual environment. Both these programs are run out of the Terry Fox Centre in Ottawa.

“The youth in the rural areas feel deprived of opportunities to integrate themselves in their nation. There are a lot of limitations since most of these youths live in communities unlike the centres where it's a global village.”

- Survey respondent

#### *7. Celebrate international days/years of recognition*

The United Nations' international days and years of recognition are another way to introduce more diversity and cultural understanding to small communities. For example: 2004 is the International Year of Rice. To many Canadians, the reasoning for this might not be immediately apparent. However, for over half the world's population, rice is *the* food staple. “Rice-

based systems are essential for food security, poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods... In Asia alone, more than 2 billion people obtain 60 to 70 percent of their energy intake from rice and its derivatives.”<sup>2</sup>

Combined with the multitude of other international days, months, years and even decades, youth, even in a rural setting, have the opportunity to gain an improved understanding of other cultures, differing social environments, and the challenges facing the world outside their communities. Implementing these days in curricula and communities can also inspire youth to take action on these timely issues and have an effect in- and outside of their communities.

“Canadian rural communities are very racially and culturally limited to those European descendent and are not very diverse. Languages are limited to English/French.”

- Survey respondent

#### 8. Diversity in activities available

One of the general themes referred to in nearly every survey response was a need to create more opportunities and activities for youth. Most often, this came in the form of calls for a youth drop-in centre. Such centres can combine intramural sports, internet access, guest speakers, walls of expression, musical performance, and different kinds of lessons—drawing together the diverse other suggestions in this list of recommendations. It can, and does in many communities, serve as a focal point for all the other activities mentioned.

“More community groups and opportunities to bond (sport, cultural, art) but without having to pay a fee. The lack of money stops some youth from participating in some activities.”

- Survey respondent

“Community involvement through volunteer opportunities is key. Youth want and need to feel connected to their community. Opportunities for youth to feel ownership and pride in their community will help them to feel a greater sense of belonging and cohesion.”

- Survey respondent

“Our town didn’t have a well developed community centre or even a youth drop-in centre for people to hang-out in. Having a bit more diversity in the types of activities (aside from watching the local jr. C hockey team) would have been nice.”

- Survey respondent

<sup>2</sup> “2004: International Year of Rice.” United Nations.  
<http://www.un.org/av/photo/subjects/IYR.htm>

### 9. Develop mentorship programs

“Encourage and insist that all businesses mentor students and youth. This will give more youth many views and training to help with the transition from school to work. I mentor students who are interested in International Affairs.”

- Survey respondent

In some ways, rural youth reluctance may feel limited simply because they have not been exposed to the full range of possibilities within their communities. A mentorship program, affording young people the experience to gain new skills—both hard, task-specific skills and the soft skills required for so many sectors of the knowledge economy—may also open their eyes to the full array of career and lifestyle options available in a rural setting. Such a program exists at York University, the Atkinson Student-Alumni Mentorship Program, matching students with experienced alumni in a relevant field, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth and development for both groups. Similarly, but on a less-thorough basis, a ‘Take Your/Our Kid to Work Day’ program can open youths eyes to new possibilities, and dramatically change their attitude toward and understanding of the nature of their communities.



### 10. Recognize and enable diverse role models

Youth do not necessarily need only adult role models. Other young people can provide excellent examples of what one can achieve in a rural setting.

“Life is not easy, especially when what u see on TV is just the urban centres. There is very little focus on rural towns. There is very little opportunity for the youth to show what they can achieve.”

- Survey respondent

Programs that recognize the accomplishment of rural youth could provide other rural youth with an excellent source of motivation, helping them excel in their own right. Beyond simply recognizing achievement, investing in those role

models through training and support can help to strengthen communities, particularly a community's youth.



The Top 20 Under 20, founded by Youth in Motion, recognises talented young Canadians taking action in their communities, provides them with a 4-day leadership seminar and the opportunity to meet and interact with successful business and community leaders. Each winner also receives an award to be applied to funding an educational experience, be it post-secondary education, conferences, etc. On a smaller scale, many towns offer not only a citizen of the year, but a *youth* citizen of the year award, in an attempt to encourage youth to contribute positively to the community.

## Appendix 1: Compiled Survey Data

Self-identified rural residents		10 of 29
How long have you lived in a rural area?		Occurrences
1	Whole life	4
1	10+ years	4
2	6-10 years	2
Are you a member of a First Nation?		
1	No	10
Do you consider yourself to be a rural youth?		
1	Yes	10
Explain (i.e. what is your definition of rural? How is your community different from an urban centre?)		
1	Surrounded by farms/countryside	4
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	4
2	Small population	3
3	Less commotion	2
3	More greenspace	2
3	Close-knit community	2
4	Less traffic	1
4	Limited ethnic/cultural/linguistic diversity	1
4	Different fashion/culture	1
4	Low change rate	1
4	Less crime	1
What are the challenges that you face as a rural youth?		
1	Lack of ethnic/cultural diversity	4
2	Lack of relevant employment opportunities	3
2	Isolation	3
3	Peer/family pressure/challenging to be different	2
3	Lack of access to education	2
Can you see yourself working and living in rural Ontario in the long-term?		
1	Yes	5
1	No	5
If so, what are your reasons for wanting to stay?		
1	Less pollution	3
2	Less noise	2
3	Lower cost of living than urban areas	1
3	Less traffic/transit	1
3	Greenspace	1
3	More comfortable	1
3	Better place to raise family	1
3	Less stress	1
If not, why not?		
1	More job opportunities in city	2
2	Intolerance	1
Do you believe that a strong sense of community and belonging, especially among youth, exists in your rural setting?		
1	No	5
2	Yes	5
What are some ways to increase a sense of social cohesion and sense of belonging among rural youth?		
1	More youth groups	5
2	Already strong, out of necessity	3
2	Create diversity in activities and cultures	3
3	More education	2
4	In-school seminars	1
4	Community involvement through vounteerism	1
Do you think that you are or will be able to reach your maximum potential as a leader, student, entrepreneur, etc. in your rural setting? Are the opportunities...		
1	No	6



2	Yes	4
<i>What additional tools or opportunities could help you reach this potential without leaving your community?</i>		
1	Easier access to social/cultural opportunities	3
2	Internships at local companies/skill enhancement	2
2	More jobs	2
3	High tech jobs	1
<i>Do you think that the loss of young people to larger urban centres is a problem for your community?</i>		
1	No	6
2	Yes	4
<i>If so, what solutions could help to overcome this problem? If not, why not?</i>		
1	Youth will leave, focus on returning older residents	2
2	Increased intellectual career opportunities	1
2	More cultural and sporting activities	1

<b>Rural but not self-identified</b>		<b>13 of 29</b>
<i>How long have you lived in a rural area?</i>		<i>Occurrences</i>
1	10+ years	7
2	1-5 years	3
2	6-10 years	2
3	Whole life	1
<i>Are you a member of a First Nation?</i>		
1	No	13
<i>Do you consider yourself to be a rural youth?</i>		
1	No	12
2	Blank	1
<i>Explain (i.e. what is your definition of rural? How is your community different from an urban centre?)</i>		
1	Small population	5
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	5
2	Limited cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity	4
3	Close-knit community	2
3	Surrounded by farms/countryside	2
4	Less pollution	1
4	Suburbs	1
4	Confining	1
4	Not "street-wise"	1
4	Fewer job opportunities	1
4	Isolating	1
<i>What are the challenges that you face as a rural youth?</i>		
1	Lack of ethnic/cultural diversity	4
2	Lack of access to education	3
3	Peer/family pressure/challenging to be different	2
3	Isolation	2
3	Closemindedness	2
3	Lack of role models/support facilities	2
3	Boredom	2
3	Transportation issues	2
4	Drugs/substance abuse	1
4	Poverty	1
4	Lack of relevant employment opportunities	1
<i>Can you see yourself working and living in rural Ontario in the long-term?</i>		
1	No	7
2	Yes	5
3	Blank	1
<i>If so, what are your reasons for wanting to stay?</i>		
1	More comfortable	1
1	Better place to raise family	1
1	Less pollution	1
1	Less noise	1

<i>If not, why not?</i>	
1 More job opportunities in city	5
2 Opportunity to further oneself	2
2 Love of urban areas/don't fit in small towns	2
2 Diverse and fast moving [cities]	2
3 Lack of privacy	1
<i>Do you believe that a strong sense of community and belonging, especially among youth, exists in your rural setting?</i>	
1 Yes	7
2 No	5
3 Blank	1
<i>What are some ways to increase a sense of social cohesion and sense of belonging among rural youth?</i>	
1 More youth groups/sports/opps	6
2 Create diversity in activities and cultures	2
3 Community involvement through vounteerism	2
3 Change old-fashioned ways/remove generational differences	1
3 Reduce poverty	1
<i>Do you think that you are or will be able to reach your maximum potential as a leader, student, entrepreneur, etc. in your rural setting? Are the opportunities and tools you need available in your community?</i>	
1 No	7
1 Yes	6
<i>What additional tools or opportunities could help you reach this potential without leaving your community?</i>	
1 Easier access to social/cultural opportunities	4
2 Not sure	2
2 Easier access to education	2
2 Internships at local companies/skill enhancement	2
3 More jobs	1
3 Internet	1
<i>Do you think that the loss of young people to larger urban centres is a problem for your community?</i>	
1 Yes	9
2 No	4
<i>If so, what solutions could help to overcome this problem? If not, why not?</i>	
1 More cultural and sporting activities	3
2 Have businesses owners mentor youth	2
3 Solutions exist, youth just have to take advantage	1
3 Teach art/cultural appreciation	1
3 Online education	1
3 Funding for entrepreneurship	1
3 Make it easy to commute to urban centre	1

<b>Non-rural</b>		6 of 29
<i>How long have you lived in a rural area?</i>		<i>Occurrences</i>
1	Less than 1 year	6
<i>Are you a member of a First Nation?</i>		
1	No	5
2	Yes	1
<i>Do you consider yourself to be a rural youth?</i>		
1	No	6
<i>Explain (i.e. what is your definition of rural? How is your community different from an urban centre?)</i>		
1	Limited cultural/ethnic/linguistic diversity	2
1	Greater distance from neighbours/amenities	2
1	Surrounded by farms/countryside	2
2	Small population	1
2	Close-knit community	1
2	Fewer job opportunities	1
2	More greenspace	1
<i>What are the challenges that you face as a rural youth?</i>		
1	Lots of challenges	2
2	None	1

2	Wouldn't know	1
2	Same as urban	1
<i>Can you see yourself working and living in rural Ontario in the long-term?</i>		
1	No	5
2	Yes	1
<i>If so, what are your reasons for wanting to stay?</i>		
1	Enjoy conservative nature of small towns	1
<i>If not, why not?</i>		
1	Too limiting	1
1	Love city	1
<i>Do you believe that a strong sense of community and belonging, especially among youth, exists in your rural setting?</i>		
1	Yes	5
2	No	1
<i>What are some ways to increase a sense of social cohesion and sense of belonging among rural youth?</i>		
1	Alright exists due to close relationships	1
1	Develop an urban cultural scene	1
1	More environmental projects	1
<i>Do you think that you are or will be able to reach your maximum potential as a leader, student, entrepreneur, etc. in your rural setting? Are the opportunities and tools you need available in your community?</i>		
1	No	4
2	Yes	1
3	Blank	1
<i>What additional tools or opportunities could help you reach this potential without leaving your community?</i>		
1	Government programs	1
<i>Do you think that the loss of young people to larger urban centres is a problem for your community?</i>		
1	Yes	3
2	No	2
3	Blank	1
<i>If so, what solutions could help to overcome this problem? If not, why not?</i>		
1	More cultural and sporting activities	1
1	Offer more challenges	1
1	Urban centres getting congested, pop. will go rural	1

## Appendix 2: The Role of Youth

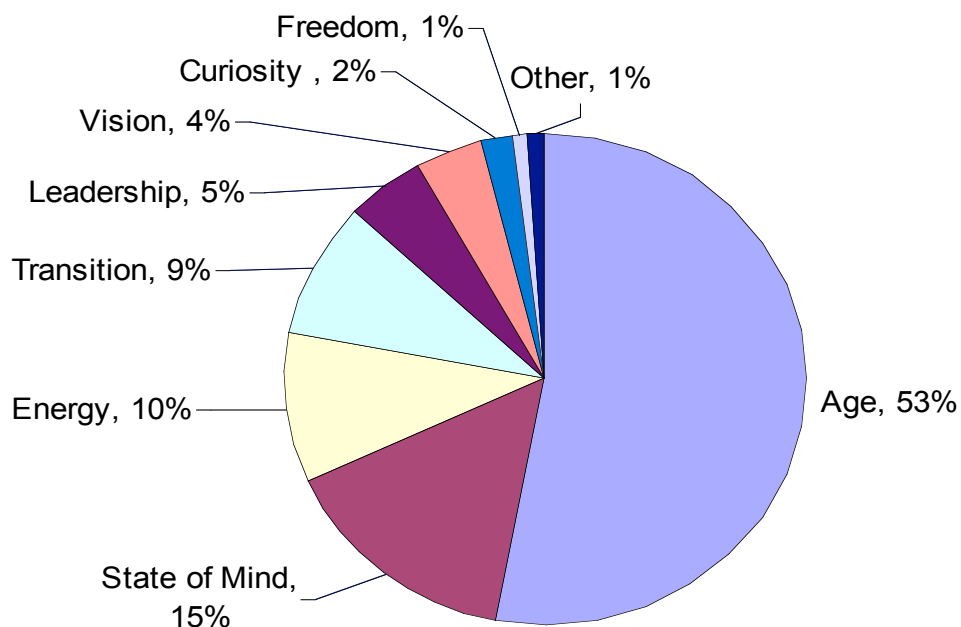
The following information was taken from TakingITGlobal's Role of Youth research to answer the question: "How do youth see themselves influencing the future?" The full report can be downloaded at:

<http://research.takingitglobal.org/roleofyouth>

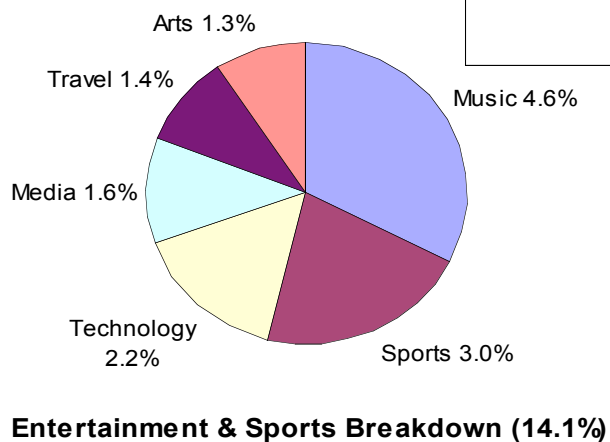
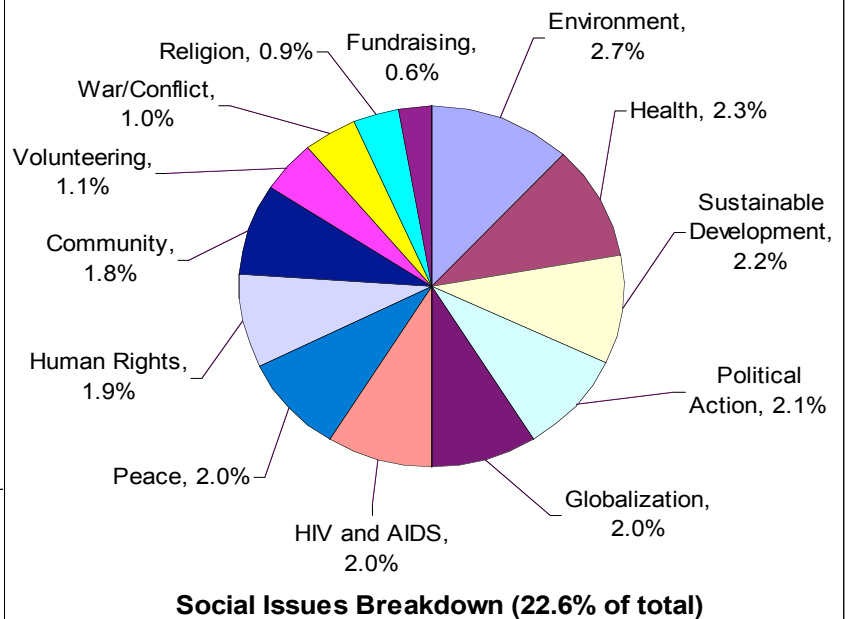
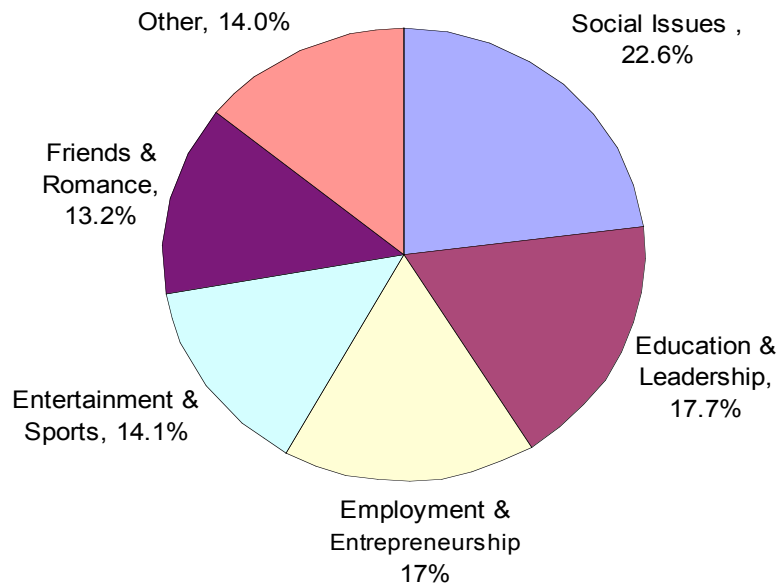
### Profile of Respondents:

- 1,443 responses from 126 countries
- High number of respondents residing in North America (29.2%) and Africa (27.4%)
- 58.7% of were male, 38.7% female
- 64.3% of respondents under age of 30
- Highly educated (55.2% have completed or are attending University or College)
- Able to speak & write in English

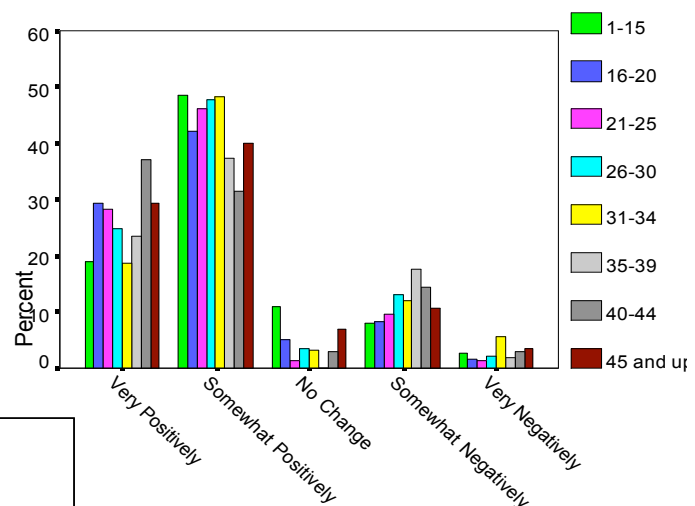
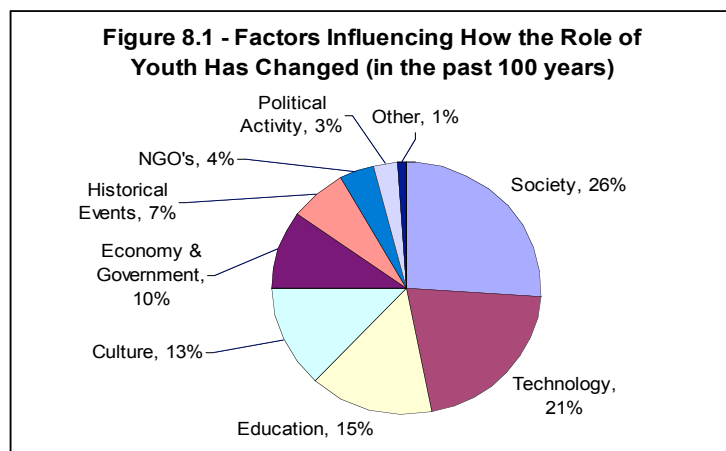
**Figure 2.0 - Defining Youth**



### Key Issues & Interests of Youth

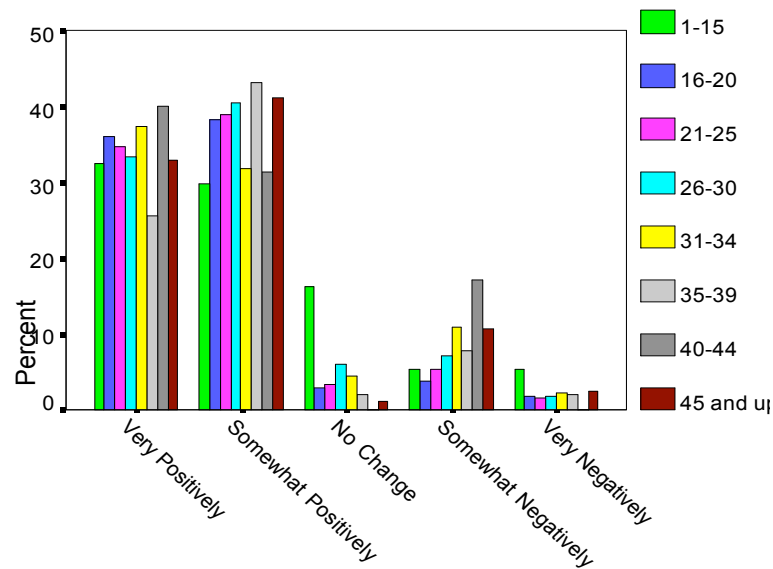


## How has the Role of Youth Changed in the Past 100 Years?

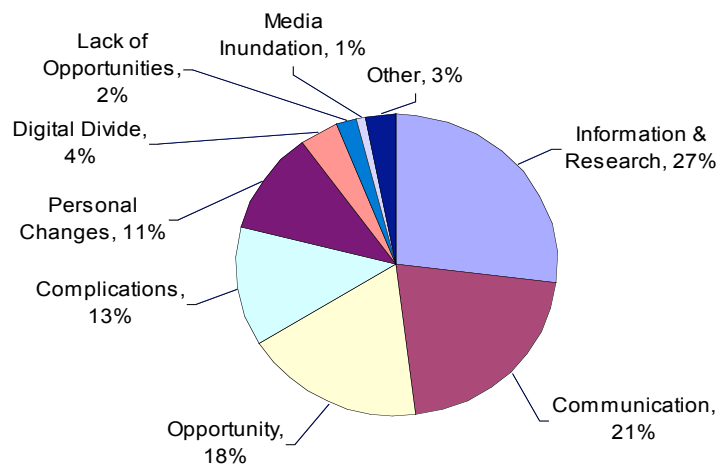


Factor Influencing Change	Result / Outcome
Technology - Access to information	More knowledgeable
Technology - ability to communicate	Open-minded, exposed to different views
Technology - access to opportunities	Diverse range of experiences and skills
Rise in democracies	Greater amount of freedom and choice
Lowering voting age to 18	Increased civic participation
Demographics - large population	Greater concern for youth involvement
Access to education	Higher literacy rate, better able to participate
Social movements	More rights, privileges & voice
Rise in consumerism	Materialistic and self-centered
Increased life expectancy	Married and having children at older age
Increased migration	More contact with foreign cultures
Increased divorce rate	Broken families, more independent
Youth-led organizations	Meaningful engagement
Increased entrepreneurship	Economic empowerment
Industrialization - longer working hours for parents, children in school to learn	Lack of parental support/guidance, increased isolation, passive role as student
Stakeholder inclusion in decision-making	Youth are being recognized as stakeholders

### How has technology impacted youth in your community?

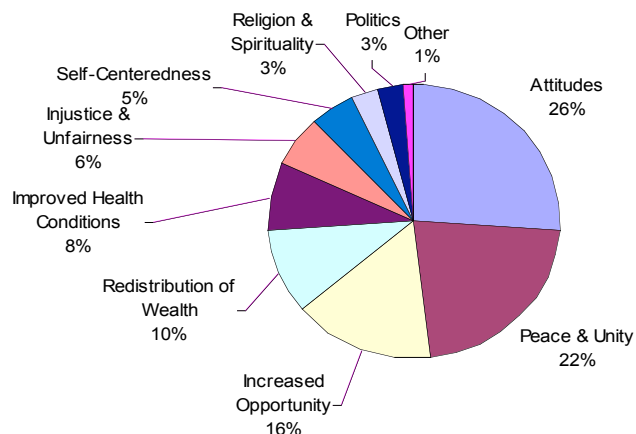


**Figure 9.1 - Impact of Technology**



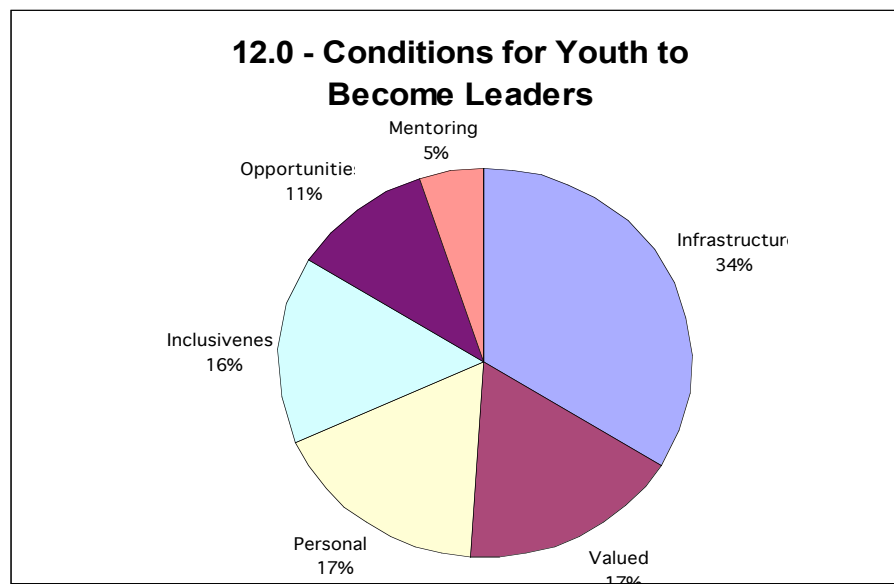
### How do youth see themselves influencing the future?

**10.0 - One Thing In The World to Change**



### What would you change about your country?

- Government - Leadership changes, broader and responsible political perspectives & elimination of corruption. More responsive, democratic leadership
- Equality - Equality of class, race, income and the elimination of poverty and creation of jobs.
- Opportunities for youth - Greater number of opportunities for youth.
- Education - Improved education, research & development, and literacy rates.
- National unity/betterment - Increased pride by citizens, unity, broader global outlook.



### Top ten ways that young people have a meaningful impact in their community

1. They are founders and initiators of projects, clubs, groups and organizations
2. They are lobbyists, involved in decision-making through political processes
3. They promote awareness of social and environmental issues
4. They share their ideas and issues of concern at conferences, forums and summits
5. They are trainers, mentors, coaches and tutors
6. They express themselves through visual, dramatic and musical arts
7. They create their own media through newsletters, websites and radio stations
8. They are organizers of petitions, campaigns and peaceful protests
9. They are entrepreneurs creating businesses and jobs
10. They are volunteers and fundraisers for charities