

# Culture of the North:

*BIPOC YOUTH TAKING ACTION*







# Contents

page 2	<b>Abstract</b>
page 4	<b>Introduction</b>
page 5	<b>Culture of the North</b>
page 6	<b>Phase 1</b>
page 8	<b>Phase 2</b>
page 9	<b>Method</b>
page 12	<b>Procedure</b>
page 13	• Sudbury Secondary School
page 16	• Manitoulin Secondary School
page 18	• Summer Art Pop-Up
page 19	<b>Results</b>
page 19	• Sudbury Secondary School
page 21	• Manitoulin Secondary School
page 22	• Summer Art Pop-Up
page 23	• Overall Results
page 25	<b>Discussion</b>
page 26	<b>Conclusion</b>

# Abstract

Culture of the North (COTN): BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) Youth Taking Action is a two-phase youth-led project. Phase one was developed in September of 2021, and it gained insight into the multicultural educational experiences of students who self-identify as BIPOC in Northern Ontario high schools. Its final report recommended and informed the development of phase two: implementing Equity Action Teams within two Rainbow District School

Board (RDSB) high schools (Sudbury Secondary School and Manitoulin Secondary School). This report will share the outcomes of phase two, including the project funding, goals, methods, procedures, results, and recommendations. The COTN Phase 2 youth-led project successfully extended beyond the schools into the community. It fostered collaborative interpersonal relationships between youth leaders and adult allies, promoted active anti-racism efforts, and

enhanced cultural awareness through artistic representations.

## Funding

Culture of the North Phase 2 was funded by the Tamarack Institute Community Building Youth Future (CBYF) Initiative's Community Innovation Fund (CIF). \$55,000 in funding was provided to support phase 2 of the project, during which we engaged youth to be Equity Action Team leaders within their schools.

## The Team



**Kerry Yang**  
Project Lead (Phase 1-2)



**Aminat Lawal**  
Project Lead (Phase 1)



**Nicole Minialoff**  
Executive Director (Phase 1)



**Kamilah Francis**  
Executive Director (Phase 2)



**Keanna Dugay**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator (Phase 1)



**Raphy Falardeau**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator (Phase 2)



**Jelise Keating**  
Communication Specialist  
(Phase 1-2)



**Charles Nyabeze**  
Business Administration  
Assistant (Phase 1)



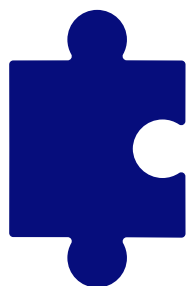
# \$55,000: Funding Breakdown\*



## Program Development



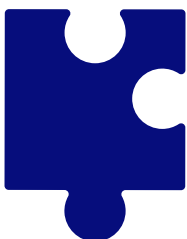
- Consultation fees (from BIPOC-run businesses with expertise in E.D.I.)
- Development of tools, action team materials and training sessions/workshops
- Honoraria for Elders, knowledge keepers
- Prints and design for workshop and program materials
- Professional translation services



## Community Engagement



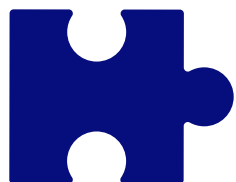
- Honoraria for student participants
- Giveaway prizes for additional engagement as needed
- Prints of Culture of the North magazines
- Prints of HOPE | ESPOIR campaign materials (CBYF Project) for use within the school
- Additional HOPE | Espoir campaign prints



## Arts-based Project



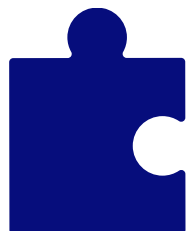
- Supplies e.g. paints, boards, project materials, etc.
- Procurement of local artists to lead the project
- Schools matched dollar amount with in-kind resources (staff time)



## Library Curation



- Each school will receive \$7,500 to be utilized in the development of a library of resources written by BIPOC authors, artists etc. to be determined by the students
- Each Equity Action Team will also curate a library of BIPOC resources for a selected local elementary school
- Action teams must determine how to divide their budget in order to develop both libraries



## Technology and other supplies



- Technology as needed to support the work of the students
- Program supplies for activities and workshops
- May include software subscriptions as needed to support their work

\*Includes \$5,000 from the reconciliation fund for Elder honoraria and traditional teaching supplies to support the integration of Indigenous knowledge keepers throughout the early stages of project development.

\*\*Including \$5,000 from the reconciliation fund for Elder honoraria and supplies.

# Introduction

The Culture of the North (COTN) Phase 2 project is the next step of a previously funded project of the same name that was initially developed and led in September of 2021 by two high school students. The purpose was to gain insight into the multicultural education experiences of students who self-identify as BIPOC in Northern Ontario high schools. The findings from the final report of that project recommended and informed the development of Equity Action Teams within schools that would focus on youth-led multicultural education to improve the school culture and environment. This pilot project broke down cultural barriers in the schools to create a more inclusive learning environment that reverberated into the broader community and made more equitable opportunities for BIPOC

youth in the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts. The project helped youth and staff uncover their stereotypes, prejudice, bias, and discrimination and aided in reconciliation between community members. The Equity Action Teams created the space for youth and staff to come together and develop actionable solutions to the real-time challenges of addressing anti-racism and providing tailored multicultural education within each school. Future North implemented the Equity Action Teams in 2 RDSB high schools within the Sudbury-Manitoulin District for this project: Sudbury Secondary School and Manitoulin Secondary School. Both schools created art representing the coming together of diverse people and cultures. They also created a student-curated BIPOC library within the

high schools and sponsored libraries for the surrounding elementary schools. Furthermore, the students engaged youth participation in gaining cultural awareness throughout their schools and in the community through the Summer Art Pop-Up series.

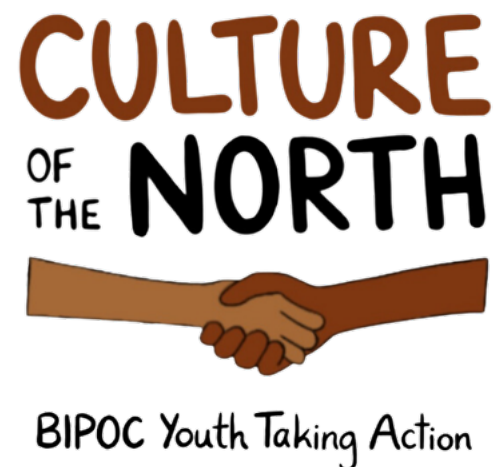
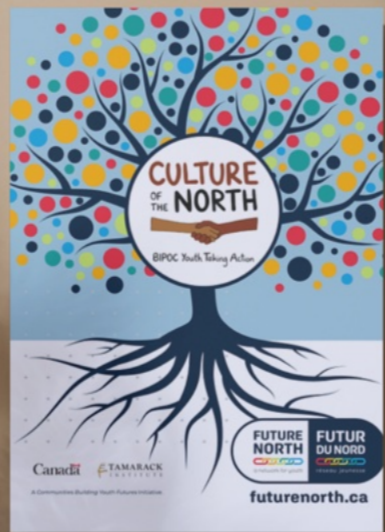


# What is the Culture of the North?

Culture of the North (COTN) aims to gain insight into the multicultural education experiences of students who self-identify as BIPOC in Northern Ontario. The COTN project seeks to break down cultural barriers in the schools to create an inclusive environment for learning that will, in theory, reverberate into the broader community. The hope is to

create more equitable opportunities for BIPOC youth in the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts. Ultimately, the project will help uncover stereotypes, prejudice, bias, and discrimination and aid in reconciliation between community members. Increased representation of BIPOC students in their school environment and

learning materials will positively impact their confidence and skill acquisition/learning in the classrooms. This project will also provide the opportunity for BIPOC youth to lead in facilitating cultural learning opportunities for the school community.



# Phase 1

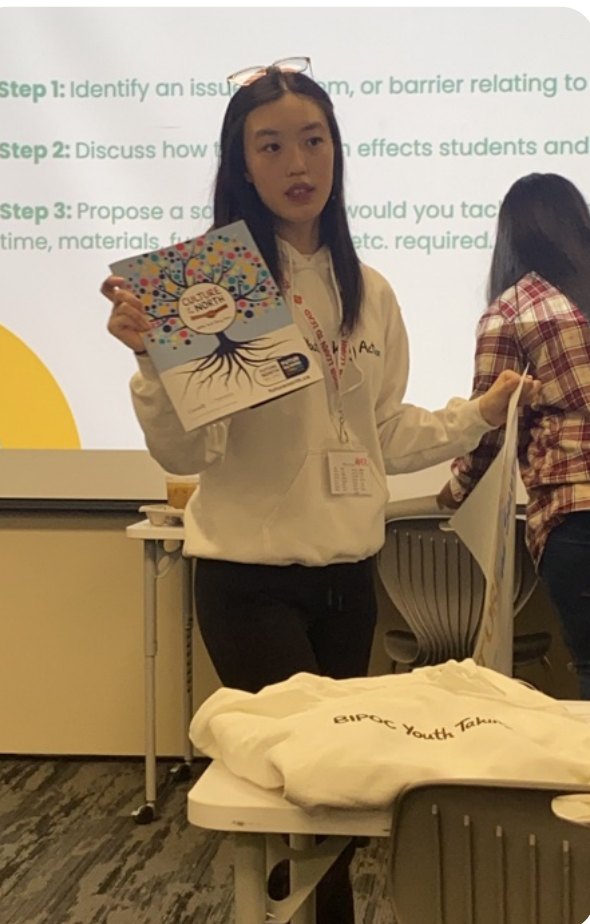
## Project start / finding / recommendations

Phase one of the project was initially developed and co-led by Kerry Yang and Aminat Lawal in September 2021, with support from Future North, and funded by Pathways to Education.

This part of the project sought to determine the degree to which multicultural education is being taught within the high school classrooms in the District of Sudbury and

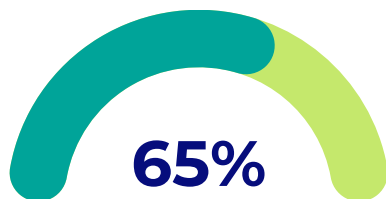
Manitoulin and its impact on students who identify as Black, Indigenous (and) People of Colour (BIPOC). Kerry and Aminat examined the lived experiences of BIPOC students in comparison to those of teachers, teacher college students, and Indigenous support workers within the four school boards: Rainbow District School Board, Sudbury Catholic District School Board, Conseil

Scolaire Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario, and Conseil Scolaire Public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario. This research was conducted through data collection through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. They obtained data from 30 schools and 220 participants. The results identified that an issue clearly existed.

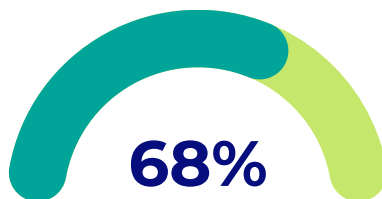




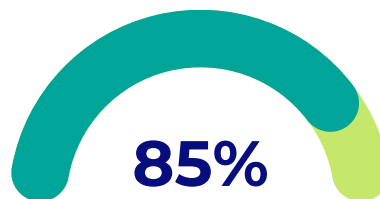
## Student Survey Results



stated they've experienced racism and 15% were unsure

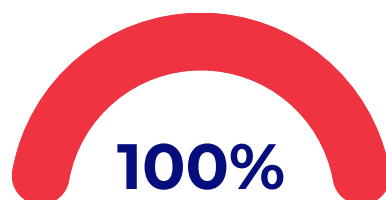


stated racism has affected their education to some degree

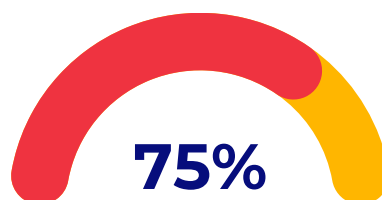


stated they wanted to engage in more cultural education

## Teacher Survey Results



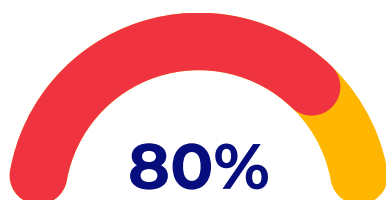
identified as white/Caucasian



stated they've witnessed racism among students

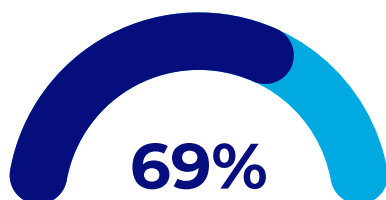


stated they've witnessed racism among staff

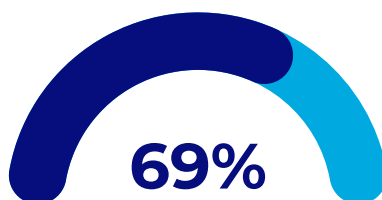


stated they wanted more cultural education training

## Teachers College Students Survey Results



stated they witnessed racism among students



stated they're not comfortable with cultural education



Scan to read full report of Phase 1

# Phase 2

Future North implemented Equity Action Teams in 2 high schools within the Sudbury-Manitoulin District for COTN phase 2. The idea was that the Equity Action Teams create the space for youth and teachers to come together and develop actionable solutions to the real-time challenges of addressing anti-racism and providing tailored multicultural education within each school. The Equity Action Teams would provide a permanent space for continued youth-led and school-based representation and multicultural learning through workshops, guest speakers, allies, teachers, and community members. They will leverage the opportunity for skill sharing

and enhancing student participants' soft skills will also be a by-product of their participation. It will ultimately positively impact areas including but not limited to their academics, life skills, cultural intelligence, and leadership skills.

The goal of the Equity Action Teams was to identify action items around equity, allyship, and anti-racism that they would like to address within their school through youth-led activities and EDI workshops. They would also work alongside the administration team to progress their actions forward and develop a plan for self-sustainability beyond the project funding period.



## There were three main areas to address with the funding:

### Arts-based project

Each team was also afforded a budget for an arts-based project to increase BIPOC representation within their school setting.

### Library curation

A second component of the team budget allowed them to curate a collection of BIPOC resources for their school's library and sponsor the curation of a BIPOC library for an elementary school of their choosing.

### EDI education

Each school will decide how to introduce EDI education and engage the entire school community in the project.

# Method

## Selection of schools

There were no specific criteria in the selection of schools. Future North sent letters to all four school boards to explain the pilot project and request their expression of interest in being selected. After a period of waiting for responses, Future North reached out to contacts who had initially expressed interest in the COTN project when the funding proposal was originally submitted to see if they could facilitate any connections to schools. Adebola, the founder of the Afro Women and Youth Foundation, connected Future North with a Rainbow District School Board (RDSB) teacher, who then connected us to the RDSB School Board. The RDSB school Board was open to the idea and requested that we present the project to the Student

Senate, based on its youth-led nature, so that interested student representatives could take it to their schools. Students expressed needing help getting their respective schools to join despite bringing it forward and receiving verbal interest. We eventually connected directly with two principals after weeks of back and forth with students unable to move things forward.

Future North commits to serving the Sudbury-Manitoulin region, and so to honour that commitment, we aimed to secure Manitoulin Secondary School (MSS) and a Sudbury-based school. After speaking to the administrative staff, we secured MSS. Jackie Balleny, a former Principal and current Executive Director of Sudbury District Restorative Justice

facilitated the connection between two Sudbury high schools. The principal at Sudbury Secondary School quickly accepted the proposal to pilot the project within their school. Therefore, we piloted the Culture of the North phase 2 project within Manitoulin Secondary School and Sudbury Secondary School (SSS). We moved forward with providing each school with a Memorandum of Understanding, which they each signed to outline the parameters of the partnership on this project. Key points from the agreement included the roles and responsibilities\* of each party involved, relationship principles, and the funding/budget breakdown.

\*Future North is responsible for:

- Providing a lead project coordinator to oversee the pilot project
- Developing a recruitment plan for the Equity Action Teams
- Keeping the team on track with the project plan milestones
- Staying accountable to the funder for the spending of funds, data and evaluation methods, and completing the mid- and final reports

MSS is responsible for:

- Assigning a MSS staff to act as a liaison between Future North and the school until the Equity Action Teams are in place
- Providing 2 teachers/staff to be a part of the Equity Action Teams and provide guidance on the project
- Fundraising, accepting donations, and/or providing in-kind resources (art supplies, staff time, etc) equating to \$5000 towards the arts-based project
- Maintaining commitments and working with Future North to ensure success of the project

# Equity Action Teams recruitment and formation

Upon securing the schools, we needed to form the Student Equity Action Team to lead the project. The Equity Action Teams were created with a call out to students interested in collaborating on a cultural arts-based project after initially meeting with the school staff that would be supporting the Equity Action Teams. Staff that helped the project and Equity Action Team at MSS included Mrs. McCann (Vice Principal), Mr. Becks (shop teacher), Mr. Robinson (shop teacher), Mrs. McGraw (Indigenous teacher), and Mrs. Roque (librarian). At SSS, the staff supporting the Equity Action Team included Mrs. Bellrose (librarian), Mrs. Auger (Indigenous Support Worker), and Mrs. Downey (Principal).

At MSS, we recruited students using colourful posters posted around the schools, including on the digital TV screen, and also sent out by email. We also used announcements to recruit and had office sign-up sheets. We also presented the project to school leaders identified by staff during class time (so they got to miss class to attend). We subsequently used the lunch hour to host a booth and brought some

Tim Hortons treats to sweeten the proposal. The vice principal recommended this approach as interest by students was lower.

At SSS, the approach was different as they already had some key established groups that had interest in the topics being addressed with this project. The librarian and Indigenous Support Worker took on the team's staff lead roles and facilitated the connection to the students in the Newcomer's group and the Indigenous reading club, clubs they led. They also made morning and lunchtime announcements about a brand new BIPOC committee to attract any other interested students. Lastly, we were invited to attend their Wellness Fair, and at our booth, we invited students to join the Equity Action Team. Those who were not interested were still invited to share ideas about a cultural art project or BIPOC library resources that interested them. The goal was to have eight students on each Equity Action Team, with 50% BIPOC representation. At MSS, we had a total of 3 students on the committee, 1 of whom used this project to complete their co-op placement and, therefore,

was dedicated nearly full-time to this starting in the 2nd semester (February). Three additional students from the Three Fire Council were consultants on the project—4 of the six students identified as Indigenous. At SSS, we had 14 students on the committee, of which 11 identified as BIPOC.





**have you seen  
discrimination from mos...**

**Yes I have, mostly on the  
part of students but also  
on the part of teachers.**

**Have you ever  
experienced discriminat...**

**Use of n-word in class by a  
white teacher (reading).**

**Have you ever  
experienced discriminat...**

**Teachers denying the  
presence of racism,  
instead insisting racialized  
students do better**

**Have you ever  
experienced discriminat...**

**Teachers using  
stereotypical racial names  
by accident on racialized  
student**

**Have you ever  
experienced discriminat...**

**Being assumed to be  
"from" somewhere else,  
while classmates were  
assumed to be from  
Canada**

**Have you ever  
experienced discriminat...**

**Being called names of  
other racialized students  
on many instances**

**Anonymous responses from  
youth to a COTN survey,  
phase 1**

# Procedure

An initial meeting with each group of students allowed us to determine the meeting times and frequency.

Moreover, we provided them with a breakdown of the project and an explanation of the total available funding so they could be decision-makers in how the budget would be allocated and spent. Meetings took place every week during the lunch hour at both schools.

Sudbury Secondary School (SSS) was able to have all meetings in person. Due to the distance, Manitoulin Secondary School (MSS) meetings were initially online, followed by in-person meetings every month. In April, the in-person meeting frequency increased to bi-weekly. As agreed upon when reviewing the budget with the students, Future North brought light snacks (as opposed to lunch, which would be more costly) to the

monthly meetings at SSS. MSS had a much smaller number of students and met less frequently and so they requested lunch be brought to each in-person meeting. The budget spent on each school's food was similar.

For communication, we initially decided to use Google Classroom. However, we quickly discovered a barrier: Google Classroom did not allow those without school-provided emails to join the platform, excluding Future North. We pivoted to using Discord, a free chat room app that everyone could access. We co-created rules for the chat space, and Future North staff were all moderators.

Having gained an understanding of the budget available to them, we proceeded with brainstorming activities. We

used the Mural platform to allow for the collaborative sharing of ideas. The mural was sent out through Discord to those who did not make the in-person meeting, and they had over three weeks to add their ideas to the mural for consideration. Due to many conflicting schedules and absences, we also introduced short surveys to get results and make decisions to move the project forward even when the entire group could not attend. All had multiple opportunities and platforms to voice their opinions.



# Sudbury Secondary School

With 14 students on this Equity Action Team, we divided the larger team into sub-teams with particular areas of focus based on their interests. The students selected the team they wanted to join through a Google form. The teams included a Marketing/Social Media team, a team focused on the Art project, a team focused on the BIPOC library

curation, and a team focused on the Final Event (cultural day). create more equitable opportunities for BIPOC youth in the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts. Ultimately, the project will help uncover stereotypes, prejudice, bias, and discrimination and aid in reconciliation between community members. Increased representation of

BIPOC students in their school environment and earning materials will positively impact their confidence and skill acquisition/learning in the classrooms. This project will also provide the opportunity for BIPOC youth to lead in facilitating cultural learning opportunities for the school community.

## Art-based project

After reviewing, deliberating, and voting on multiple ideas (including those presented by students at the Wellness Fair), SSS students decided to move forward with an oversized wooden puzzle (4 x 6 feet). This idea morphed out of what was initially a quilt idea where each student could design their piece. After speaking with the sewing teacher and considering what goes into

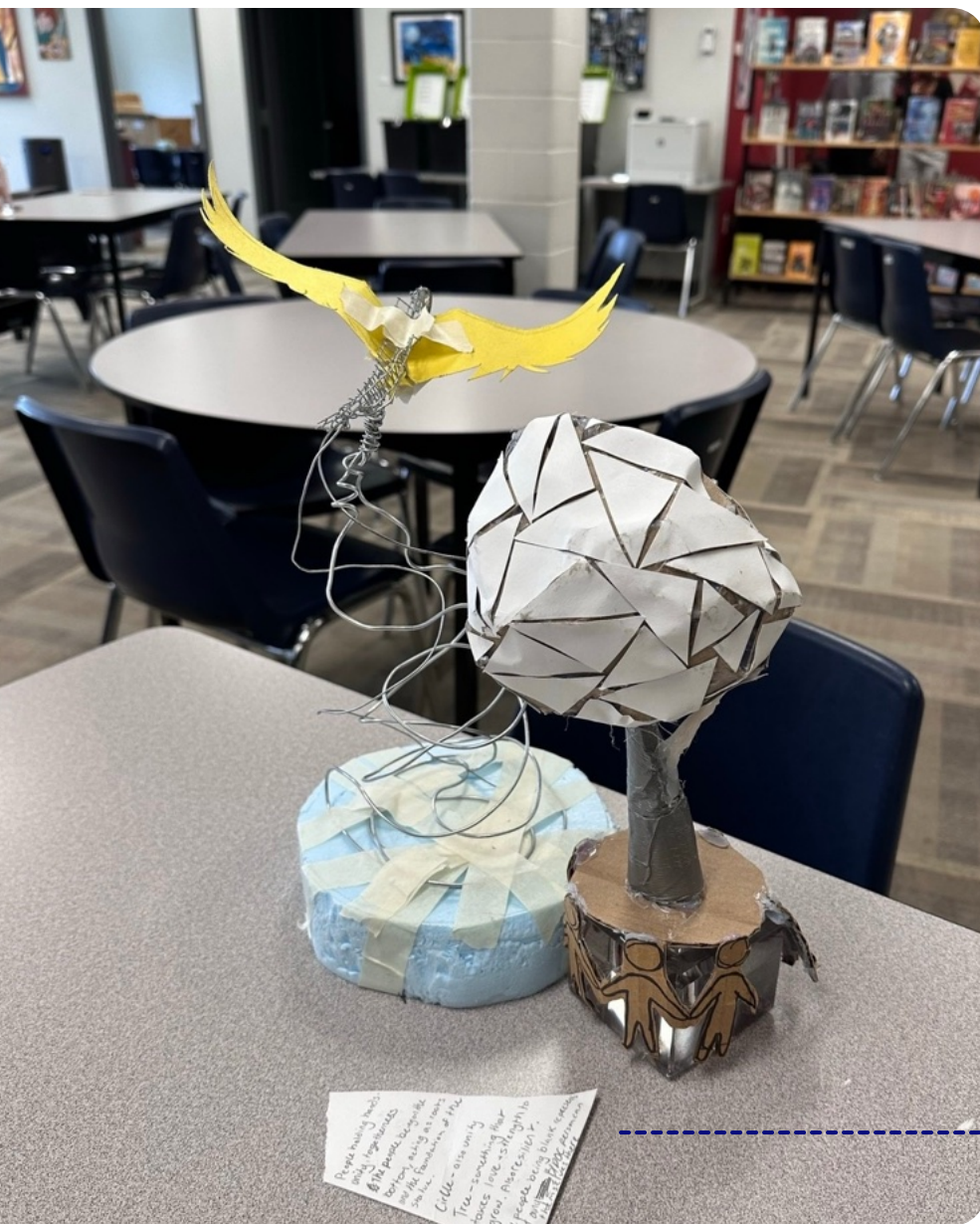
constructing a quilt, the materials, and the sewing skills required, the idea evolved into creating/painting the giant wooden puzzle. Each student would have 2-3 puzzle pieces to complete that represented them and/or their Culture. All the puzzle pieces would represent the diversity of individuals, and the entire piece would showcase the

unity of the different cultures that are coming together. The puzzle pieces were cut by Northern Woodworker. Anticipating there would be leftover funds, they added that they would create a sculpture designed by one of the students as a legacy piece if they could afford to.

After calculating the costs, additional funds remained







**“People holding hands, unity, togetherness. The people being on the bottom, acting as roots to the foundation of the statue.**

**Circle - Also unity  
Tree - Something that takes love and strength to grow. Also resilient.**

**The people being blank represent that any BIPOC person can see themselves there.”**

**Sheila Shawongonabe**

that could be used to fulfill the idea of a legacy sculpture piece. Students expressed interest in designing the sculpture and were invited to create 3D mockup designs. 2 students completed 3D mockups and explained the meaning behind each one. The students voted on their preferred design, which belonged to Shaylah Shawongonabe. Once we had a design idea, the North team began

looking to commission an artist who could transform Shayla's 3D mockup into a sculpture. After speaking to a few artists, Benjamin Hermann from Studio Nude Beach eagerly agreed to take on the project. Benjamin Hermann is a local Northern Ontario artist based in North Bay who has previously worked on Up Here festival pieces and works with various mediums. Knowing our limited budget, Benjamin

was flexible and adapted the sculpture materials accordingly. He was determined to make this sculpture come to life while staying true to the original artist's design and considering the meaning as much as possible. As requested by the principal and agreed upon by Shayla, he made the edit to include the school's star emblem and school colours in the sculpture.

## EDI education

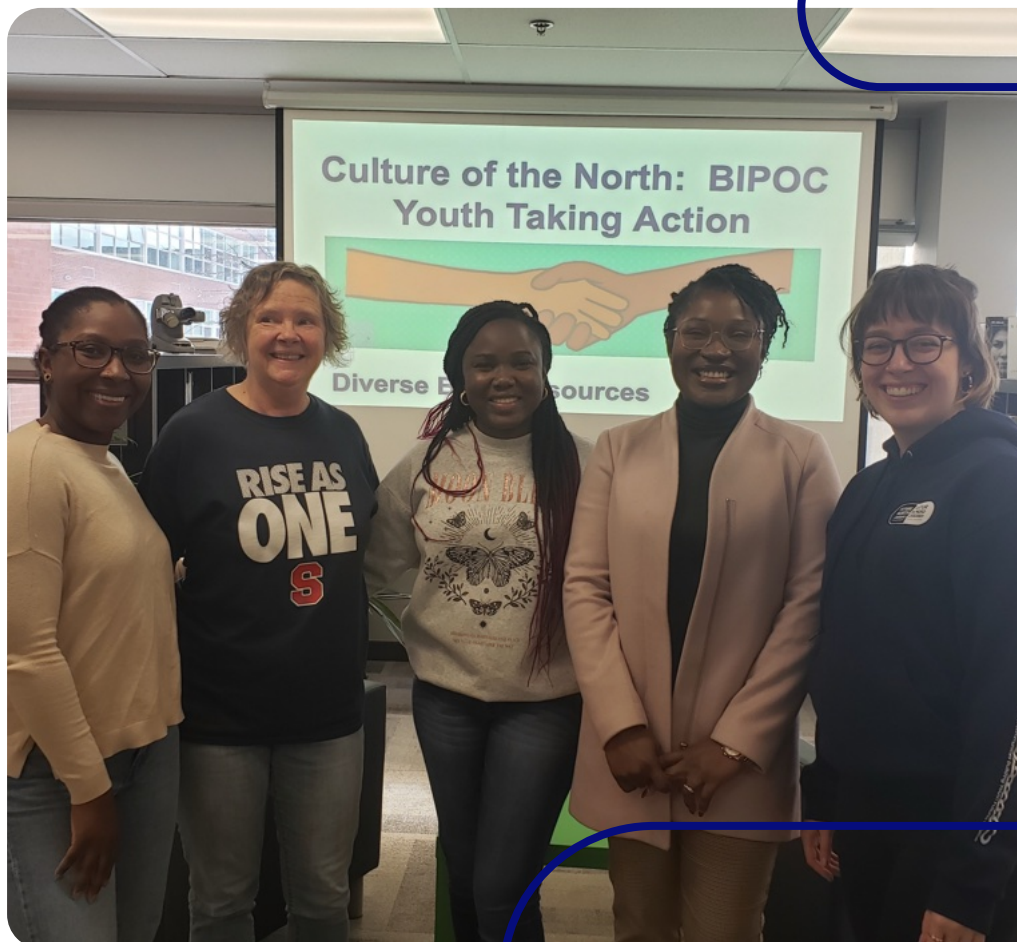
They wanted to collaborate on hosting an inaugural school-wide cultural day event with the Newcomers group, as we had some from this group on the Equity Action Team. This day would allow them to share and educate the greater school community on embracing cultural differences and allow them to unveil the completed art pieces. They also welcomed the idea of bringing in the Afro Women and Youth Foundation for a 3-part education series

(which took place during the lunch hour over three back-to-back weeks). The EDI education was open to anyone interested in attending. Adebola and her colleague delivered a presentation introducing the students to the history of colonization and reconciliation in Part 1 of the training. Parts 2 and 3 of the training were more discussion and activity-based. The students reflected on their own biases and worked through how to

be actively antiracist. Recommendations from AWYF included developing a peer education model to extend the EDI education into the community and obtaining buy-in and a plan from the school staff to ensure the continuation of the Equity Action Teams beyond the current school year.

## Library curation

The Equity Action Team decided to involve the Indigenous Book Club in the BIPOC library curation since some of the Equity Action Team members were already part of this club. In addition to curating a list of books, SSS students decided to curate a BIPOC music playlist on Spotify. During 2 of our weekly sessions, students added their favourites to the list of songs. Future North staff listened to and removed any inappropriate songs.





# Manitoulin Secondary School

## Art-based project

One of the students at MSS requested to use this project as her semester two co-op. She was, therefore, able to commit nearly a full-time schedule to this project. 2 students worked with her to support some of the other project components. Three students from the Three Fire Council consulted in 2 meetings and were part of the discord chat. With such a small student team at MSS, they worked well together on all aspects of the project. Additional support was provided from the Future North team and the school's staff/admin.

MSS decided to create a sculpture with Indigenous representation tied to the school being located within M'Chigeeng. The sculpture

would be a focal point for an outdoor education space that the Three Fire Council was already working on through separate funding they had received. The sculpture would be a Blanding turtle, representing Turtle Island and the turtle native to Manitoulin Island. Paper dolls would surround this turtle, and they joined to show the unity of the diverse student population at MSS. Additionally, each elementary school feeds into MSS (the only RDSB public high school on Manitoulin), and would each get a paper doll with a plaque explaining the meaning and linking to the MSS sculpture. Mckenna devised the idea and framework to best create the turtle to be welded out

of metal. Raphy Falardeau, Future North's Community Engagement Coordinator at the time, used her graphic design skills to make the digital model and pieces that would be used to cut out the metal shell pieces that would be welded together to form the turtle. MSS had access to a plasma cutter through Mckenna's dad, Mr. Barnes, who taught welding at Kenjgewin-Teg. We purchased a brand new ESAB welder for the school, so Mckenna had access to one solely for her use for this project. Lastly, we had access to Kathryn Corbiere, an Indigenous metal artist, for one meeting where she could consult and give her feedback on the design and elements to consider.



## EDI education

We had insufficient time to bring in external EDI education. MSS had already established some connections to the Indigenous community on Manitoulin, considering their location within M'Chigeeng. During our time there, they hosted a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) ceremony and walk with the students. However, we were not informed until the day of and therefore could not provide any funding or enhance opportunities around this for furthering the engagement with the students in this reconciliation work.

## Library curation

The entire school community was engaged in curating the BIPOC library. The students created a contest to encourage students to add their recommended books that celebrated diversity or were written by a BIPOC author to the list. This student-curated list is what the librarian used to purchase books. Books were vetted and reviewed by the librarian before being purchased. There were prizes for the top 3 individual students who gave the most suggestions and a prize for the classroom that provided the most recommendations. The contest generated 544 responses from 23 students and nine classrooms.

## SSS and MSS wrap-up

Both schools accomplished what they could within the time constraints. However, due to various factors, we could not utilize the total funds within the school year, with activities needing to be wrapped up by June 1st, 2023. The students agreed to continue the cultural education through a Summer Art Pop-Up series. Future North invited all students on the Equity Action Team to participate in a planning session for the Summer Art Pop-Up series. Only three students expressed interest in continuing to work on this project through the summer. Their emails were collected to follow up on their availability





# Summer Art Pop-Up

Myths and Mirrors is an Indigenous-led community arts organization that provides a forum for marginalized artists to express themselves and has been building community through art for over 25 years. Collaborating with them was an obvious choice. Therefore, in collaboration with Myths and Mirrors, Future North introduced Summer Art Pop-Up: FREE cultural art education provided twice weekly in two locations (Ryan Heights Playground and the Youth Wellness Hub) for youth 12 and over. The series took place over five weeks, each featuring a different emerging BIPOC artist and activity.

**Week 1:** Silkscreening with Kayode Akande

**Week 2:** Crochet Sunflower Squares with Dieter Lische-Parkes

**Week 3:** Political Poetry with Connor Lafortune

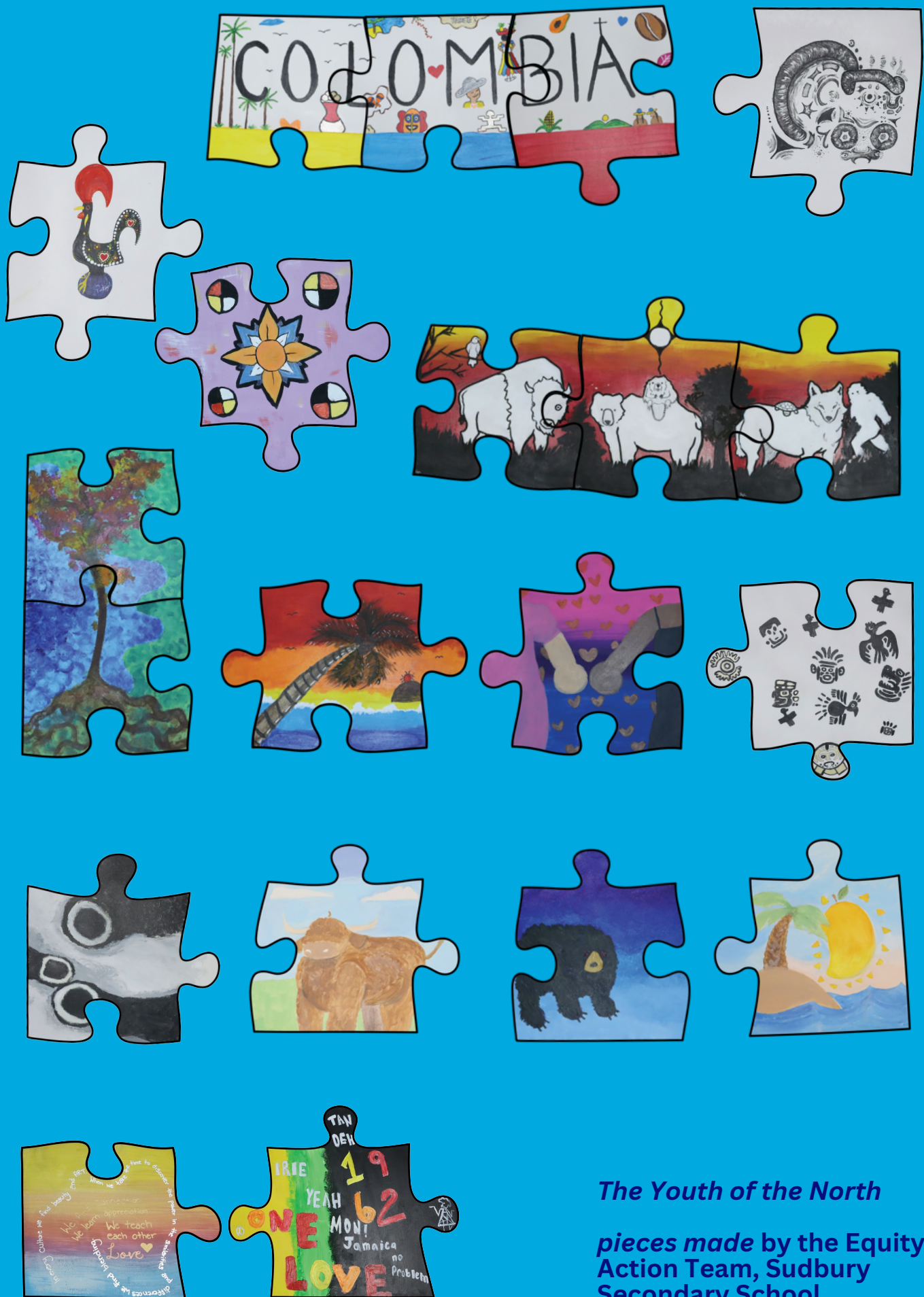
**Week 4:** Baby Birch Boats with Leisha Neuman

**Week 5:** VR with Katya Serre

The Summer Art Pop-Up series was advertised across three social media pages (Future North, Myths and Mirrors, and Youth Wellness Hub). We also put up physical posters and shared them in neighbourhood-specific Facebook groups. Moreover, we emailed the information to the schools/school Boards and our Youth and Main directory email lists. We concluded the Summer Art Pop-Up series with a major Park Party at Ryan Heights Playground, and the artists who had participated in previous weeks were invited to be vendors. There were also free BIPOC-led cultural art activities, cultural food provided by Flames Caribbean Kitchen (free for the first 100 attendees), breakdancing tutorials, and BIPOC artist entertainment through music and poetry. Activities included print screening with a design by BIPOC artist Kayode Kayande, face painting, and community members painting the SSS puzzle border. Aryi, an SSS Equity Action Team member, led this activity.







## *The Youth of the North*

*pieces made by the Equity  
Action Team, Sudbury  
Secondary School*

# Results

## Sudbury Secondary School

Arts-based project: The completed puzzle comprises 27 pieces and is surrounded by a 25-piece border created by the Sudbury community at the Summer Art Pop-Up's celebratory Park Party. Future North and remaining members of the Equity Action Team unveiled the puzzle at the beginning of the school year during Sudbury Secondary School's inaugural Multicultural Fair, which took place on September 26th. Events included a soccer game, Indian tacos for sale, cultural music, karaoke, etc. Some students were no longer at the school, but those still there were proud to show it off. Stickers were created for each puzzle piece, and the BIPOC Spotify playlist QR code was distributed to the community for free. The BIPOC playlist can continue to have songs added to it. Students loved the puzzle piece stickers and took multiples (of all their favourites).

The completed sculpture titled "Unity is Strength" was designed by Shaylah Shawongonabe and created by Benjamin Hermann. It is 7 ft tall and faces out onto Mackenzie Street. It lights up and is visible at night as well. The sculpture represents

unity, togetherness, and resiliency. The people being blank was intentional so that any BIPOC person could see themselves represented. It is a legacy piece that adds to the BIPOC representation in Sudbury and hopes to reverberate the message of celebrating diversity and increasing equity and inclusion in the community. Library Curation: As a result

of the work the librarian, Mrs. Bellrose, did alongside the Indigenous book club, they ordered \$7,500 worth of BIPOC books for the SSS library, as well as curated a BIPOC library for the three surrounding elementary schools: Queens Elizabeth II, Lansdowne, and Princess Anne Public Schools. In addition to the books, Mrs. Bellrose purchased beautiful

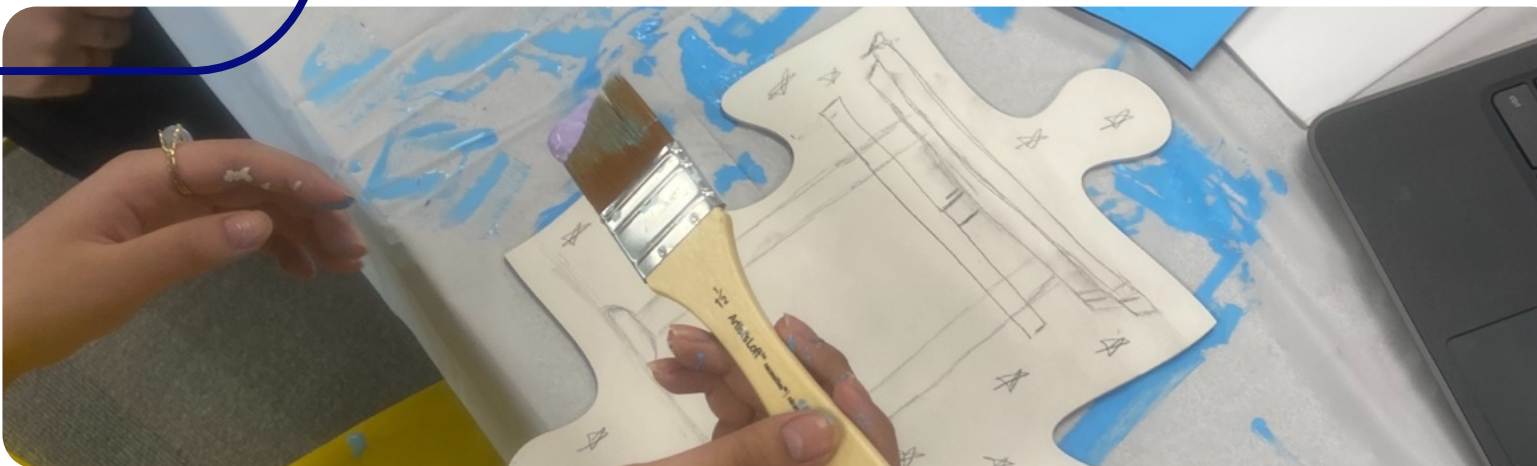




diversity bookmarks to hand out to students checking out library books. The necessary bookbinding and some additional shelving to properly house the new books were also purchased, ensuring there were no other expenses due to the purchase of the books for the schools.

## EDI education

The students who attended the EDI training sessions were highly engaged, indicating a great interest in the topics addressed. Students who were in the library for other reasons joined in on day two and requested to come back for the next session. Following the students' training, the librarian asked that we provide some training on the PD day to all the Rainbow District School Board Librarians.





# Manitoulin Secondary School

Sculpture: All the students at Manitoulin Secondary School involved in the project were grade 12s and very keen on leaving this legacy project. The plasma cutting and welding of the paper dolls were completed by Mckenna Barnes, with support from her father, David Barnes, a teacher at Kenjgewin Teg. Fusion 360 was the software used to convert the design into the plasma cutter. The sculpture still needs to be completed. The names of the three students will be on the

plaque, recognizing them for their hard work and dedication. Mckenna Barnes won a scholarship towards her post-secondary education in the trades based on her work on this project. Although Mckenna did not have sufficient time to complete the sculpture, there is a plan to finish it during the 2023-24 school year using the shop class and a student, Noah, who practiced welding all fall and has been working with Mr. Barnes at Kenjgewin Teg.

## EDI education

BIPOC library: The \$7500 library budget was used to purchase various BIPOC books and bookshelves to accommodate them in the library. The students did beautiful wood burning designs on the bookshelves. The Equity Action Team decided to provide all elementary feeder schools on Manitoulin with their own BIPOC library.



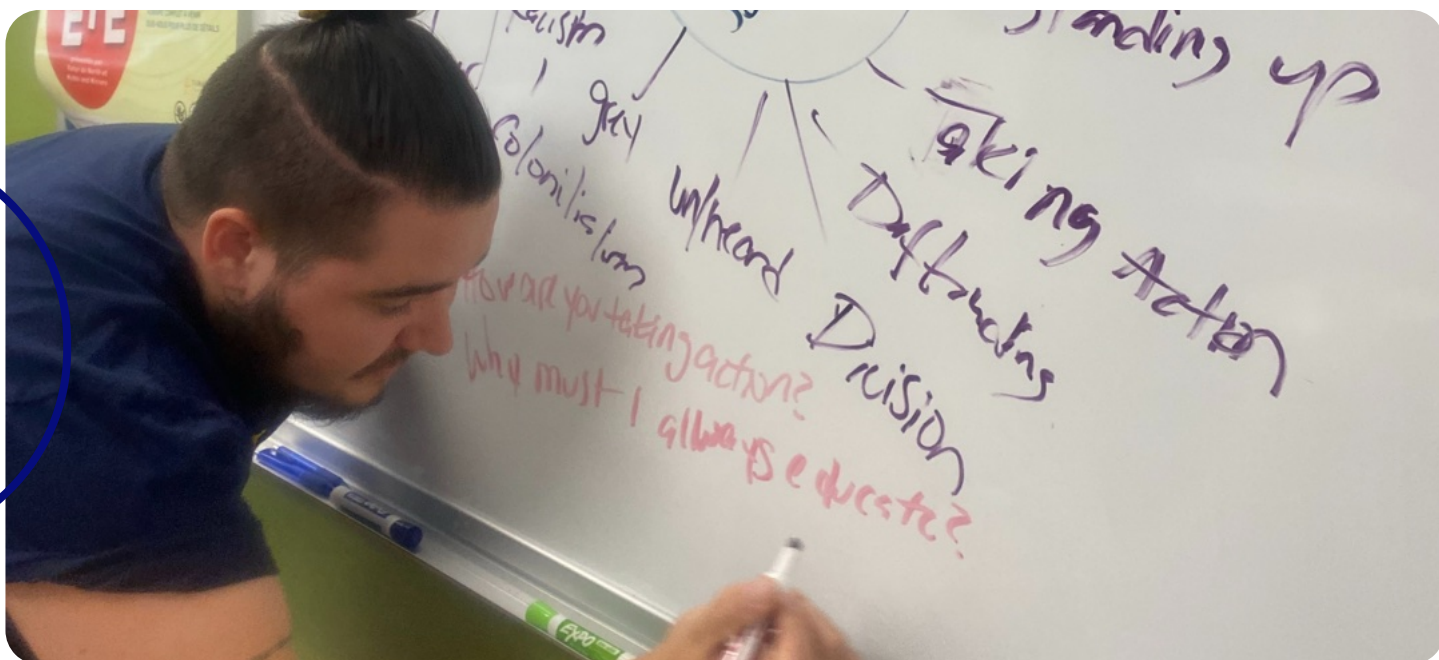


# Summer Art Pop-Up

We had 75+ youth participate in the Summer Art Pop-Up series, with the Youth Wellness Hub seeing a more significant number of participants than the Ryan Heights Playground.

Over 200 community members participated in the Summer Art Pop-Up Park Party event. The vibe and feedback were overwhelmingly positive.





## Overall Results:

We provided increased visibility for Myths and Mirrors and the Youth Wellness Hub (which opened in June 2023). We also increased the availability of cultural education and the representation of BIPOC artists in our community. Through this project, we reached youth in high school, post-secondary, and the broader community when we pivoted to offer the Summer Art Pop-Up series. We involved youth in many ways, from the art project to the music playlist, library book curation, and the final Summer Art Pop-Up park party.

After hearing about the Culture of the North project, we were invited to present and join the Rainbow

District School Board's Anti-racism committee. This committee aimed to develop and implement an anti-racism strategy at the School Board level. After our final 2022-23 school year meeting was cancelled, we have yet to receive an update on committee meetings resuming.

We also received the opportunity and invitation to join the Mayor on October 16th for a large group discussion with various community leaders to develop a municipal strategy around a welcoming (and antiracist) city, stemming from our work on the Culture of the North project.

One SSS student from the Equity Action Team joined

Future North's Youth Expert Panel and attributed their new role as part of the Student Senate to the confidence they gained from participating in the youth-led Culture of the North project and Equity Action Team the previous school year.

The MSS student working on the sculpture as part of her co-op came in second place for welding at the Technological Skills competition and the Northeast Qualifiers. She went on to compete at the provincial-level Skills Ontario competition. In September 2024, McKenna received a scholarship to pursue her education in the trades.





*The Youth of the North*  
by youth of Greater Sudbury



# Discussion

The Culture of the North phase 2 project sought to increase cultural education and representation in schools and the broader community through youth-led Equity Action Teams and activities. SSS and MSS agreed to work with Future North to pilot this approach and create youth-led Equity Action Teams within their respective schools. Through this project, students increased cultural representation in their schools through art and library/educational resources. Moreover, Future North was victorious in engaging youth in externally provided EDI education they would not have otherwise received. They also initiated school-wide activities and gained participation in

increasing cultural representation and diversity throughout their school. Furthermore, the Summer Art Pop-Up series allowed Myths and Mirrors to create opportunities for emerging BIPOC youth artists to facilitate workshops that shared cultural education through art, making it more fun, engaging, and digestible to the broader community. It also allowed the Sudbury community to engage with and be a part of the SSS puzzle piece, demonstrating to the school's BIPOC community that the Sudbury community embraced and supported them. The achievements of this project are a testament to the power of collaboration and supporting youth-led work.

The project's impact extended beyond the schools and into the broader community. It fostered collaborative interpersonal relationships between youth leaders and adult allies, promoted active anti-racism efforts, and enhanced cultural representation and awareness through artistic representations in the Sudbury-Manitoulin District.





# Conclusion

## Recommendations and Next Steps

Although excellent work was accomplished by Future North and the Equity Action Teams, the work to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in the education sector does not end here. With the increasing BIPOC population in Sudbury and the North, increasing BIPOC representation and education in schools must continue to be a priority.

To start, let's:

**1.** Continue building on the momentum. By staying in motion and continuing on the path toward equity and inclusivity, we can build on the positive changes that were set in motion through this project (or risk remaining stagnant according to the laws of inertia).

**2.** Focus on partnership and collaboration: By focusing on partnerships, we can leverage the skills and resources of those around us to progress further in a shorter time frame.

**3.** Create uniform approaches to cultural education: By starting at the school Board level, we can ensure that information is disseminated consistently so students receive the same message.

## Limitations

Future North must acknowledge the limitations of this project. Working within schools requires a lot of pre-planning, notice, and permissions at various levels, depending on the request. The time frame for a project within schools needs to be longer, and the communication with staff/admin needs to begin in the previous year for the

upcoming school year. Furthermore, despite verbally supporting youth-led projects, the education system policies and hierarchy posed barriers to allowing this project to be authentically youth-led. Education for the staff/Board in authentic youth engagement is a prerequisite to beginning a project like this in the future

as it would alleviate navigating tricky situations that arise from adult-youth power imbalances.

# FUTURE NORTH | FUTUR DU NORD

*Help Youth Leaders Turn Nickel City into Gold*



More information on  
Future North



Follow us on Instagram



Support us by donating