

*A Youth Strategy  
for New Brunswick*

Final Report



April 2011



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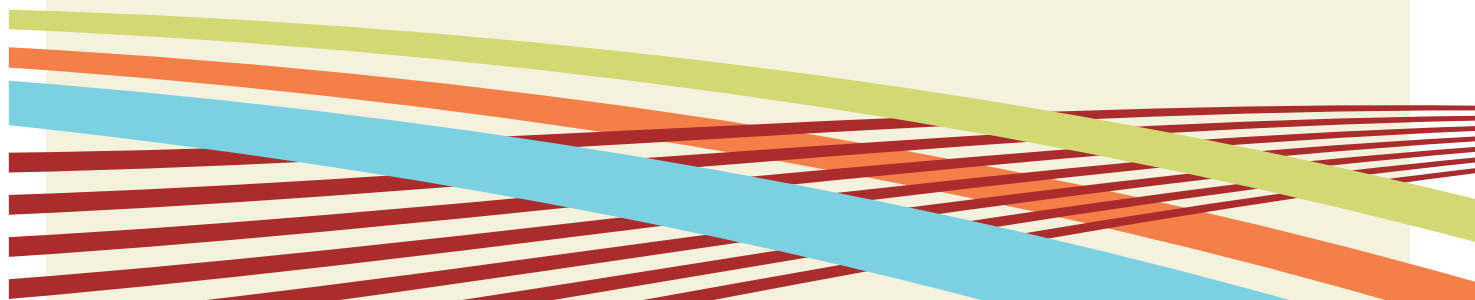
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## Introduction

The government of New Brunswick has placed youth at the centre of its priorities by funding a Youth Secretariat which challenged the youth movement to rally around the creation of a provincial youth strategy that would mobilize all stakeholders. Government also defined the process leading to the Youth Strategy as a means to ensure that New Brunswick develops a vision and a more complete capacity for intervention amongst young people. At the heart of this new intervention capacity rests the collaboration and vision that the diversity present in the youth sector is an asset that we need to support and encourage, and the resulting approach will rely on a partnership between government, community, and New Brunswick youth. Such a process of engagement and maintaining dialogue with New Brunswick youth in a global sense is really a first for the province. While many organizations, programs, and interventions already exist for New Brunswick youth, the development of a global vision for this important segment of New Brunswick society had not yet been undertaken. The enthusiasm and innovation demonstrated by young people throughout the evolution and development of the youth strategy is a pledge for success during the strategy's implementation.

This document aims to highlight and clearly articulate the results of a comprehensive and representative consultation on the needs of young people living in New Brunswick at the beginning of the third millennium. It should serve as a beacon leading to a systematic intervention on behalf of all New Brunswick stakeholders that either serve youth or help in their development.

It goes without saying that, at first glance, it is no easy task to study the challenges facing young people on a daily basis. They experience the same trials and tribulations of the modern age as everyone else in society while also trying to carve a niche, become autonomous, and build a new society and well-being. The analyses demonstrate that the dilemmas and issues facing young people are numerous and complex.

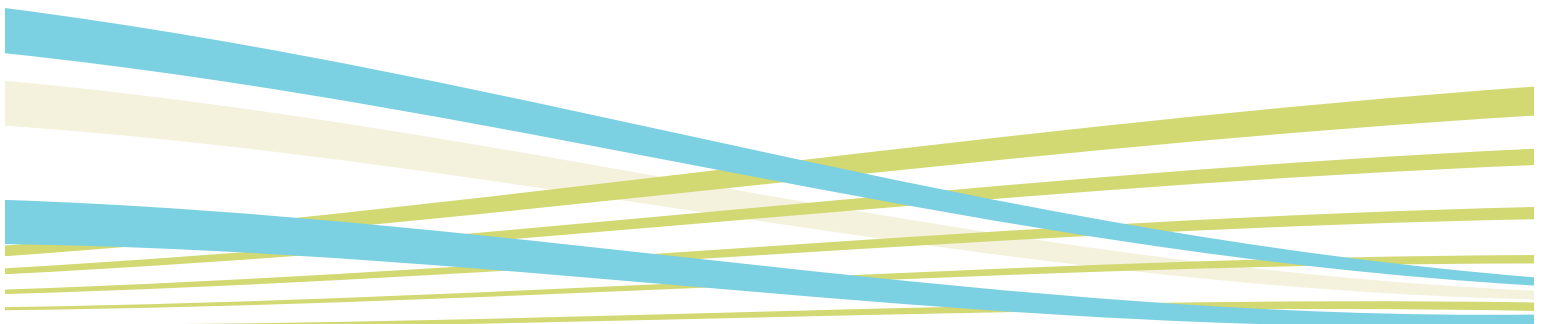
Before the work begins in earnest, the New Brunswick Youth Strategy developed a clear vision, mission statement, values, as well as objectives that guided them throughout the provincial consultation process. These pillars act as the foundation for all the activity undertaken by the Strategy and should inform the recommendations that will be brought forward. These principles are:

### Vision

“That each young New Brunswick citizen can flourish according to his or her expertise and interests.”

### Mission

“The driving forces in all sectors are mobilized while political and government partners are engaged in the implementation of structure-based youth models and strategies.”



## The values that guided the consultations

### Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a progressive theory employed in youth studies as a means of observing the interaction between different aspects of a young person's identity (such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation) and how these different "identities" influence his or her experiences in the various systems (for example, the public school system and the political system) or with social classes, sexism, homophobia, etc. This concept emanated from the United States at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. When studying youth, it is suggested to use an "intersectional lens" to understand the problems and find solutions (Definition provided by Leah Levac).

### Intersectoriality

Intersectoriality is defined as a coordinated network leading to sustainable strategies as a means of surmounting traditional obstacles that exist in the public sector by virtue of government and community participation. At the opposite end, the fragmentation of initiatives, excessive sectorization and a focus on the result of special programs leads to hollow policies and unfunded programs leading to resource waste and reduced effectiveness and efficiency. The integration of diverse services such as health, education, social services,

and culture by a commitment from government and community officials is not only feasible but also very promising.

### Social inclusion

Social inclusion is defined around a key concept: valued recognition. This concept both grants and values recognition and respect for groups and individuals. This includes recognizing the development gaps that exist between children and, consequently, the non-assimilation of a handicap to a pathology; help for community schools that are sensitive to cultural and gender differences; and broadening the notion of inclusion to encompass *common values* through universal programs such as healthcare.

### Human development

Nurture the development of talents, know-how, skills, and choices that young people and adults make so that they value their own lives and contribute to society in a way that others, and even themselves, find extremely worthwhile. For example: learning and development environment for all adults and youth; community daycare and leisure programming for children that foster growth and challenges rather than basic babysitting.

### Participation and engagement

Having the right and the necessary help to make decisions and to participate in the decision-making process affecting them, their families and their communities, and to engage in community life. For example: the engagement of young people and control over those services that affect them, the participation of parents in decision-making regarding the school curriculum and placement of their children, citizen engagement in government decision-making and a greater participation in civic life.

### Proximity

Sharing physical and social spaces to provide opportunities for interaction and to reduce the social gaps between individuals. This includes shared public spaces such as parks and libraries, neighbourhoods with mixed socioeconomic status representation, as well as schools and integrated classrooms.

### Material well-being

Having access to the necessary tools and resources to facilitate the full participation of young people and their parents in community life; in other words, living in safe areas and earning an adequate income<sup>1</sup>.

### Civic participation

An active and engaged citizenry that translates to voting as a minimum but also through other means of individual and collective engagement aiming for a social transformation of its environment and of society. Civic participation in this case means the involvement of youth, at the same level as other citizens, in the decision-making processes that affect them locally, nationally, and as a more individual expression, in weaving young people in community projects; it translates the expression of the civil society reality<sup>2</sup>.

### Definition

The youth of New Brunswick can be defined in both quantitative and qualitative terms. On the one hand, it includes young people between the ages of 12 and 30. Regardless of age, however, it also encompasses any person that is engaged in a cycle of growth and transition, beginning with a strong dependence on one's parents, school setting, and community, and leading progressively or abruptly towards a more or less greater autonomy.

### Organizational structure

Every step of the project, including the participants, is represented in the organizational structure. The design and development of the strategy is the responsibility of the Steering Committee. This committee is composed of youth groups and representatives from related sectors. These representatives are tasked with establishing the priorities and scope of the approach and ensuring the implementation and follow-up of the Youth Strategy.

The Strategy's Secretariat is responsible for overseeing the implementation and short-term follow-up. The Steering Committee is supported by the Interdepartmental Committee made up of representatives from government Departments with a youth portfolio and working with young people.

### Objectives

The Strategy has as its objective to coordinate the driving forces present across various youth sectors so that they may:

- identify the necessary elements leading to optimal youth development;
- analyse the state of affairs (strong networks, weak networks);
- agree on actions that are a priority;
- develop a strategy and a development plan;
- identify the lead organizations.

<sup>1</sup> The five preceding values are from Mitchell, Andrew; Shillington, Richard, *Cahier de recherche – Pauvreté, inégalité et inclusion sociale*, Laidlaw Foundation, December 2002, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Mercier, Clément, *Participation citoyenne et développement des communautés au Québec: enjeux, défis et conditions d'actualisation*, Alliance de recherche université communauté – Innovation sociale et développement des communautés, Université du Québec en Outaouais, January 2009.

In doing so, the driving forces behind the other sectors in NB will be engaged in order to:

- define the role and place of youth in society;
- identify new models of collaboration between municipalities, organizations, and local stakeholders and the sectors involved with youth;
- define an engagement model allowing youth to fully participate in the development of their communities and to our province.

As the approach nears the end, different political and governmental partners at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels will be involved in the process of observation and conceptualization and:

- will be engaged in the implementation of the recommendations and initiatives emanating from the Youth Strategy;
- will create and adapt their programs to the needs of New Brunswick's youth.

In the following pages, we will see to what extent the established objectives are both realistic and achievable, and we will prioritize the objectives through a list of recommendations. The methodological approach used to accomplish this work calls upon a combination of qualitative data, with the goal of informed analysis of the strengths, gaps, risk factors, and opportunities. The quantitative approach allowed us to paint a global picture of New Brunswick youth from a set of pertinent sociodemographic variables.

With respect to the qualitative approach, it seeks out the perceptions of those players in the sector that are called upon to respond to the needs and realities of young New Brunswickers. The province's youth includes Aboriginals, Francophones and Acadians, Anglophones, as well as young people representing other cultures, while also keeping in mind the marked differences between boys and girls.

For these reasons, the analysis cannot be completed through a single lens. As the Strategy leader, it is important to recognize and understand these differences, to be inclusive, and to take the needs expressed by

young people into consideration. The Strategy has thus opted for a consultation process that is at once open and transparent.

This report is divided into five sections. The first is devoted to the history and frames the context surrounding the establishment of the Youth Strategy team. The second section covers the methodology, including elements linked to the collection and analysis of data, as well as hosting a Youth Summit for young people in New Brunswick that gathered 120 participants. In the third section, the report presents its recommendations proffered by youth as a means of responding to their needs and expectations so that they may fully participate in the development of our province. The fourth section proposes a model and condition for implementing the Strategy. Finally, the last section offers a conclusion to the Final Report.

The Strategy originated in 2009 and work continued until February 2011. The effort made it possible to identify and to appreciate the daily realities of more than 400 young persons across the province. The Youth Strategy not only gave these young people a voice, but also a voice to all of New Brunswick's regions by virtue of their participation in the process. These youth were able to articulate their needs and priorities for the years ahead.

## **Purpose**

The Youth Strategy was able to see the light of the day thanks to those people who believed that an emergent force from young people would contribute to the social and economic improvement and growth of the province. Several community stakeholders were convinced that such an initiative would reinforce the role of young people in the development and growth of the province.

## **Context**

The Youth Strategy is an initiative emanating from the *Fédération des jeunes francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick* (FJFNB) following its participation in an international youth gathering. The FJFNB pitched the idea of a youth forum where young people from across the province would have the opportunity to express themselves and get engaged with respect to their future as leaders and social partners.

As an initiator of this strategy, the FJFNB succeeded in assembling young Acadians, Francophones, Aboriginals, Anglophones, and newcomers to the province around this important societal project.

## **State of affairs**

The first step of the process involved painting a realistic and representative picture of New Brunswick youth by conducting an exhaustive review of government and community-based programs, services, and infrastructures that are intended for young people. The results of this research guided the creation of a social, economic, cultural, and political profile on youth.

## **Consultation**

The findings derived from the research were strengthened by the second step of the approach which was the consultation-dialogue phase. During this step, approximately 250 young people of all ages representing a wide array of cultural and linguistic groups, as well as different regions of the province, were consulted by a team of facilitators during the winter of 2010. In addition to opportunity afforded to young people of the province to participate fully in the process, this dialogue provided the Youth Strategy team with the necessary elements to gain a better understanding of New Brunswick youth. The results from the consultations allowed us to validate and improve upon the aspects of the profile on youth, and they also allowed us to draw out some key themes that would be broached during the subsequent phase, which consisted of working groups.



### **Working groups**

In light of the findings, the Youth Strategy team suggested probing three particular themes in greater depth: basic needs, education, and engagement. Composed of young people, community stakeholders, and government representatives, the working groups gave participants the opportunity to discuss and to reflect upon action items to better respond to the needs of young New Brunswickers with respect to programs and services. The participants in each of the three working groups met on three different occasions over the course of 2010 – June, September, and November.

### **Youth Summit**

The recommendations and solutions that were proposed over the course of the working group phase were then presented and validated during the Youth Summit, which took place in February 2011. The Summit gathered young people from across New Brunswick, as well as the major community and governmental representatives. The stakeholders committed themselves to implementing the proposed recommendations.

“The Summit gathered young people from across New Brunswick, as well as the major community and governmental representatives.”

Following research and consultation regarding the possible methods that could be used to conduct a consultation, the team opted for an “organic” approach, which meant loosely structured focus groups.

This approach allowed the facilitators to adapt to any particularities among the consulted groups; for example, they could adapt to the number of participants in each group, or to their skill or experience level. On one hand, the choice of methodology was driven by the desire to acknowledge the new way young people do things, and on the other hand, by the necessity of giving each young person the opportunity to express herself in her own way on the themes determined to be the most important. It offered a level of flexibility with respect to the direction of group discussions and facilitation.

The consultation process consisted of three principal activities. The first two – the Research Symposium, entitled *Dialogue between stakeholders and youth*, and the Youth Mobilization Forum – helped draw out several salient issues, notably those surrounding migration and engagement. These two activities preceded the official consultation phase conducted through the use of focus groups.

## Collaborative approach

The Youth Strategy opted for a collaborative and participatory approach allowing them to capitalize on the experiences and perspectives of the participants who were engaged in the process.

This approach matches the definition penned by author Lefrançois (1997):

*“(…) acquiring an expertise in concrete issues that interest the stakeholders (prevention, psychosocial adaptation, functional autonomy) and the target audience (physical and mental well-being, autonomy, health, safety).*

*It will lean on universal descriptions (situational and contextual) and on interdisciplinary lectures detailing situations such as those experienced and perceived by the participants themselves.” [trans., p.82]*

## Collaboration with the provincial government

This methodological approach embraces the mission that the Youth Strategy gave itself: *The driving forces in all sectors are mobilized while political and government partners are engaged in the implementation of structure-based youth models and strategies.*

The Youth Strategy set up an approach that fosters collaboration across many levels. The provincial government has been an essential partner in implementing the consultation process as well as in the development of pertinent solutions. Several departments were deeply involved in establishing a positive environment in which young people were able to take on their rightful role throughout the entire Youth Strategy process. The government recognized the opportunity to bring together young people so that they could share their differences, similarities, and the things that concern them. Government collaboration measured itself in the form of the necessary financial support to organize and host the Youth Summit. It also ensured that departmental staff working with youth and eager to listen to their needs were available for the Youth Strategy. This openness toward dialogue and discussion exhibited by the provincial government was an essential element in the success of the Youth Strategy from beginning to end.

The departments with youth portfolios worked in close collaboration with Youth Strategy employees to ensure a successful Youth Summit as well as the culmination of its recommendations *by and for* youth.



## Foundational activities of the Youth Strategy consultation

The youth Research Symposium, *Dialogue between stakeholders and youth*, was held on March 4 and 5, 2010 in Moncton and gathered approximately 83 young people, stakeholders, and researchers.

The Youth Mobilization Forum (mobilization and engagement) brought together approximately 60 youth and stakeholders on February 14, 2010 in Fredericton.

On top of that, the focus group that took place in the various communities across New Brunswick made it possible to reach approximately 258 young people between the ages of 12 and 30. Members of the Steering Committee and governmental representatives were also consulted (30 people). All in all, the Youth Strategy managed to hear from over 400 young people and stakeholders during the consultation phase.

Over the course of the different components of the consultation phase, the team observed recurring elements advanced by the participants. However, it is important to note that the third consultation method – focus groups – also helped to tease out the priorities as expressed by young people who were otherwise victims of social exclusion. In comparison to the other two consultation components, in which the Research Symposium and the Forum tended to gather young leaders, the dialogue in the focus groups was more likely to gravitate towards sub-themes such as

“All in all, the Youth Strategy managed to hear from over 400 young people and stakeholders during the consultation phase.”

bullying in schools, poverty, and the important need to speak with adults for help. These sub-themes became the priorities for the Youth Strategy’s working groups.

A guide was developed to assist the facilitators and offered broad guidelines without boxing them in too rigid a structure. The common denominator for the dialogue sessions was the *Youth Strategy Ecosystem*, encompassing the themes identified by the Steering Committee members as well as the Secretariat during the early stages of the Youth Strategy; these themes were divided in three broad categories: Being, Well-being, and Becoming. This approach generated very interesting results and allowed for identifying priorities according to the needs of the groups involved. There was also a written exercise to prioritize needs that was planned and most groups were able to complete it when it was appropriate to do so. The reports from the note takers and the results from the prioritization exercises were analysed to draw out the priorities that would eventually inform the themes for the working groups.

The participants in the focus groups varied between 3 and 27 people. Led by a facilitation team, the Youth Strategy consultations were conducted in all regions of New Brunswick. The facilitators received training linked to the themes of the Youth Strategy Ecosystem as well as a specific training session entitled *Animaction*, offered by the Fédération des jeunes francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick. Recruiting of young participants was done following a sampling method that takes into consideration the activities, age, and region. Groups were approached individually and were encouraged to send young representatives from their client base to come and share their thoughts on the Ecosystem. The main objective in inviting these representatives was to ensure that not only leaders were included, but also those young people from different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Youth Strategy team consulted over 21 focus groups. The Strategy collected valuable information all while maintaining a consultation-dialogue done by youth for youth.

## *Participant profile*

Given that one of the objectives of the consultation was to ensure that the least-engaged youth or those experiencing social exclusion be included in the consultation, the young people recruited into the process came from different backgrounds and were currently living varied realities. The facilitators had the opportunity to bring together groups composed, among others, of homeless youth, leaders, public school students, recent immigrants, varied ethnocultural groups, aboriginals, people with physical and intellectual disabilities, young parents, dropouts, university and college students, and youth considered “at risk” of social exclusion. The consultation provided an avenue for reaching young people between the ages of 12 and 30 who don’t always have a platform to share their opinions and needs. The number of consulted individuals is estimated at over 400, including young people and stakeholders.

Stakeholders that were consulted came from different backgrounds: researchers, social workers, university and college professors, public servants, and community-based stakeholders. While this list is not exhaustive, one can nonetheless appreciate the diversity of the participants that contributed to strengthening the consultation process.

As previously mentioned, the chosen method applies on both a quantitative and qualitative basis. Such a mixed approach, which validates how youth perceive and understand their own reality, enabled participants to take their turn to speak and express their views on topics that were chosen beforehand.

The major steps in the process were the following:

1. Public consultations across the province
2. Consultations representative of cultural and linguistic realities
3. Theme selection
4. Organization of the three working group meetings
5. Discussions and deliberations
6. Revisit the communities to validate the work
7. Recommendations
8. Provincial forum

As in any research process, there are limitations to the consultations that were conducted as part of the New Brunswick Youth Strategy. For example, it was difficult to meet with all groups in the 12 to 30 years old range targeted by the Youth Strategy. Despite the fact that the facilitators were given a facilitator’s guide and were provided with some training, the consultations were not conducted the same way every time. Hence, the consultation approach was chosen because of its flexibility and adaptability to different youth groups. This shortcoming is also considered as a strength since the facilitators handed over the dialogue to young people thus increasing the confidence of youth in the process.

Despite time and access constraints, 400 youth and stakeholders were consulted across the province. These young people came from different socioeconomic backgrounds and environments, which is important in order to ensure diverse representation (leaders, young male and female dropouts, athletes, students, etc). We can therefore conclude that the priorities emanating from the three working groups are fairly representative of young New Brunswickers as a whole and not only of one particular youth group.

## Data collection

For the sake of representativeness and in order to better define the reality of everyone involved, the team targeted young people from all regions and of different socioeconomic backgrounds. It was a fundamental tenet that the discussions initiated by the Youth Strategy accurately reflect the realities and needs of the greatest number of young New Brunswickers. Throughout the process, young people were the ones who had the final say on the results.

In total, 258 young people were consulted through the use of focus groups across the province: 119 young males, and 139 young females. Following is a non-exhaustive profile of the participants:

- Young people from rural and urban areas
- Young people exhibiting “at-risk” behaviours
- Homeless youth
- 60% Anglophones and 40% Francophones
- 7% recent immigrants and 5% aboriginal
- 64% in high school, 14% in elementary, and 22% either at a postsecondary institution or employed

## Analysis of the results

As this process spanned two years, it is reasonable to believe that the results are not only telling, but also fits with the reality of young people in New Brunswick.

Gathered under the same roof over the course of three days, a group of approximately 150 young people representative of the gender-based geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity identified three themes that framed the discussions at the Youth Summit:

- Civic engagement
- Education
- Wellness

These three themes reflect important issues for the youth of New Brunswick. wellness constitutes an important aspect of their daily life, whether it is linked to the use of drugs or alcohol, of being a young gay or lesbian person, or even bullying. In all of their differences, young New Brunswickers have identified these issues linked to wellness as crucial.

Young people are also preoccupied by education. Truthfully, school is a place of social interaction as much as it is a learning environment. Given that they are the first to experience reforms to the public school system, young people have an important perspective to share on the topic of education and the learning environment.

As fully-fledged citizens in this province, civic engagement remains an important topic among young people. They do not want to wait until they reach voting age before taking a stand. In fact, they want to share their views on issues that concern them, whether it be on the environment, peace or other social policy, or employability. Young people want to engage now and have their opinions heard on issues that affect them today and in the future.

The following section is the culmination of the reflections and discussions of the Youth Strategy participants. These recommendations are the priorities put forth by youth and they should be the ones guiding the organizations and people who will be responsible for implementing this Youth Strategy.

With the Youth Strategy having now achieved its mandate of consulting youth, efforts should now be focused on implementing the recommendations. The young people who participated in the Youth Strategy in one way or another deserve to see implementation of actions.

This section contains the recommendations that young people have deemed essential. They are hoping that they will receive the support of the provincial government and that there will be a swift follow-up with concrete actions. The recommendations are the following:

### Recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

The young people of New Brunswick, as a whole, are not represented at the provincial level. A unified voice is essential to its development. The creation of a provincial youth network would sustain youth interest by:

- supporting existing youth organizations;
- encouraging the creation of new organizations in order to address existing needs;
- following up on the recommendations developed through the consultations of the New Brunswick Youth Strategy.

The young people of New Brunswick recommend that government and community partners actively support youth in establishing a provincial youth network representative of young New Brunswickers as a whole.

#### Recommendation 2

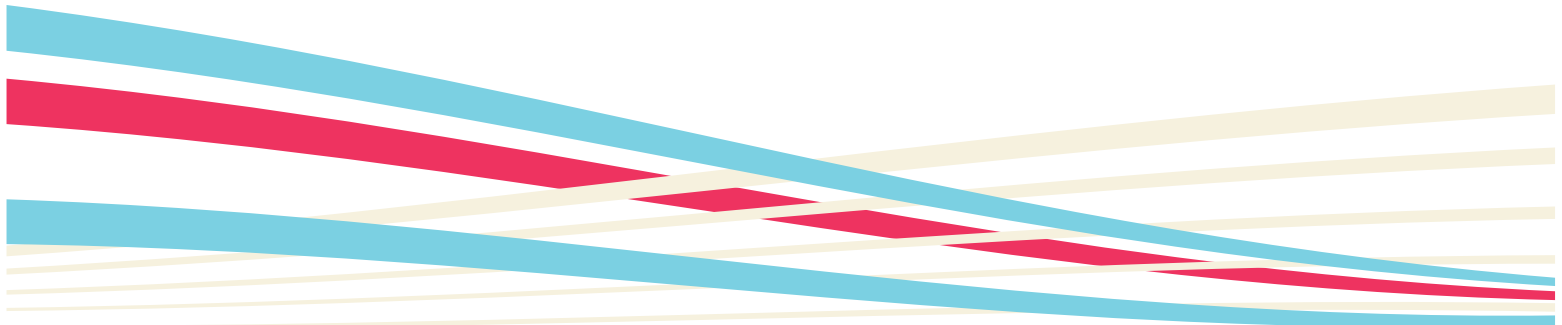
In some cases, young people that would like to get engaged in their communities have a hard time reconciling their social, school, and work lives with their desire to be engaged, leaving them with the feeling of being overwhelmed by the effort required to balance all of these demands. To help young people fully engage in their communities, there is a need for a better understanding that it is necessary to engage all of the partners working for and with youth. Furthermore, engagement is a social responsibility for all of us; it is an opportunity for integration and inclusion for all of the linguistic and cultural communities of the province.

The young people of New Brunswick recommend that all key partners work together towards creating a social climate that fosters and values the full civic participation of youth in our society. This initiative should raise awareness and access to programming, as well as increasing the amount of assistance from adults with respect to program development.

#### Recommendation 3

Youth initiatives in New Brunswick are facing fiscal restraint which limits their accessibility and effectiveness. A universal public policy coupled with the creation of a program for continued funding would ensure the proper development of these initiatives

The young people of New Brunswick recommend a long-term funding commitment – both public and private – targeted at sustainable youth initiatives.



### Recommendation 4

In spite of the out-migration of young people and population decline in the province, we need to improve our retention strategies so that they respond to the priorities of young people and emphasize their potential. These strategies must promote youth retention and their repatriation so that they will settle here and contribute proudly to the economic and social development of our province.

The young people of New Brunswick recommend that they be participants in the development efforts aimed at making our province the ideal place to establish oneself and fulfil personal goals.

### Recommendation 5

A number of youth initiatives already exist in the province; however, they are not always effective. An evaluation of existing programs and services is a crucial step in determining which ones are working and which ones are not. Without reinventing the wheel, it is simply a matter of tailoring certain programs to the needs of young people. In order to ensure that they remain relevant and avoid duplication, it is important to evaluate and catalogue them.

The young people of New Brunswick recommend that youth play an active role in the continued evaluation of initiatives linked to youth in order to ensure the best solutions to their needs.

### Recommendation 6

At the national and provincial levels, we have noticed low participation rates for youth in the democratic process. Some young people are cynical towards politics and their role in it. However, young people believe that a stronger form of raising awareness on a continual basis, beginning in elementary school, as well as dynamic and non-traditional initiatives inspired by the “for and by youth” could help increase their political interest.

The young people of New Brunswick recommend the implementation of youth-directed initiatives as a means of further encouraging engagement and civic participation in the political process.

## Recommendation 7

Certain young people think that the school curriculum does not respond to their diverse needs and does not encourage their full development. A significant number of young people have difficulty with the teaching methods found in the traditional classroom environment. As a result, many of them drop out of school or lose faith in their abilities. There is a real desire for the school system to be more flexible in order to better respond to the needs of all of our learners.

Further, some young people feel under-prepared to make a career choice when they reach the end of their public schooling. Young people blame the school system and society for favoring certain professions or institutions that are elitist at the expense of other career options that are just as valid. They want to be exposed to wide range of possibilities, more complete and non-discriminatory, with respect to the school curriculum, post-secondary studies, and opportunities in the labour market.

When it comes to post-secondary studies, many young people choose not to pursue their studies or to abandon them in mid-stream, for a number of different reasons (including financial reasons). On the other hand, those young people who, despite everything, decide to pursue their studies face a number of obstacles due to the burdensome administrative process.

It should be noted that the following recommendations should be respected by both the francophone and anglophone education sectors in the province.

7.1 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend including youth in the process of reviewing and modernizing the school curriculum in order to better address their needs and foster the development of their full potential.

7.2 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend a continued modernization of the education system that considers the different needs and interests of young people by offering flexible and tailored pathways.

7.3 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend the renewal of the career orientation program. It should be available from the end of elementary school through to the end of high school. In addition, it should take into account the needs and interests of young people and should offer a range of different career perspectives without value judgement.

7.4 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend a marked improvement to the post-secondary accessibility programs with special attention paid to including the following groups: First Nations, first generation students, families from low socioeconomic backgrounds, rural areas, and individuals with a handicap.



### Recommendation 8

There does not appear to be a high level of cohesion between the public and quasi-public organizations in New Brunswick that work with youth. For example, there are already several initiatives and strategies with respect to health and wellness. It would be beneficial if these were distributed and shared between the different linguistic and cultural communities as a way to avoid duplication and working in silos.

Also, awareness campaigns do not always achieve their objectives among young people. Many initiatives exist, but do not necessarily respond to the needs of youth, or do not succeed in reaching them in an effective manner. These campaigns need to use the communication tools that directly reach young people in their environment. It is important that awareness campaigns for youth are tailored to their realities and needs by taking into account the human rights of youth.

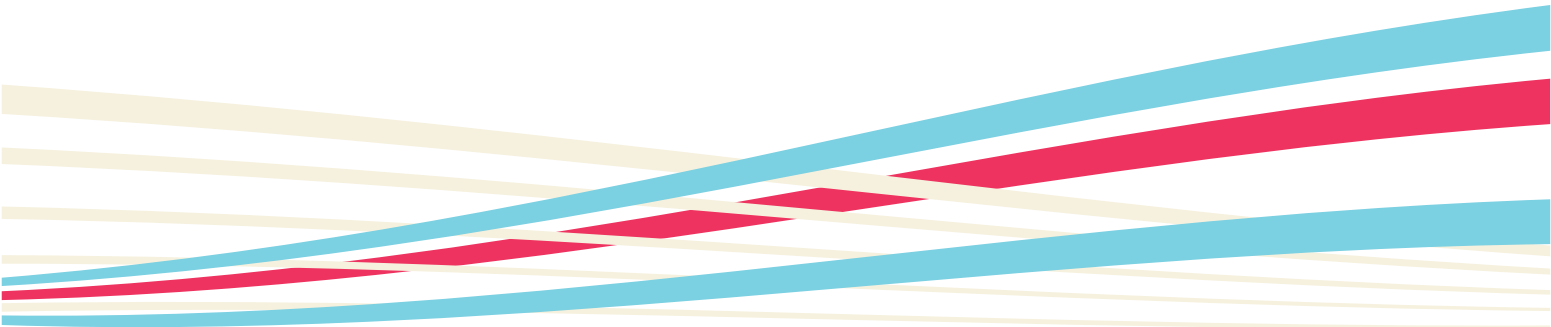
The term “health and wellness” encompasses several themes. Even so, after consulting 300 young people across the province, the New Brunswick Youth Strategy captured four themes that recurred throughout the consultations and are therefore priorities:

- Lack of income (poverty)
- Mental health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Bullying

8.1 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend the development of a better community approach to health and wellness that is both intersectoral and holistic. This approach must be adapted in such a way as to respond to local needs in collaboration with young people.

8.2 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend the direct participation of youth in the development and distribution of awareness campaigns on health and wellness.

8.3 - The young people of New Brunswick recommend that the health and wellness initiatives be identified and evaluated in order to adopt best practices between the different linguistic and cultural communities.



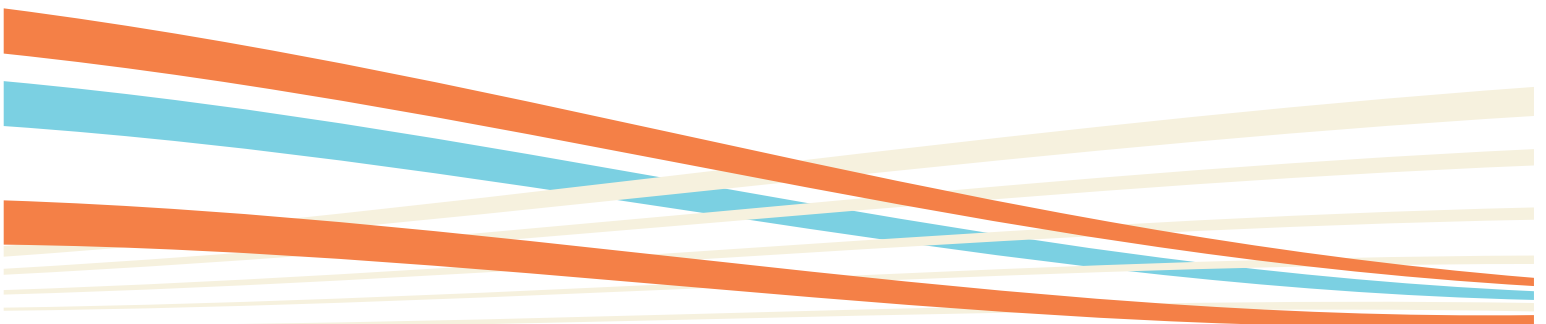
## A winning model and the conditions for success

The New Brunswick Youth Strategy has demonstrated, without a doubt, that young people are engaged, mindful of their education, and concerned about their own well-being and that of their peers. All the consultations conducted throughout the province concerned themselves with being inclusive, allowing the following groups to have their voices heard: young Aboriginals, Francophones and Acadians, Anglophones, recent immigrants, as well as those without a stable home environment or without the income necessary to meet their basic needs.

The New Brunswick Youth Strategy, under the auspices of the Fédération des jeunes francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (FJFNB), achieved great success by uniting the groups constitutive of New Brunswick youth around the same table. These young people taught us a great life lesson. It is possible to work together while respecting the differences even if the needs and realities are not the same. These young people learned that an essential ingredient leading to success in the working groups is the respect for diversity. Through provincial consultations, the Youth Strategy succeeded in giving young people their say on three themes. Chosen by youth, there is no question that other themes could have been discussed, but young people from across the province – over 400 in total – prioritized three of them. However, in order for this type of Youth Strategy to adequately address the expectations of its target population and to the objectives of the process, it was more appropriate

to focus on qualitative rather than quantitative data. The qualitative dimension of this approach to the consultations allowed us to summarize the issues in three themes: education, wellness, and civic engagement. These are nevertheless three fields that encompass a wide range of issues facing young people. The major concerns expressed by youth at the Summit were packaged into recommendations and action items. As a strategic partner in the Youth Strategy's success, the provincial government must recognize the work that it led and be proud, but it will certainly be the first partner called upon to facilitate its implementation.

At this point it is important for the Youth Strategy to implement what young people have expressed loudly and clearly since the beginning of the consultations. Among others, we find the importance of giving young people the opportunity to talk and to find fulfilment in all aspects of life. If we arm them with the right knowledge and skills, we are in essence empowering them. This empowerment will be reflected in the creation of a provincial office managed by and for youth with a Board that is representative of the diversity found among young New Brunswickers, notably the linguistic, cultural, geographical, and gender-based diversity.



This provincial office and its governance structure should be representative of New Brunswick youth. It should, at the very least, contain the following elements: an equal proportion of young women and young men, an aboriginal representation, an equal proportion of Francophones and Anglophones, representation from both urban and rural areas, and representation of recent immigrants and young people with handicaps. The operating budget should be guaranteed for the next four years in order to allow the implementation of the recommendations.

The structure of the Youth Strategy should be established as soon as possible so that the collaboration between the quasi-public and governmental sectors can begin in earnest. It is important to follow through with the recommendations that were validated and adopted by the young people of New Brunswick. The Government of New Brunswick emerges from this engagement a proud partner, having contributed to the advancement of ideas emanating by and for youth so that they may participate in the development of New Brunswick, whether it be in wellness and education or toward their own engagement as full citizens of New Brunswick.

“The structure of the Youth Strategy should be established as soon as possible so that the collaboration between the quasi-public and governmental sectors can begin in earnest.”

## Conclusion



The Youth Strategy encompasses the most complete and exhaustive engagement exercise on the state of young people in New Brunswick. More precisely, it represents a starting point and a springboard toward the implementation of a more vigorous and more coordinated government action in partnership with community, education, and youth-based stakeholders. Thanks to concerted efforts and to a renewed vision of the development and leadership role of young people, “by and for youth”, we must take advantage of the winds of optimism to strengthen our capacities and allow youth to take their proper place in the heart of New Brunswick society. The implementation of these recommendations by all partners will now be the proof and concrete indication of the priority that they give to the development and the achievement of the ambitions expressed by the young people of New Brunswick.

## Bibliography



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