

"I have a lot of confidence because Mind the Gap proved to me that there are hundreds of leaders who recognize youth as a valuable resource and even more who care strongly about some of the things in our communities and homes that are difficult."

Youth Participant

Thank-you youth for reminding me how much we need to do what we know is right. And a reminder to adults...we are on the right path even if others look at us as if we're nuts. Adult Participant

Why Mind the Gap?

Mind the Gap comes from the London Subway slogan alerting passengers to watch the gap between the train and the landing. We too need to mind the gap between adults and youth and work together to bridge our differences.



How Do We Mind the Gap?

MOTIVATING -

Celebrating our Accomplishments: Building on Youth Experience, Interests & Issues

TRAINING – **Building** Skills for Youth Leadership & Participation

EQUIPPING – Creating the Mechanisms for Youth Involvement

Table of Contents

Section A - Conference Background	3
Section B - Conference Program	9
Section C - Issues, Emerging Themes & Strategies for Action	13
Section D - The Recommendations - Reports of the Discussion Groups	19
Section E - Budget	27



Section A Conference Background

Background

Young people from across Saskatchewan have been saying that they want to have a way to participate in decision-making and policy development – particularly when decisions and policies affect them.

In 1998, the Saskatchewan Council on Children published its second report. This report included several recommendations which focus on the need to increase youth participation in decision-making and policy development. The Mind the Gap Conference was initiated as a result of these recommendations, which are outlined below.

Recommendation:

Youth participation in Government and Government funded programs and services needs to be increased substantially. Government should take a lead role in modelling how youth can effectively and successfully contribute to policy formulation and program development.



Recommendation: Specific, well-defined guidelines should be developed for use by Government and community agencies. The guidelines should promote the involvement of youth in all levels of decision-making and provide information about how to ensure that youth are fully involved in decision-making.

Recommendation: Develop an educational program for adults about involving youth in decision-making.

Recommendation: Develop an educational program with youth so that they feel able to participate and contribute effectively.

Recommendation: The Department of Justice review the Corporations Act and other legislation and identify any potential restrictions or barriers to full and equal participation by youth on boards including, but not limited to municipal, provincial, and community-based organizations.

Recommendation: The Department of Justice review legislation that pertains to the rights of youth in making decisions about their personal life.

(Saskatchewan Council on Children. 1998. Second Report of the Saskatchewan Council of Children. Regina: Author.)

Provincial Youth Delegation

With the assistance of the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office, youth from across the province have come together to voice their issues and concerns. Established in June 1998, the Provincial Youth Delegation meets annually to identify issues and activities to promote the voices of youth across the province. Delegation participants come from across Saskatchewan and have a variety interests and experiences in youth and community activities. There are 25 - 30 members participating in the Delegation, with a steering committee consisting of eight members. The steering committee meets on average three to four times per year to carry out the tasks established by the Provincial Youth Delegation.

The Provincial Youth Delegation was very excited to partner in hosting the *Mind the Gap* conference held November 2000 in conjunction with National Child Day. The goals of the conference closely match the goals of the Delegation, namely, to bring youth and adults together to partner in making decisions that affect young people.

I had the opportunity to be involved in a very special way as I was involved as both chair of the Provincial Youth Delegation and the Conference Co-ordinator. I am very excited by the outcome of the conference to date and I am anticipating further opportunities that will also result from the *Mind the Gap* conference.

This report has already been referenced in documents that will form policy in both our government and community organizations – even though as I am writing this, this document hasn't been printed. Obviously, the voice of youth is both valid and important. Therefore, I am pleased to

present to you, on behalf of the project partners and everyone involved in this project, the Final Report of *Mind the Gap*.

The Report is the result of the dedicated efforts of the youth and adults who assembled in Bruno, Saskatchewan for the *Mind the Gap* conference. Since the conference, there have been many youth-adult partnerships formed that have also been instrumental in the writing of this document.

I am honored to have been a part of organizing *Mind the Gap*, not because its success was a result of anything that I did, but because of the many partnerships that worked for the success of the event. These partnerships; between the original four partners, with the Saskatoon Action Circle Partners, the conference host team, and the individuals in the Children's Advocate Office and the Department of Social Services, that I had the great opportunity to work with, are a perfect example of youth-adult partnerships that worked exceptionally well. I hope that in the coming years, youth-adult partnerships will be a part of everyday life rather than just a privilege like I was able to experience.

In conclusion, I would like to thank, once again, everyone who has been involved in this venture and everyone who believes in the great resource our youth are in this province. I firmly believe that our young people have much to offer *now* and in the years to come.

Aaron Schroeder

Chair, Provincial Youth Delegation & Co-ordinator, Mind the Gap



Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office

The Children's Advocate has the authority to promote the interests of, and act as a voice for, children who have concerns about provincial government services. The Children's Advocate engages in public education, works to resolve disputes, and conducts independent investigations. The Children's Advocate also recommends improvements of programs for children to the government and/or the Legislative Assembly. For the Children's Advocate Office, *Mind the Gap* was an incredible opportunity to put in to practice our strong belief that children and youth must have a voice in matters that affect them. The events of the weekend were a significant step towards our goal of full youth participation in decision-making.

Mind the Gap evolved as a partnership in which the Provincial Youth Delegation, an initiative of the Children's Advocate Office, took a lead role. The Provincial Youth Delegation has been working towards an event such as *Mind the Gap* since 1998 when the Children's Advocate Office invited over 20 youth from all across Saskatchewan to come together in a round table discussion about youth participation. These young people formed the Delegation and began to work to increase youth voice in decision-making in Saskatchewan. The Children's Advocate Office has been privileged to support the group's development over the last three years. Having both the Delegation Co-ordinator (Christa Shepherd) and the

Conference Co-ordinator (Aaron Schoeder) working in our office each day has been a great pleasure and a real learning and growing experience for all of the staff at the Children's Advocate Office.

The major goal of Mind the Gap, to promote the meaningful involvement of young people, was realized not just over three days in November, but in the months leading up to the event. The leadership demonstrated by youth as facilitators of the conference was integral to its success, and the inclusion of youth in the planning was as important in many ways as the final product. Our chief concern now is to see that the ideas, energy and recommendations from *Mind the Gap* are honored through action. The Children's Advocate is committed to continuing this work in Saskatchewan, to ensuring that children and youth are actively included in the life of their communities, and that their voices are heard in the decisions which impact their future.

Deborah Parker-Loewen

Children's Advocate

Saskatchewan Council on Children

The Saskatchewan Council on Children provides a forum for discussion and advice to the government in the areas of health, justice, education, recreation, housing, social services and other issues as they relate to the well-being of Saskatchewan children and youth. The Council recommends to the nine provincial Ministers responsible for the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children its priorities for action. This advice plays a significant role in the ongoing development of a children's agenda in Saskatchewan. The Council consists of individuals who represent a broad range of issues, service sectors and geographical areas of the province. Many are involved in community services for children, youth and families, with the majority coming from non-government agencies and organizations. In its last major report, the Council recommended that the government take a leadership role in assisting both youth and adults in developing the skills they need to work together to address problems and issues facing our youth and society as a whole.

The Council was honored to be a partner in the development, planning, and implementation of *Mind the Gap.* This involvement has reinforced the commitment to youth leadership and participation reflected in our last major report to government, which addressed the importance of involving youth in decision-making about issues and policies that affect them, their families, and communities, and suggested that government take a leading role in making this happen. *Mind the Gap* is a clear demonstration of what can be done when youth come together, supported and encouraged by adult mentors. The commitment, enthusiasm, and thoughtfulness displayed by the youth was inspiring. The youths' recommendations echo our calls as a Council for increased opportunities to meaningfully engage youth in problem solving and decision-making. As a society we need to learn to listen to, value and respect the voices of our youth. Now more than ever, the Council is committed to breaking down the negative stereotypes of youth, promoting continued leadership development, and encouraging productive youth/adult partnerships.

Kathy Dammann

Chair Saskatchewan Council on Children

Greg Hatch

Chair Saskatchewan Council on Children

Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children

Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children is an interdepartmental initiative of the Government of Saskatchewan. It represents the co-operative effort of seven government departments and secretariats:

- Saskatchewan Social Services
- Saskatchewan Education
- Saskatchewan Health
- Saskatchewan Justice
- Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
- Municipal Affairs Culture and Housing
- Northern Affairs
- Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training
- Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat

The Child Action Plan is a provincial policy framework to enhance the well-being of children, youth and families and provides a process for working together to improve the well-being of Saskatchewan children. Government, communities, organizations and individuals have developed a common approach to children's issues -- to ensure that resources are used more effectively. Communities determine the kinds of services they need and deliver them with government's help. The Child Action Plan Interdepartmental Steering Committee was very pleased to be a partner in organizing the *Mind the Gap*. Planning and participating in the symposium provided us with a remarkable opportunity to learn about the benefits of youth participation and how government can support the voice of youth in decisionmaking.

Youth participation is a relatively new concept. It requires a substantial shift in how we, as adults, interact with youth and how we go about organizing our communities. One of the most significant benefits of this kind of event is that it helps to create a climate in which youth can speak and be heard in communities that welcome youth leadership and participation. Symposiums like *Mind the Gap* are an excellent vehicle for equipping today's youth to be this province's future leaders.

This report will go a long way in sustaining the momentum and energy generated by the

conference. The recommendations provide a good basis for government and communities to address the barriers to youth participation and begin developing a plan to ensure there are greater opportunities for youth to lead and become involved.

Bonnie Durnford

Chair Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children Interdepartmental Steering Committee

Sponsors

Day two of the program for the Mind the Gap Conference was developed in partnership with the:

Saskatoon Action Circle on Youth Sexuality

Funding for the Mind the Gap Conference was provided by the departments in the Saskatchewan Action Plan for Children, the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office and as well as by the organizations and agencies listed below.











56////





Section B Conference Program

Conference Agenda

Day I — Saturday, November 18

Day one included a series of workshops focusing on building youth leadership and participation skills. Each workshop was followed by a small group session in which youth discussed what they learned and how this knowledge can be applied in youth participation activities.

- 9:30 Registration
- 10:30 Opening Ceremonies
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:30 Keynote Address by Philly D: Three Steps to Defeating the Negative and Creating the Positive
- 1:00 Keynote Address by Muzammal Nawaz: Making an Impact, Youth Activism Around the World
- 2:15 Break
- 2:30 Discussion Session A Motivating Youth
- 3:00 Keynote Address by Philly D 4 C's to Successful Leadership
- 4:00 Break
- 4:15 Roger Dumont, SaskTel Communications and Team Building
- 5:15 Free Time
- 6:00 Supper
- 7:00 Discussion Session B Leadership Training
- 8:00 Mission Impossible Social
- 10:00 Social Activities and Free Time
- 12:00 Lights Out

Day 2 — Sunday, November 19

Day two focused on strategy development. Ideas generated throughout the conference were developed into recommendations for future directions for youth participation in Saskatchewan.

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Good Morning Session
- 9:30 Introduction to Group Work by Muzammal Nawaz

- 9:45 Workshop 1 Developing our Issues
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 Discussion Session C Solutions & Recommendation Building
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Large Group Activity
- 1:45 Discussion Session C: Solutions and Recommendation Building (Continued)
- 2:30 Break
- 2:45 Discussion Session C: Solutions and Recommendation Building (Continued)

4:00 Workshop 2 – Our Solutions Presentation of Discussion Reports

- 5:00 Free Time
- 6:00 Supper
- 7:00 Planning Session for "Report Back" on Day 3 -- Finalize Presentations
- 8:00 Motivational Media Assemblies
- 9:00 Dance and Social
- 12:00 Lights Out

Day 3 — Monday, November 20

Day three brought adults and youth together to share ideas and build for the future.

- 7:30 Breakfast
- 8:15 Depart for Saskatoon
- 9:00 Muffins and Mingle Adult Registration
- 9:45 Introductions and Welcome

10:15 **Report Back – Strategies for Youth Involvement** Youth presented ideas and recommendations they developed over the first two days. Adults and youth had the opportunity to openly discuss ways to move

days. Adults and youth had the opportunity to openly discuss ways to move forward.

11:15 Break

11:30 Workshop 4 – Youth/Adult Joint Training

Linking Youth...Networking Community (LYNC) presented a joint training session on developing positive working relationship between adults and youth. Information on how adults can develop strategies for incorporating the voices and energy of youth in an organization's activities and programs were included.

- **12:30** Luncheon Presentation Keynote Address by Muzammal Nawaz
- 1:30 Departure

Keynote Speakers

Muzammal Nawaz, National Director, Youth Programs, Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO)

Almost expelled in high-school for starting "radical youth groups", Muzammal advocates for organizations to better engage youth in all aspects of their work and in all levels of community activities. He is currently working on his doctorate on "youth activism" at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OSIE), even though he hated school and struggled due to a learning disability. His long-term goal is to become an "absent minded crotchety professor." Through the Coalition, Muzammal works with youth serving agencies to design and support strategies to fully engage youth as agents and not simply as passive recipients of service. Currently the Coalition is working towards the establishment and promotion of a National Youth Agenda developed "by youth for youth" - but also for all stakeholders in society. Muzammal spoke on the work of the Coalition, the development of youth leadership worldwide and strategies for meaningful youth involvement, challenging conference participants to start making a difference by acting locally and thinking globally.

Philly D, Pause-ative Presentations

Phil Doucette is one of Canada's youngest speakers (25) who has made a full-time commitment to speaking to today's youth. Philly D draws on his tremendous leadership experience in high school, running a business, being a leadership camp director, and travelling Canada for four years. Philly D's presentation was dynamic and interactive, and his message message balanced with laughter, emotion and personal experience. He encouraged youth to "Look at the Positive" and to "Take action to open your Heart."

Youth Facilitators

Youth representing three Saskatoon organizations, the Provincial Youth Delegation, LYNC and the Action Circle on Youth Sexuality, facilitated small group discussion and gave leadership to all aspects of the conference programming including the presentation of recommendations at Monday's joint session with the adults.

A big thank you to the following individuals for their effort and enthusiasm in making the conference happen:

Jordan Anderson Melissa Cotton Jayson Cross

Wally Dion Janine Bellegarde Trustin Domes Amanda Doucette Neetu Khanna Jessi Gerard

Kadane Headley Bonnie Heilman Erin McElligott

Amber Milne Casey Murray Sarah Ninnie Marla Pender

Dionne Pohler Alison Sebastian Christa Shepherd Nicole Stenerson **Tenille Thompson**

Adult Allies

A group of adults drawn from partner organizations in the planning of Mind the Gap (the Children's Advocate Office, the Children's Council, the Child Action Plan, the Saskatoon Action Circle on Youth Sexuality) provided on-site support and a valuable model for joint youth-adult leadership throughout the weekend. Thank you to:

12

Roberta Burns	Kathy Damman	Rosanne Glass	Deb Parker-Loewen
JoAnne Cadrin	Bonnie Durnford	Deb Hay	Gerald Roy
Sharon Chapman	Ina Fietz Ray	Joe Kluger	Brenda Szala
			Del Williams

Section C Issues Emerging Themes & Strategies for Action

Issue #1: Exclusion from Decision-Making Bodies & Processes

Government agencies and community bodies which form policy regarding youth often exclude young people from the decisionmaking process. Whether this is because of the logistical complications of involving youth or ideological opposition to the practise, the result is the same: adults and youth are isolated from one another and a valuable opportunity to create mutual understanding is lost.

Strategies

- » Integrate youth into settings where their perspective & contribution facilitate greater insight, but from which they are conventionally excluded.
- » Provide young people with the opportunity to acquire skills and relationships which facilitate successful transition to independence and adulthood.

Actions . . .



Develop permanent youth advisory boards to government departments which serve youth as a part of their mandate (i.e. Social Services, Education, Health).

Create opportunities for youth to be trained in and develop leadership skills.

Develop a website to facilitate information exchange among youth-serving organizations, government, adults and youth themselves. This would serve as an on-line resource with links to information on conferences and events, leadership training, internship and mentorship programs, volunteer opportunities in community and government ranging from grassroots activism to membership on boards.

Create Youth/adult mentorship programs at all levels of government, business and community.





Issue $#_2$: Inaccurate Assumptions about Youth

Sensational media coverage of youth crime and deviance leads many adults to generalize antisocial traits (such as violence, laziness, and apathy) to all young people, and ignore the active participation and positive contributions of youth in their communities.

Strategy

» Adults, government and community groups need to support youth in challenging the negative stereotypes presented in the media, and in pressing for the creation of more accurate and positive portrayals of young people.

Actions . . .

- **Create** youth-driven media that acknowledges the achievements of youth (particularly Aboriginal youth).
- *Incorporate* a media criticism and training component into the school curriculum.
- *Establish* youth mentorship/internship opportunities to help build partnerships and understanding between adults in the media industry and interested youth.
- *Form* a media-watch group to lobby media outlets (such as newspapers and magazines) when they feel that youth are being negatively stereotyped or otherwise devalued in their coverage (or lack thereof).



Issue #3: Health & Well-being

Socio-economic instability during childhood poses a great challenge to the well-being and future success of young people. 'At-risk' youth experience an increased incidence of abuse and neglect, sexual exploitation, and government intervention through Social Services (foster care) and the Justice system (YO).

Sexuality is an important and controversial issue for all youth, regardless of socio-economic status. Young people cite two major barriers which keep adults from establishing a shared and healthy understanding of youth and their sexuality:

- Interest groups promote seemingly contradictory ideas about sexuality through widely varying sex education curricula;
- Access to resources and services which would encourage informed decision-making by young people themselves is often restricted.

This exclusion of youth from decisions around their own sexual health has damaging consequences, both for young people as individuals and society as a whole.

Strategy

» Empower youth to participate in policy creation and implementation and in decisions which impact both their everyday lives and future success.

Actions . . .

- *Establish* committees drawn from Young Offender facilities province-wide to look at what is working to prevent youth from re-offending, with an emphasis on restorative justice over jail.
- *Involve* youth in or from care in creating policy and training foster parents.
- **Recognise** sexually exploited youth as victims rather than offenders. Shift focus of policy and funding from punitive to rehabilitative.



- Amend Saskatchewan's Human Rights Code to protect those less than 18 and over 65 from discrimination based on age (in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)
- *Increase* awareness of child abuse and neglect, and promote rights education for children.
- *Revise* the Sexual Education curriculum in Saskatchewan, incorporating young people at every stage, from advisory roles in curriculum development to partnership with adults in the delivery of course material.

Issue #4: Logistics of Including Young People

Boards, committees and charitable groups who incorporate youth in their work have the opportunity to mentor a young person while benefiting from their fresh perspective, high energy and enthusiasm. Solid youth-adult partnerships offer the young person a chance to learn from the knowledge and experience of adults and acquire valuable skills for leadership within that organization, in their community, and in society as a whole. Young people cite three components as essential to the success of such partnerships: **attitude**, **skills**, and **information**.

Strategy

» Young people cite three ingredients as essential to successful youth-adult partnership:

» attitude,

- » skills, and
- » information.

Actions . .

Maintain an attitude of mutual respect, openmindedness, and appreciation for uniqueness.

Ensure that the flow of *information* between parties is always maintained - that expectations are clear and the sense of purpose is shared.

Invest in skill development in order to communicate and organize more effectively.

"We've got to stop complaining and start looking to the adults who are listening, and who will continue to listen because they know us and take our ideas seriously." Youth Participant



Additional Resources Leadership

www.dosomething.org A handbook and on-line resources designed to aid community groups in identifying meaningful roles for youth, implementing effective recruitment strategies, and developing programs for the training and on-going support of young volunteers.

Rights

http://www.unicef.org/voy

The United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] works for children's rights – their survival, development, and protection – guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The 'Voices of Youth' page is an electronic forum for the exchange of information and ideas among teenagers and others concerned with the future of the world and the rights of youth.

Youth <mark>at Risk</mark>

http://www.youthincare.ca

The Youth in Care Network provides information and support to young people in the care of child welfare authorities. The network seeks to facilitate constructive dialogue between young people and adult service providers based on the philosophy of 'youth helping youth'. Find links, a message board, on-line newsletter, and contact info for your local network.

The Federal government declared a new Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2001. This change has important implications for young people - their rights and responsibilities. The Public Legal Education Society of Canada [PLEA] has initiated an educational campaign to help Canadians understand how the new legislation compares to the Young Offenders Act it replaced. You can contact them for more information or to arrange a group presentation at: **plea@plea.org** Or, review the new legislation yourself at: http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/yj

Work is being done at local, provincial, and national levels to combat the problem of child sexual exploitation. Locally, Saskatoon Communities for Children is spearheading efforts to establish safe refuges and practical outreach for young prostitutes, educate the public and deter johns through poster, billboard and media campaigns, and lobby for changes to the law and its enforcement.

Saskatoon Communities for Children Joint Planning Mechanism P.O. Box 7543 Saskatoon SK S7K 4L4

Phone: (306)<mark>956-6147</mark> Fax: (306)<mark>244-1097</mark>

The Government of Saskatchewan established a *Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade* in December, 1999. The committee is conducting research into law enforcement and intervention strategies implemented in other jurisdictions and holding public hearings to voice the concerns and experiences of youth working in the sex trade. The Committee tabled its Interim Report in June of 2000. This document, and further information on the work of the Committee, is available at: http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/aecc

Save the Children Canada released a special report in 2000 following nation wide consultations with groups of sexually exploited youth from Iqaluit to Vancouver. The document, entitled *Sacred Lives: Canadian Aboriginal Children & Youth Speak Out About Sexual Exploitation* contains a Declaration and Agenda for Action based on the recommendations of these young people, as well as a valuable listing of community resources and suggested readings. It can be viewed at: http://www.savethechildren.ca

The Recommendations -Reports of the Discussion Groups

Issue #1: The Media

Recommendation #1:

Keep news unbiased by working along side representatives of the media.

- Establish youth advisory Boards to act as program advisors or reviews
- Have youth work directly with editor/news directors establishing media/youth mentorship programs to provide a youth perspective into youth issues.
- Initiate a research study comparing the number of negative media portrayals of youth to the number of positive portrayals of youth. Communicate findings to the media.

Recommendation #2:

Provide funding and support for youth initiated media activities.

• Establish youth initiated media programs such as TV current affairs shows, weekly newspaper columns, radio programs on community radio stations, etc. that acknowledge the achievements of, particularly aboriginal youth.

Recommendation #3:

Have youth encourage other youth to become involved in positive activities.

- On our own time do more positive things within the community to show positive images of youth – contact the media about those activities.
- Make or develop presentations, which could be presented to youth involved in negative activities.
- These presentations would focus on presenting the positive initiatives that youth can and are involved in.

Strategy #4:

Create opportunities to overcome the stereotypes perpetuated by media.

- Create a media training program for high-schools as part of the school curriculum.
- Have SRCs establish media consulting positions.
- Establish youth groups which could contact all types of media and communications design and advertising companies to lobby for changes in the way they portray youth.

Issue #2: Inaccurate Assumptions of Youth

Recommendation #1:

Implement programs to raise awareness of youth issues in schools and the community.

- Promote more youth conferences.
- Promote a positive understanding (in fun ways) with schools.
- · Create opportunities to network and use youth leadership.
- Go out into your community and raise awareness of your group and your goals.
- Utilize adults as liaison and as a resource.
- Promote need/use of economic development officers.
- Funding for the above.

Recommendation #2:

Give more media coverage for the positive things youth are doing.

- Write letters to the editor of newspapers and MLAs.
- Bring it up to City Council
- Raise awareness in schools through newsletters or announcements (positive youth outlook/activities).
- Approaching people who are directly involved in the activities being covered by the media.

Recommendation #3:

Integrate adults and youth into each other's programs to better understand why there are barriers between adults and youth. (Without playing the role of the adult for youth, but as equals.)

- Invite adult participation to our meetings/conferences.
- Get involved in adult committees (ask questions).
- Spread the word about our "leadership" initiatives to adult organizations.



Issue #3: Making Decisions

Recommendation #1:

Improve and facilitate open communication between adults and youth.

- Prioritize the creation of a youth initiated website to give youth and adults a venue for information sharing.
- Once created, delegates of the Mind the Gap Conference would be made aware of the site. In-turn, the delegates would work to promote/advertise the website to as many youth, adults and agencies as possible. This would include making presentations to schools and organizations.
- The website would include:
 - A chat room for youth and adults to post their thoughts or ideas to encourage new adults and youth to participate in youth participation activities.
 - News on current and future events.
 - Resources such as planning guides and other education papers/articles by or for youth.
- Additional communications programs such as newsletters, magazines, conferences, etc. should also be developed.



Recommendation #1:

Make adults realize that youth are good resources and can be helpful. Youth need adults to really want youth to be there and need to be made aware of youth issues from a youth viewpoint.

- Give adults examples of situations where youth are currently an untapped resource and how youth could make effective contributions. This could be done through educational teams.
- Actively promote increased youth mentorship programs with government, business and the community.

Recommendation #2:

Get youth on "boards" involving youth issues.

- Have agencies and community groups with existing boards develop youth positions on those boards. These positions could/should be filled with youth currently involved in the agency through internship and summer student positions. Job descriptions for these positions would include involvement on the board or management committees.
- Promote to youth the incentives for being on boards. These include learning and skills training, job opportunities.
- Have adults recognize that making a contribution on a board is an incentive for youth to be involved.
- Adults could advertise for positions in schools getting adults from the board to talk about experiences and give information about said board.
- Boards could simply ask youth they know.

Recommendation #3: Making youth effective members.

- Make sure youth are assigned a mentor on the board.
- Make sure the role of the youth is defined or that the youth knows that it is their job to define the role.
- Flexibility in terms of timing/dates of meetings, dress and etiquette.

Recommendation #4: Keep the momentum.

- Make sure that the youth position is continuous with opportunities for overlap for new members to be trained in their role while older youth move on.
- Boards should have room for advancement for youth that are aging out for continued involvement.
- When new boards are created youth should be involved from the beginning.
- Youth advisory boards to government should be developed.

Issue #5: Youth Sexual Health/III-Health

Recommendation #1:

Have adults and youth work together in joint counselling initiatives in schools.

 Initiate peers helping peers instead of adult only counselling. Adult training and supervision on to how to handle situations involving sexual abuse disclosures and other issues requiring action.

Recommendation #2:

Develop youth teams, which would travel around Saskatchewan to share experiences and talk about selfesteem issues.

Recommendation #3:

Have adult experts who present information to youth include youth in their presentations. This could improve the reception of messages by the youth.

Recommendation #4:

That all Saskatchewan school curriculums include a sex education course that has input from both teachers and students. Individuals, agencies and the community should be encouraged to advocate for the government to make this change.

"There are people out there who are willing, who want to work with us. They know that if you take the energy that youth might use in negative ways and make it positive, you've got something powerful to work with." Youth Participant



Issue #6: Involving Youth at Risk

Recommendation #1:

Actions to address Young Offender Services.

- Establish committees from young offender facilities around the province to look at what is working to prevent re-offending and creating peer mentorship opportunities for youth and peer to peer support.
- Focus on restorative/rehabilitation over jail.

Recommendation #2: Actions to address Youth in or From Care (YIC).

- Implement the Youth In Care Network (YICN) across the province.
- Create provincial legislation requiring youth voice via the YICN.
- Take responsibility for what you do.
- Have a national conference driven by youth to have a consultation on legislation.
- Get youth involved in the foster parent training.

Recommendation #3: Actions to address Sexual Abuse/Sexual Exploitation.

- Create tougher john school.
- Invite young people who are involved in the sex trade to be involved in the solution.

Recommendation #4: Actions to address Human Rights.

- Change the Human Rights Code to include age discrimination protection for all people

 those less than 18 and those over 65.
- Have youth and adults work together on this proposal.

Recommendation #5:

Actions to address Child Abuse.

- Provide support for kids leaving abusive situations.
- Keep track of and care for youth in and entering foster care.
- Provide more information in schools about child abuse, especially elementary schools.
- Provide information on rights for kids entering foster care.
- Provide training for teachers on child abuse.
- Develop age friendly posters on child abuse particularly for elementary schools.

Issue #7: Youth Leadership/Skills Development

Recommendation #1:

Develop and gather a youth/adult partnership model to give adults and youth the skills to work effectively together within the community. This model must include the following components:

Attitude

- Respect: Mutual respect for each other's opinions and differences.
- Open Mindedness: Keep an open mind for each other's differences and opinions.
- Appreciation: Make an effort to appreciate and acknowledge each other.

• Skills

- Communication Skills: Good communication is the basis of all aspects in meaningful youth/adult relationship.
- Organization Skills: Organization skills must be developed and practised.
- Criticism: Both parties must be welcome and accept constructive criticism.

• Information

- Expectations: Clear and positive expectations need to be clearly stated.
- Briefing: Both adults and youth need to discuss the background of all parties involved and the purpose of the given project.

Recommendation #2:

Implement the above developed model to teach other youth and adults how to engage in meaningful partnerships. This could be accomplished through conferences, workshops, and the development of educational materials to name just a few.







Approved Budget, Mind the Gap Youth Conference

Number of Delegates/Conference Hosts -- 85 Number of Adults -- 100

INCOME:			
Child Action Plan — Joint Contributions			\$10,000.00
Child Action Plan — Individual Departments	Saskatchewan Social Services Saskatchewan Health Northern Affairs Saskatchewan Woman's Secretariat	\$4,819.16 \$2,000.00 \$2,000.00 \$1,000.00	\$9,816.16
Children's Advocate Office*			\$8,091.85
Sponsors:	Sask Lotteries SaskTel SGI Saskatoon RIC	\$10,000.00 \$500.00 \$2,500.00 \$500.00	\$13,500.00
	Registration Donations		\$375.00
TOTAL REVENUE			\$41,786.01
			φ+1,700.01
EXPENSES:			
Accommodations:	Bruno Dorms Meeting Room Rental	\$4,015.28 \$500.00	\$4,515.28
Insurance	Meeting 100m Nental	ψ000.00	\$1,030.00
Meals/Coffee Breaks			\$8,960.92
Presenters:	Keynote Honoraria	\$1,000.00	ψ0,300.32
	Keynote Speaker Travel Host Training Hosts – Meals/Accommodations Host Honoraria	\$646.02 \$288.05 981.91 \$1,600.00	\$4,515.98
Social Activities:	Snack Foods Motivational Media Social Activities	\$320.23 \$595.00 \$70.00	985.23
AV Equipment			\$795.00
Printing	Registration/Sponsorship Packages Programs General Photocopying Final Report	\$987.66 \$159.80 \$143.97 \$6,458.00	\$7,749.43
Postage**			\$280.60
T-Shirts			\$2,546.42
Travel Expenses	Passenger Vans/Gas Buses	\$400.00 \$2,779.60	\$3,179.60
Miscellaneous			\$31.49
Office Supplies			\$400.00
Conference Coordinator			\$6,027.01
Wrap-Up Session	Accommodations	\$129.32	
	Meals	\$639.73	769.05
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$41,786.01

*Note: The Children's Advocate Office also provided in-kind office support including project supervision, communications, secretary and administrative support.

**Note: Postage does not include cost to distribute 6000 copies of final report.

"There are good adult allies out there, but there are also those who think they know what the youth voice is , and really they don't. Pass this on to all those youth who have voice, need a voice, or want a voice:

We're not goin' to take it, No we ain't gonna take it, We're not goin' to take it anymore

We've got the right to choose it, There ain't no way we'll lose it

We'll fight the powers that be, Just don't pick our destiny cuz

We're not gonna take it anymore!

(Twisted Sister – We're Not Goin' to Take It) (Submitted by a Youth Facilitator)

Mind the Gap

c/o Provincial Youth Delegation, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office 315 25th Street East, Saskatoon, SK 57K 2H6 Phone: (306) 933-6700 Toll Free: 1-800-322-7221 Fax: (306) 933-8406 Email: child.advocate@govmail.gov.sk.ca

03/2001