

# The Kugluktuk Story

Responding to Crisis through Engagement  
of Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit



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This tool was created by the Focus Three team: youth of Kugluktuk, Parma Court's Youth Vybes Crew, Kainai Youth Council and The Students Commission.





## Case Study: Kugluktuk

### Short Profile

Kugluktuk is a community of 1300 people located on the Coppermine river northeast of Yellowknife. It is the most westerly community in Nunavut and has been a semi-permanent Inuit fishing and sealing camp since ancient times. The remoteness of Kugluktuk means the cost of living, food, and family health care are more expensive than in southern Canada. General health care is provided by registered nurses in the hamlet and about once a month doctors are flown in to address more serious cases. The local schools, both primary and secondary, operate from August until June but face many of the same challenges as other underserved communities across the north. Together youth and adults are working together to overcome the challenges they face. Within the high school and the Kitikmeot Board of Education a strong sense of hope has grown and the Grizzlies sports organization has become a real force for positive change in the community.

### Approach

The Students Commission staff had met a young man from the community at an international conference and he invited us to assist him in addressing a key issue in his community: substance abuse. At his invitation, we invited him and some of his adult allies in the community to join the Focus 3 project.

### Element 1: Invitation, Initiating

In Kugluktuk, Nunavut, we connected with a group of teachers, parents and youth who were working to find solutions for alcohol and substance use and abuse and the suicides and violence that are directly linked to these social issues. Connections were made, through the youth who had requested that we work with him, with the principal of the high school in Kugluktuk and several key community adult supports.

### Element 2-3: Relationship Building, Clarifying Objectives and Purposes

Exchanges and opportunities to involve more youth in activities and events external to their communities were ranked high as a catalyst (initiators) for members of the Kugluktuk youth community to get involved and engaged in positive, pro-social activities.

Presence in the community and on the ground was identified as important to demonstrate commitment and support for the idea of true partnership. The desire for long-term commitment was clear, as was the suspicion that outside organizations come and go. There was a genuine fear among the individuals of these communities that sustained partnerships would not arise from this project. Adults and youth alike placed a high value on opportunities for youth to travel and experience people, ideas, and options not available in their communities — to broaden horizons. The School and the Grizzlies organization enthusiastically circulated material and recruited for applicants to attend the training sessions and conferences.

There was consistency amongst the key desires as expressed by both youth and adults. That is, a desire to receive support and training around positive role-modelling and leadership, support to and training for engaging young people “on the fringes” and support to identify community leaders and key allies. Also desired were opportunities for young people who are traditionally not engaged to participate in something that would benefit their community. A final expectation was to showcase the efforts of youth, and the community in a positive light so as to combat some of the community, cultural, ageist and racial stereotyping that they have identified as happening in and to their communities.

### **Element 4, 5, 6: Building Capacity by Working Together, Designing and Executing Positive Activities**

Through consistent communication by phone, email and in face-to-face meetings relationships between SC staff members and members of the community continued to build. Spending close to a week with young people from Kugluktuk in training went a long way to building a solid partnership with this community, and continued communication with key adults from the community supported it. Discussions revolved around next steps and concrete activities to do.

Through connections with the Kitikmeot Board of Education and contacts at the high school, we were introduced to a number of key allies within the community.

Early on, two young women involved in one of the key community organizations for youth (The Grizzlies, a sports organization) were selected to come to Toronto for training with youth from the other communities of Focus Three. The training occurred at Students Commission offices and at the Town Youth Participation Strategies (TYPS) annual conference on youth leadership development. Here, they and their adult ally from the Kitikmeot Board of Education connected with members from the other Focus Three communities, Kainai Blood Reserve and Parma Court and discussed ways in which they felt The Students Commission’s support would be best accessed.

As a follow-up, a group of four youth and one adult ally (an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from the community) then attended a YOUTHQUAKE conference and training opportunity in Ottawa, Ontario in May 2008 for further training. Feedback from the Principal of the High School in Kugluktuk indicated that this was an effective strategy for developing the capacity of the youth leaders. Specific training on conflict resolution and mediation organization was acquired by the youth leaders from the community.

In Kugluktuk, three youth were supported to participate in the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse’s national strategizing conference in Toronto, after which they spent a further two days with our staff working to create a survey to be distributed to all high school students in their community. This survey was created to establish an understanding of attitudes towards the issues of alcohol and substance abuse amongst school aged youth, while defining areas of concern (ie: student-school relationships, reasons for early school-leaving, access to alcohol and access to substance abuse support programs etc.) to further the work they wanted to do in the community.

During the summer periods, many of our community connections (both adult and youth) migrated out of the community for the duration of the summer, which slowed the pace of work in the community. Some headed south to Alberta or various other destinations within the country, while others went out on the land with family and friends. Still others have received a variety of job placements through various corporations and government summer job programs.

Youth began to engage in writing articles and stories that could be published in the community and on the website. In Kugluktuk in February 2008, two SC staff visited the community for six days, meeting with youth, adults, community leaders and institutions, spending time following up with the young people that we brought south for training previously, and connected face-to-face with The Grizzlies program coordinators. There are a number of excellent programs and people doing good things in Kugluktuk, however they are not connected as well as they could be and not complimenting one another's efforts and services as well as they could be. Our staff held interviews and focus groups with a wide variety of community members, and spent significant time working with the young people of the community to draft the resources they wanted to begin to address some of the needs. The objective of Focus 3 in Kugluktuk became to build upon and celebrate the strengths of the community and better connect the groups that are in existence to one another, a key missing link identified by the community. The best way to address the issues of school leaving and substance abuse was seen to be three-fold: celebrating the success and voice of youth in alcohol distribution controls, expanding "engagement" opportunities offered by groups like the Grizzlies to more than competitive sports, and providing opportunities that motivated youth leadership through travel and connections with youth outside the community.

## Element 7: Celebrating Results, Connecting Resources

Working together with Kugluktuk youth and community members gave everyone the opportunity to learn from each other while developing resources to benefit the community.

### TOOLS AND RESOURCES BY KUGLUKTUK YOUTH

- Enough is Enough — a celebration of achievement poster.
- Kugluktuk Youth Take Charge — a description of achievements.
- Celebrate and Take Action — instructions on how to use worksheet questionnaire, called Taking Action.
- Taking Action — a blank questionnaire and worksheet for photocopying.
- Enough is Enough — a four-page newsletter.
- Young Decision Makers in Kugluktuk — a pamphlet for youth in community.

This tool was created by the Focus Three team: youth of Kugluktuk, Parma Court's Youth Vybes Crew, Kainai Youth Council and The Students Commission.



# ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

AS A COMMUNITY WE ARE MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE



**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!  
COMMUNITY VOTES 'YES'  
TO ALCOHOL EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE**



**WE DID IT.  
THE GRIZZLIES ATHLETICS  
ASSOCIATION HELPS KIDS  
STAY IN SCHOOL**

**IF WE  
WORK TOGETHER,  
WE CAN MAKE  
THINGS HAPPEN**



## KUGLUKTUK YOUTH TAKE CHARGE

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY



## Kugluktuk Youth Take Charge



There are approximately 1300 people who live in Kugluktuk. In 2007 we were in a crisis. Alcohol abuse ravaged our community affecting people of all ages, suicides had increased and the whole feel of the community was not good. Kugluktuk did not feel healthy, it felt unproductive, and it felt like a very lonely and dark place. In the span of one year, Kugluktuk lost many young people to suicide. As sad as it is, we found a way to pick ourselves back up and a way to do good things for our community. We took action!

We brought the students from the Kugluktuk High School together in the gym to help them find a creative outlet for their feelings. We threw our feelings onto paper and into conversations and created posters and letters that we could either keep to ourselves or share with the group. With our peers, our allies, and the people we trusted, we took our artwork into the community and marched through town. We screamed, we shouted, we chanted “ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!” We were done! We were not going to let this continue. Kids were dying. We were hurting, we had to do something about it.

When we left the high school we asked the students and the staff from the elementary school to join us. To start, we were a group of approximately 130 people. As we marched through town, we picked up more people along the way. By the time we reached the community hall; which is where we ended the march, there were at least 500 of us. The strength and determination coming from all those people was overwhelming. It made you feel like you were gaining control of the things that were happening in your life. It was empowering. We hung our posters around the community hall to share them with the rest of the community; we discussed different solutions to the issues we were facing. We needed a way to control the amount of alcohol that was coming into the community and we needed to educate our people about safe drinking practices.

For three months, the youth worked with the adults to spread the word that there would be a community vote. You would either vote ‘yes’ to becoming a restricted community or ‘no.’ We won our vote with more than 60% voting yes for alcohol restrictions. As a result, we now have the Kugluktuk Alcohol Education Committee, which handles the liquor applications and works to educate the community about the effects of alcohol and safe drinking practices. Since the restrictions were put in place, Kugluktuk is a much happier place to live in. People are going out more, more kids are in school, criminal activity is decreasing, and the community just seems more happy and healthy.



# Celebrate & Take Action



## Introduction

Though sometimes it's easy to buy into the hype and the stereotypes that they're not, young people actually ARE doing good things in their communities! Many youth are passionate, resourceful, energetic, and POSITIVE members of their communities, and we think it's time people start talking about all of the amazing things that they're part of. These "Celebrate and Take Action" worksheets can help you get the people in your community to see and celebrate all the good things that youth are doing AND help you plan the next big thing you want to do:

### **Celebrate the Good Things Worksheet:**

This worksheet will help you pull together ideas of the good things that youth are doing in your community. Get a group of young people together and get them to fill out these questions with you. Have a discussion, share experiences and talk about the things you're doing that are worth showing off!

### **Celebrate the Good Things...an example of good things from Kugluktuk:**

To give you an example, this worksheet was filled out by some of the young people from Kugluktuk, a community in Nunavut whose youth rallied together to create positive change and address some of the serious issues around alcohol and suicide in their community. After realizing how many good things they'd done, they made a poster to show people. The poster is included here for you to see too!

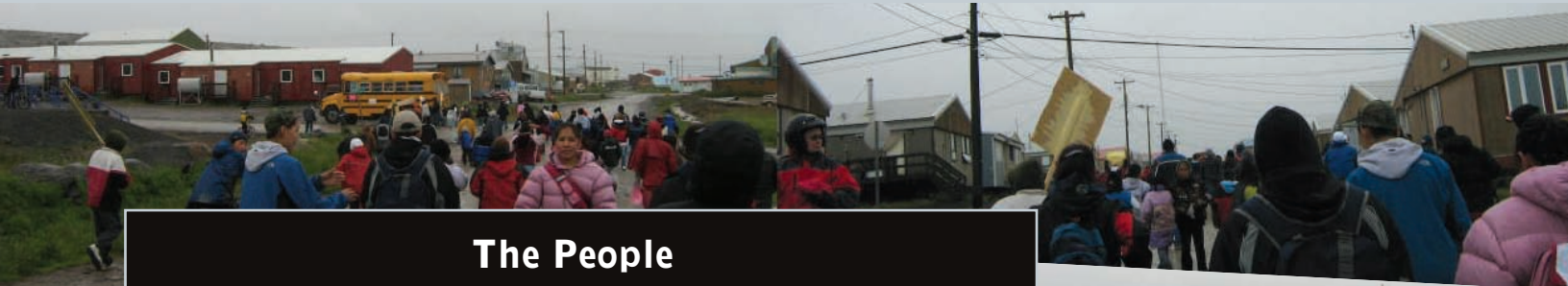
### **Taking Action Worksheet:**

This worksheet is a bit different than the first one. Celebrate the Good Things was about looking at the things you HAVE done. Taking Action is about what you can do next. Use this worksheet to help guide a discussion with your peers, so that you can map out what you want to do next in your community. We came up with a list to get you thinking.

- Create your own poster about all the good things you've done and plaster it around town!
- Have a Youth Appreciation Day with games and activities that showcase all the great things youth are doing in the community!
- Hold a BBQ for the community. Get community businesses to sponsor the event.
- Have a community awards ceremony to recognize the good stuff that young people are doing!
- Ask your town council to publicly recognize the work that youth are doing!
- Lead a community march!
- Host a dance, a movie night, a bake sale, or a car wash as a fundraiser to help young people get some money to do something positive or fun
- Plant and maintain a community garden.
- Host a community clean-up.
- Get on the radio and local television stations to talk about the work that youth are doing.
- Produce a play.

# ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

COMMUNITY VOTES 'YES' TO ALCOHOL EDUCATION COMMITTEE



## The People

Kugluktuk needed a way to control the amount of alcohol that was coming into the community, and we needed to educate our people about safe drinking practices.



## Marching Together

We threw our feelings onto paper and into conversations and posters and letters... With our peers, our allies, and the people we trusted, we took our artwork into the community and marched through town. It was empowering.

## With Strength & Determination

For three months, the youth worked with the adults... We won our vote with more than 60% voting 'yes' for alcohol restrictions.



## We Succeeded

As a result, we now have the Kugluktuk Alcohol Education Committee.



# KUGLUKTUK YOUTH TAKE CHARGE

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY





# Celebrate The Good Things

(Discussion questionnaire)



The idea behind this questionnaire is to get you discussing the positive things that have happened and that are happening in your community. This will help you to identify the steps that you took in order to deal with those issues, and hopefully, will get you talking about other things that you can do for your community.

By celebrating the actions we take to affect our community in positive ways we show others what we value as individuals and as a community. From your experiences, write down five good things that youth have done or are doing in your community:

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....
- 5. ....

Think about all the good that came from the things you have done. Pick one of the five good things you listed above and answer the following questions about the one you pick.

a) What issue made you take action and decide to do this activity?

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b) How did you do it? (the steps you took to get it done or make it happen)

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c) What support did you need? (people, things and resources)

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d) How did you feel about doing this? What was the best thing about it? What were the greatest challenges?

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e) Where are you now? What other things would you like to see happening in your community?

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# Celebrate The Good Things

(Example worksheet filled out after Kugluktuk's group discussion.)



The idea behind this questionnaire is to get you discussing the positive things that have happened and that are happening in your community. This will help you to identify the steps that you took in order to deal with those issues, and hopefully will get you talking about other things that you can do for your community.

By celebrating the actions we take to affect our community in positive ways we show others what we value as individuals and as a community. From your experiences write down five good things that youth have done or are doing in your community:

1. *Lead a community march*
2. *Grizzlies (Kugluktuk High School Athletics Association)*
3. *We lobbied for a Kugluktuk Alcohol Education Committee*
4. *Worked at Computer Access Program Site*
5. *We are involved with the FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) group*

Think about all the good that came from the things you have done. Pick one of the five and answer the following questions about it.

a) What issue made you take action?

*We needed people to stop abusing alcohol and we needed to take away suicide which had become a real option for the youth.*

b) How did you do it? (the steps you took to get it done or make it happen)

*We got the students together, helped them find creative ways (like creating posters) to express their feelings, and we took them around the town to make others hear what we had to say!*

c) What support did you need? (people, things and resources)

*We needed the support of our leaders, to hear the messages we were sending. We needed the support of our friends to find strength and courage to share our feelings and we needed the support of our parents to love us and support our decisions.*

d) How did you feel about doing this? What was the best thing about it? What were the greatest challenges?

*It felt empowering, like we were accomplishing something, having our community hear about our issues and having them work with us to address our needs. It felt like we were gaining control over what happened in our lives and in our community, which in turn helped us to feel a sense of pride and ownership in Kugluktuk.*

e) Where are you now? What other things would you like to see happening in your community?

*We now have the Kugluktuk Alcohol Education Committee who has set the limits for how much alcohol comes into the community and educates the residents on safe drinking practices (knowing your limits, how to hold a party, etc.). With voting day coming up in 2010, we would like to see the continuation of the Alcohol Education Committee and hope to see more people looking for healthier alternatives to drinking. We would also like to see a youth representative on the Committee.*



# Taking Action

(Build on what you have started.)

You know that you are capable of creating change. You can see this in the examples you provided on the “Celebrate the Good Things” questionnaire above. Are there other things you would like to do, or things you would like to see happen in your community? You can start right now.

What do we need? (Identify issue or need)

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What can people do? (Actions)

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What supports do we need? (People, things, resources)

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Continued on reverse.

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What are our next steps to make this happen?

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Other thoughts:

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This tool was created by the Focus Three team: youth of Kugluktuk, Parma Court's Youth Vybes, Kainai Youth Council and The Students Commission.





# “ENOUGH Is Enough”

## Kugluktuk Youth Respond to Youth Suicide and Alcohol Abuse

Written by members of the Focus 3 team.



**Fact:** Kugluktuk, Nunavut has taken an innovative approach to address the issue of alcohol abuse with the creation of the Alcohol Education Committee in 2008.

**Fact:** The number of people who spent time in the Kugluktuk RCMP detention cells in 2008 was 333, which is a 38 percent decrease from 536 people in 2007.

**Fact:** The overall number of incidents reported to the Kugluktuk RCMP detachment went down by 30 percent in the past year.

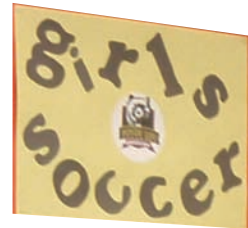
**Fact:** Young people played a major role in having Kugluktuk become an alcohol restricted community in 2008.

This tool was created by the Focus Three team: youth of Kugluktuk, Parma Court's Youth Vybes Crew, Kainai Youth Council and The Students Commission.



# “ENOUGH IS ENOUGH” YOUTH RESPOND

**Youth engagement** is the meaningful and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity focusing outside the self. (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement) Examples include sports, volunteering, social activism, drumming and dancing or school based activities.



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH...

- Youth feeling connected
- Youth feeling pride in what they are doing
- A reduction in risky behaviours such as decreasing alcohol and drug use
- Kids staying in school
- Reduced rates of teen pregnancy
- Reduced youth involvement in crime
- Mental health benefits for youth

### Who it helps?

Youth engagement not only helps the young person involved but their community as a whole. When youth become engaged and active, it encourages others to do the same. More active youth can help the schools and different programs in the community and make Kugluktuk a better place to live for everyone.

### How it helps?

When youth are getting engaged they are participating actively, learning new things, building healthy relationships with their friends and adults, having new experiences, and they can gain a sense of belonging. For some youth this helps them decide what they want to do as they get older, get a feeling of competence (like they are good at something) and a sense of increased pride in themselves and the activity that they are involved with. They feel good about themselves and where they live.

A great example of youth engagement exists in Kugluktuk! Youth worked together to move the idea of being an alcohol restricted community forward – something that would help lots of people – not just themselves.

Many of the young people who helped lead the movement forward in Kugluktuk have finished high school, some are attending college or university and are still volunteering in the community.

Following the drinking related death of one of their peers, youth led a community march to the Hamlet Office to express how they felt and demonstrate that they wanted change. The youth worked to educate each other on the topic of alcohol abuse, took part in a play about substance abuse and encouraged community members to vote in a referendum in order to make Kugluktuk an alcohol restricted community.

“Any youth ideas that are started are going to be supported.”

### Community Member

Young people want to continue to make change. Adults want to continue supporting youth ideas. Together they can help Kugluktuk in taking the next steps in creating a community where youth and families are valued and young people have a role in helping their community.



The Grizzlies Table Tennis Team from left to right starting with back row: Attila (coach), Bev, Vikki, Suzi, Ian, and in front, Angella, Kevin, Iris and Haviik.

## NEXT STEPS IN HAVING KUGLUKTUK YOUTH ENGAGED

Young people are aware of many of the issues facing themselves and their friends. They also have some great ideas on how to make their community stronger. Below are several issues and possible solutions that youth and adults have thought could help and would be interested in starting in Kugluktuk:



As of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 the Kugluktuk High School is Junk food & Orange (fruit) free workplace.



table tennis



As young peoples' awareness around issues grows their ideas become solutions for positive change in the community.

In teams of two the youth will knock on the door and go into the student's room and encourage them to get up for school. A volunteer organizes the volunteers making sure that they have the names of who is to be woken up (and maybe helps make sure they are up). A different volunteer can contact each family notifying them that their child has signed on for this opportunity.



**Need:** In order to be successful, the Wake Up Crew will require someone to help them stay organized, to coordinate the volunteers and those who are getting the wake up's. Parents will play a large role in helping the Wake Up Crew be successful by letting them in the house in the mornings and encouraging their children to sign up to get woken up if getting up is hard for them to do. Some training to learn respectful and safe techniques for waking people up for volunteers would help to make sure that they do not put themselves in danger.

**The Issue:** Youth are very concerned about their friends who are not coming to school. There were many reasons youth felt their friends do not go to school:

- Their parents didn't attend themselves so it wasn't important in the family
- They were failing classes and gave up on themselves
- They felt that teachers don't like them or that they have conflict with teachers
- Using drugs, alcohol or gambling
- Staying up late at night
- No one is waking them up for school

### The Youth Solution: Wake Up Crew

Young people have come up with an idea that they feel will help get their friends to school that youth can lead with the support of parents and other adults. A group of youth volunteers on a rotating basis are responsible for helping wake up students who might want to go to school but can't wake up in time. Students can sign up to be woken up and their friends will come by each morning to help them get up for school.

### How to Do it?

- Youth and adults who want to be involved volunteer to organize the Wake Up Crew
- Recruit new volunteers
- Make pamphlet for parents / posters for youth
- Develop training with support from other organizations
- Advertise Wake Up Crew to youth (at school, Youth Centre, to friends, siblings etc)
- Start waking up youth

**The Issue:** Quite often young people find that there are not enough things to do, especially past 9:00 PM on the weekends. When there is nothing to do, youth believe their friends are more likely to make bad choices. In the past there have been successful all night dances but due to a lack of adult support there haven't been any in quite a while.

## The Youth Solution: All Nighters

There are dances now but some youth felt that they need to go back to the all-nighters that go until 7:00 AM. The youth felt that these dances will help keep youth safe in the community and provide healthy alternatives to drinking, drugs or gambling. Youth have identified that they would be happy to volunteer for this activity to help make it happen: youth felt that they could help plan and promote the all-nighter, provide security, lead activities throughout the night and provide food.

**Need:** In order to be successful the youth will need the support of the space where dances can be held all night – either one of the schools or the Arena. The youth wanted to have parents or other adults in the community volunteer so that there is an adult presence for safety but also so youth see the support they have from adults in the community. Often times adults aren't sure if youth they know, either their own children or other youth in the community, want to have them around. The youth who want to organize these all-nighters were very clear that they want adults there and see a real role for them in helping make the events successful.

### How to Do it?

- Recruit youth and adults who will help organize the all nighter
- Assign roles and clear responsibilities for each person
- Confirm space
- Advertise dance
- Plan activities throughout night (what it is, who is running it, what is needed)
- Host the all-nighter



## The Young Decision Makers

Listening to youth in Kugluktuk who had been involved in positive activities, (the Grizzlies, working at the CAP site, volunteering, going outside the community to conferences) they shared that they felt very good about themselves when they were helping their community. Adults have seen the change that getting involved has had on the youth, their peers and siblings. There is an idea that could help young people and the community, providing many youth, young adults and adult allies similar opportunities.

The *Young Decision Makers (YDM)* is a body of youth under the age of 18, young adults and adult allies from across the country working together to make sure that youth voice is heard in formal and informal decision-making bodies (government, systems (like Kitikmeot District Education Authority), and organizations). Across Canada there are an increasing number of youth who are getting active and involved in learning about issues, talking about them and making decisions and recommendations to their schools, organizations they are involved with and government. In Kugluktuk this could look like having a group of youth who get together with the support of

young adults, (18 to 25 year olds) and adult allies: teachers, parents, community members and government staff who want to help young people find a role in their community to do just that. The group can talk and learn about issues that are important to youth, use the Internet and connections to outside organizations to get more information. Now that they know more the group can have discussions that are informed – and fair – as everyone in the discussion has had a chance to learn about it. The discussions are based on not just what they know from their own experience but other information as well. These conversations will lead the group to being able to make decisions on the topic – what they think then becomes the final word of the group. The group then takes their decisions forward and shares them with whoever is relevant to the topic: the Hamlet, the School Division, the Territorial government.

Forming the Kugluktuk YDM would allow for youth to learn about local issues, talk about them and make decisions that can help influence policies at the schools, local organizations (such as the Wellness Centre), the Hamlet and Territory. Young adults who have had experiences when they were younger in being involved can mentor youth and help them move ideas forward.

The Kugluktuk YDM would help ensure that the voices of youth from the community are heard throughout the Territory, nationally and internationally. When there are national YDM meetings, youth members, with the support of the young adults and adult allies can identify who might go to represent them. The team can nominate youth to take on a leadership role within the national network.

The Kugluktuk Young Decision Makers will exist when youth and adults decide it does. There are no forms to fill out, no applications or training to take. It is as simple as coming together and talking, learning and deciding – does this work for Kugluktuk? The Kugluktuk YDM exists when you say it does.

The Students Commission can provide resources and support with Kugluktuk starting a YDM Network.

### Are you An Adult Ally?

Young people in Kugluktuk want to work with not just their friends but also with adults to make these things happen! How do you know if you are an ally or not to the youth you know? Here are some tips:

- Let youth decide if you're an ally – they will tell you
- Limit how long and how often you speak in discussions – encourage youth to speak
- Don't vote – adult allies can help make sure youth know what they are voting on without voting yourself
- Don't be in charge of the group's money, space, or resources – but be a support for them to learn how to do that

they = young people under the age of 18 – as these are the youth who do not have any formal opportunity to have their voice heard (vote, sit on AEC, DEA, etc)

For more information on the Students Commission please visit us online at [www.tgmag.ca](http://www.tgmag.ca)

## YDM's Eight Principles

### Inclusive

Each YDM project should involve a variety of ages, life experiences and backgrounds with members of varying organizations. This is to ensure that different perspectives, skills and experiences are brought to the table to help us make informed decisions.

### Participatory

Space for studying and discussing specific issues should exist and be promoted so those who want to participate in decision-making can actually do so.

### Youth-Led

Youth involved with the Young Decision Makers should be supported to speak their minds. Youth are encouraged to take on leadership roles, facilitating workshops, creating materials for other youth, and reporting back to the Network.

### Adult Partnerships

Adults should be equal participants in supporting youth and helping them move their ideas into action.

### Young Adult Support

Young adults are those over the age of 18 who identify themselves as being able to play a mentoring and supporting role to youth.

### Accountable

YDM continually strives to be the "connector" between formal decision-makers and youth. Too many times young people are consulted on a topic and never reported back to. YDM members are also accountable to each other on projects they are involved in.

### Representative

When youth participate at events, consultations and meetings as a YDM representative, they are supported to do the research they need to do to speak on behalf of the network, and various experiences of diverse youth. Thus, they carry with them a voice much larger than their own.

### Informal Structure

To truly engage youth in a process, we believe they should be free to pursue their own ideas. For this to occur, an informal structure exists to ensure we are flexible to accommodate as many participants and thoughts as possible.



## How to Get Started

The Kugluktuk Young Decision Makers will exist when youth and adults decide it does. There are no forms to fill out, no applications or trainings to take. It is as simple as coming together and talking, learning and deciding - does this work for Kugluktuk? The Kugluktuk YDM will exist when you say it does. We recommend the following:

- Find others who want to be involved. Invite youth, young adults and adult allies to come together at a common time and place.
- Learn about our YDM model and how it works. Our Centre can help with this.
- Have discussions and meetings on what issues the community members face.
- Choose an issue that YDM Kugluktuk group wants to work on.
- Talk to the community, youth, experts and elders to learn about the issue. Invite everyone you talk to, to join the group.
- Have further discussions and meetings.
- Youth in the YDM Kugluktuk group vote on their opinions. Together their voice will shape the action the group will take.
- Youth, young adults and adult allies share how they can proceed on actions
- Continue the same process for issue after issue after issue!

**It is that simple. It may not be easy to go through each step alone but the more active and involved members the group has, the easier it will be! So if you feel like Kugluktuk needs a group like this, show this brochure to a friend and get started!**

### To learn more about the model please contact us.

Website: <http://ydm.engagementcentre.ca>

Phone: (416) 597-8297

Email: [ydm@igmag.ca](mailto:ydm@igmag.ca)

The Students Commission, 23  
Isabella St., Toronto, ON M4Y 1M7

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement leads the Young Decision Makers (YDM) project.

**Key partners to date:** The Students Commission, TakingITGlobal, Brock University, Youth Launch, YouCAN, the McCreary Centre Society and the City of Vancouver.



CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Youth Engagement

# YOUNG Decision Makers

# WHERE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN DECISIONS ARE MADE IN KUGLUKUTUK?



## What is YDM?

Young Decision Makers (YDM) is a body of youth, young adults and adult allies from across the country working collaboratively to ensure that youth voice is heard in formal and informal decision making bodies (government, systems and organizations).



## What Young People Are Saying

"One opinion, one vision can start a revolution."

"I learned about the power of group dialogue to build innovative ideas and expand structures."

"I will take all the work we did and show it to others because I'm proud of it."

"[I feel] Empowered. Excited. Reinvigorated. Optimistic."

"I plan on incorporating YDM principles into other groups I participate in!"



The Students Commission's Four Pillars are Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate.

# YDM IS OPEN TO EVERYONE

Don't let our name misguide you. YDM encourages every person in Kugluktuk who believes in the idea that youth need to be involved when decisions are made that affect them to help create this network. This means youth (ages 17 and under), young adults, and adult allies can and should be a part of YDM!



"I've learned new methods of dealing with group issues/discussions and decision making as a group."

"There is a lot of support."

"...there is a strong and positive push for giving youth a voice in decision making."

## Eight Great Reasons to Start the YDM in Kugluktuk

- You would be a part of a passionate body of youth, young adults, adult allies and organizations from across the community working collaboratively to ensure that youth voice is heard!
- You make and network with friends from across the community no matter the age, race or gender!
- YDM Kugluktuk will be used to help identify youth to participate in local, national and international conferences and events.
- YDM Kugluktuk can be listed as a valuable experience on your resumés and scholarship applications. There will always be opportunities for young people to work on our websites, write reports, fill out questionnaires, help organize events, etc. YDM is a great place for you to practice and hone your skills.
- You get to express yourself! You are invited to address issues as diverse as the young people of Canada.
- You have access to young people who bring ideas, opinions and enthusiasm with them.
- Young adults (those over 17 years of age) get a chance to share their experiences and skills to the next group of youth leaders ready to make some change!

"I've learned a lot about how a group works together to make important decisions. Also, I've learned a lot about how other places in Canada are different than PEI, where I'm from"

"I realized... I truly have inexplicable potential."

"I feel that arguments and debates of opinions and view points bring the team closer and allow to bring the 4 pillars\* into our team. Even though it might be a roller coaster—we are all on the same ride."

"Although we are all different — I learned that although discussion may be heated and stressful — having various people from different walks of life is beneficial to learning."

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Check the back cover of this brochure on how to get a YDM group in Kugluktuk going!

## Sustaining

In Kugluktuk, we have continued to support the capacity of the young people and their mentors by maintaining contact with them regularly, and involving them in consultation and opportunities provided by other funders and organizations we are partnered with. The project has established enduring relationships that will be sustained.

This tool was created by the Focus Three team: youth of Kugluktuk, Parma Court's Youth Vybes Crew, Kainai Youth Council and The Students Commission.



