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Sent: Sunday, February 7, 2021 1:26:57 PM

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Cc: Sara Kirk <Sara.Kirk@Dal.Ca>; Hailey Vidler <hvidler@engagenovascotia.ca>

Subject: Tri-County Youth Survey

Dear Mayors and Wardens,

I'm writing to share with you an exciting opportunity to learn more about the health and well-being of our children and youth in the Tri-County region. The Canadian Index of Well-being (CIW) team, who collaborated with Engage Nova Scotia in the recent province-wide Quality of Life survey, has been working with UNICEF and the Trillium Foundation on a pilot project to develop a community-based well-being survey for children and youth, focused on their life at school, at home and in the community.

Engage Nova Scotia has connected with Dr. Sara Kirk, a Professor of Health Promotion at Dalhousie University, whose research is focused on child and youth health and well-being. Sara is supporting us in moving forward with this opportunity, including covering the \$15,000 in costs associated with the data collection and helping us with coordination. She is co-leading a province-wide partnership called "UpLift" which can be found at "www.upliftns.ca".

In order to ensure the successful collection of data in the three counties, we need a team of influential local stakeholders who can champion the survey within the region and encourage participation. This will involve sharing the survey widely among youth and youth-serving organizations and, at every opportunity, encouraging youth to complete the survey.

Warden Penny Smith has discussed this initiative with Sara and is interested in being a champion for participation in Shelburne County. We are hoping that you will join her.

Sara is copied on this email and she would be very happy to engage with you to provide further information and discuss the effort to achieve wide participation in the survey.

Thank you and all the best,

Ron Smith

PARTNERSHIP
for
UNICEF Canada Child and
Youth Well-being Survey
PHASE II

CONCEPT NOTE
September 2020

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies to which they were born.

UNICEF Report Card 7



1. How are the children?

In some cultures, warm greetings between people would not be complete without asking, “how are the children?”. Do communities in Canada ask that question? *Can* they answer it? The UNICEF Canada Child and Youth Well-being Survey (CY-Survey) is a tool in development to help communities ask and answer this fundamental question, by gathering community-wide data from children and youth from ages 9 to 18 years.

Tracking changes in the state of children and youth, and in the equality gaps between them, is a basis for deeper understanding, dialogue, and action that brings a community together to learn from successes and take on challenges that will improve children’s lives. The survey, in combination with a toolkit, will offer communities support to gather data that are challenging to secure at the local level and to directly engage children and youth at every step of the process.

Filling a need for local data

Community-wide, population-level data are an important part of the evidence ecosystem around children and youth, but such data are not available in many communities. Community-level population data to monitor a comprehensive range of indicators of child and youth well-being are extremely limited by the dearth of surveys and administrative data available to scale, the complexity of accessing a range of existing sources of data, and gaps in data that can be disaggregated to those under age 18 and between groups of children and youth – by gender, ethnicity, and other status.

The CY-Survey provides a real-time way to identify how life is from the perspectives of young people from 9 to 18 years of age, to complement administrative data, and to provide a comprehensive picture of well-being across dimensions of children’s lives (see Figure 1). The need for robust data about the state of children and youth is only heightened in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A partnership among the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), UNICEF Canada (CUC), the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) at the University of Waterloo, and the Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region (CYPT) was formed to develop and pilot the CY-survey from 2019-2020. The participation of diverse children and youth in the pilot shaped the survey into a “youth-friendly” instrument, now ready to use in three demonstration communities.

Figure 1. Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being (CY-Index)/CY-Survey Framework



2. How can your community participate?

The CY-Survey is entering a demonstration phase following the pilot completed in Waterloo Region, Ontario, in September 2020. The founding partners are inviting two additional communities to implement the survey in 2021. In total, three communities (including a second iteration in Waterloo Region) will be supported to implement the CY-Survey. This will yield a report with data for each community by June 2021 (see proposed Table of Contents attached based on the Waterloo report). The community partners will receive support for every step in the survey, from design to knowledge-sharing, and action planning. Community partners will participate in all decisions related to how the survey is administered in their community, as well as shape the iteration of the survey and a toolkit to support expansion across Canada.

Each community partner will make a contribution to the partnership of \$15,000, a substantial cost saving over a survey project designed solely for your community. The cost for community participation is offset both by founding partner contributions and potential new funding partner contributions to this project.

3. How will the project outcomes benefit your community?

A community survey of children and youth, supported by a toolkit for implementation, can increase capacity for your community to:

- collect, use, and share data, solving for gaps and complexities in the collection of robust data about children and youth,
- establish a baseline of the state of children and youth in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- understand the needs of children and youth from their perspectives, and improve youth-adult partnerships,
- identify inequalities among young people,
- start conversations to deepen understanding and youth engagement,
- plan actions that focus on the greatest challenges and help close equity gaps,
- learn from success and challenges in other communities, and
- track changes over time.

4. When will the survey take place and how much of our time will it take?

The activities will begin in December 2020 with planning for the survey. The survey should be ready for data collection in March-April 2021, with a report ready for your community by the end of June 2021. Child and youth agencies, youth groups, and other like-minded community organizations are requested to participate. To be successful, this children and youth project will be co-created by children and youth and should aim to include all children and youth from ages of 9 to 18. The Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the three communities and the founding partners, will have four 2-hour meetings over the duration of the project. While a community team will be engaged in all aspects of survey planning between December and February, this is not expected to be onerous. Our team has experience gained through the Waterloo Region pilot, and a draft of a toolkit complete with templates, to make this process seamless. At various points, your team will be invited to contribute feedback on the next iteration of the survey and toolkit, based on your experience going through the process.

In the end, community leaders need to know how their children and youth are faring and where to focus efforts to advance their rights and well-being. The opportunity presented is a relatively low time commitment and a low cost way to gather and use evidence in decision making. We hope you will join us!