



Review of Event and Processes

Appendix - Participant Evaluations from YWALK Youth Forum

This document is one of the appendices to the YWALK Youth Forum Final Report. It outlines the findings from the evaluation sheets distributed to participants at the October 3rd Forum.

Summary

The YWALK Youth Forum evaluations were designed to assess the teenage participants' level of empowerment, expected action and inspiration after attending the Forum. Over 60 completed sheets were returned; representing environmentally active youths who regularly walk and take transit to school but have not yet included sustainable transportation topics within environmental club activities at their schools.

The most significant finding was the inspiration the participants gained in the presence of the enthusiasm and accomplishments of their peers: almost half of all respondents (45%) listed 'confidence' as *the most valuable lesson or tool gained by attending the Forum*.

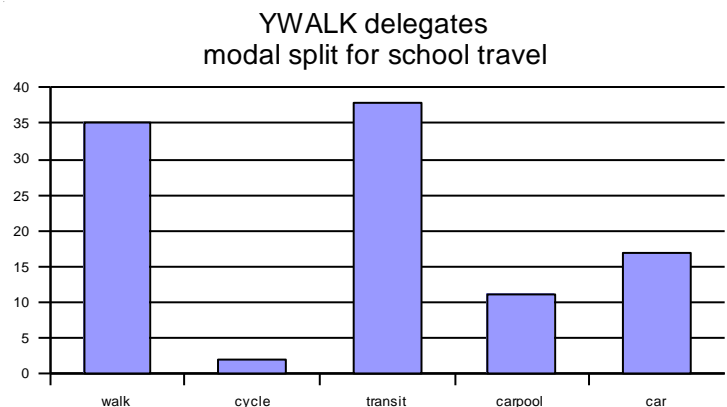
Another strong benefit was the participants' enhanced sense of empowerment. Almost three-quarters claimed to feel *better able to get involved and make a difference*, and an even stronger inclination to *share what they've learned*. This indicates a potential for greater environmental action from youth leaders given the opportunity to periodically gather and share ideas and successes.

Further opportunities exist to develop more youth-focused events and activities on sustainable transportation initiatives. Almost half of all responses (49%) indicated sustainable transportation projects as *the most likely project they would start soon*.



An evaluation sheet was given to all the participants at the afternoon breakout session and 63 evaluation sheets were returned from youth participants. (Twenty-two additional sheets were completed by teachers and adults observing the Forum: these were not tabulated within this document.) The sheet was not anonymous as the reverse -the *DreamNow* project sheet- had requested the participant's name and contact information. The majority of responses were from teenagers living within the City of Toronto: between the ages of 14- and 17-years-old. The average age was 15.5-years-old.

The evaluation contained 18 questions (see Appendix- *YWALK Forum evaluation form*) requiring either a short answer response, or a rating from a scale between 1 to 5. The focus on the evaluation was to gauge the



participants level of empowerment (i.e. *After attending this forum, I feel that I am...*), inspiration (i.e. *who & what inspired you*), expected action (i.e. *lessons & projects for self, school & family*), and interest in next year's Forum (i.e. *are you interested in attending and/or organizing*).

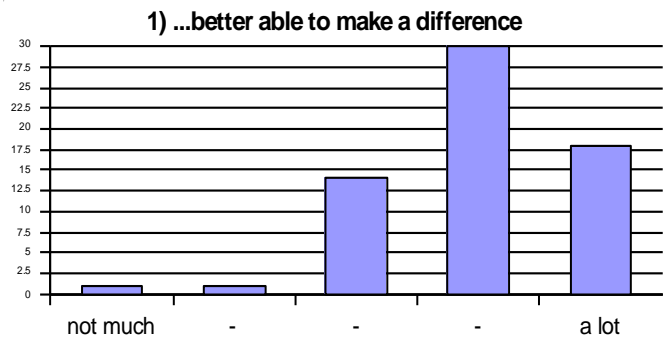
Participants were asked to list their usual mode of transportation to get to school during the past month since the school year began. Three-quarters of the youth participants are already using sustainable forms of transportation with more than a third commuting by transit (38%) and another third walking (35%). Slightly more than a quarter of the participants travel by car (17% in a car with no other student from their school and 11% carpooling). Only 2% regularly cycle to school.

Empowerment: “After attending this forum, I feel that I am...”

The first six questions asked participants to rate the increased ability and confidence they felt they had acquired by attending the Forum. These questions began with; “After attending this forum, I feel that I am...” and requested a response between 1 (not much) to 5 (a lot). Overall, the responses indicated a sense of greater confidence, ability to get involved and make a difference; and a much greater level of awareness, enthusiasm about what others are doing and interest in sharing what they've learned.

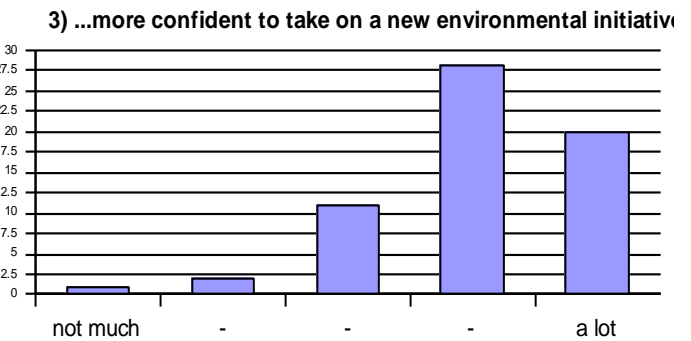
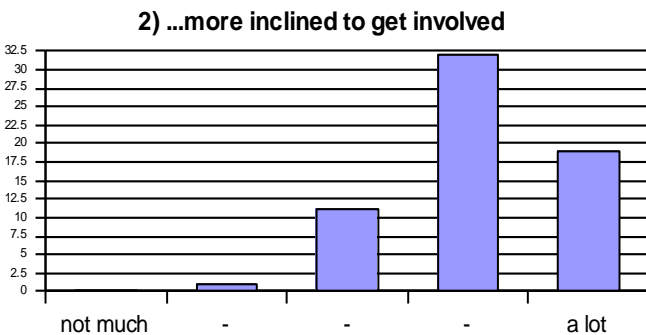
The first three questions generated positive responses where approximately half of the respondents selected the second highest category (i.e. 4/5). These questions asked about the ability to make a difference, inclination to get involved, and confidence to take a new environmental initiative.

Responses to the first question demonstrated a very high sense of the participants' perceived **ability to make a difference**. Three-quarters (75%) chose from the highest two categories, and almost half of all respondents (47%) selected the second highest category.



Responses to the second question showed an even higher higher rate (81%) of participants selecting either of the highest two categories. Slightly more than half (51%) selected the second highest response to the statement of feeling **more inclined to get involved** and no one selected the lowest category.

The third question related to **confidence to take on a new environmental initiative** and responses followed a similar pattern. Three-quarters (77%) chose from the highest two categories, and almost half of all respondents (45%) selected the second highest category.



The next three questions also generated positive responses where upwards of 40% of respondents selected the highest category on the scale from 1 to 5. These questions asked about the

participants' excitement about what others were doing, increased awareness, and inclination to share what they had learned.

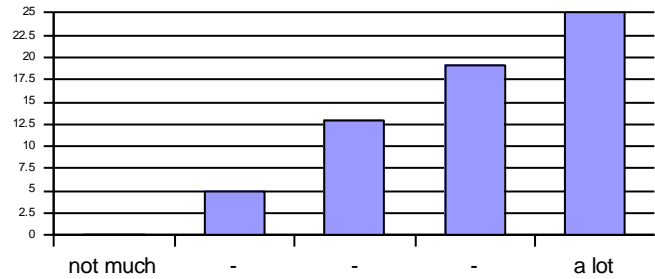
Question 4 asked: **After attending this forum, I feel that I am... more excited about what others are doing.** Almost half (40%) of responses indicated the highest category, and three

quarters were within the highest two categories. No one selected the lowest category.

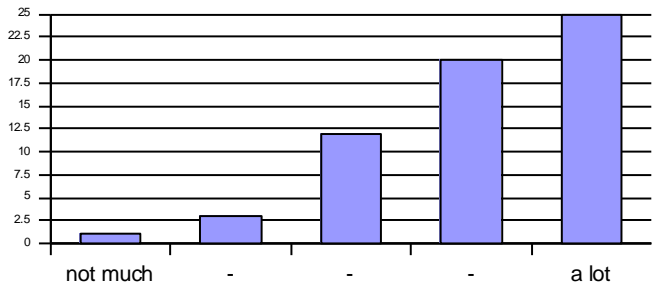
The next question asked about the participants' feeling of being **more aware of what they could do to help the environment.** Similar to the previous question, almost half (41%) of responses indicated the highest category, and three quarters were within the highest two categories.

The sixth question asked whether the participant was **more likely to share what they've learned with other people.** Almost half (43%) of respondents selected the highest category, and over three quarters (79%) selected either of the two highest categories. Only one participant selected from the lowest two categories.

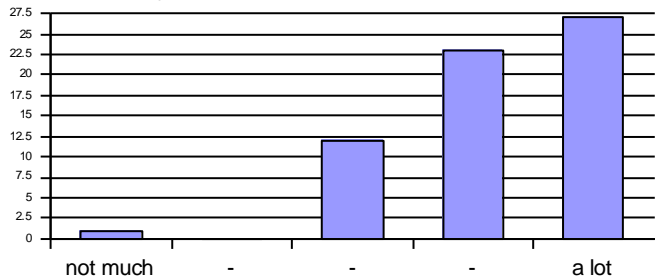
4) ...more excited about what others are doing



5) ...more aware of what I can do to help the environment



6) ...more likely to share what I've learned with other people

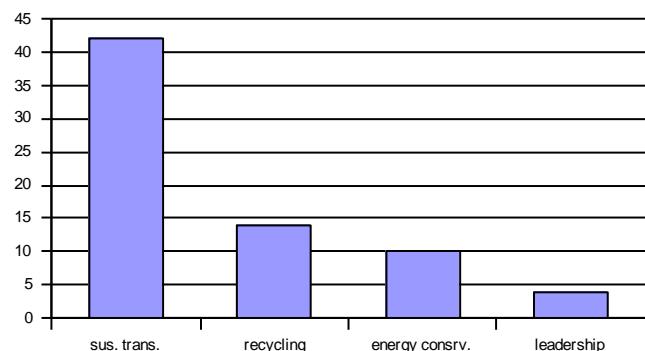


Expected Action: Projects that might be Implemented

The evaluation sheet included four questions asking about expected action that might follow from participation in the Forum. Three questions related to general actions with a personal, school and household focus: **What have you learned today that can help you reduce... your own , your school's and your family's ...ecological footprint?** The fourth question specifically asked which **project is most likely to get started soon.** There is a high degree of focus on sustainable transportation initiatives – this suggests a great potential for a growing focus on new projects and activities promoting walking and cycling to school.

Almost three quarters of all responses (60%) cited sustainable transportation as a new tool for reducing one's own ecological footprint. Of these, the majority listed *walking more* (21%), while almost equal number listed a combination of *cycling more* (13%), and *taking public transit more* (7%). The balance of the responses indicated a more general inclination to *use alternative transportation more* (9%). The remaining responses listed *more recycling* (20%), *more energy conservation* (14%), and *leadership* (6%) as new tools for reducing one's own ecological footprint.

8) What have you learned today that can help you reduce your own ecological footprint?



With regard to *reducing your school's ecological footprint*, the focus was split between sustainable transportation (38%) and energy conservation (37%). Transportation initiatives included; *create idle-free zone (13%), encourage students to walk & bike more (7%), and get bike racks (4%)*. Energy conservation was primarily directed at the installation of SWITCH's *solar panels (24%)*. Other initiatives listed included recycling and waste reduction (18%) and student leadership training.

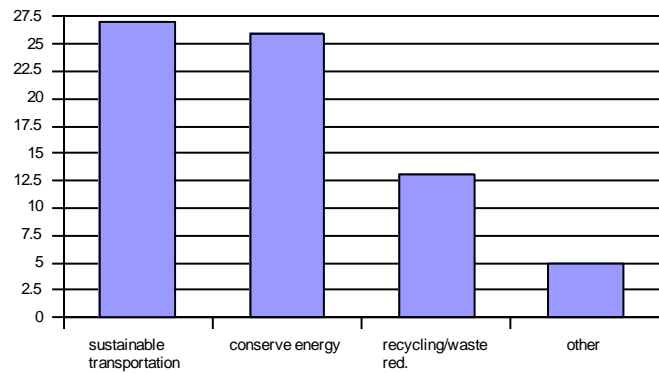
The next question – asking about *reducing your family's ecological footprint* – demonstrated a narrower scope of initiatives. Half of the responses cited waste reduction (52%) i.e. *be conscious of waste we produce (16%), and recycle (15%)*. Slightly fewer responses (42%) cited sustainable transportation initiatives, such as; *use less gas-driven transportation methods (15%), walk, cycle or use transit instead of drive (13%), and stop idling the car (6%)*. A few responses (4%) cited *more focus on our safety environment*.

The following question asked more directly for a specific project that the participant believed that they were **most likely to get started soon**. It is possible that the term 'project' implied a more official or organized school initiative. If so, it is not surprising that a majority of responses pointed to sustainable transportation initiatives that support the earlier focus in this area to reduce one's personal, and school's ecological footprint. Half of the responses referred to sustainable transportation projects (49%) – including *car-free days, bike racks, and bike lanes*. There were many other projects cited; waste reduction (19%), environmental walkathon (8%), school greening (7%), installing solar power (6%) and a mix of responses for environmental clubs, EcoSchool certification, composting, and vegetarian options at the school cafeteria.

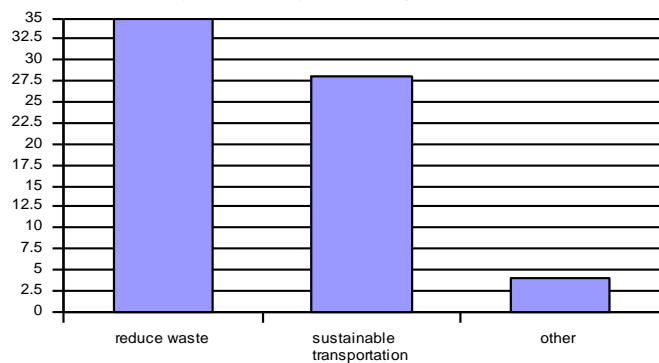
Inspiration, Value and Worth

Five short answer questions sought out the participants' level of inspiration and perceived value from attending the Forum. The first of these – asking *what lesson or tool was most valuable* – showed a clear benefit of the confidence gained by almost half of the participants (45%). This confidence seemed to be born from the many inspiring youth leaders who spoke of the projects they have already

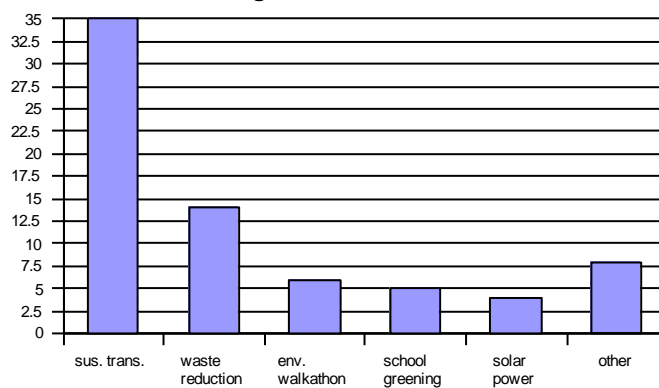
9) What have you learned today that can help you reduce your school's ecological footprint?



10) What have you learned today that can help you reduce your family's ecological footprint?



11) What project are you most likely to get started soon?

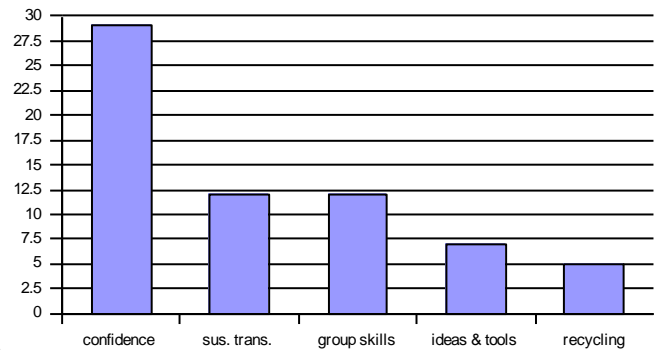


undertaken. Specifically, this confidence was cited as; *everybody has the power to make a difference, youth can make a difference, that my one action can bring positive action, that one person & one idea is enough to make a difference, be a leader, perseverance is the key, etc.* Other responses included sustainable transportation (18%), specific tools & ideas (18%), skills for environmental groups (11%) and recycling (8%).

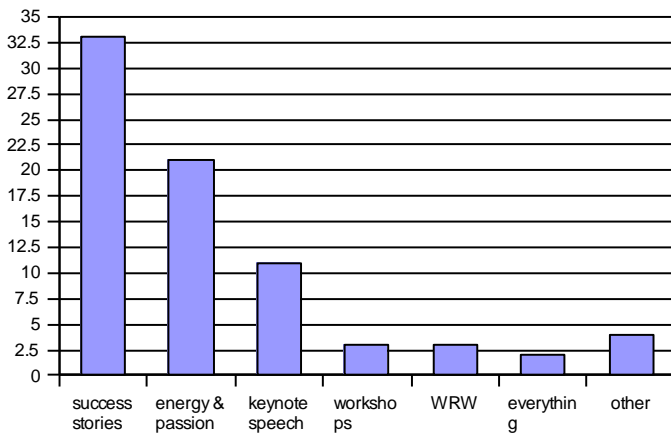
Participants were also asked about *what* and *who* inspired them. Not surprisingly, it was the youth leaders themselves – and their projects – that inspired. With regard to *what*, almost half the responses cited the success stories (43%) and a quarter (27%) listed the energy and passion of students and teachers. Other responses were the keynote presentation (14%), the World Record Walk (4%).

With regard to *who*, responses were split between the 18-year-old keynote speaker (47%) and student presenters (45%) with a few others citing *everyone else* as their inspiration.

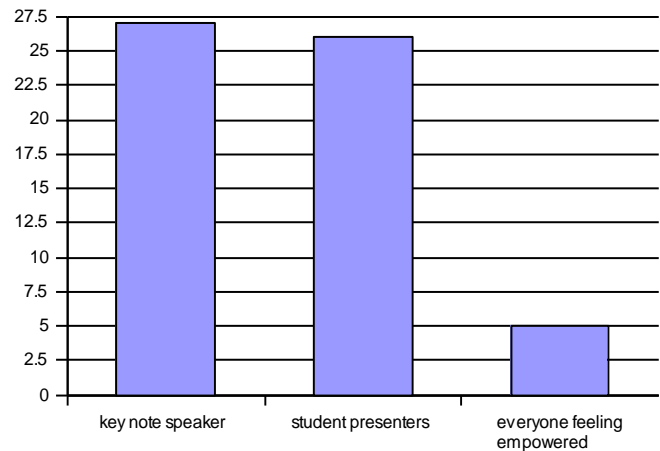
7) What is the most valuable lesson or tool that you can bring back to your school?



12) What inspired you most about today?



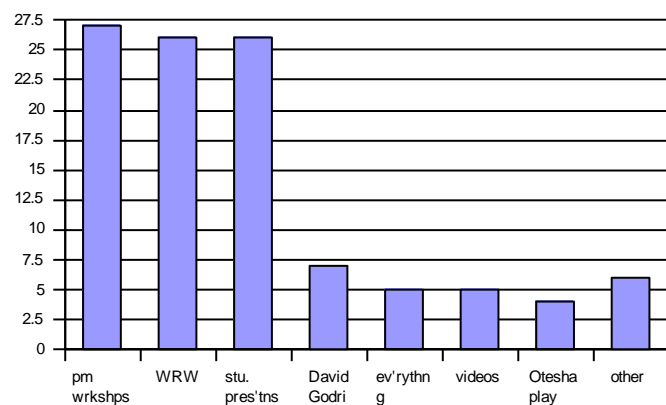
13) WHO inspired you most?



The next two questions asked what part of the day was *most-* and *least-worthwhile*. In the category of *most-worthwhile*, (not including the free lunch) three items each received a quarter of the responses; the afternoon workshops (25%), World Record Walk - WRW (25%), and student presentations (25%).

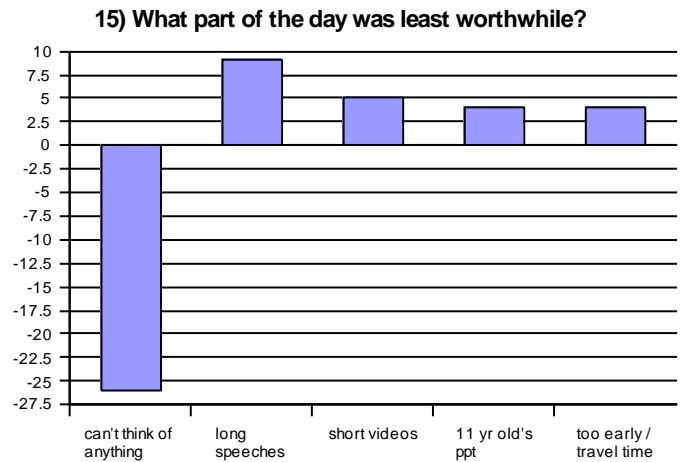
These elements are not surprising as they represented a change in pace from presentations within the auditorium. The afternoon workshops offered a change in scale, smaller groups, a focus on a specific topic and a less intimidating arena for asking questions. The WRW also offered a change of scale, as well as exercise and fresh air outdoors where participants were free to gather and chat in groups of all sizes. The student presentations offered inspiration from the successes already achieved by youth leaders.

14) What part of the day was most worthwhile?



The remainder of the responses were split between; the keynote speaker, everything, videos, and Otesha play.

In the category of *least-worthwhile*, more than half of the respondents (54%) wrote that they *couldn't think of anything that wasn't worth it*. Other responses included; the long speeches (19%), the short videos (10%), the 11-year-old's powerpoint on biking (8%) and needing to get to school too early in order to arrive at the Forum on time (8%).



2008 Forum: Are you interested in attending and/or organizing...

The final two questions asked participants about their interest in both organizing and attending a similar Forum in 2008. Based on the high level of enthusiasm and inspiration, it should not be surprising that two-thirds (64%) claimed to be interested in helping to organize the event next year, and a significant 87% claimed to be interested in attending the event next year.

