



MORE THAN TOKENS: FINDINGS



60%

**STRONGLY AGREE THAT
THE LACK OF PAID
OPPORTUNITIES IS A
BARRIER TO YOUTH
PARTICIPATION**



33%

**EXPERIENCED BIAS DUE
TO THEIR LEVEL OF
KNOWLEDGE OF ONE OF
THE OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES**

The Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace & Security (CCYPS) is a network of individuals and organizations working on Youth, Peace and Security locally, nationally and globally. In July 2021, we launched a web-based survey on the tokenization young people experience in civic spaces, supported by the #YouthRising grant administered by TakingITGlobal. Based on the survey results, the CCYPS is creating a toolkit that will demonstrate the experience of young people in decision-making and civic spaces, while also identifying recommendations to avoid further tokenization, ensuring meaningful youth engagement in Canada and globally. The CCYPS thanks all participants who generously shared their experiences with us and TakingITGlobal who made this possible.

→ **47 SURVEY RESPONSES** → **85% AGED 19-30**

→ **RESPONDENTS FROM ALBERTA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, MANITOBA, ONTARIO, QUÉBEC, AND OUTSIDE CANADA**

→ **23 WOMEN; 14 MEN; 3 NON-BINARY; 7 NON-DISCLOSED RESPONDENTS**

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ONLY ALLOWING ONE YOUTH FROM AN ORGANIZATION TO SPEAK, GOES BACK TO NEEDING TO FEEL SUPPORTED IN A SPACE DUE TO POWER DYNAMICS. MOST SPACES ARE NOT CREATED BY AND FOR YOUTH. (MANITOBA, 25-30, GENDERQUEER)

- Participants experienced mild to extreme bias in social, political, and civic spaces due to their age.
- Most young people experienced age discrimination on Governance boards or committees.
- Most participants agreed that they needed to prove their expertise in civic space based on traumatic experiences (that can have a re-traumatizing/victimizing effect)
- Most participants identified a lack of diversity among youth participation at conferences, on committees, and in service projects.



**I THINK ONE IS TOO SATISFIED WITH JUST 'HAVING A YOUNG PERSON AT THE TABLE.' SO THE REPRESENTATIVENESS IS THERE, BUT THE ADDED VALUE OF THE PERSPECTIVES AND THE COMMENTS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IN ADDITION, THE WHOLE QUESTION OF INTERSECTIONALITY IS NOT DISCUSSED ENOUGH. YES, WE NEED YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT EVEN MORE THAN THAT, WE NEED SEVERAL YOUNG PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT SEVERAL REALITIES.
(NEW BRUNSWICK, 25-30, FEMALE)**

DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION AND/OR VIEWS IN CIVIC AND DECISION-MAKING SPACES?



Most participants did not think that young people’s knowledge and expertise were valued and taken seriously in decision-making, policy development, and influencing outcomes. They are only respected when it is relevant to young people or concerns “youth related issues”. Young people do not feel heard by decision-makers or seen as equal actors when there is co-management or production of decisions. Young people are often tokenized by being assigned specific “youth-focused” roles or as “the face” of a cause.



**INVITING A YOUTH SPEAKER TO BRIEF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, FOR EXAMPLE, BUT ONLY IN A PUBLIC EVENT. THEIR CONTRIBUTION ENDS WITH THEIR STATEMENT AND THEY ARE NOT CONSULTED IN THE NEGOTIATION OF ANY OUTCOME DOCUMENT BASED ON THE MEETING, OR GIVEN ANY FURTHER POWER TO FOLLOW UP WITH PARTICIPANTS.
(ANONYMOUS SUBMISSION)**



77%

YOUTH HAVE EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING FOR FUNDING



90%

PARTICIPANTS FOUND THE MAJORITY OF OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM IN CIVIC AND DECISION-MAKING SPACES ARE UNPAID

- Young people who were able to participate in events, conferences, decision-making spaces, etc. were often chosen for convenience. Any recommendations they gave were rarely considered seriously.
- Young people rarely have the space to have conversations about tokenization and are often silenced when they challenge the status quo.
- Intersectionality among young people is not adequately considered. In global spaces, the practices and cultures of young people are not always respected or considered.
- Professionalism among young people has often been categorized as White, heteronormative, and from certain social and economic classes.



**YOUTH ARE ALSO OFTEN IN A POWER IMBALANCE IN THESE SPACES, RELYING ON OLDER MEMBERS IN THE SPACE WITH THE POWER TO ADVANCE THEIR CAREERS/ACADEMICS, FOR REFERENCES, AND FOR SIMPLE NETWORKING ACCESS. SHOULD THEY CHALLENGE POWER NORMS WITHIN THESE SPACES, THEY ARE OFTEN PUNISHED.
(MANITOBA, 25-30, GENDERQUEER)**