

Getting the Bug for Democracy



CPRN's National Dialogue and Summit Engaging Young Canadians



Presentation to Elections Canada

December 20, 2006

Sharon Manson Singer, President of CPRN

Charting the Course for Youth Democratic and Civic Participation

- Partnership between CPRN / Elections Canada and others
- 6 academic research papers + synthesis report
 - Youth attitudes about citizenship, government
 - Barriers, challenges and opportunities
 - Civic education in Canada
 - Youth and political parties
 - Aboriginal youth
- Analysis and recommendations



CPRN's Objectives for the Dialogue and Research Project

- Bring the voices of young adults into the national conversation about Canada
 - What kind of Canada do you want, now and in the future?
 - What are you prepared to do about it?
 - What do others need to do?



Youth Involved Throughout

- Their themes:
 - learning
 - work
 - health
 - Environment
- Citizenship an overarching theme
- Workbook a tool for civics education –10,100 downloads
- Youth facilitators



They Got the Political Bug

- Over 90% had very positive experience
- Over 80% more likely to become involved in public issues
- High commitment to become more politically engaged
 - Vote
 - Become active in their communities
 - Become more informed
 - Write to MP/MLA
 - Share experience with friends and family



Young People's Party of Canada



Towards an Action Plan for Canada 'Our Vision, Values and Actions'



**CPRN National Dialogue and
Summit Engaging Young Canadians
November 24-27, 2005**

March 2006

Vision for Canada

Canada is a place where:

- Everyone takes responsibility to contribute to a more equitable, healthy, sustainable and knowledgeable society (local to global)
- We have common, high quality standards of public services
- Mobility for education and jobs
- Bilingualism is a reality
- We value diversity AND celebrate common bonds of citizenship
- Take us seriously as citizens and take citizenship seriously



In their own words...

“We see Canada as a dynamic place to live in, full of activism, participation and inclusion. We want the government not to be something untouchable, but rather a community in which we not only hear what everyone has to say, but we truly listen and care about issues relevant to our people. We want citizens to know why they are paying taxes, to understand how the system works and to have the chance to have their voices heard in decision-making.”



In their own words....

" I want a Canada that has EQUALITY in every aspect, all over. National, not provincial, territorial. I think that in order to get the Canada we want, we all need to work for it. Ideas are good but actions are better. I want Canadians to work for a better nation not just sit around and whine without any actions."



Guiding Values of Young Canadians

- **Equity**
 - Achieve common standards and equalize opportunity
 - Reduce gap between rich and poor
 - Greater attention to those face higher barriers
- **Accountability and transparency**
 - For all: governments, business, civil society, individuals
 - Accept responsibility for actions/consequences at home and abroad
 - Honesty and ethics in all spheres



Guiding Values (2)

- **Long-term sustainability and prevention**
 - Intergenerational and international
 - Holistic and future-oriented
 - 4 year horizon cannot get us there
- **Efficiency in the federation**
 - Collaboration between/among governments
 - Reduce duplication, overlap, waste
 - Mobility and accreditation
 - Improve Canada's competitive position



Actions, Roles and Responsibilities

- Social contract is one of shared responsibilities
 - Reciprocity
- Government is very important but federation is falling short
- More is expected of everyone: governments, individuals/families, employers and the voluntary sector
- Collaborative, inclusive approach



Healthy Democracy

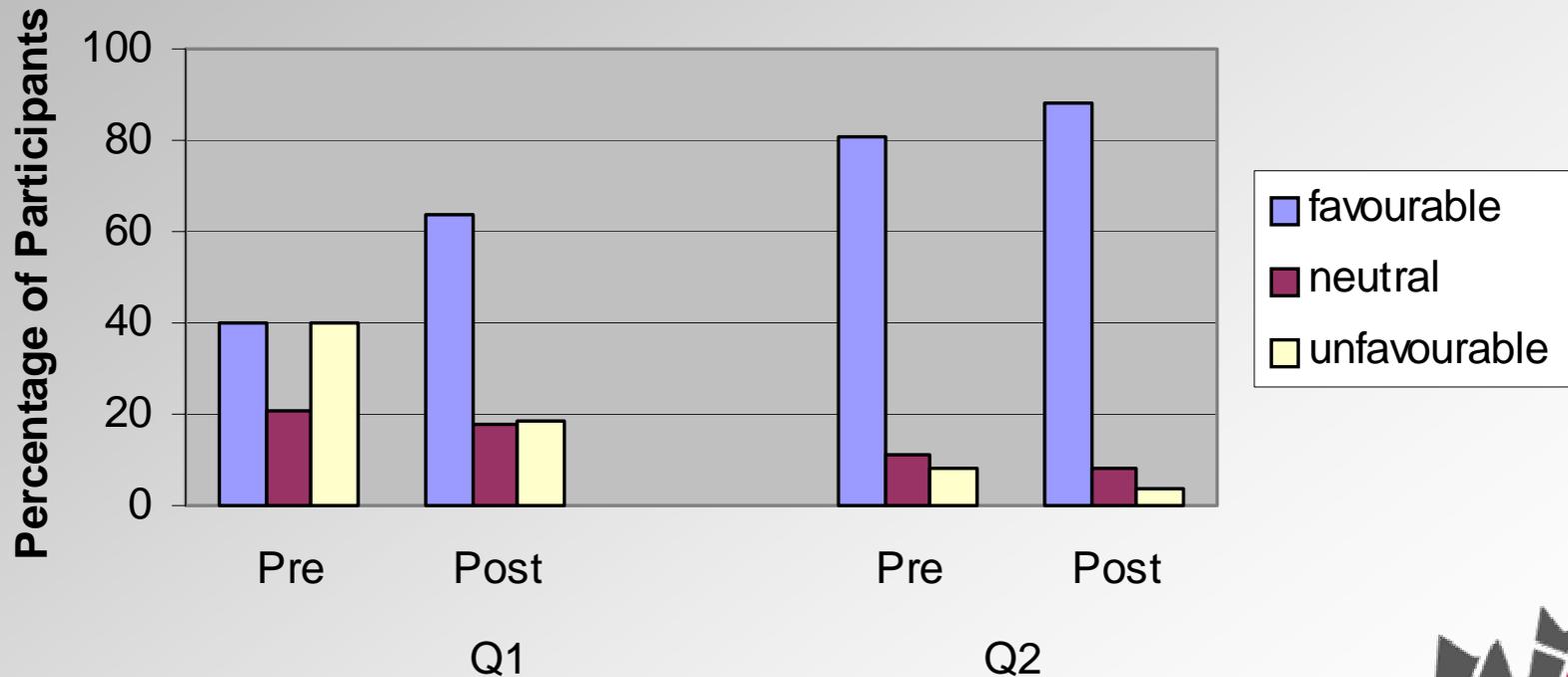
- Institutions more representative, open and inclusive
- Public engaged between elections
- High civic literacy and participation
- More unified country
- Pan-Canadian perspective
 - ‘national’ collaboration
 - effective federation



Pre-Post Questionnaire Results

Democracy

Pre Post Ratings under Democracy



Learning

- Education for citizenship and life
 - Civics revitalized, life long learning
 - Involve youth in society while still in school
- Equitable access to PSE
 - Governments to increase investments for individuals/institutions, families to save more, business to provide grants and scholarships, students to be responsible
- Value different paths
 - Culture shift, vocational/trades education improved
 - Business to be more active partners with schools
 - Bridges between academic and vocational paths
 - Student centred education, portfolio idea



Learning (2)

- Pan Canadian education system
 - Common standards across the country
 - Core curricula that reflects common needs and respects local uniqueness
- Intergovernmental coordination and collaboration essential
 - No tolerance for jurisdictional bickering
 - Reduce duplication, share best practices, build on successes
 - Identify core competencies with industry
 - Align education system and labour market needs



Work

- Common employment standards / Common accreditation system
 - Remove barriers to labour mobility
 - Enable newcomers to Canada to work in their field
 - Support mobility / economic efficiency
 - Governments to work together
- High quality work places
 - Employers key part of life-long learning
 - Support balance between work and family
 - Pan Canadian job quality assessment tool



Work (2)

- **Improve conditions**
 - Increase minimum wage (within reason)
 - Provide income supplements, health benefits, child care to offset burden on employers
- **Promote small business and entrepreneurship**
 - Better pathways to encourage creativity
 - High pay-off in productivity and innovation
 - Educational institutions to include entrepreneurship as an attractive option
- **Broaden measure of success beyond GDP**



Health Care

- Common high standards across the country
- Preventative approach (not sickness centred)
 - Address root causes: poverty, exclusion, mental health
- Individual responsibility to be informed, make good lifestyle choices
 - Public institutions to provide accessible and relevant information



Health Care (2)

- Coordinated, multidisciplinary, community based health care
 - Focus on the needs of the individual / families
- Universal, publicly funded
 - More transparency about how public funds are spent: needed if public is to hold governments to account
 - Need national conversation about role of private payment/delivery driven by concerns about sustainability



Environment

- Culture shift needed – from “*this would be nice*” to “*this must happen*”
- Shared responsibility across all actors for BOLD action
 - Beyond 3Rs; renewable energy; green technologies
 - E.g. Zero Waste In a Generation (ZWIG)
- Governments to provide strong leadership
 - Mix of incentives, regulations, serious penalties; better information



Environment (2)

- Consumers to reduce consumption; pay 'real' cost of goods (water, energy)
 - Vote with your wallet and vote with your votes
- Businesses to be strong environmental stewards
- Canada to be a world leader
 - Keep commitments and promote sustainable approaches in developing world



Connecting Young People, Policy and Active Citizenship



**National Dialogue and Summit
Engaging Young Canadians**

Research Report

**Mary Pat MacKinnon
Judy Watling**

May 2006



Six Cross Cutting Themes

1. *Building connections for a stronger Canada*
2. *Updating Canadian governance: accountabilities, responsibilities, inclusion and participation*
3. *Sustainability – strive for holistic, long-term policy decisions*
4. *Achieving equity and efficiency in the federation*
5. *Connecting education, quality of life for all and productivity*
6. *Knowledge and information as catalysts for active citizenship*



CPRN Activities and Commitments

- Research Series: *Charting the Course for Youth Democratic and Civic Participation*
- CPRN Youth Internship Program
- Collaborate with others to support action plan / youth engagement





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