



## **YOUTH AND DEMOCRACY: A DIALOGUE SESSION**

**HOSTED BY THE  
LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT**

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*No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline.*

Kofi Annan

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## INTRODUCTION

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How healthy are Canada's democratic traditions? It is probably true that most Canadians do not spend a great deal of time reflecting on the nature of democracy and its day-to-day impact on their lives as citizens. Still, these same Canadians have at least a passing familiarity with the various functions of government and Parliament and follow debate about public issues via the media and in their communities. Most Canadian adults still vote during elections. A smaller percentage is actively involved in politics, policy development or public advocacy.

But what about Canadian youth? Commentators have despaired that young people today are less engaged and less aware of their rights and responsibilities than previous generations. Still, others argue that youth are finding their own ways to have an impact on their communities and their country. According to this point of view, youth are not disengaged from democratic life, they simply do not participate in ways that can be identified and measured by traditional proxies of engagement, such as voting or party membership.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, some of Canada's top thinkers in the areas of civic and democratic engagement and youth involvement, many of them youth themselves, met in Ottawa on Parliament Hill to consider these trends and to discuss their implications for Canada and the future of our democratic institutions.<sup>1</sup> Hosted by The Library of Parliament, the goal of the meeting was to identify the trends and challenges characterizing existing efforts focused on civic and democratic engagement by youth. Participants were also challenged to envision a future in which young people are fully engaged with their democratic institutions, and to identify the steps required to achieve this level of engagement between now and 2017 (Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary).

Participants shared their experiences and their perspectives on the needs and interests of youth and discussed the impact had by young people locally, nationally and internationally. Together they learned that we do not yet have the research and understanding required to draw firm conclusions about youth and their participation in the civic and democratic life of Canada. Despite this lack of certainty, participants agreed that youth are engaged in their own unique ways, and that much work needs to be done to dispel the myths circulating about the nature of that engagement and the locales in which it manifests.

The Dialogue Session allowed participants to engage in a passionate debate on this pressing topic, a valuable exchange that resulted in a series of recommendations arguing for more information-sharing, research and funding to both understand democratic engagement by youth and inspire it. The group agreed that this could only be achieved through collaborative partnerships between and among members of the public, private and

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<sup>1</sup> Participants were asked to make their contributions based on their own perspectives and expertise, and not as representatives of the specific organizations by which they are employed or that they lead. For information on the participants and their backgrounds, please see Appendix ("List of Participants and Bios").

non-profit sectors. Somehow, all of the positive intentions and energy of Canadian governments, Parliamentarians and other elected representatives, and youth and community serving agencies must focus on this challenge, and soon, with the present and future health of Canada's democracy in mind.

The following report summarizes the major trends and challenges identified during the session, and outlines the nature of successful youth engagement as it was envisioned by the participants. The report continues by exploring the recommendations that flowed from the day's discussion, including plans to build on the conversation started at the Youth and Democracy Dialogue Session in future collaborative ventures.

## **DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT BY CANADIAN YOUTH:<sup>2</sup> TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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The dialogue session began with the participants reflecting on the dynamics that complicate or support efforts focused on civic and democratic engagement<sup>3</sup> amongst Canadian youth. Laying out the trends and challenges at play in this domain prepared the participants to discuss opportunities that could be seized to better reach youth currently dis-engaged from the political processes shaping life in Canada.

### **A. Trends**

#### **1. General Decline in Levels of Democratic Engagement**

- Voter turnout in Canadian federal elections has declined significantly in the past twenty years. Most of this decline can be attributed to a drop-off in voting amongst those aged 18–24 years old. In addition, today's young people are not likely to become active voters as they grow older.
- Evidence suggests that parents who are not active voters raise children that also do not vote. As such, if the current generation of youth is not composed of active voters, it is likely that this trend will continue with the following generation of young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Definitions of the term "youth" vary, and participants at the Dialogue session did not focus on reaching one commonly held understanding of the term. Rather, a fluid sense of the term was employed in discussions in order to accommodate the different understandings of "youth" held by participants depending on the mandates of their organizations. Accordingly, in this report the term "youth" is also used in a very broad sense, and refers to young people between the ages of 12 and 30.

<sup>3</sup> Democratic engagement or participation refers to an individual or group's interaction and involvement with democratic institutions such as Parliament or governments, or democratic processes such as elections. Typically, this engagement is focused on the betterment of the country as a whole and the political structures that produce elected or appointed representatives at the national level and/or public discourse focused on national issues. Civic participation or civic engagement is somewhat more locally focused, though no less important than democratic engagement. Civic participation can include community activism, advocacy and various organizational tasks such as networking and fundraising. While this kind of engagement frequently intersects with and supports democratic engagement it is often completely isolated from pre-established democratic procedures or institutions such as governments and the legislatures.

## **2. Youth are Engaged, but not Necessarily in the Democratic Process**

- Today's youth possess a growing interest in local and global issues, but seem to have less interest in national issues and the traditional political processes addressing them.
- Youth participate in non-traditional forms of engagement such as social justice and environmental organizations, international development projects, and online petitions and forums. Youth may have little to no understanding of how or if engaging in these activities can be brought to bear on the formal democratic process. Some evidence suggests that this activity may lead to traditional forms of democratic engagement, such as voting and party membership. Further research is required. What seems evident at this stage is that youth direct their limited time and political capital to venues that they feel are most relevant to their needs and interests, and most likely to be receptive to their input.

## **3. Everything is Happening Later**

- Life transitions, such as completing school, getting married, or starting a family, are all happening later in life. This trend may be driven by the fact that for youth today, the length of time between completing education and settling into a career is longer than was the case before. Whatever the cause, youth of today do not face the same set of options and expectations that shaped the realities of previous generations.

## **4. The Demographic of “Young Independents” Is Growing, and They are not Engaged**

- Evidence suggests that young singles and young couples (i.e. those aged 30 and under that are no longer in school, that do not yet have children, and that are primarily focused on careers) are the least civically and democratically engaged, compared to students, families with children at home, and mature singles and couples. This group of young singles and young couples, labelled “Young Independents” by Robert Barnard of Decode,<sup>4</sup> currently makes up 10% of the Canadian population, and has grown significantly as a proportion of total population as youth focus on careers, and wait longer to start families than their predecessors did. Since the bulk of youth engagement strategies focus on students specifically, this highly disengaged group is under-researched and inadequately addressed by existing strategies that emphasize student youth.

## **5. Decline in Quality and Enthusiasm for Civics Education in the Classroom**

- Civics programs and methods of delivery are not evolving to meet student needs. Likewise, teachers do not always receive sufficient training in the subject.
- In general teachers and students are disinterested in civics education.
- In general, schools focus more on civic engagement than they do on democratic engagement.

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<sup>4</sup> For information on Robert Barnard and Decode, please see Appendix (“List of Participants and Bios”).

## **6. Digital Engagement is no Guarantee of Democratic Engagement**

- Many new digital engagement strategies have surfaced in the recent past. Youth leaders and researchers assumed that online engagement would lead to greater participation in formal democratic processes, but this does not appear to be the case. In addition, evidence suggests that the same types of youth that are democratically engaged in the offline world take advantage of online opportunities for democratic activity. Digital strategies do not undermine traditional methods of democratic engagement, but they do not appear to inspire new individuals to partake in the democratic process.

## **B. Challenges**

### **1. Lack of a Thorough Understanding of Youth**

- We lack metrics tracking youth participation in non-traditional political activities, such as community volunteering initiatives, boycotts or petitioning. As such, we do not fully understand how, why, and how frequently/deeply youth engage in these channels, information that could strengthen efforts to promote democratic engagement. Because we are not able to track and measure these non-traditional forms of engagement, much debate exists over the actual levels and quality of youth civic and democratic participation, with some arguing that the levels are at historic highs and others suggesting a net decline in engagement and participation.
- A number of myths about young people circulate. When these myths are accepted as truth, engagement strategies are weakened, and youth become disenchanted with programs and strategies. For example, participants brought differing opinions and hard data regarding whether or not youth were concerned with global issues and the environment, two common assumptions about today's young people. Likewise, the common association of "youth" with "students" ignores a significant portion of school aged youth who are not in school, but require encouragement to engage in the democratic process nonetheless, such as those starting their career, or those that leave post-secondary education before graduation.
- Youth in Canada are diverse in terms of geography, language, cultural origins, socio-economic status and interests. It is difficult to understand the needs of this highly varied group, and to design programs and strategies that are tailored to the individual needs of its members.

### **2. Lack of Collaboration**

- The federal government, federal agencies, and the non-profit and private sectors do not always coordinate efforts with other partners in their own sectors, or with members of other sectors, when addressing youth democratic engagement.

### **3. Ineffective Communication Channels**

- The problem of communication is not one of information supply, for in today's information age, resources on politics and government are abundant. Rather, the problem is one of dissemination. Existing communication channels do not necessarily reach all youth in an effective way.

- Some participants claimed that parents do not always serve as good role models of democratic engagement, and that many deliver negative messages about politics and the democratic process to their children. As key role models for young people, their negative perceptions about democratic engagement have a significant influence on youth, an influence that is often at odds with programs encouraging young people to become more politically active.
- Political leaders often do not communicate in ways that youth find engaging. Political speeches, debates and press releases are often viewed as “boring” and “out of touch” by young people.
- Democratic engagement is not a priority in the school system. Like parents, teachers and school administrators have a significant influence on the attitudes of young people. When they are not excited about the democratic process and politics, youth often follow suit. Unfortunately, because of jurisdictional issues, it can be difficult to influence the approach taken to civics education in schools.
- Youth are under-represented in the media. Because we have very few mainstream, national news commentators from the youth demographic, young people cannot always find a voice that they can relate to in the national political dialogue taking place in mainstream media channels.
- Democratic institutions, such as Parliament, do not effectively target youth in communicating their relevance and societal value. Youth often do not understand why these institutions are important, largely because the messages emanating from these institutions are not always tailored to a youth audience.
- Even though social media and other web-based tools have the potential to open up new modes of communication, it is difficult to use these tools to reach youth in effective and/or meaningful ways. Increasingly, young people restrict their time on the Internet to user-defined social networking sites and direct messaging, behaviours that limit the degree to which young people can be exposed to the messages of those focused on youth civic and democratic engagement when online. In addition, youth expect immediacy in their online communication, and often, the deliberation that goes into online messaging by these agencies makes it difficult or impossible to meet this expectation.

## **C. Opportunities**

### **1. Mentorships**

- Participants indicated that opportunities for one-on-one interactions between youth and current and former parliamentarians and elected officials, as well as highly democratically engaged youth and adults, are effective means of encouraging dis-engaged youth to participate in the democratic process. More mentorship programs should be established, emphasizing the importance of reciprocal exchanges between youth and mentors, as opposed to unilateral relationships that under-value the contributions that can be made by youth when given these kinds of opportunities.



## 2. School System

- The time spent in primary and secondary school, as well as in college and university, represents a huge window of opportunity for those working to encourage youth participation in the democratic process. Youth are there, and with the right programs, attention is guaranteed. While certain schools are hosts to effective programming, there are many in which this opportunity for engagement is under-explored. That said, when seizing this opportunity, it is important to note that the term “youth” should not be equated solely with “student.” Given this, a comprehensive engagement strategy must make use of the time that young people spend in school, while also addressing non-school venues where captive youth audiences are found (workplaces, community centres, etc.).
- Participants suggested that a reformed student council model could improve the presentation of parliamentary democracy in school systems. Students currently vote to create a governing body which is based on a presidential model rather than a parliamentary one. In addition, student councils generally lack any real power. If this institution was reformed into an empowered parliamentary system, students’ first experience of voting and government would serve as a better reflection of Canada’s Parliament and the democratic process governing the nation.

## 3. Technology

- New web-based technologies offer innovative ways of learning and communicating that many youth are familiar with. However, it is important to consider the “digital divide” separating active internet users from those with little knowledge of and access to these communication technologies, as well as the limits of social media applications in terms of guaranteeing long-term democratic engagement and action. Participants suggested that the use of new media technologies was too often treated as a panacea for youth dis-engagement, and that in reality, the proliferation of web sites and social media applications directed at youth has led to an overwhelming mass of web-based strategies whose value is not always evident. Given these factors, technology-based opportunities for engagement should be seen as one tool among many means of engaging and informing youth.

## 4. Collaboration Within and Among Sectors

- There are many unexplored opportunities for collaboration between and among private, non-profit and public sector. Whether in terms of sharing research results, or when designing and implementing programs, all will benefit by co-coordinating efforts and building on each other’s work.

## 5. Programming

- Programming often focuses more on the actors, institutions, and processes of parliamentary democracy – the *how* – instead of emphasizing the significant influence that these actors, institutions and processes have on our everyday lives – the *why*. Youth react positively to programs that connect their interests and needs to democratic engagement, a reality that is not reflected in many programs current being delivered to youth.



## **VISION FOR THE FUTURE – WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN 2017?**

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In order to reach a common definition of “successful youth democratic engagement” and to establish benchmarks by which progress towards this goal can be measured, the group was asked to envision the ideal state of democratic engagement amongst youth in 2017, Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The following benchmarks were identified:

### **A. Better Representation of Youth in Parliament**

- Youth (age 30 and under) will represent 5% of Parliamentarians in the House of Commons (currently 1.7% of Parliamentarians in the House of Commons are aged 30 and under).

### **B. Effective Civics Education**

- Youth will have basic levels of knowledge and understanding of government, Parliament, voting, and the legislative process.

### **C. New Venues for Engagement Encourage Participation Amongst Non-student Youth**

- Programs will target youth that have left school by bringing youth engagement strategies to their workplaces and into the community centres, cafes, etc. where “Young Independents” spend their time. Mentorship opportunities or a “Gap Year” offering youth experiences between school and work with a focus on democratic engagement, preferably through exposure to activities on Parliament Hill, could also support this emphasis on non-student youth.

### **D. Institutional Reforms**

- The structures of government and Parliamentary democracy will allow youth to engage meaningfully in policy and legislative processes, whether in Parliamentary committees or via consultations conducted by federal agencies.
- Parliament will pass legislation calling for mandatory voting, or incentive schemes that encourage citizens to vote.

### **E. Heightened Collaboration Amongst Youth Engagement Initiatives**

- Roles will be defined, assets will be mapped, and collaboration and communication among public, private and non-profit agencies will be institutionalized into ongoing partnerships.
- Non-profit agencies will receive core funding from federal agencies to strengthen their capacity for program delivery.

## **F. Greater Understanding and Appreciation of Youth**

- Reliable metrics will track youth engagement, and produce a thorough, tested understanding of youth and their needs and interests.
- Non-profit agencies, public agencies, and elected officials will engage youth as legitimate partners in democracy. In turn, youth will feel that their input is valued by members of these agencies and capable of affecting visible change in Canadian society.
- Youth will have a more prominent role in the design, management, and delivery of initiatives that promote youth democratic engagement.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Dialogue Session revealed that a number of challenges make it increasingly difficult to successfully engage today's youth in the political processes governing Canadian life. Ineffective civics and democratic education, a heightened emphasis on careers, and politically apathetic parents often influence youth to discredit the political process at early stages of life, leaving young people ill-informed and disinterested in politics and democratic institutions. What's more, formal communication channels often under-represent youth and the issues that matter to them. Even when these issues are addressed, it is rarely in context, at a pace or in a language that is meaningful to youth. Equally problematic are the myths about youth that circulate amongst members of older generations. These un-investigated assumptions become particularly troublesome when they inform programs and strategies directed at youth.

These factors have contributed to a generation of young people that do not fully appreciate or benefit from their rights and obligations as citizens in a parliamentary democracy. Currently, youth voter turnout is reaching unprecedented lows, with evidence suggesting that this political disenchantment will only continue as Canada's youngest generations age. While the significance of this dilemma should not be downplayed, there are many reasons to be hopeful about the role that youth will take in Canada's democracy in the years to come. Youth possess a powerful capacity for passion and altruism, and in many cases, are extremely engaged in the associations and networks that speak meaningfully to their needs and interests. By channelling this energy into formal political institutions and processes, not only will youth gain by ensuring that their voices are heard in the national political discourse, but on a more fundamental level, the institutions of government will benefit from a greater degree of representativeness and in turn, legitimacy.

Those that participated in this Dialogue are driven by the belief that youth can and must perform this transformative role in Canadian democracy. With a view to moving forward to realising their vision of successful youth engagement, participants concluded the day's discussion with a number of suggested future steps. These suggestions can be grouped into three categories: Research, Funding, and Collaboration.

## **A. Research**

- Participants recommended that an asset map be prepared to provide an inventory of agencies focused on youth democratic and civic engagement. This inventory would outline the specific mandates and major activities of each public, private and non-profit agency, and would be used to identify available research (e.g. public opinion or demographic) and gaps in programming and opportunities for collaboration between agencies with overlapping or complementary activities.
- Participants recommended that international best practices in the domain of youth democratic engagement be compiled.
- A greater understanding of non-student youth is required, with a particular emphasis on young singles and couples at early stages of their careers who demonstrate significantly low levels of engagement relative to individuals in other stages of life. Participants recommended key research questions be identified for more investigation of "Young Independents."

## **B. Funding**

- Participants noted that efforts to engage youth in the democratic process will be strengthened if a core fund allocated to innovative initiatives is established. Certain participants pledged their commitment to work with federal agencies to identify sustained funding to encourage youth engagement in democracy.
- Certain participants emphasized that federal funds should be allocated to community-based initiatives that focus on the needs of youth in the immediate community, as opposed to larger, more-centralized regional or national programs. It should be noted that not all participants openly condoned this "grassroots" approach to funding.

## **C. Collaboration**

- Agencies must communicate and work together on a more formal and regular basis. Federal agencies are beginning to coordinate efforts. Similarly, agencies in the non-profit sector must share research and combine resources to be more effective. Moreover, these two sectors should not exist in isolation from each other, and must work together to engage other key players, such as teachers, parents, the media and current and former parliamentarians, when funding, designing, and delivering programs focused on youth democratic engagement.
- Participants identified the need for a champion that would coordinate future collaborative ventures focused on youth democratic engagement. They suggested the Library of Parliament as an appropriate coordinating body, given its ties to Parliament and federal agencies, as well as its non-partisan mandate and focus on democratic engagement and public education. Specifically, participants suggested that the Library organise a second dialogue to take place sometime after six months, during which participants would have the opportunity to assess progress made in relation to the recommendations made at this first dialogue session.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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The Library of Parliament committed to drafting this report summarising the discussion and outcome of the Dialogue Session and agreed to share the report widely. In the spirit of collaboration and sharing, the Library of Parliament, in consultation with federal agencies and participants, will investigate and propose how the recommendations discussed above can be moved ahead.

## **APPENDIX**

### **List of Participants**

**JANICE ASTBURY**  
**Senior Program Officer**  
**J. W. McConnell Family Foundation**  
<http://www.mcconnellfoundation.ca>

Janice Astbury has been a Senior Program Officer with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation since January 2005. Her responsibilities include grants management, development and implementation of proactive initiatives, and contributing to the Foundation's evolving strategy to fulfill its mission of supporting Canadians in building a society that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

Janice has been involved in the design and development of recent Foundation initiatives to engage youth and has managed a variety of grants to youth-led organizations.

**ROBERT BARNARD**  
**Founder of DECODE**  
**Co-author of *Chips & Pop: Decoding the Nexus Generation***  
<http://www.decode.net>

Founder Robert Barnard has spent the last 15 years decoding youth, young adults and young families. Since 1994 as founder of DECODE, Robert has led a passionate team of Decoders to discover and develop what's next. Through his exploration of consumers, employees and citizens in Canada and increasingly around the world, his work transcends industries and sectors, providing a holistic approach to research and innovation.

Robert is the co-author of the best-selling book *Chips and Pop: Decoding the Nexus Generation* and is a recipient of The Caldwell Partners' Canadian Top 40 Under 40 award. He is also Past Chair of Street Kids International, an innovative organization trying to help a world of more than 100 million street kids.

Prior to DECODE, Robert founded Generation 2000, a Canadian youth organization committed to informing and inspiring youth to take action. He has also had stints as a clothing designer and manufacturer, bank teller, tennis instructor and pizza delivery guy.

**ANDRÉ BLAIS**  
**Professor**  
**Université de Montréal**  
[http://www.crcee.umontreal.ca/equipe\\_hm\\_a.html](http://www.crcee.umontreal.ca/equipe_hm_a.html)

André Blais is professor in the department of political science at the Université de Montréal. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a research fellow with the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship, the Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en économie quantitative (CIREQ), and the Center for Interuniversity Research Analysis on Organizations (CIRANO). He is past president of the Canadian Political Science Association and is currently the Canada Research Chair in Electoral Studies, a position he has held since 2001. Between 1997 and 2006 he was principle co-investigator, Canadian Election Study. His research interests are elections, electoral systems, turnout, public opinion, and methodology.

**DIANNE BRYDON**  
**Director General, Learning and Access Services**  
**Library of Parliament**  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Dianne Brydon oversees the Library of Parliament's client learning and outreach services. Through delivery of its public programs the Library helps to increase understanding and teaching about Parliament. Over a 20-year history working for Parliament, Dianne has developed and implemented a variety of education and visitor outreach services and products to heighten awareness about Parliament. Before joining Parliament, Dianne worked as a secondary school teacher and as a museum educator.

**MARC CHALIFOUX**  
**Executive Vice-President**  
**The Historica-Dominion Institute**  
<http://www.dominion.ca/>

Marc Chalifoux is Executive Vice-President of The Historica-Dominion Institute. The Historica-Dominion Institute is a national charitable organization that was launched on September 1, 2009 through the amalgamation of two existing organizations: The Historica Foundation of Canada and The Dominion Institute. Its mandate is to build active and informed citizens through a greater knowledge and appreciation of the history, heritage and stories of Canada.

Marc previously served as Executive Director of the Dominion Institute, a national charitable organization dedicated to these same goals.

He has also worked in federal politics, notably as Executive Assistant to Michael Ignatieff, then Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition. He recently completed an MSc in Politics and Communication at the London School of Economics and Political Science, where he was a Chevening Scholar.

**PIERRE DESMARTEAUX**  
**Assistant Director General**  
**Association des Scouts du Canada**  
<http://www.scoutsduncanada.ca>

Pierre Desmarceaux has been involved primarily with community and youth groups for over 30 years. He worked as a monitor, activities leader and director of programs and activities at Patro Le Prévost in Montreal for 18 years.

He has also served as head of programs and activities at the Patro de Jonquière camp at Lake Kénogamie and co-manager of a school day care centre.

His community involvement has included terms as a school board chair, Scout group leader, treasurer of the Association des anciens et anciennes du Patro le Prévost, and he has also been a frequent speaker for the Montreal United Way.

Pierre Desmarceaux has been the Assistant Executive Director of Association des Scouts du Canada for eight years.



**ILONA DOUGHERTY****Executive Director****Apathy is Boring**<http://www.apathyisboring.com>

An activist and artist from an early age, Ilona's diverse experiences range from being a Canadian delegate to the United Nations at 17 years old to producing major concerts across Canada. Along the way, she gained extensive and hands-on experience in band and artist management, workshop facilitation, and organizational strategic planning.

In January 2004, Ilona co-founded Apathy is Boring, (<http://www.apathyisboring.com>) a national non-partisan organization that uses art and technology to re-engage youth in the democratic process. As Apathy is Boring's current Executive Director, she has been featured on Canada AM, CTV National News, CBC The National, The Current, Mike Duffy Live, MuchMusic, Etalk Daily, and many more.

Ilona's interest has always been in fusing art and social change, which she continues to make a primary focus. She has won numerous awards including Vince Sirois Prize, Yukon Women's Award, and she was featured in the book "Notes from Canada's Young Activists" compiled by Severn Cullis-Suzuki.

Melding her backgrounds in the music industry and social engagement, Ilona has worked on events such as the Grey Cup and the Juno Awards and with artists and well-known Canadians including Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, Jian Ghomeshi, Melissa Auf Der Maur, Nelly Furtado, K'naan, Jully Black, and Zaki Ibrahim.

Ilona continues to speak around the country about innovative ways to reach 18–35 year old Canadians. Recent speaking engagements include the Community Foundations of Canada Conference, University of Toronto, McGill University, Ottawa University, Global Youth Assembly, Yukon Volunteer Bureau, Volunteer Bureau of Montreal, and Association of Yukon School Councils.

Ilona Dougherty was raised by socially engaged parents in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Whitehorse, Yukon and currently lives in Montreal, Quebec.

**LÉO DUGUAY****President****Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians**<http://www.exparl.ca>

Prior to joining the Rothwell Group in 2006, Leo Duguay held the position of Senior Vice President with a major international public affairs firm where he provided government relations counsel across a broad spectrum of industry sectors.

A former Conservative Member of Parliament for St. Boniface, Manitoba, Mr. Duguay served on the House of Commons Standing Committees on: Health and Welfare; Transport; Official Languages; and Employment and Immigration. He also served as Canada's representative on the Human Rights Committee at the United Nations 40th Assembly.

Following his House of Commons career, Leo was Chief of Staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs before forming his own consulting firm in 1990. Through his ownership of Duralex Management Inc. he provided consulting services to many leading Canadian and North American organizations.

Prior to his election to the House of Commons, Leo was a teacher and high school principal, as well as an active citizen, serving on the boards of several community organizations and receiving numerous awards in recognition of that service. These include being named a Member of the Order of the Buffalo Hunt, Manitoba's highest civilian honour. In October 2007 Leo was named to the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame.

Leo is a Past President of the Canadian Teachers Federation and the Government Relations Institute of Canada. Recently the Hill Times recognized Leo as one of Canada's top 100 Lobbyists. He was elected President of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians in June 2009.

**TRACEY-LEE EDDY**  
**Central Canada Youth Coordinator**  
**Experiences Program**  
**Equal Voice**

<http://www.equalvoice.ca/index.cfm>

Tracey-Lee Eddy was born in Montreal, Quebec but grew up in Vancouver, BC. She graduated from Lakefield College School and then the University of British Columbia in 2003. Upon graduation, Tracey took over as the Director of a non-profit before and after school care society where she was responsible for the care and well being of 50 school aged children. Tracey has also had the privilege of providing the voice of the fiercely independent little 8 year, Madeline, on the animated series 'Madeline'. Tracey has also volunteered extensively, worldwide. She travelled to India to work at a shelter for young girls who had been sexually exploited teaching English and creative education, as part of the shelter's reintegration program. Tracey and her husband welcomed their first child, a little girl, into the world in 2008. Tracey is thrilled to have joined the team at Equal Voice, and looks forward to contributing to the 'Experiences' program.

**AMANDA GRAINGER**  
**Civic Footprint Online Organizer**  
**Framework Foundation**

<http://frameworkfoundation.ca/>

Amanda Grainger is the Civic Footprint Online Organizer for Framework Foundation, located in Toronto Ontario. Framework has two core programs; Timeraiser and Civic Footprint. Through its novel speed-dating meets silent art auction, the Timeraiser has raised 55,000 volunteer hours, engaged 4,400 Canadians to pick up a cause, and has invested \$300,000 in the careers of Canadian artists.

Amanda engages young adults through social media platforms, building dialogues and promoting Civic Engagement online. Amanda specializes in developing online communications strategies, helping to establish Framework's Cloud Computing strategy (it.timeraiser.ca). Amanda holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts from The University of Western Ontario in Information and Media Studies, and has a wealth of experience using and researching the newest trends in technology, with a particular interest in mobile and open-source platforms.

**SYLVAIN GROULX**  
**Director General**  
**La Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française**

<http://www.fjcf.ca>

Mr. Sylvain Groulx currently holds the position of General Director at the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française (FJCF) since February 2006. He is responsible for the overall strategic direction and operations of the organization.

Well-known for his dedication and implication within the francophone youth network, Sylvain was involved early on as a student at the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO). While with the FESFO, he held numerous responsibilities such as representative of the executive board, training officer and the leader of many workshops and activities. After a successful career in marketing, communications and management, he joins once again the youth network bringing with him more than 10 years of experience.

**TAYLOR GUNN**  
**Chief Election Officer**  
**Student Vote**

<http://www.studentvote.ca>

Taylor co-founded Student Vote with Lindsay Mazzucco in 2003. When not introducing young people to democracy, Taylor enjoys being outside with Soul and Lindsay, or spending time in their vegetable garden. Because of Student Vote, Taylor has been lucky to receive the first ever Public Policy Forum Youth award, an Ontario Teachers Federation Fellowship and the time of the most amazing Canadians around.

**KELLY JONES**

**Camp Coordinator in Niagara District  
YMCA**

<http://www.ymca.ca/en/who-we-are.aspx>

Currently a Camp Coordinator for the YMCA of Niagara, before that Kelly oversaw Youth, Preschool and Leadership Programming for numerous YMCA Branches in Niagara for over 7 years. Kelly also teaches “Leadership with Youth” and “Leadership in Society” for the Recreation and Leisure Services Program at Niagara College.

Kelly is also pursuing a degree in Recreation and Leisure at Brock University to compliment his education to further assist youth in his community.

**SAMIR KHAN**

**Strategist**

**DECODE**

<http://www.decode.net>

Samir is a moderator and researcher specializing in issues relating to public policy, media, and culture. At DECODE, he has designed a variety of public sector projects in the fields of health promotion, anti-discrimination and cultural policy. He joined DECODE in August of 2004, having spent over 10 years working in communications and marketing with the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario. Samir is currently on the Board of Directors of the Music Gallery and has a Bachelor of Journalism from Carleton University.

**DR. MARK KRISTMANSON**

**Director, Public Programming  
National Capital Commission**

As Director of Public Programming at the National Capital Commission in Ottawa, Mark Kristmanson is responsible for capital events (including the Canada Day and the Winterlude festivals), commemorations, interpretation, public art and visitor services. He received his Ph.D. in Humanities from Concordia University in Montreal, an M.A. in Arts Management from the City University, London, and a B.A. in History from the University of Ottawa. He is the author of peer-reviewed articles as well as a volume in the Canadian Social History Series (Oxford University Press). He was the founding Executive Director of the New Brunswick Arts Board and Technical Director at the National Arts Centre. He has produced or directed numerous live productions for the stage and for television. He serves on the federal government’s committees for Canadian Studies, Veterans’ Week, and Commemorations and is an expert advisor to the Cultural Capitals of Canada program.

**CATHERINE LATIMER****General Counsel and Director General****Youth Justice, Strategic Initiatives and Law Reform  
Justice Canada**

Catherine Latimer is currently the Director General of Youth Justice, and Strategic Initiatives and Law Reform, Federal Department of Justice. She joined the federal Ministry of the Solicitor General to work on youth justice in 1983 and spent a year on secondment to the Manitoba Department of Justice in 1985. From 1989 to 1997, Catherine was the Privy Council Office analyst for the justice and solicitor general portfolios and provided advice to Cabinet and the Prime Minister on criminal law, human rights, correctional law, policing and other related issues. Catherine Latimer is a lawyer and has a Masters degree in criminology from the University of Cambridge, England.

**FRANCIS LEBLANC****President****Educational Foundation, Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians**[http://www.exparl.ca/home\\_e.asp](http://www.exparl.ca/home_e.asp)

An economist by training, and fluently bilingual, Francis LeBlanc brings a wealth of leadership and management experience, a broad knowledge of government and politics, and an engaging personality to issues of public policy facing organizations of national scope. He has over 20 years of experience within Parliament and the Government of Canada, as a Member of Parliament, Chief of Staff, and senior Policy Analyst.

Francis was first elected to the House of Commons on November 21, 1988 as Member of Parliament for the Nova Scotia constituency of Cape Breton Highlands-Canso and served as critic for Trade, Atlantic Development and Fisheries in the Official Opposition. Re-elected in 1993, he was named Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and led the Committee's parliamentary review of Canada's Social Programs at the request of the Government. Francis was later appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and led delegations to the United Nations and Haiti.

In July 1997, Francis joined former Liberal Cabinet Minister Pierre Pettigrew as Chief of Staff and served until December 2006 in the portfolios of Human Resources Development, International Trade, Health and Intergovernmental Affairs, and, finally, Foreign Affairs, providing strategic advice and management in these diverse branches of the Government of Canada. During the December 2006 UN Conference on Climate Change in Montreal, Francis was senior advisor to the head of the Canadian delegation and worked closely with Canada's negotiating team, other country delegations, NGOs, and other key stakeholders to produce a successful outcome.

In June 2009, Francis was elected President of the Educational Foundation of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians. During his term, he hopes to increase the Foundation's presence in Canada and abroad.

From 1984 to 1988, Francis worked on unemployment insurance issues as senior policy analyst for the then Department of Employment and Immigration in the Government of Canada.

He holds a B.A. in Political Science from St. Francis Xavier University, an M.A. in Economics from Queen's University, and has studied economics at the doctoral level at Université Laval. He is married to Ottawa businesswoman Marlene Shepherd. They have two children.

#### **MICHEL LEMAY**

##### **Director General**

##### **Office of the Director General, Citizen Participation Canadian Heritage**

Michel manages a wide variety of policies, programs and activities that promote Canadian identity and belonging, including Exchanges Canada, Canadian Studies, and Katimavik.

#### **CHRISTINE MACINTYRE**

##### **Director, Events and Visitor Services**

##### **Office of the Secretary to the Governor General**

Originally from southern Ontario, Christine MacIntyre began her career of public service with the Parliamentary Guide Programme in Ottawa. After eight years as an interpreter, recruiter, educator and guide programme manager and after completing a Masters degree in Canadian literature at the University of Ottawa, Christine accepted a position as a Parliamentary Protocol Officer, serving both the House of Commons and the Senate.

In 1999, Christine accepted a position as Chief of Events at the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General where she was responsible for the organization of all events hosted by the Governor General. After 10 years at Rideau Hall, Christine is currently Director of Events, Visitor Services and Exhibits. In addition to her responsibilities coordinating national honours ceremonies, state visits by international dignitaries and all events hosted by the Governor General, Christine is responsible for the institution's education and outreach programme and spends a great deal of time working with organizations across the country on issues of social engagement and civic responsibility in support of the priorities of the Governor General.

#### **BENOIT MORIN**

##### **Director, Public Education Programs**

##### **Learning and Access Services**

##### **Library of Parliament**

The Director of Public Education Programs (PEP) oversees the strategic planning and operational management of all branches of PEP, including Interpretive Planning, the Education Outreach Program, the Parliamentary Tour Program the Retail Program and the Poet Laureate Program.

Benoit has occupied the position of Director of PEP since 2006. Before joining the Library of Parliament team, Ben was at the National Capital Commission (NCC) from 1994 until 2006 in various positions including Acting Director, Capital Interpretation. His positions have been related to managing, planning, developing and implementing public programs involving interpretation and symbols for the Capital region. He also managed NCC youth programs for many years.

**Kevin Millsip**  
**Executive Director**  
**Next Up (Vancouver)**  
<http://nextup.ca>

Kevin's passion is working at the intersection of sustainability, social change and democratic engagement. He recently joined the Vancouver Board of Education in a new role of Sustainability Coordinator and is also the Director of Next Up: a leadership program for next generation social change leaders. He is a Co-founder and past Director of both Check Your Head and Get Your Vote On and has served as an elected Trustee on the Vancouver Board of Education. He volunteers on the Board's of the Columbia Centre for Civic Governance, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Small Change Fund. Kevin has recently begun rooftop gardening and loves old cruiser bicycles.

**AKELA PEOPLES**  
**Co-Founder, President and CEO**  
**Youth in Motion**  
**Top 20 Under 20™**  
<http://www.top20under20.ca/engHome.htm>  
<http://www.youth-in-motion.ca>

Akela Peoples is an entrepreneur, visionary leader, trainer, author, and motivational speaker. In 1997 she founded Youth in Motion (<http://www.youth-in-motion.ca>), a highly successful organization that has presented more than 100 motivational career conferences and a wide variety of other programs across Canada in the past 10 years. This successful organization's highly sought after career and personal development programs include motivational career conferences, mentoring programs and a national awards program called Top 20 Under 20. Youth in Motion's recent partnership with the Governor General's office illustrates that the organization is a leader in youth educational programming and a best practice model for mentoring.

Akela is the recipient of numerous awards. In 2005, she was named one of the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada by the Women's Executive Network and she was the youngest ever recipient of the YWCA's Women of Distinction Award in 2002 for Entrepreneurship. Akela has also received many awards for her leadership in education including the Toronto Sun's Women on the Move Award.

In early 2008, Akela was honoured to be appointed by the Ontario Minister of Education to chair the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Teaching. She has a highly successful background and proven expertise in the area of educational programming, partnerships



and fund development. She has authored 3 books on mentoring and her background, prior to Youth in Motion, includes a leadership role in the creation and implementation of 2 internationally renowned educational programs: a high-tech international business program and a regional performing arts school both located in southern Ontario. She also was recruited to a national role for a major Canadian educational training institute.

Akela is a dynamic, passionate and inspirational speaker who has made presentations to business and education leaders, as well as to parents and young people, both in Canada and abroad. Across Canada, she has often received attention on television and radio, on the Internet (webcasts) and in newspapers.

### **SUSAN TOROSIAN**

**Director, Outreach Program and Stakeholder Engagement  
Elections Canada**

Susan Torosian has held a variety of positions with both the public and private sectors each with varying degrees of stakeholder and customer engagement relationships. As the recently appointed Director, Outreach with Elections Canada, Susan is responsible for the development and delivery of the national outreach strategy, programs and partnerships with a priority focus on youth and Aboriginal electors.

### **LACEY WHITEDUCK**

**Student Program  
Aboriginal Healing Foundation**  
<http://www.ahf.ca>

Lacey Whiteduck is from the Kitigan Zibi, First Nation in Québec. She holds an Honours of Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of Ottawa and is presently employed by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation working on special projects. Lacey's career goals include; to attend law school and to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people, with a special interest in Aboriginal youth and the law. It is her determination and drive to succeed that will ensure that she makes a positive contribution to society as an Aboriginal person. Lacey is a strong promoter of healthy lifestyles and is deeply concerned with the many issues relating to Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal youth. Lacey has gained valuable work experience as the Québec delegate on the Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council. During her tenure on the Council, she has had the opportunity to work on various youth initiatives including the development of the *"Rebuilding our Nations Accord; Five Year Action Plan"* which seeks to address the many issues affecting Aboriginal youth today.

Over the years, Lacey has served as an advocate and speaker for Aboriginal youth at various meetings and events which have included; the 2008 Women's Walk for Justice, the Youth Dialogue Session on the *"Power of Hope"* hosted by the Governor General and has participated on various panel discussions regarding Aboriginal issues and Canadian youth. Lacey believes that our Canadian youth are a vital component of society as they are not the leaders of tomorrow, but are the leaders of today. She believes that it is time that their voices be heard and recognized with regards to any issue relevant to Canadian society.

Lacey recognizes this need and is prepared to take whatever steps necessary to ensure that this is achieved.

**SANDRA ZAGON**

**Senior Associate, Ascentum**

**Board Member, Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation (C2D2)**

<http://www.c2d2.ca>

<http://www.ascentum.ca>

Sandra retired from Canada's federal public service in 2003 with over 30 years of experience in several public policy areas, including consultation, official languages, and learning. She retired at the same time from the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN), where she worked on several national citizens' dialogues between 1999 and 2003, including quality of life in Canada and the future of health care in Canada (Romanow Commission). She remains a CPRN associate. She co-chaired the Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation's (C2D2) 2005 and 2007 conferences and is now chairing the 2009 conference. She co-founded C2D2 in 2006, is its past co-chair and remains on its Board of Directors.

She is a senior associate with Ascentum, an Ottawa-based company dedicated to informed interaction and participation. Her latest public involvement work was with the Mental Health Commission of Canada on dialogues with stakeholders on what a transformed mental health strategy for Canada might look like.