

WEBINAR

Promising Practices in Youth Engagement for Health Promotion

BC Healthy Communities - Living Life Fully Project

December 7, 2011



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BC Healthy Communities
People. Place. Potential.

Why Youth Engagement?

- Not engaging youth isn't working
 - E.g. 86% of youth said they would talk to a friend or peer about a mental health issue, less than 5% said they would talk to a professional (Youth Net)
- We have an opportunity to see youth as partners in developing solutions to issues they face
- Youth engagement is associated with positive health and educational outcomes, and is considered an effective, low cost way of reducing anti-social behavior
 - lower rates of smoking, drug and alcohol use, risky sexual behaviors, youth violence, and a correlation with higher graduation rates and improved grades, higher self-esteem and physical activity rates
 - Benefits accrued as a youth carry into adulthood

Defining Youth Engagement

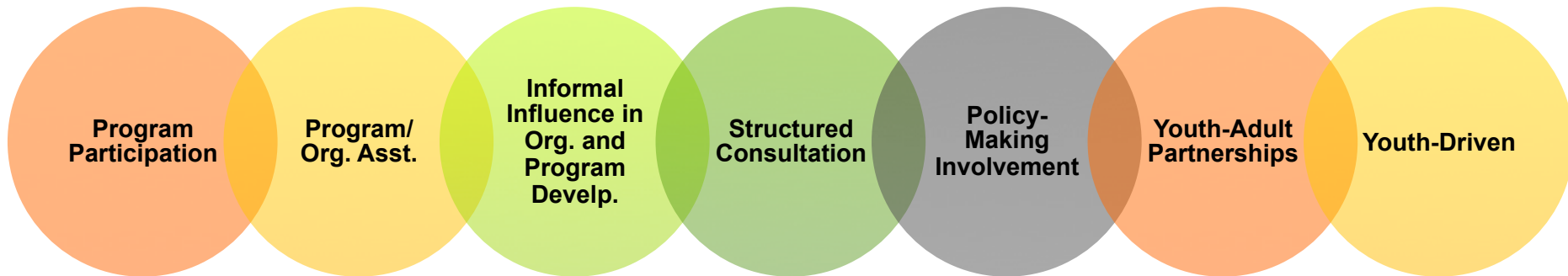
“Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person that has a focus outside of the individual” (Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development)

- Asset- based approach
- Emphasizes the connection between youth and community development
- Occurs in multiple sites
 - Individual
 - Organisational
 - Whole community level

Youth Engagement

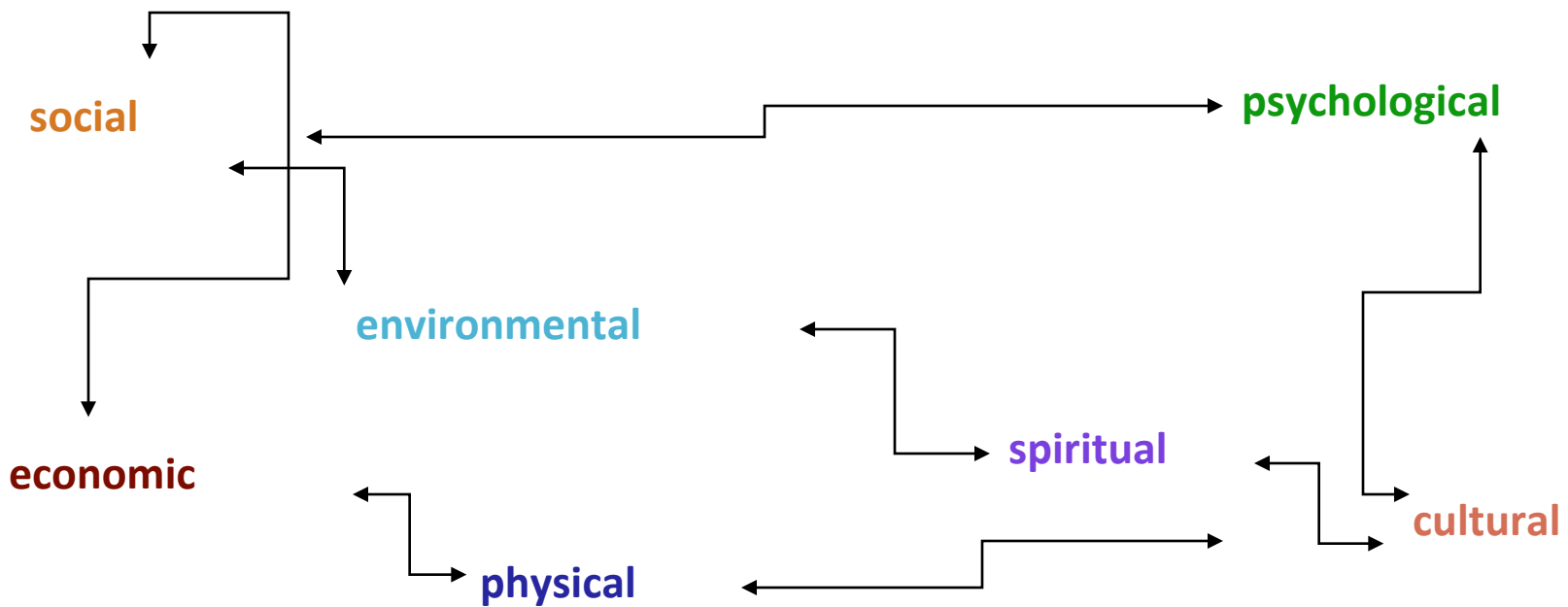
- Meaningful and sustained participation of young people in civic initiatives, projects and decision-making processes
- Allows young people to take action and legitimately have their voice respected, considered and influence the multiple determinants of health that affect their day to day lives
- Experience includes supportive community allies and organizations
- There are resources to implement and support their ongoing and sustainable involvement
- Youth have the ability to explore their individual capacities and link to collective action

The Spectrum of Youth Engagement



Connecting the Dots...

The Healthy Communities approach focuses on “**connecting the dots**” among the multiple and interconnected determinants of health:



↘ What connections do we need for Youth Engagement?

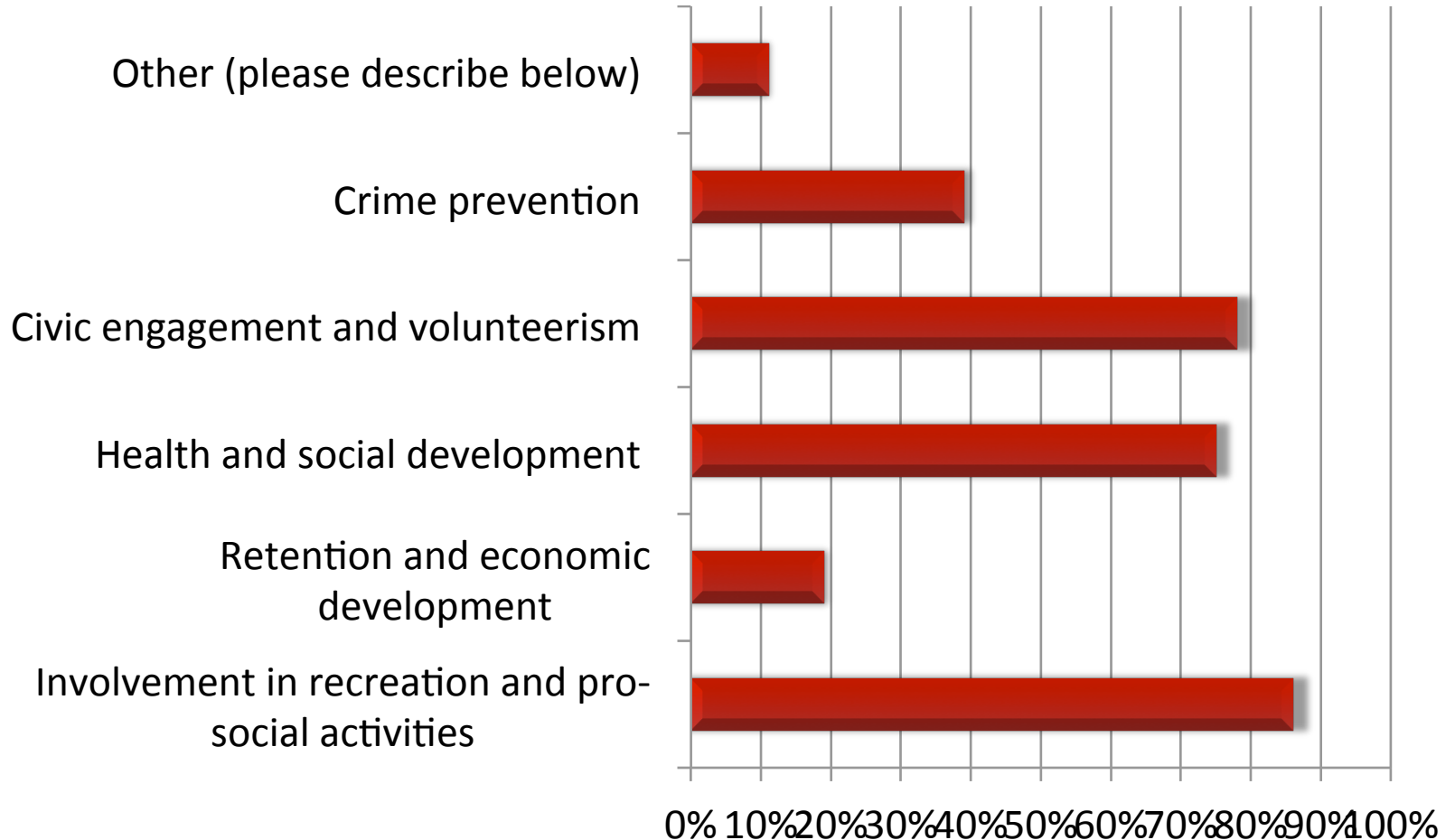
What does this look like in practice?

- Youth involvement in decision making, policy change, and community planning initiatives (e.g. Youth councils, OCP processes)
- A culture of collaboration between service providers
- Initiatives that create opportunities for youth and adults are to learn together
- Initiatives that link short term, and individual goals with longer term community goals- is tangible now and in the future

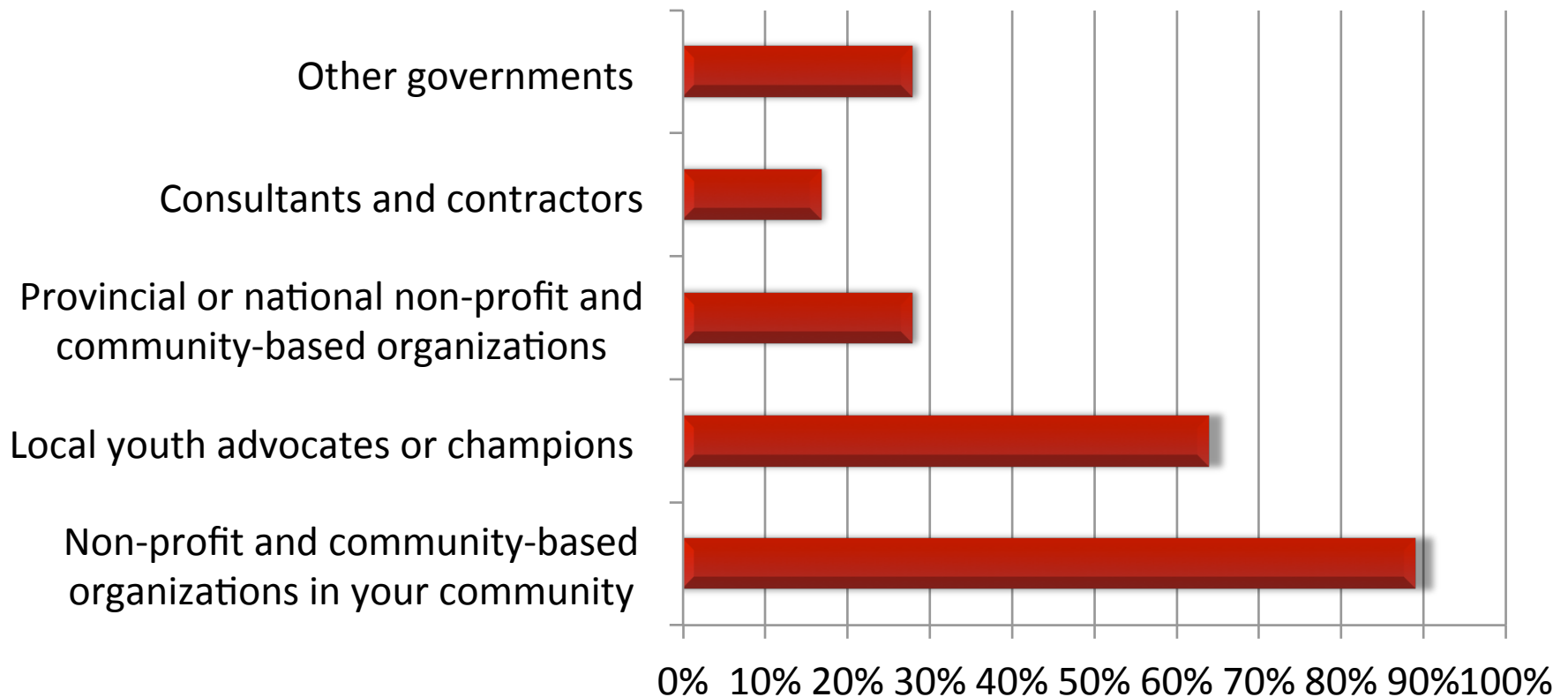
What does this look like in practice?

- Community Youth Strategy or Youth Engagement identified as item in OCP
 - 11 of 37 communities
 - 2 currently in development
- 12 of 27 communities indicated that they have a Youth Council
- Most communities do not have a formal definition or framework for youth engagement
- **Common challenges:**
 - Commitment (political and from youth themselves)
 - Competing demands on time (for youth and decision makers)
 - Effective communication of opportunities
 - Resources and staffing capacity/training and development
 - Making the connections/demonstrating the ways and benefits to involvement
 - It takes time to meaningfully connect and avoid tokenism!

Priority youth engagement issues



Partnerships for youth engagement





To view the community profiles and complete report, visit:

<http://youthcore.ca/engagementmap/map.php>

To add your community, please email:

youth@bchealthycommunities.ca