



CULTURE OF THE NORTH



BIPOC Youth Taking Action

A Youth Led Project Supported
by



A Communities Building Youth Futures Initiative





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT(S)

Future North is located in the district of Sudbury and Manitoulin – our place of work is within the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, within and adjacent to the Wahnapiatae First Nation and Sagamok Anishnawbek.

The Culture of the North - BIPOC Youth Taking Action, youth led project supported by Future North and funded by Pathways to Education and The Tamarack Institute.



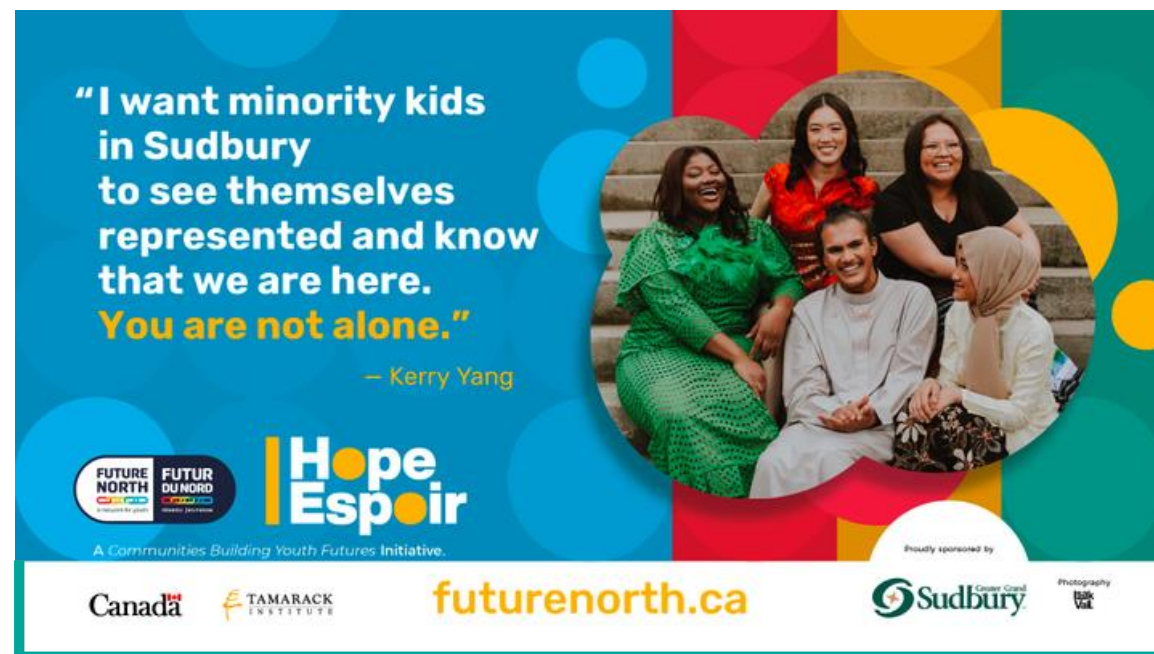
Future North

We commit to work side by side with young people in the community, to understand their experiences, and to work to influence change, so together we can improve available resources and create opportunities in our community.

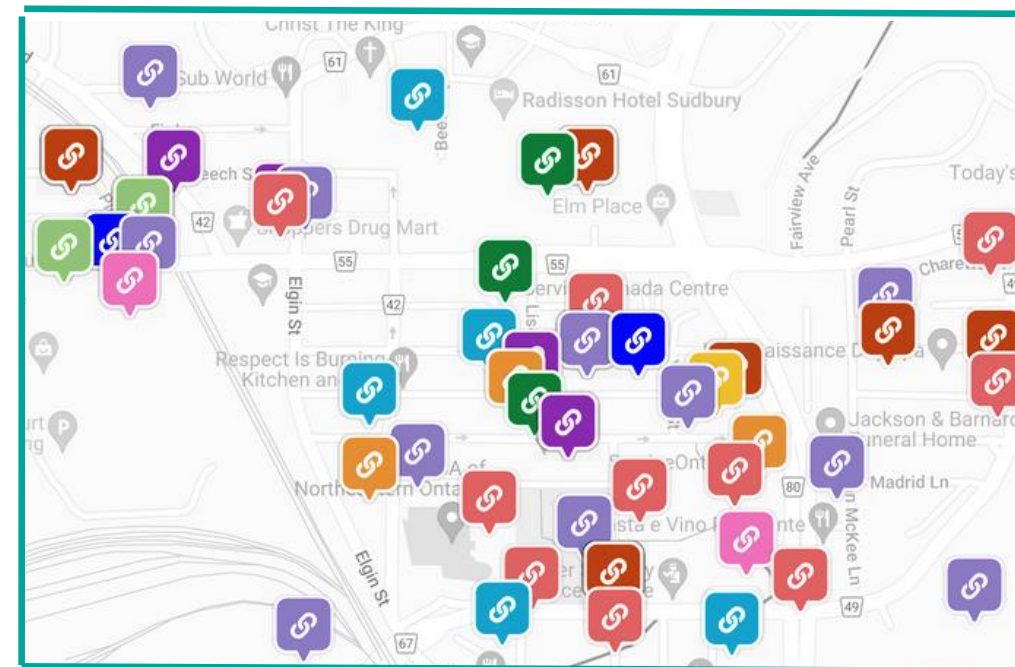


Youth Expert Panel

"Nothing About Us, Without Us"



HOPE Campaign



Community Map



Youth Opportunities

Culture of the North

Culture of the North is a **youth-led** project aimed at exploring and addressing barriers BIPOC students face in their education.

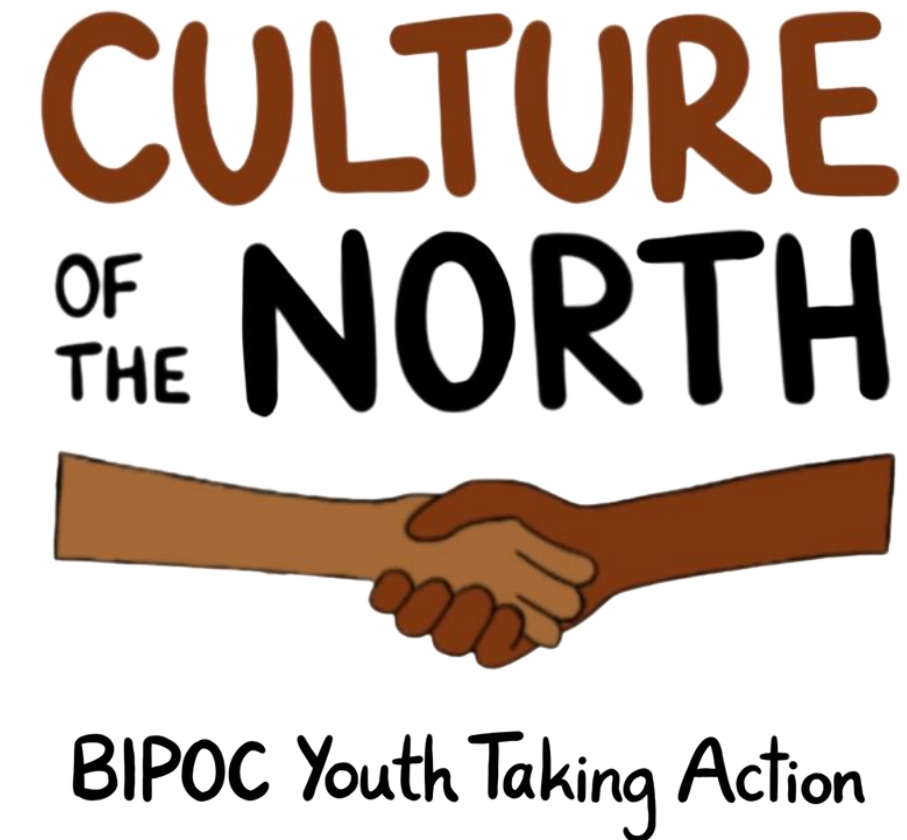
"What would you tell your younger self to bring in your backpack when you started high school?"

Research Questions

- How do cultural differences affect student learning?
- How can/are youth accessing cultural education and cultural resources?
- What cultural tools, resources, or opportunities would youth benefit from?

Project Goals

- Create safe spaces for engaging and meaningful conversations among BIPOC students
- Identify barriers and challenges faced by BIPOC students in their education
- Address barriers and challenges using a lived-experience and evidenced-based solution



Research Overview

- **30** schools, **3** school boards, **11** out of district schools
- **220** participants engaged formally over 3 months
 - **95** student survey responses
 - **38** staff responses (teachers, teachers college students, support workers)
 - **16** focus group participants

Research Themes

Representation

Racism

Politicization

Early Years
Learning

Learning
Opportunities

Lived
Experience



Research Results

Student Survey Results

- **65%** stated they've experienced racism and **15%** were unsure
- **68%** stated racism has affected their education to some degree
- **85%** stated they wanted to engage in more cultural education

Teacher Survey Results

- **100%** identified as white/Caucasian
- **75%** stated they've witnessed racism among students
- **30%** stated they've witnessed racism among staff
- **80%** stated they wanted more cultural education training

Teachers College Students Survey Results

- **69%** stated they witnessed racism among students
- **69%** stated they're not comfortable with cultural education

Lack of Representation

"there is a big issue in rural towns where youth struggle with their cultural identity"

Misrepresentation

"students to become exposed to highly focused examples of cultural identity. These are generally negative, primitive, victimized, and criminalized portrayals of culture"

"I've almost never felt represented and if ever I did it was almost always in a bad way"

Classroom Culture

"I wish they talked about it..., sometimes I feel they are just avoiding the subject"

"Even just talking about it, I feel like there is going to be a problem"

The BIPOC Student Experience

What is it like to be a BIPOC student in the Northern Ontario education system?

"I'm willing to talk about my cultural identity and my struggles but even during this meeting my voice is shaking because nobody has ever asked me to talk about it so it feel strange".



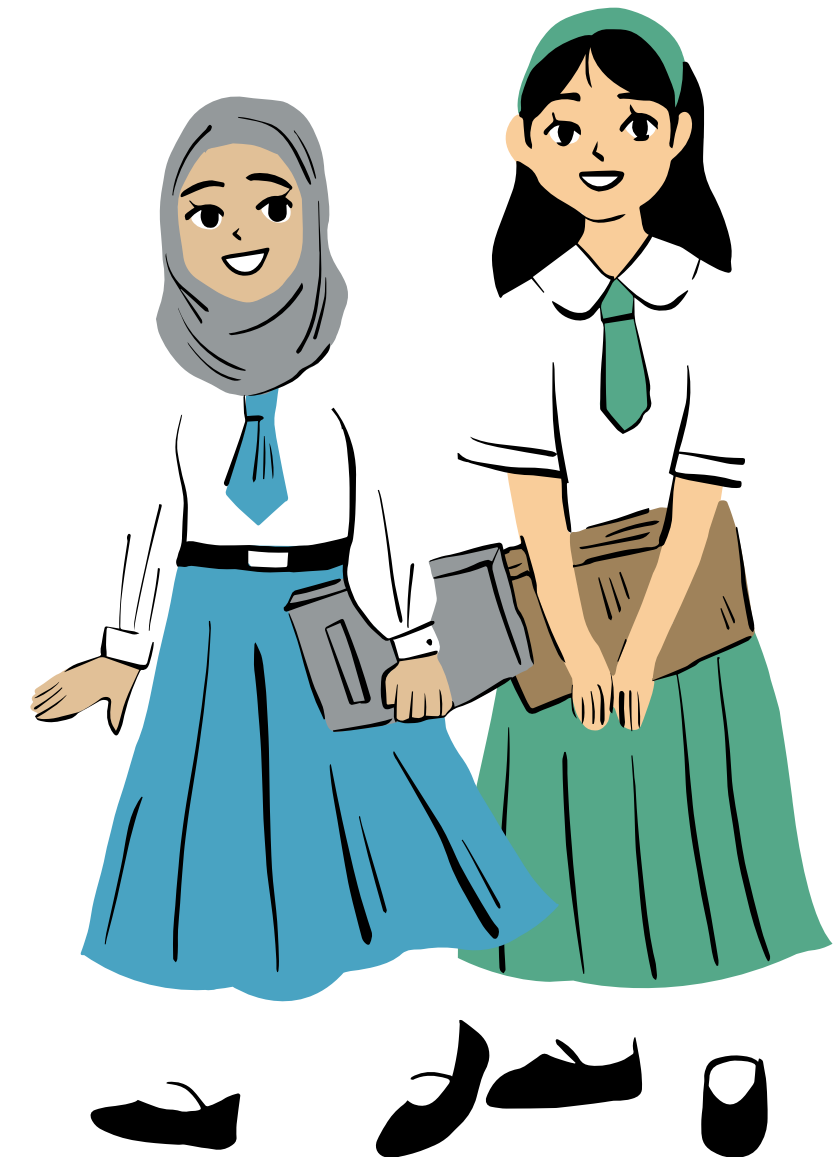
The Bitter Taste of Unbelonging

"you feel like you are living a double life".

"I did not show my culture so that I could connect with other people".

What are the needs?

- Spaces to share **lived experiences**, perspectives, and ideas
- **Youth-led** and **arts-based** opportunities for cultural education
- BIPOC **representation** in education



Equity Action Teams

The equity action teams aim to engage youth in learning, celebration and understanding of diverse cultures within the district of Sudbury-Manitoulin. Culture of the North/Future North provides all resources, mentorship, workshops, honorarium, and training to support the student-led projects.

2 schools

8 months

\$55,000

arts-based

We also aim to address the challenges uncovered in the research with the creation of BIPOC libraries in secondary and elementary schools to increase and improve cultural representation.



Manitoulin S. S.



Sudbury S. S.



From the Perspective of an Advocate

The Timeline for Change



Comfort and Support



Stereotypes



Tokenism, Performatism & other isms

LESSON # 3

Instructions:

1. Look good on paper (policies, buzz words, form a committee or two to "recommend")
2. Offer training but keep it 'traditional', theoretical, dry and infrequent (don't allow it to equate to actual scenarios that may be encountered in your particular workplace)
3. Be able to point to a "diverse" workforce – tokenism works
4. Ensure the workplace culture is "professional" and "collaborative" – avoid "discomfort"
5. Gas light! Force instigators to quit or fire them!
6. Settle human rights allegations quickly – get that NDA!
7. Whatever you do, don't keep metric. Stick to anecdotes and highlight tokens.

Calls to Action

- To increase hiring of BIPOC staff where possible; and work to address systemic barriers leading to the lack of diversity in hiring pools.
- To establish clear anti-racism policies and protocols with strategies to address incidents of racism amongst youth, recognizing that traditional reporting measures do not effectively prevent or put an end to racism.
- To create workshops, trainings and youth-led information sessions that discuss topics of racism, how to be an ally, definitions of racism and support students to become allies from an early age.
- To increase BIPOC youth representation on decision-making bodies.



Questions?

- What information peaked your curiosity, surprised you, or made you uncomfortable?
- Did you learn anything **new** or gain new perspectives?
- Are there any questions that you wish we would have researched more in depth?
- Any suggestions and/or recommendations?

Thank you for your time!

