

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

youth participation, arming them with information with which to enact the most relevant and effective best practices for planning.

To do this, there needs to be an increase in contextually variant research on the participation of young people in planning in order to gain comprehensive knowledge of its impacts. With approximately seventy-five percent of people being under the age of eighteen, and worldwide, youth accounting for approximately one-third of the world's population, the evolution of our ability to successfully plan relies on the continued research of planning impacts and effective methods, and our awareness of opportunities in which to do so.

For these reasons a diverse spectrum of youth and societal conditions were analyzed in order to assess the limited discourse on youth participation, and to propose a set of best practices in which to prevent the intermittent success of youth participation facilitation in the future. In this study a multiple-method triangulated research approach was employed. By using widely held academic theory on youth participation in planning and practice to gain insight into its current status, findings from selected academic case studies on youth in planning were compared with case study findings from the Community Design Initiative (CDI) revitalization project within the Kingston-Galloway/ Orton Park (KGO) Priority Neighbourhood in Scarborough, Ontario. By doing so, this report aimed to diversify the reality of young people's participation in planning, and derive a deeper understanding of how youth and communities benefit when youth participate in planning, and develop a more comprehensive and relevant set of best practices for its successful facilitation.

When youth acted as resources communities improved their social, physical/environmental, and economic infrastructure, and strengthened democratic processes. Case studies frequently cited assessing community resources, and supporting planners and youth through programming as effective methods in facilitating young people in planning. Diverse community contexts were shown to experience these benefits in equal and greater ways, resulting in a reduction of stigmatization, and strengthened socio-economic conditions.

This study highlighted a variety of areas in which improvements need to be made for successful youth participation in planning, with the following five recommendations being the most salient for planners at this time in its successful facilitation, and in achieving inclusive, effective, and sustainable community planning practices:

- 1. Ensure that a backbone organization is in place before initiating youth participation in community**

4. Ensure that participation frameworks and activities are flexible and diverse.

5. Periodically evaluate youth participation planning frameworks and facilitation methods.

At this stage in the discourse on youth participation in planning there is an alarming need to further develop and conduct research that showcases diverse youth contexts, is longitudinal in nature to better evaluate the effectiveness of their participation over time, and features mixed research methods to ensure that a wider spectrum of youth and communities can benefit from their participation. Only then will planners have the information in which to effectively facilitate and support youth in the planning process, ultimately creating the societal conditions needed for the more comprehensive planning of inclusive and vibrant communities for the present and for the future. In doing so, Canada would move towards fulfilling the UNCRC (1989) treaty ratified in 1991, and uphold its international reputation as a mecca of human rights and equality, and home to some of the best cities in the world.