

# Creating Culture Shifts: Collaboration, Outreach and Diversity in Service Transformation

Haley Marion McLean, Jimmy Tan  
& Chantelle Mireault

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# ACCESS Open Minds National Youth Council



# HALEY MARION

National Youth Council Member ('15 - Present)

Has a dog (pictured)



# JIMMY TAN

National Youth Council Member ('14 - Present)

Avid Pokemon GO Player (Always)



# LET'S GO ON AN ADVENTURE

# Joining the Council

There is an issue that your project or organization addresses that affects the livelihood of local or national youth. You have decided to form a Youth Advisory Council to help inform your project. Local youth would like to join your council.

How would youth join your council?

- a. Fill out an application or submit a resume
- b. Call the office
- c. Attend a welcoming social or information session
- d. Attend an open interview call
- e. Other

# How would youth join your council?



Text **ACCESSOM** to **37607** once to join

Fill out an application or  
submit a resume

Call the office

Attend a welcoming social  
or information session

Attend an open interview  
call

Other



# What we did:

We removed the formality. All of it.

Before, youth filled out an application, submitted a CV, and had a phone interview with the council co-leads.

Youth now contact our stakeholder engagement coordinator if they're interested in joining council. Council co-leads are invited to join.

We talk about what the council is, and what it means to be a member. Together, we explore whether it measures up to their interests and expectations.

# The Outcome:

We provide an opportunity for interested parties to learn more about ACCESS OM, chose if it's right for them, without requiring a formal application process. Since we changed our approach in membership, our council grew noticeably quickly, and the change helped promote inclusion of youth from different socioeconomic and other diverse backgrounds.

**Lived experience, interest and commitment. Skills can be developed.**

# Youth's First Council Meeting

Youth want to participate on your council, but all meetings take place in the 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday timeframe set by the organization, during traditional working hours.

Despite interest, few youth come to the meeting.

What's next? How do you address the issues?

- a. Ask for feedback from those who are missing the meetings
- b. No one's showing up? I guess they're not interested. Maybe a council wasn't the right move.
- c. Hold a discussion with everyone to problem solve
- d. Offer several meet times a week to compensate for low turnout and share info with members who weren't there
- e. Other

# What's next? How do you address the issues?



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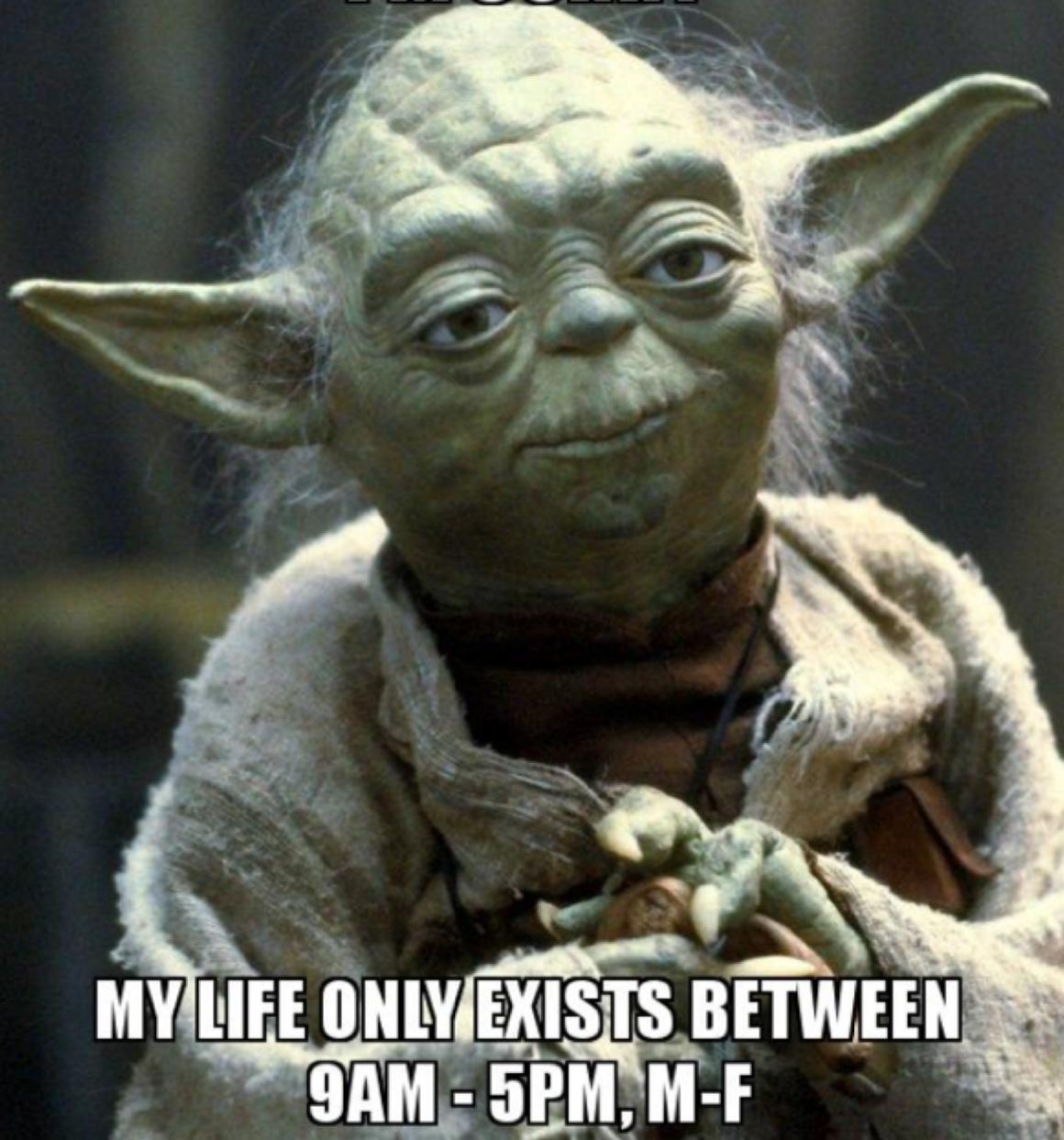
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Hold a discussion with everyone to problem solve

Offer several meet times a week to compensate for low turnout and share info with members who weren't there

Other

**I'M SORRY**



**MY LIFE ONLY EXISTS BETWEEN  
9AM - 5PM, M-F**

## What we did:

We found communication platforms that worked for everyone and used them consistently. We shifted from Doodle Polls to pre-scheduled standard meeting times to remove confusion.

Council members understand that it's okay to miss a meeting, so long as we keep open communication (i.e. respond to action items, shoot off a quick text).

We also worked with our office to allow our Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator to co-facilitate evening and weekend meetings, as well as co-creating our agendas! [#RocketScience!](#)

# The Outcome:

We create opportunities for youth to contribute to at times which may work better for them, in the meetings that matter to them.

Higher attendance. Different member attend different meetings.

# A discussion on values...

As youth begin to participate in council activities, there is miscommunication about expectations. Each council member also brings their own unique set of values which have not been made clear. The inconsistencies begin to cause tension. How do we work together? How do we develop our council values, roles and manage expectations?

How would you move forward to clarify these issues?

- a. Discuss with host organization existing council governance structures, and adapt for the youth council.
- b. Sit down formally to develop a governance structure or terms of reference from scratch with youth.
- c. Ask youth what their values are, what they would like out of the council experience, and what their expectations of meeting are.
- d. Tell youth what is expected of them at meetings, explain what your organization's values are.

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Other

**WHEN YOU HAVE A TEAM**



**BUT DON'T KNOW HOW TO  
WORK TOGETHER...**

## What we did:

We discussed our values as youth, and as an organization. We talked about potential goals, our contributions and outcomes of the project. We invested in an in-person meeting to connect and co-create a [Terms of Reference](#) that represents us all.

# The Outcome:

Youth from different value sets feel more comfortable collaborating with their teammates. There is less confusion of the expectations placed on youth, and less tension and uncertainty as a result. The outcomes of the council itself are clearer, and youth understand the goal they are working towards. The guidelines place emphasis on protecting and holding space for diversity.

It took time!

# Progress is being made

Youth council members have a variety of levels of participation. Some participate actively and regularly in several working groups. Others can only attend general meetings. All youth council members are excited about this project, however many cannot commit the time they would like because of educational and financial responsibilities. This conflict raises the question of compensating youth for their time.

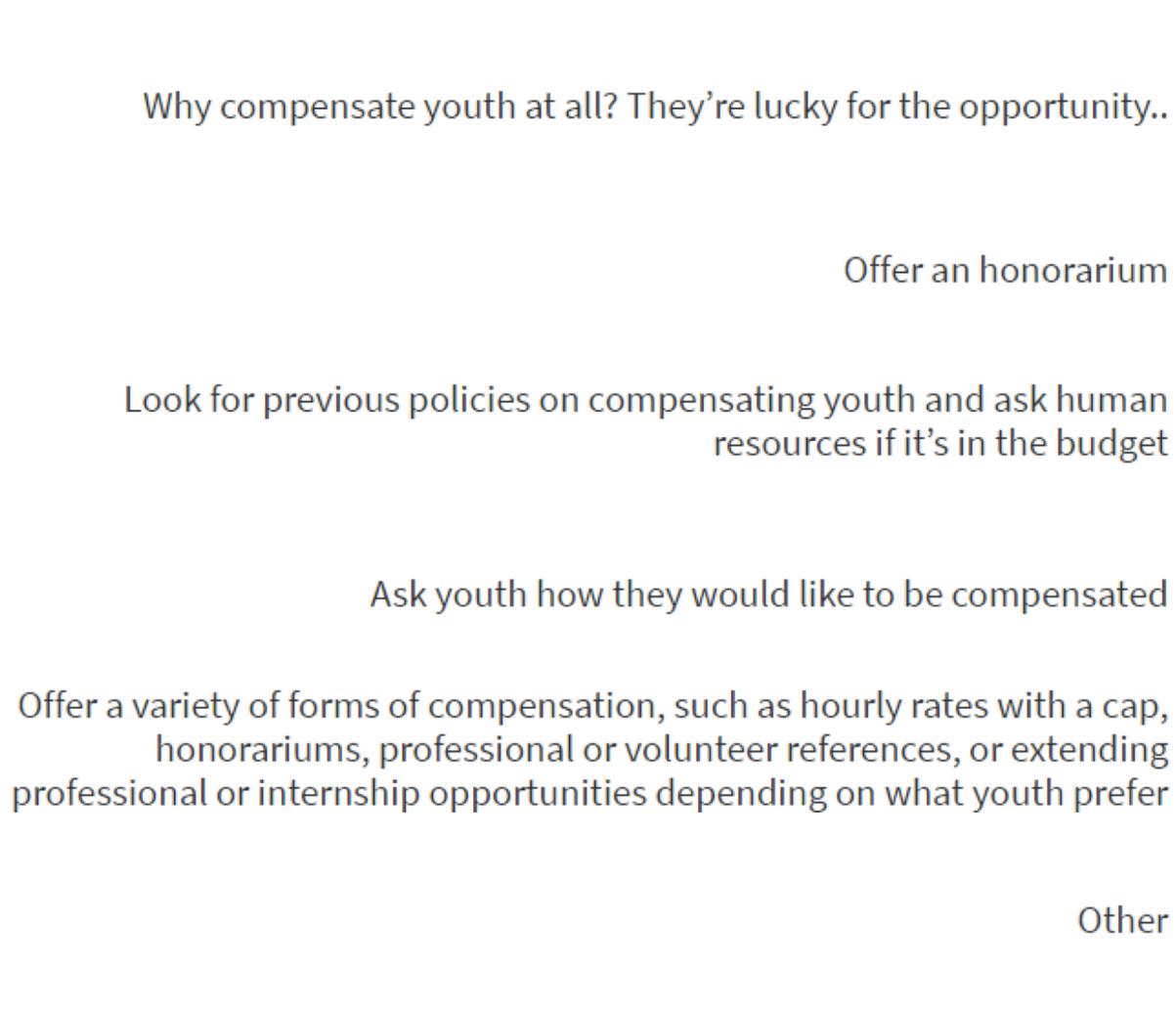
How could compensation look like?

- a. Why compensate youth at all? They're lucky for the opportunity...
- b. Look for previous policies on compensating youth and ask human resources if it's in the budget.
- c. Offer an honorarium.
- d. Ask youth how they would like to be compensated.
- e. Offer a variety of forms of compensation, such as hourly rates with a cap, honorariums, professional or volunteer references, or extending professional or internship opportunities depending on what youth prefer.

# How could compensation look like?



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**YOUTH DEDICATE MANY HOURS  
AND CO-CREATE AMAZING  
PROGRAMS**

**ZERO DISCUSSION ON  
COMPENSATION**

## What we did:

We held several meetings, and discussed a variety of types of compensation to ensure that any decisions made were well informed. By the end of our discussions, National Youth Council members agreed to be paid a fixed hourly rate at a cap of five hours of work per week for their time, are invited to networking & professional conference opportunities, as well as receive reference letters. Compensation allows for diverse youth to invest their time in community causes that concern them, while maintaining financial security.

# The Outcome:

By compensating members, we can include youth who could otherwise not partake due to their financial reality.

By compensating members, we put our values to work: we recognize and validate lived experience as equal contributions.

As a result, attendance and level of engagement has increased.

# Internship Opportunities

Your organization has offered a youth council member an internship opportunity. As the internship progresses, they notice staff consulting them for the ‘youth opinion’ instead of reaching out to the youth council. Soon, the youth is involved in many projects and they sense that other youth council members feel “left out”. The youth is uncomfortable with this dual role, as these questions seem to come from a place of convenience, leaving the youth feeling tokenized.

What can be done?

- a. Nothing should be done. This is the most efficient way to include youth.
- b. Cancel the internship program; this is clearly unfair
- c. An email sent is drafted and sent to the entire council to explain the necessity of the dual role.
- d. A process is set up for staff members to contact the entire youth council when needing youth input for more diverse opinions.
- e. Other

## What can be done?

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Other

**WHEN ONE YOUTH TAKES ON  
EVERYTHING**



**OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS  
FEEL THIS**

## What we did:

The youth council created a [nomination process](#) for youth council opportunities.

# The Outcome:

The nomination process promotes equal involvement, and helps hold space for diversity. This process also helps promote teamwork by empowering council members to recognize and value the strengths in each other. This transparency helps develop trust in our processes.

# Summary of Outcomes and Debrief

- #1: The application process is accessible and informal.
- #2: Meeting times and methods fit the needs of youth.
- #3: Youth are compensated, in whatever form that might take.
- #4: Youth are given equal opportunity, not tokenized based on 'convenience'.

## Promoting diversity:

Who's around the table?

Who's missing?

Target recruitment efforts and tailor approach.

## Youth Engagement:

There is no perfect process! It's nuanced, requires tailoring to your project, your community and youth.

Meeting them where they're at. Throw aside personal or professional assumptions, be aware of how you present yourself, the language you use, the impact of formal attire. Be willing to meet at unconventional hours, and take the time to ask what youth need to better engage.

Thank you! Merci! Danke! Wela'lin!  
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For more information:

Jimmy Tan: jimmy.tan@mail.utoronto.ca

Haley Marion McLean: haleymarion.mclean@douglas.mcgill.ca

Chantelle Mireault: chantelle.mireault@douglas.mcgill.ca



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