

# CHECK-IN

To the person(s) next to you: Introduce yourself! & What are your thoughts, coming into the space today?



AMO x AisB:  
**Engaging YOU(th) in  
Local Democracy, Elections & BEYOND!**

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Apathy is Boring (**Tiohtiá:ke**/Montreal) is situated on the traditional territory of the **Kanien'kehà:ka**, a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst many First Nations including the Kanien'kehà:ka of the **Haudenosaunee Confederacy**, **Huron/Wendat**, **Abenaki**, and **Anishinaabeg**.

**Tkaronto/Toronto** is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory.' The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the **Anishinaabeg**, **Mississaugas** and **Haudenosaunee** that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

Prior to colonization, many Indigenous Peoples in Canada had democratic forms of governance. For example, the Iroquoian Confederacy (now known as the Haudenasounee) followed a functioning constitution called Kaienere'kó:wa or the Great Law of Peace, a democratic document that shows (in the form of a wampum belt) that everyone has a voice and laws are created based on substantial agreement and consensus decision making.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### Reflection:

What has this land given you?

TRC's 94 Calls to Action:

[https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)



**WHO ARE WE?**

**Molly McKenzie**



**RESEARCH &  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANT**

**Sydney Penner**



**RESEARCH &  
EVALUATIONS  
LEAD**

**Ashley Igboanugo**



**PARTNERSHIPS &  
ENGAGEMENT  
MANAGER**

**Erika De Torres**



**DIRECTOR OF IMPACT &  
DEVELOPMENT**

# TO THE POLLS!

Join the conversation.  
Head over to join our **Kahoot** and let's get started to win prizes!



# ICEBREAKER: TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE ABOUT US.

**#3**

Apathy is Boring was founded in 2004, when a **choreographer, a filmmaker, and a fashion photographer** met at a party.





# ABOUT AMO

- AMO is a non-partisan non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments.
- Our mandate is to make municipal governments stronger and more effective by working together and addressing common challenges.
  - Policy development and advocacy
  - Cost-saving programs
  - Conferences and training opportunities
- The governing body of AMO is the Board of Directors, comprised of 43 elected and non-elected municipal representatives from different geographic regions.
- AMO has been and continues to be very influential in the development of provincial and federal policy that impacts municipal governments.



# THANK YOU

- MASSIVE shoutout to Stew, Henry & Petra for having Apathy is Boring here!
- Thank you especially to Stew, Henry and Michael McGregor (Associate Prof, TMU) for your time, guidance and commitment to this session

# Why are we here together today?

Let's break down all of our roles.

- **Youth attendees:** You're here to **give a voice** to how the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) can **better engage young people** like you **in local governments** around the province.
- **Youth org attendees:** You're here to **shed insight into how organizations like yours are breaking down barriers to youth civic engagement** and how AMO and local governments in Ontario could do the same.

# Why are we here together today?

Let's break down all of our roles.

- **AMO's Role:** AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario) is leading this Forum and they're here to **listen to and learn from both youth and youth orgs**, so that they can encourage **real changes to how youth are involved in the local governments** of their villages, towns and cities around Ontario.
- **Apathy is Boring (AisB):** We're your facilitators and local youth democratic engagement experts – **we're here to help make sure your voices get heard loud and clear today**

# How will the knowledge created here today be used *moving forward, after we wrap up?*

After we at AisB round up all of your work today, we'll provide it to AMO.

Part of AMO's job is to help strengthen municipalities around Ontario, and they want to **bridge the gap between youth and municipal governments in order to help accomplish this goal!**

AMO will be sharing this work with their members, locally elected officials in municipalities across Ontario, so they can learn and work to include youth in local decision making around the **policies, programs and services, and organizational cultures of municipalities around Ontario** – effectively helping them to become more youth friendly spaces!

# How will the knowledge created here today be used *moving forward, after we wrap up?*

We are here to help collaborate on potential solutions.

There are no “perfect” answers and we’re not here with the answers – that’s why we’re here together!

All of our learnings from you and with you will help AMO move forward on programs and procedures that really put you(th) leadership in the right direction

## **AGENDA:** What are we exploring this afternoon?

- **GRWM:** Civics & Municipalities 101 (50 min)
  - Break (10 mins)
- **Hang out sesh 1 – The Why:** Barriers to youth civic engagement (50 min)
  - Break (10 mins)
- **Hang out sesh 2 – The How:** Systemic & surface level solutions (50 min)
  - Break (10 mins)
- **Hang out sesh 3 – The What:** Using youth leadership to help organizations become youth allied (50 min)
- **Wrap up:** Reflection & post-survey (10 mins)



# Focus Group Étiquette

- Respect for others at all times
- Understanding and willingness to learn
- Maintaining a non-judgemental space
- Avoid interrupting each other
- Notice who isn't speaking just as much as who is. Make space for everyone to share.
- Remain aware of all of our identities, both shared and different
- Be kind and keep an open mind





# **CIVICS & MUNICIPALITIES 101**

# BACK TO BASICS

The word democracy comes from the Greek words "demos", meaning people, and "kratos" meaning power; so democracy can be thought of as "**power of the people**": **a way of governing which depends on the will of the people.**

**KAHOOT  
TIME!**

## THE CONTEXT

What's going on?

- Youth have been retreating from political institutions for the last 50 years
- Trust is **LOW**
- There is interest in politics but alienation from the democratic process.

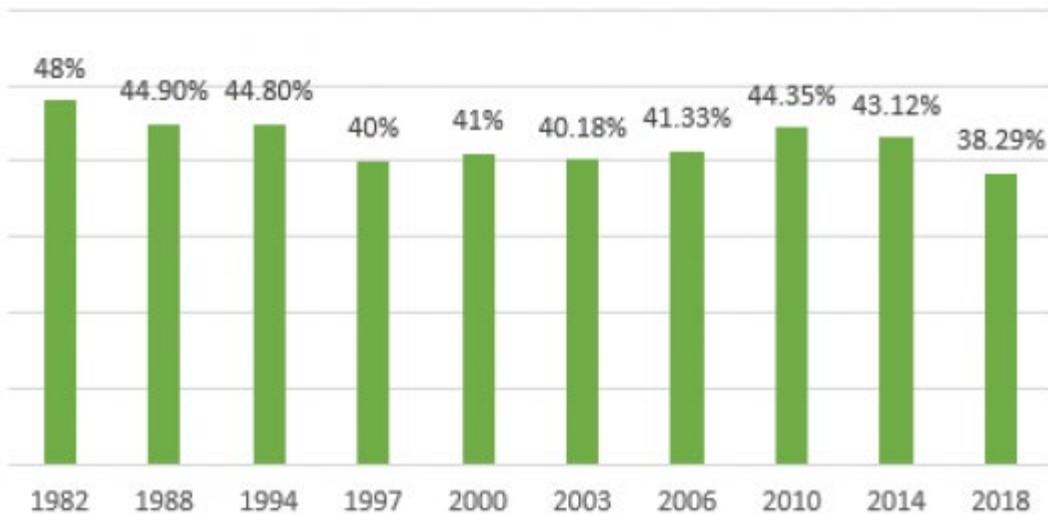
This is **more** than an issue of barriers to participation...

Instead, it is a **crisis** of political culture.

# Group Chat:

Have you ever  
voted in a  
municipal  
election in  
Ontario?

Voter Turnout for Municipal Elections in Ontario  
1982 - 2018



## 2022 Election Statistics

**36.30%**  
VOTER TURNOUT

**WITH  
417**  
MUNICIPALITIES REPORTING

**42%**  
NEW

**32%**  
FEMALE CANDIDATES

Source: AMO, 2022 Ontario Municipal Elections – Ontario Votes Website (<https://elections2022.amo.on.ca/web/en/home>)

# Election trends

The good. More women running —more women elected.

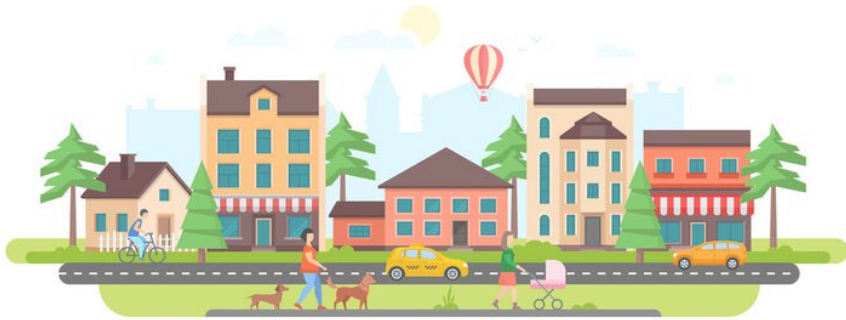
	2010	2014	2018	2022
Women running	1,495	1,647	1,808	1,939
Women elected	26%	21.6%	698	750
Women heads of council	100	78	92	110

The not good. Voter turnout decline and acclamations rise

	2010	2014	2018	2022
Position acclamations		390	477	553
Full council acclamations	30	18	26	32
Voter turnout	44.35%	43.12%	38.3%	36.3%
Candidates	8,039	7,290	6,658	6,325
Referendum questions		10	4	

■ Source: AMO election data

## Q: Why aren't young people voting?



“When I decided to vote this year, I had so many different issues that were on my mind. It was hard to pick between all the different campaigns, learn and read about what parties are doing, choose who to advocate for. **All this pressure seems like a very overwhelming choice** for individuals, and that’s probably the main reason some young people opt out.”

– Mississauga young person, first time voter (TVO, 2022)

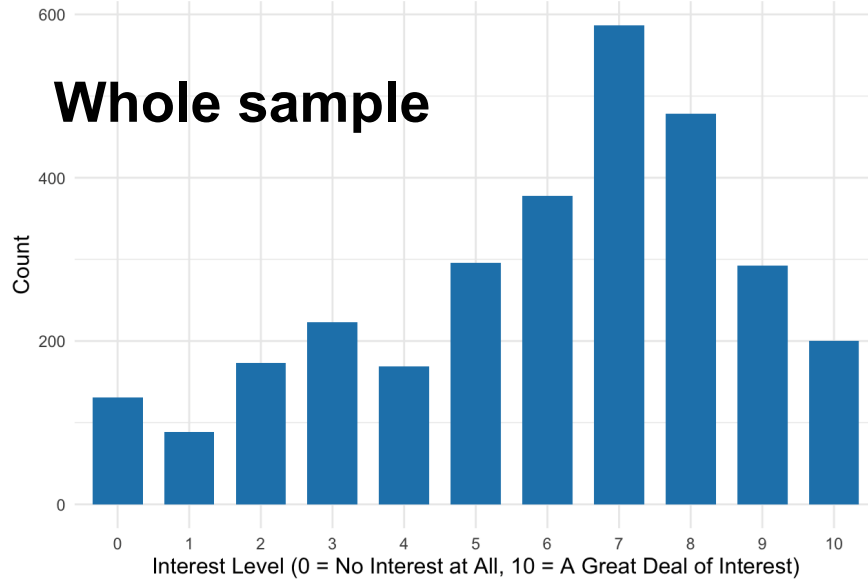
**Let's take a look at some data that asked local Ontarians their views about their municipal governments.**



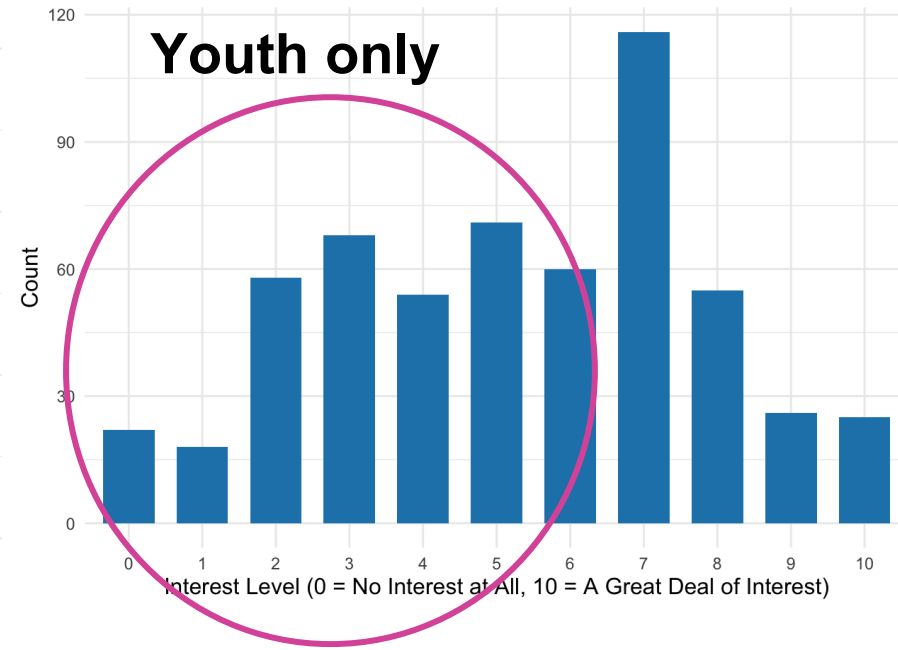
## What are we about to look at?

The following results are based on a survey of over **4,000 Ontarians** that was fielded at the time of the province's **2022 Municipal Election**. Data were collected by Leger, and participants were recruited from their proprietary panel. While all efforts were made to obtain a representative sample, as is the case with all opt-in election studies, voters are overrepresented.

How interested are you in politics, generally?

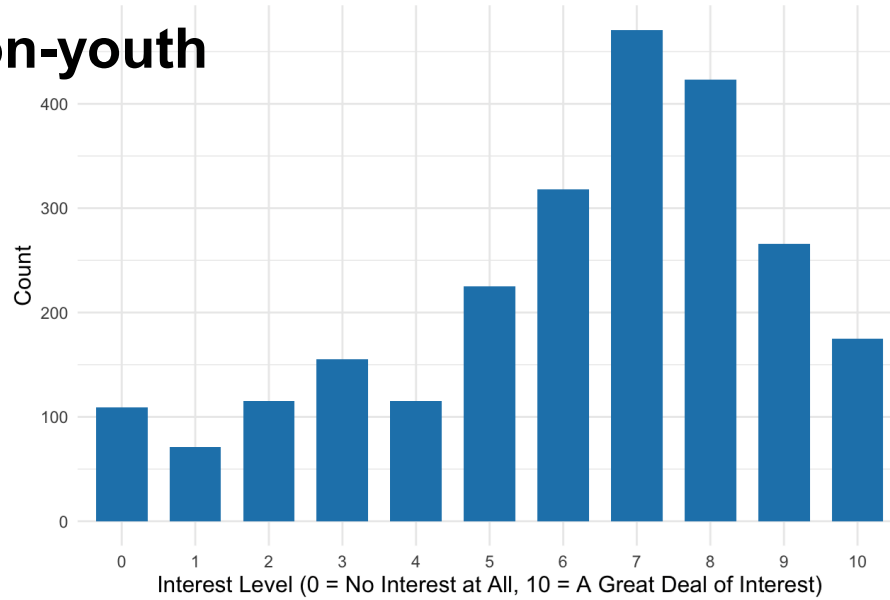


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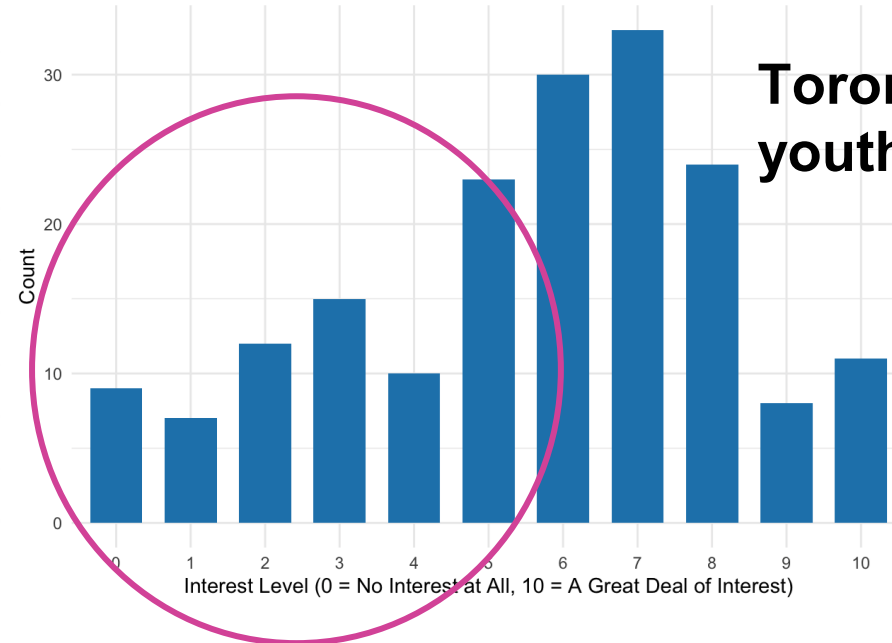


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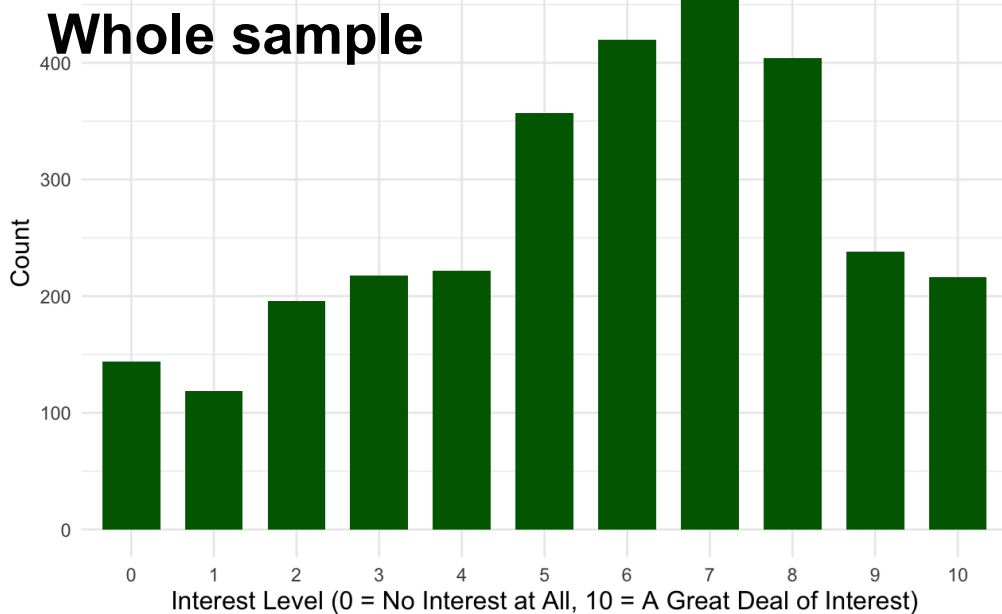
### Non-youth



How interested are you in politics, generally? (Toronto Young People)?



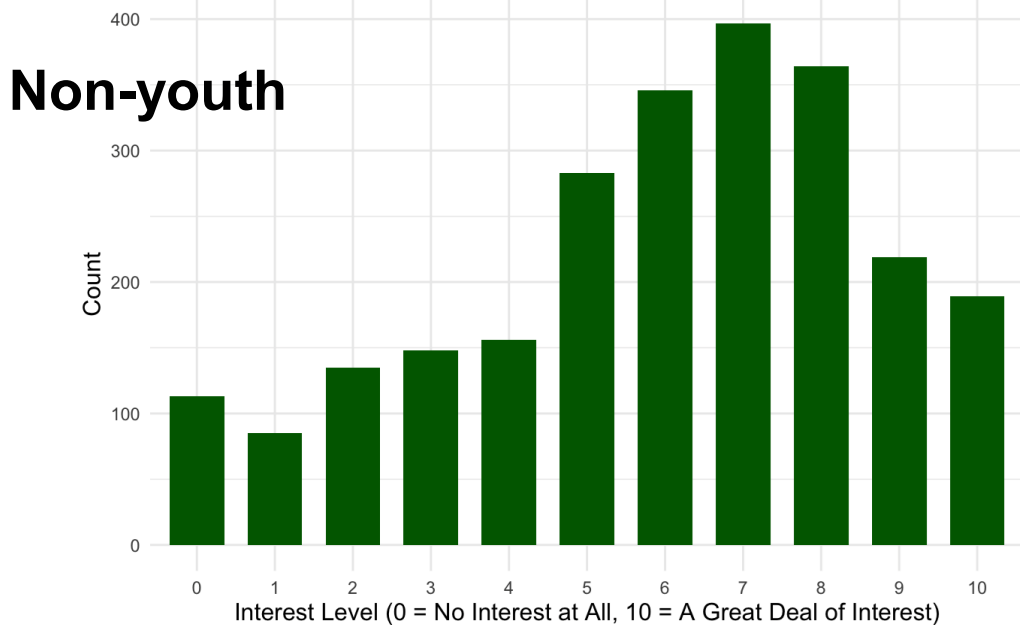
How interested are you in this municipal election?



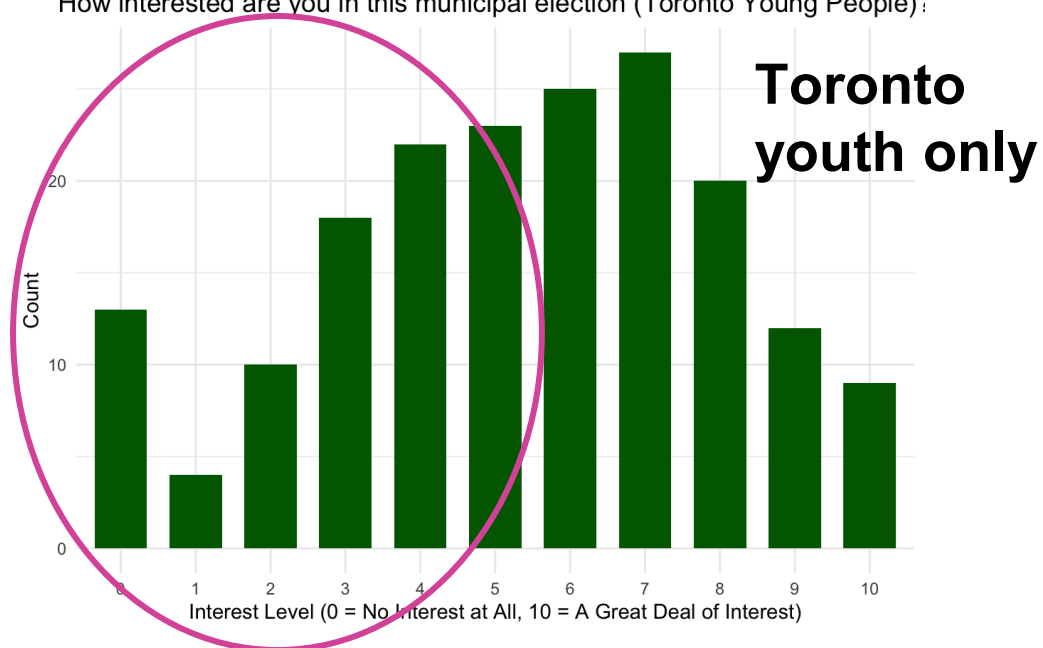
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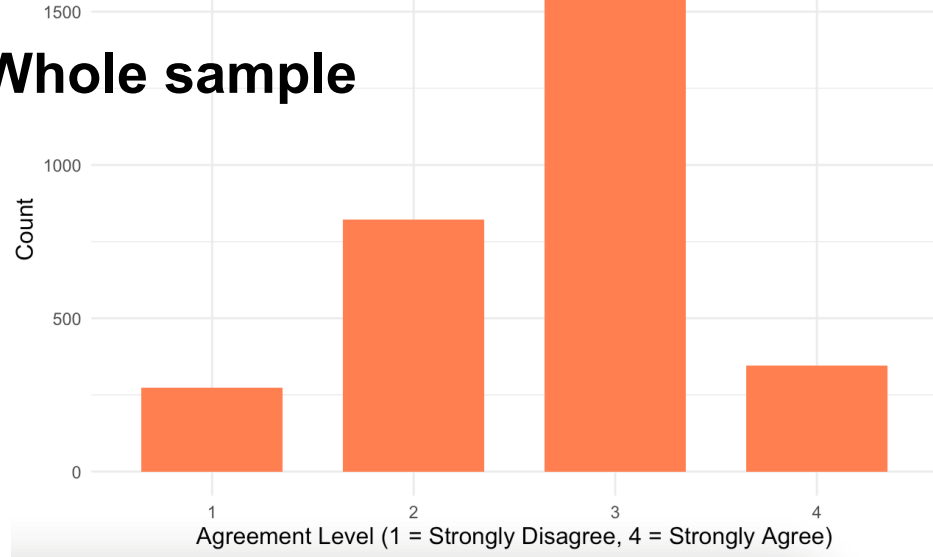


How interested are you in this municipal election (Toronto Young People)?



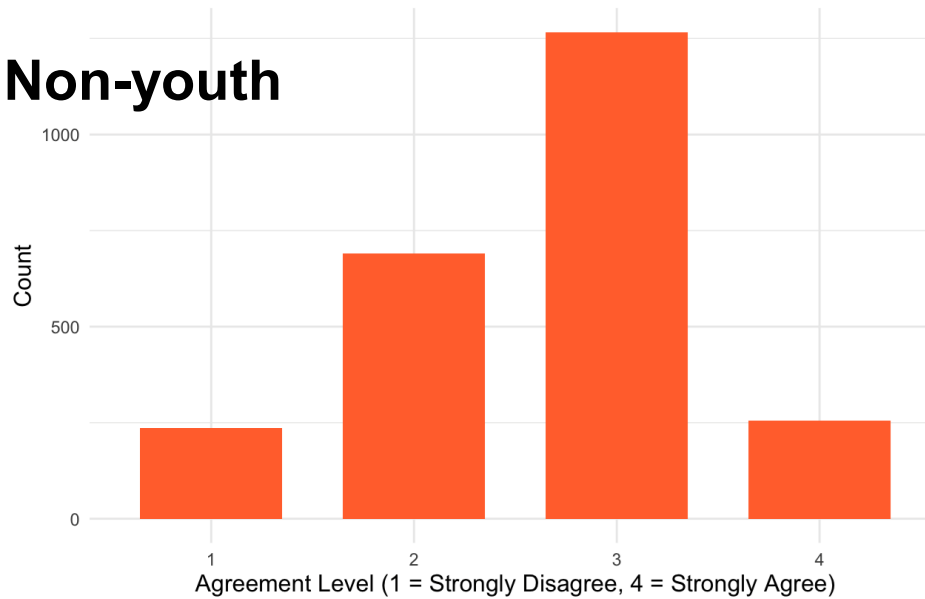
Sometimes, municipal politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

## Whole sample



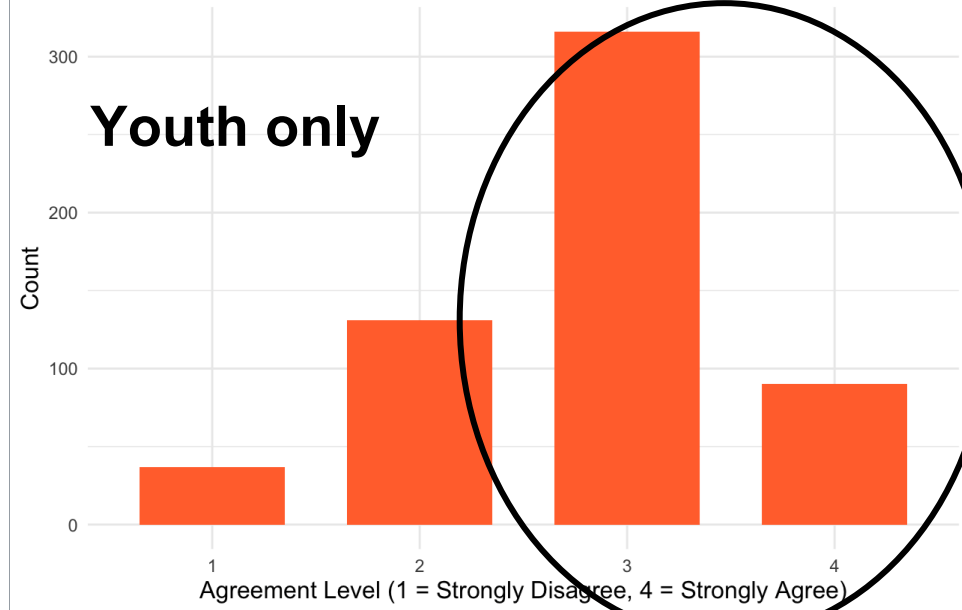
Sometimes, municipal politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

## Non-youth



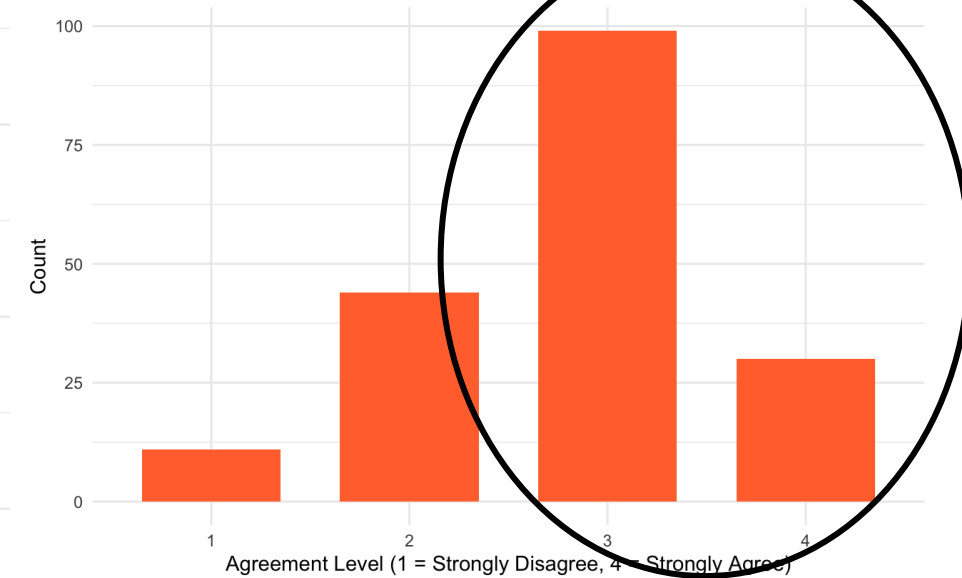
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## Youth only



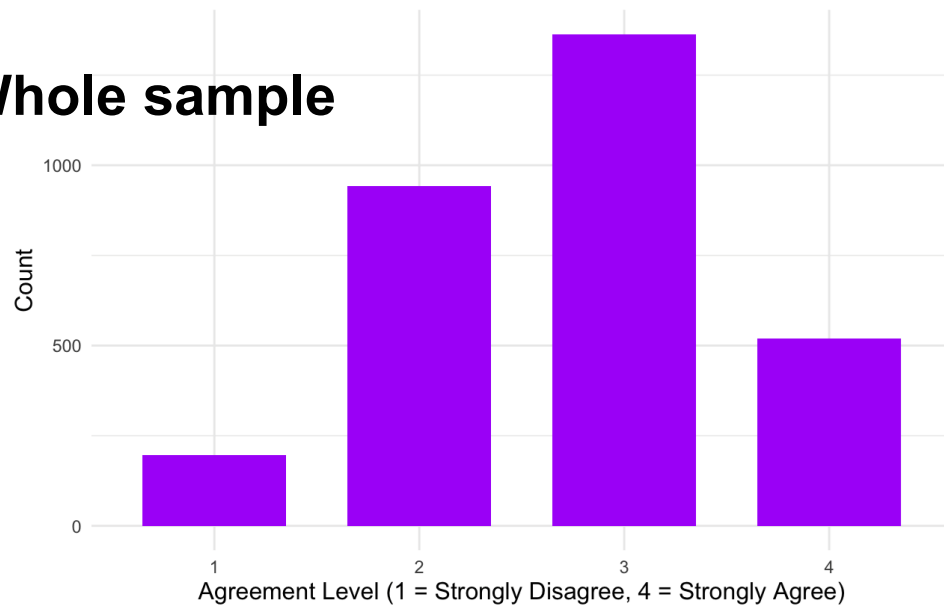
Sometimes, municipal politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on (Toronto Young P...

## Toronto youth only



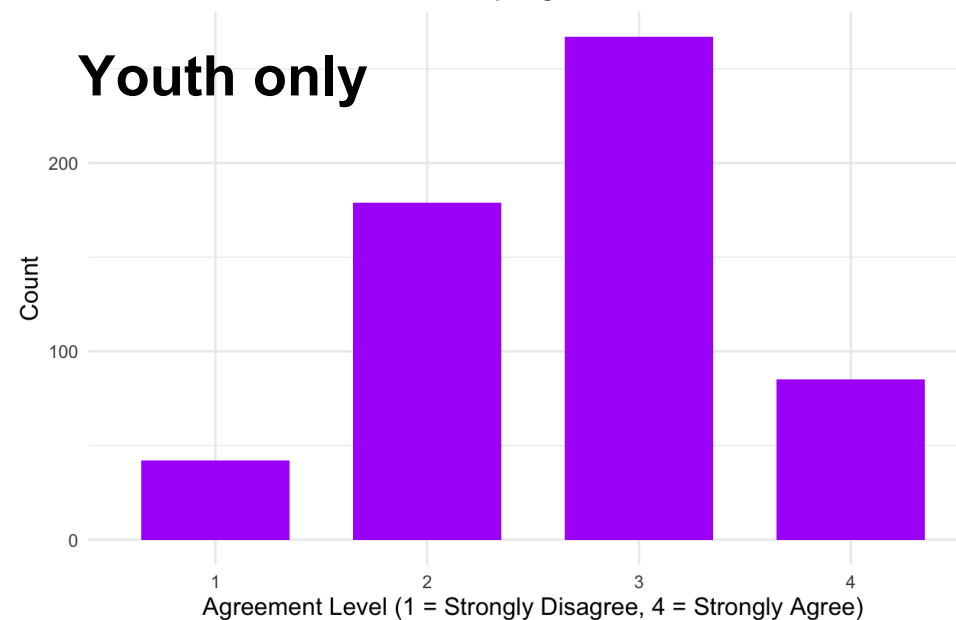
People like me don't have a say about what the municipal government does.

## Whole sample



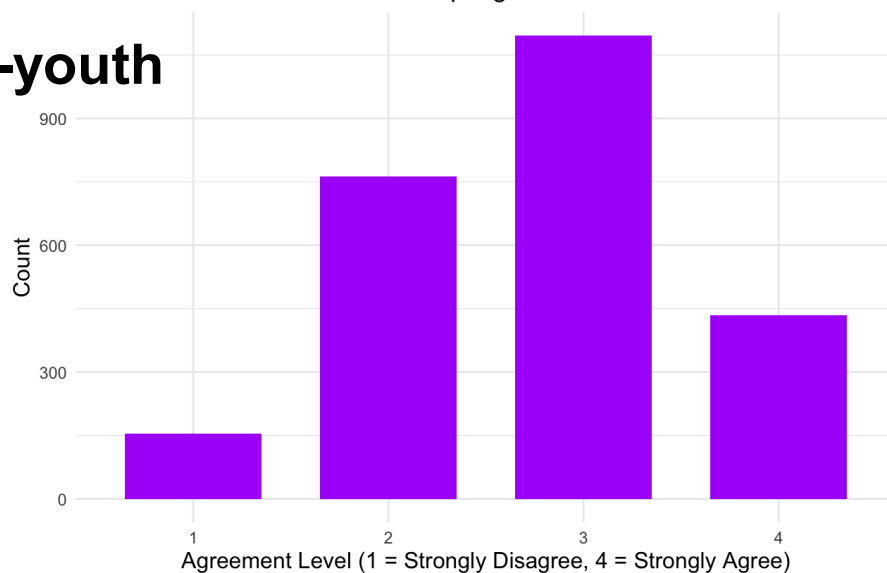
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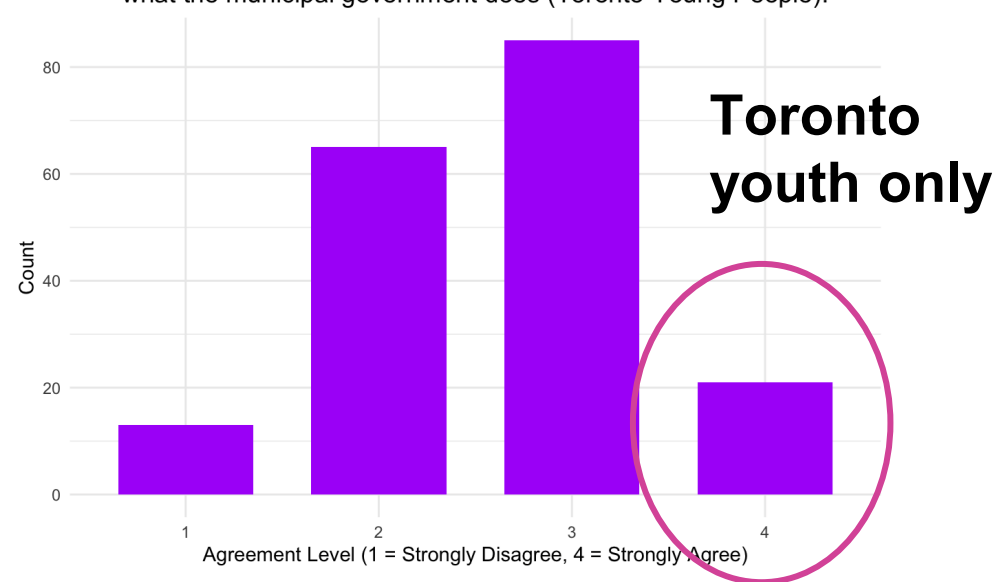


People like me don't have a say about what the municipal government does.

## Non-youth



People like me don't have a say about what the municipal government does (Toronto Young People).



## Toronto youth only

**Not a DECLINE in  
engagement...**

**A SHIFT.**

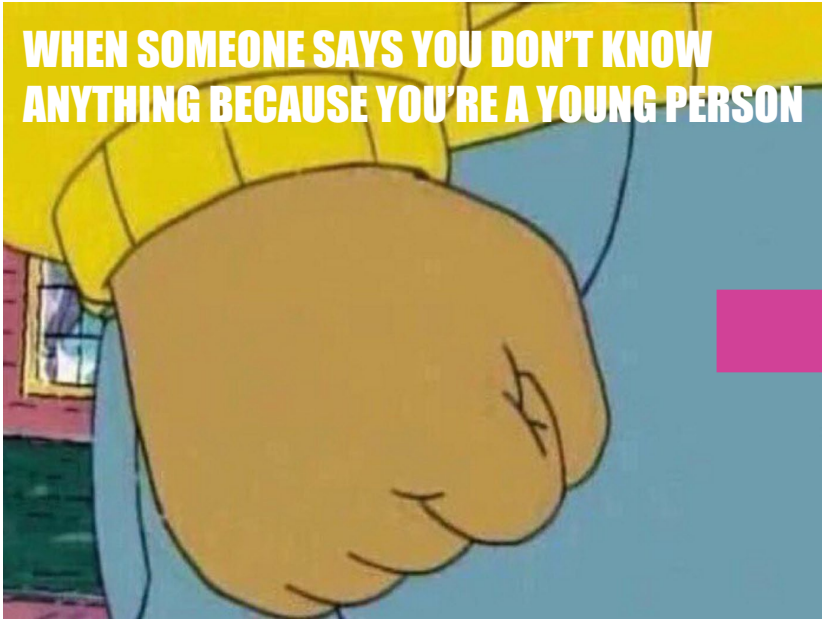
## OLD MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth are seen as subjects that need to be guided, monitored and controlled with limited power.

## NEW MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Youth movements
  - Social media
    - Protests
- “Less Traditional”.


**WHEN SOMEONE SAYS YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING BECAUSE YOU'RE A YOUNG PERSON**



**OLD MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

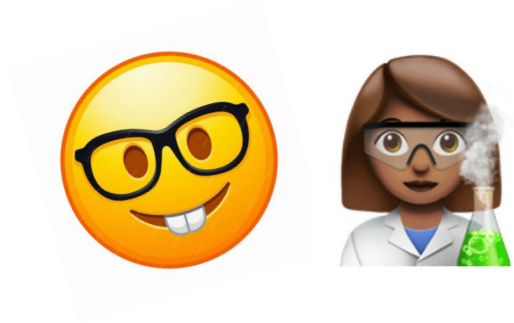
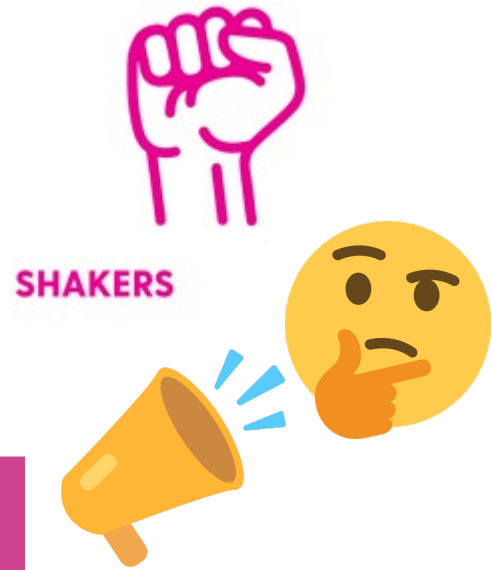


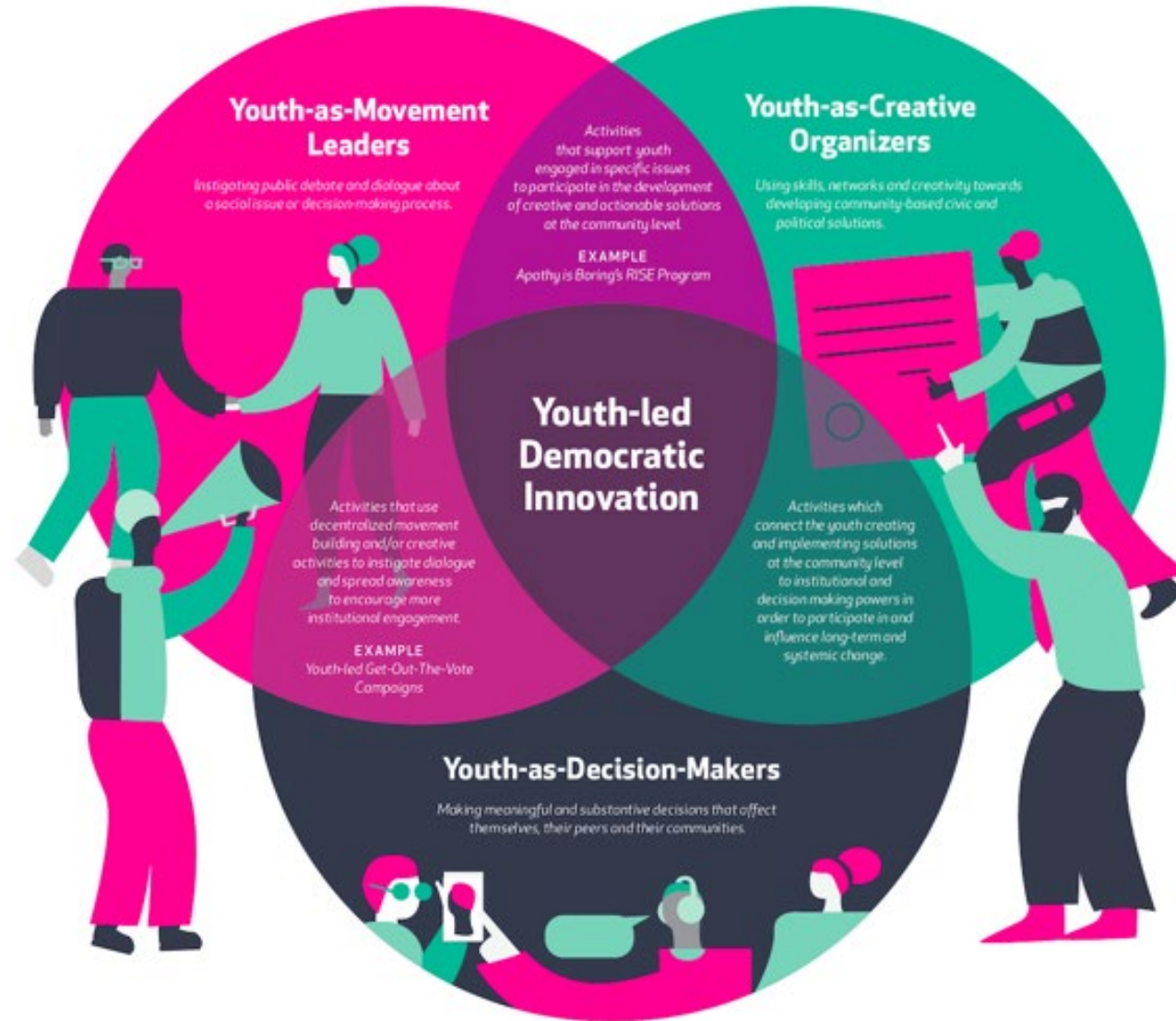
**WHEN YOU REALIZE YOUNG PEOPLE DO KNOW THINGS AND CAN DO THINGS**



**NEW MODELS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**







**Q: What are young Ontarians saying about civic engagement?**

“Civic engagement means to make a difference in the civic life of our communities by the knowledge, skills, values and motivation. It means **promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.**”

– Ontario youth  
(Youth Impact  
Summit Report, 2017)

**How are youth  
currently engaging  
with their local  
communities in  
Ontario?**







## At 18, I only recently realized the importance of community engagement and politics

Creating a Muslim Student Association made me realize how much community voices can have influence

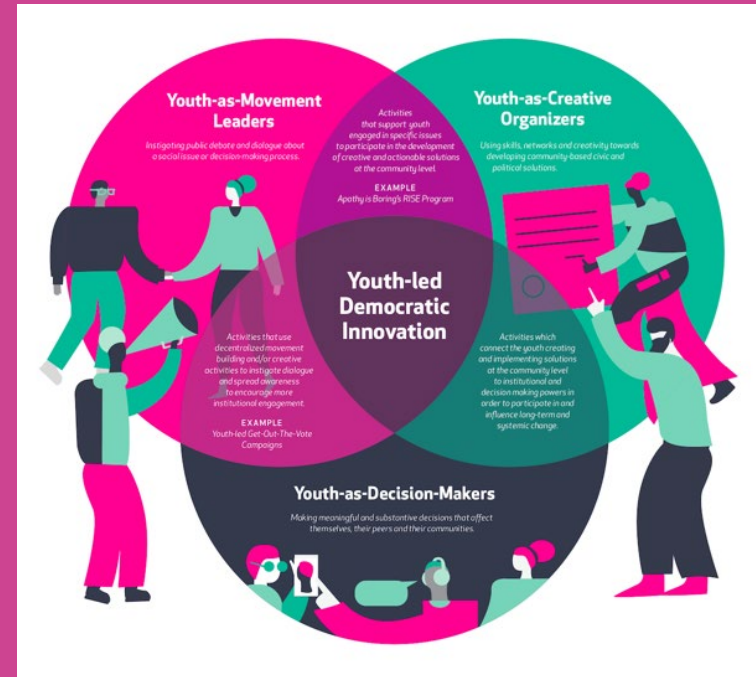


[Shayyan Husein](#) · for CBC Opinion · Posted: Oct 01, 2022 3:00 AM PDT | Last Updated: October 1, 2022



“The issue that matters to me the most in this election is the young voices of Hamilton not being heard. I realize some of my peers don't feel the same way, even though I think their voices matter, too.”

# BACK TO THE (KAHOOT) POLLS



**What is the  
government,  
anyways?**



# Who's doing what?



## Federal

- Enacting and enforcing laws related to national interests, such as defense, foreign policy, and immigration.
- Managing national finances, including taxation and budget allocation for federal programs and services.
- Overseeing inter-provincial/territorial and international relations, including trade agreements and treaties.



## Provincial

- Administering and delivering healthcare, education, and social services within their jurisdiction.
- Regulating industries and professions, such as transportation, natural resources, and labor laws.
- Developing and implementing policies tailored to the specific needs of their province or territory.



## Municipal

- Providing essential services to residents, including local infrastructure, waste management, and public transportation.
- Urban planning and zoning regulations, including land use and development approvals.
- Collaborating with higher levels of government on issues affecting the municipality, such as housing and environmental protection.

# Municipal governments are **cities, towns, villages, townships, counties, districts** and **regions**



*How are they formed?*

→ Every four years, the voters in each municipality elect a Head of Council (Mayor, Reeve, Warden or Chair) and Councillors to make decisions about municipal finances and services



# Municipalities by population range

- Under 999 81
- 1000-4999 105
- 5000-9999 77
- 10,000-2499 83
- 25000-49999 31
- 50000-99999 28



# What are the levels of municipalities?

## Lower-tier

Cities, towns, townships, or villages that provide some services at the local level, but their geographic area is also covered by an upper-tier municipality

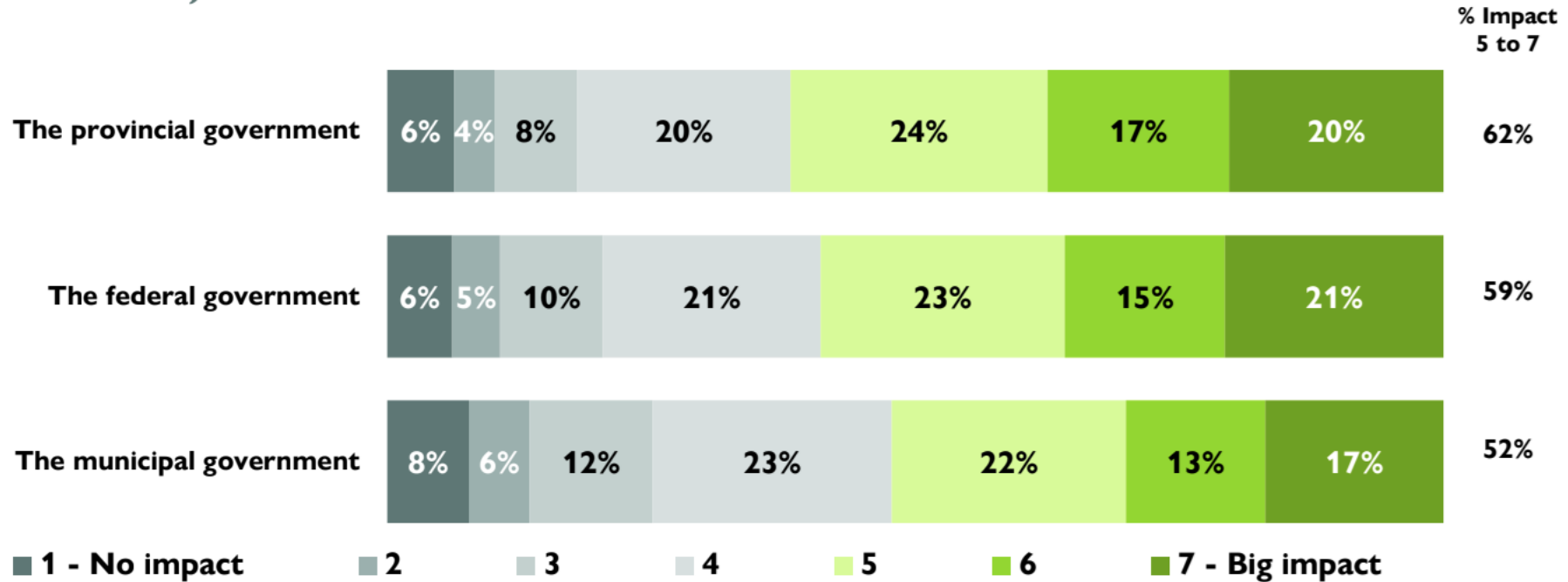
## Upper-tier

Counties, Regions, Districts are municipalities that provide certain services over an area that includes more than one lower-tier municipalities

## Single-tier

Municipalities that are the only level of municipal government in an area (i.e. no upper-tier municipality) and provide all services for their area

## PERCEIVED IMPACT OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT LOWER THAN PROVINCIAL, FEDERAL



Few say municipal government has *no* impact on their lives however the degree of impact is lower compared to other levels of government. Perception of impact does play a role in whether or not an individual votes municipally, but it has a much stronger relationship with awareness (meaning, those who can name their municipal representatives), and whether or not someone is actively involved at the municipal level.

# Drilling down: Municipal issues that affect youth

- Parks and recreation programs
- Housing!
- Public transit improvements
- Community safety
- Local sustainability and climate action (i.e., green waste management practices, zero emissions buildings)
- Third spaces like libraries

## SOME EXAMPLES OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES



# What do youth have to say about it?

**Q: Do you feel like voting impacts the services you see in your community?**

“Honestly not really. I see a difference for the big politics and international relations, but **I don't really feel it on a day-to-day basis for services.**”

– Abacus data youth participant



# What do Ontario youth have to say about it?

“I do see a connection between the voting process and the government services I receive. **I see a connection in the quality**, when I vote for certain people the quality increases and decreases.”

– Abacus data youth participant, Ontario



“**Public services are a key feature of society** because how would we function without our schools, libraries, hospitals/pharmacies, public transportation, etc.? They are key features because **we as a community rely on these important services** that we want and need.” – Abacus data youth participant, Ontario



**BREAK: 10 MINS**

## *Now it's your turn!*

We're going to break out into groups to discuss and work together a few questions.

- In your groups, we'll need 1 note taker
- Speak freely & make sure to give each other space to contribute
- After each part, we'll ask you to get up and take a dot to go to the area that speaks most to you (what resonates the most)
- We'll chat about each spot that gets the most dots as a larger group

**PART 1:**  
**Barriers to**  
**Engagement**

## *The Why*: Barriers to youth civic engagement

- 1. Why haven't you or your peers engaged with your municipality? If you or your peers have engaged, why?**
  - a. Consider: Surface Level & Systemic Barriers**



**Let's share back!**

**We'll be recording your answers on the flip charts!**



**Now, in true DOT-mocracy fashion, we'll take the next 5 minutes to grab a sticker dot from the table and place it onto the barrier that sticks out to you the most.**

**BODY BREAK: 5 MINS**

# **PART 2:**

# **Solutions**



## *The How:* Solutions

Now that we've talked about the barriers: what are some solutions to help mitigate them? We'll assign each table to a specific barrier and you'll work with your table to creatively think through some solutions.

## *ACTIVITY: BRAIN WRITING*

**BRAIN WRITING: On the piece of paper in front of you, write down an idea and then pass it to the next person. You can either add a new idea or build on one that's already been written. We'll take 4-6 minutes to do this, and then we'll share back in your small groups.**

## *ACTIVITY: BRAIN WRITING*

### **Share back**

- **We'll write everything down & take some time again to have all of you take another dot to put on the solution that most interests you.**

**BREAK: LUNCH!**

**PART 3:**  
**Municipalities and**  
**You(th)**

## *The What:* Municipalities and You(th)

1. What do municipal government leaders need to be doing better to ensure that youth voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes?
  - a. How can municipal governments identify and nurture potential youth leaders?

## Activity: Crazy 8's

Individually, take 8 minutes to write out 8 different ideas for **municipal elected officials** to take in order to engage youth.

After, share back with your group and list out any common ideas.

## Activity: Figure Mapping

Now that you have a bunch of ideas written down: it's time to think like a **municipal elected official**: whether it's a councillor or a mayor.

What are the steps you should take in order to engage youth? Map it out step-by-step together.



Discussion Wrap-Up:

**Let's round up some of  
these solutions**

Discussion Wrap-Up:

**What are the Next  
Steps?**

## Next Steps:

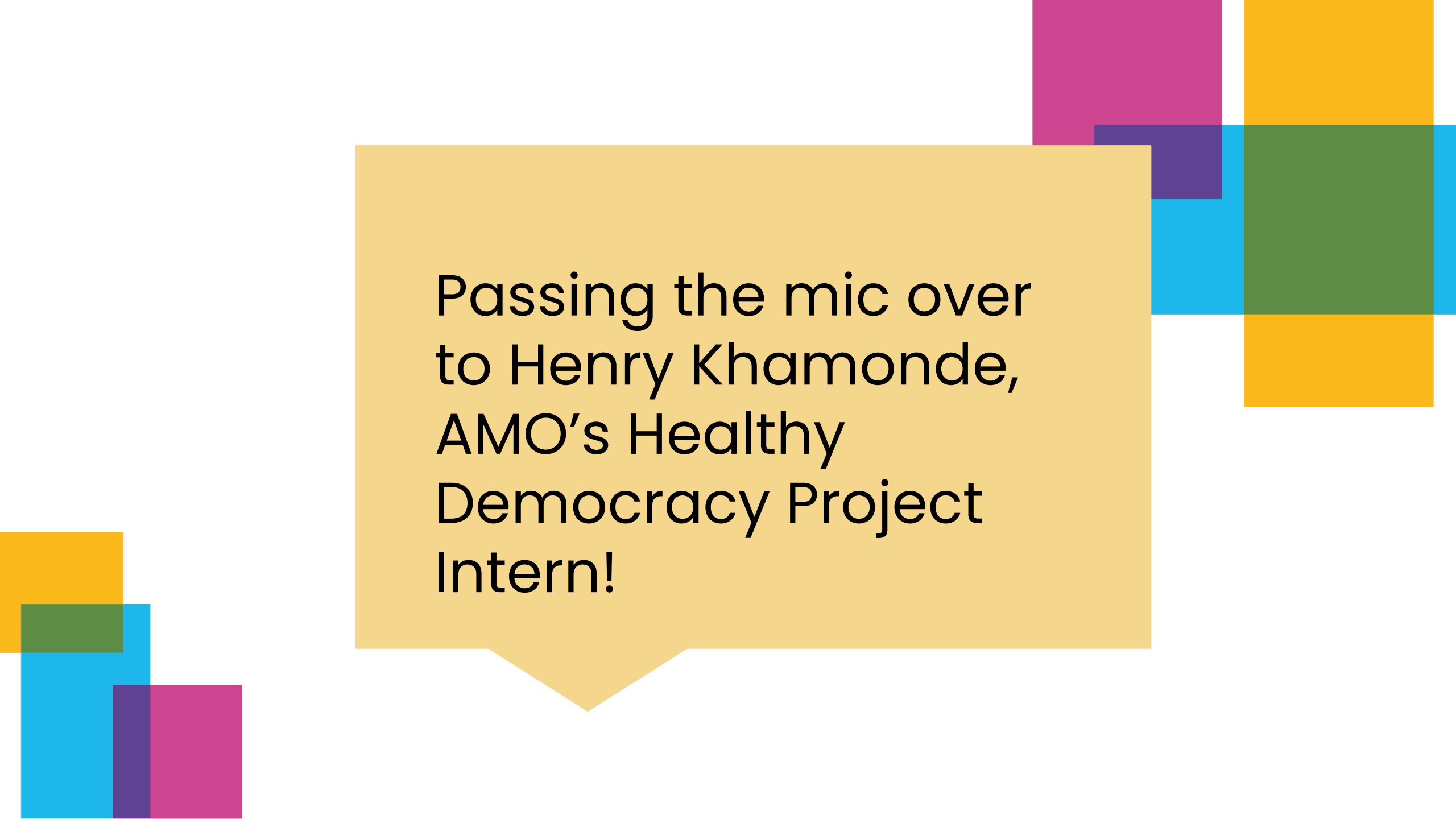
As we said, we'll round up all of your work today, we'll provide it to AMO.

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## IN REFLECTION:

How are you feeling,  
coming out of this  
session?



Passing the mic over  
to Henry Khamonde,  
AMO's Healthy  
Democracy Project  
Intern!



**THANK YOU!**

**If you have any other questions, we'd love to chat!:**

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Director of Impact & Development  
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Take the  
**post-event  
survey**  
here!



**APATHY  
IS BORING**

# LINKS + RESOURCES

Apathy is Boring: <https://www.apathyisboring.com/>

FORA RISE on Boards:

<https://www.foranetwork.org/riseonboards>

CIVIX: <https://civix.ca/home/>

iMatr & iQed: <https://imatr.org/>

Guelph Project Campaign School:

[guelphadvocates@gmail.com](mailto:guelphadvocates@gmail.com)

VOTE16: <https://vote16.ca/>

Environment Leadership Canada: Municipal Internship

Program: <https://www.environmentalleadership.ca/mci>



**THANK  
YOU <3**



**PATHY  
IS BORING**