



RCMP deal.org program

Youth Consultation report 2007-2008

August 2008



Executive Summary

Introduction

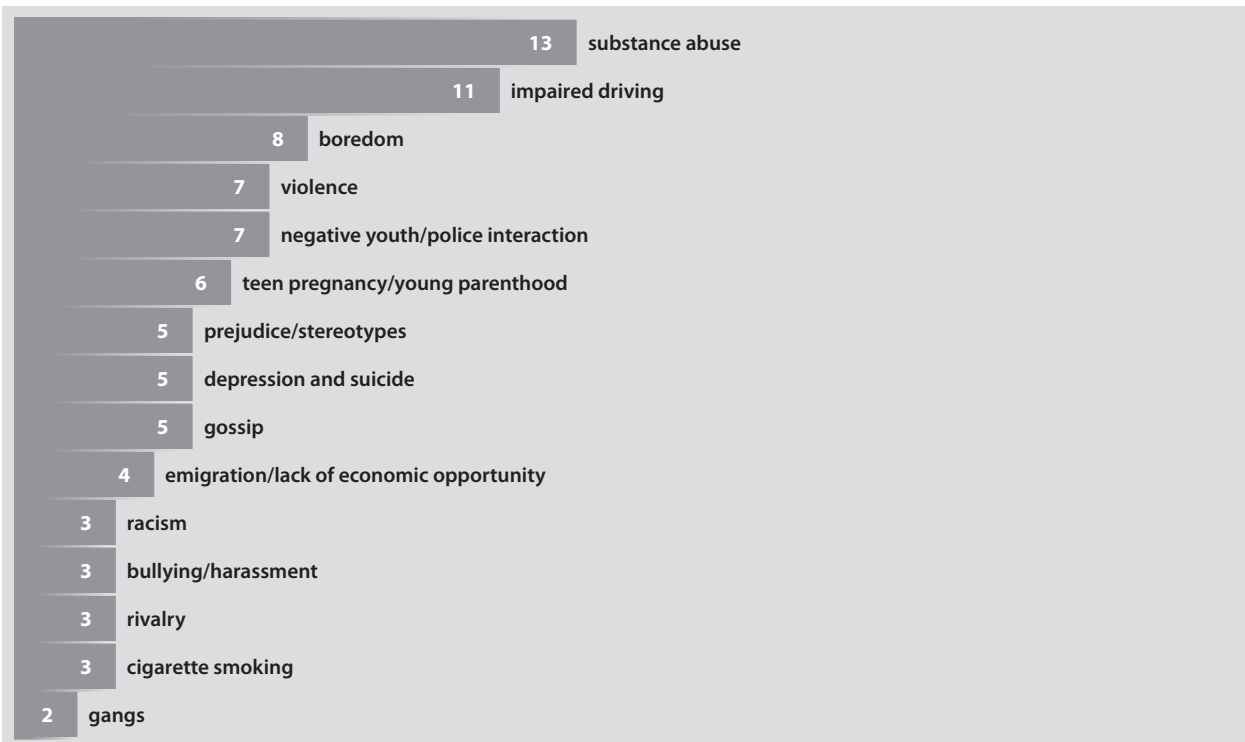
The deal.org Program went into diverse communities across the country to ask youth to talk about the barriers they face and what they would do to change them. The youth participated in the forums enthusiastically; many reported that youth/police interactions were largely negative and this opportunity to be genuinely heard by the RCMP and given a way to contribute to crime prevention was very welcomed. Many of the issues identified and discussed were socio-economic ones, indicating that the youth have a strong grasp on what the root causes of crime are and are keen to address them.

Demographics

- Nine of the communities where forums were held were largely Anglophone, three were entirely Anglophone, and two were largely Francophone.
- Twelve of the communities had a small percentage of residents who identified as Aboriginal, one had no residents who identified as Aboriginal, and one was a community where the majority of residents identified as Aboriginal.

Key Findings

Top issues included:



Other issues that were discussed include health education, poverty, gambling, abuse, mischief, discipline and respect, prostitution, homelessness and apathy.

It was also observed that several of the issues intersected and most likely interacted with others.

For example, in communities where teen pregnancy and young parenthood were named as issues, difficulty in accessing health education and treatment, prejudice/stereotypes and gossip also tended to be mentioned as issues. Similarly, communities where depression and suicide were of major concern also tended to be smaller communities where there was more stigma around mental illness; youth reported being ashamed and afraid to seek information and help.

Final Recommendations

- Continue consultations with youth in order to keep a “finger on the pulse” of youth issues.
- Improve methods to prevent youth involvement in crime through social development by encouraging open dialogue between youth, their communities and the RCMP.
- Create tools to empower youth to change their communities as well as inform them of the resources they have available to them.

Table of Contents

Program Overview & Background	5
Mission Statement	6
RCMP deal.org Program - Three Core Objectives	6
Purpose of Youth Consultation	6
Objectives	7
Impact	7
The Campaign	8
In this report	8
“B” Division - St. John’s	9
“C” Division	11
“D” Division - Thompson	13
“E” Division - Campbell River	16
“F” Division - Yorkton	18
“G” Division - Yellowknife	20
“H” Division - Yarmouth	22
“J” Division - Oromocto	25
“J” Division - Tracadie-Sheila	27
“K” Division - St. Albert	30
“L” Division - Montague	32
“L” Division – O’Leary and area	34
“V” Division - Iqaluit	36
Canada	40
Final Recommendations	43
Deal.org Plan of Action	44
Reflection	45
Thanks and Acknowledgments	45
Appendix A - Planning a youth forum	46

Program Overview & Background

The deal.org program is designed to empower young Canadians to become informed, develop their leadership skills and get involved in their schools and communities.

deal.org supports the RCMP's youth strategic priority in several ways. The program works with young people to prevent crime that involves them either as victims or offenders and helps them stay safe in their communities by raising awareness of relevant issues. In so doing, deal.org gives youth the tools they need to make good life choices. Further, the program encourages youth to actively engage in their communities by soliciting their views and opinions on issues that matter most.

The deal.org website reaches a wide audience and receives over **1.4 million hits per month**. The website consists of the following sections:

The Webzine

- The Webzine is an online monthly magazine.
- Articles are written by students on staff at deal.org and are complemented with submissions from youth from across Canada.
- Each month deal.org provides articles for the Youth Officer Resource Centre (YORC).

The Toolbox

- A collection of downloadable "youth-friendly" presentations for officers and community members to deliver to youth.
- Topics include Internet safety (E-literacy), bullying, impaired driving and other relevant issues.

The Knowzone

- A digital library of fact sheets on topics ranging from bullying to drugs to mental illness.
- Each fact sheet contains a definition, information and resources for further information.
- The Knowzone also includes a "how-to" section with topics ranging from how to write a resume to how to improve study skills.

These projects serve as inspiring and provocative tools to get youth involved in their communities and make a difference in the lives of others.

In addition to the website, deal.org serves as the "youth voice" for the RCMP and has collaborated with the National Youth Officer Program, the National Child Exploitation Coordination Center and RCMP Border Integrity (among others) to ensure that the youth perspective is represented within the RCMP.

Mission Statement

At deal.org, we strive to become the best resource on the Internet for Canadian youth. As a by-youth for-youth initiative, we are uniquely qualified to act as a voice for young Canadians. We provide youth with information on issues that are important to them. We are a forum for expression, we encourage leadership and we incite youth to take a stand and get involved in their schools and communities. deal.org provides the tools needed to make healthy life choices and to overcome obstacles in personal, family and community life.

RCMP deal.org Program - Three Core Objectives

1. Provide a youth perspective to the RCMP

- Help the RCMP better understand youth culture.
- Collaborate with National Youth Services, Crime Prevention Services, other policy centers and other organizations to bring youth perspectives to their projects

2. Recognize youth as valuable contributors to crime prevention

- Represent Canadian youth through a by-youth for-youth program
- Work towards implementing a National Youth Advisory Committee
- Perform youth consultations whenever appropriate.
- Ensure all youth are represented on the deal.org program website including (but not limited to) Francophone youth and Aboriginal youth
- Provide opportunities for community engagement and problem solving

3. Provide useful and comprehensive tools and resources for youth

- Based on trends identified by National Youth Services and the RCMP, deal.org will create and make available appropriate youth-focused resources on these topics.
- Provide articles and fact sheets on topics of importance to youth
- Utilize key messaging provided by National Youth Services and the RCMP in the creation of articles and fact sheets for the deal.org program website
- Continuously evaluate and improve the way information is delivered to youth through the integration of new web technologies and/or the implementation of off-line resources.

Purpose of Youth Consultation

For 2007-2009, deal.org has planned a series of initiatives that contribute to the program's goal of representing the voices of all Canadian youth. These initiatives build on the program's strategic goals of diversifying the program's "youth voice" and creating a sustainable youth voice within the RCMP to support the force's existing crime prevention activities.

In 2007-2008 the deal.org program performed consultations with youth from across Canada. Through youth forums in most provinces and territories, deal.org hoped to create an opportunity for youth to speak out about the issues of most importance to them. The forums also allowed youth to create a meaningful dialogue with the RCMP about these problems and their solutions.

We at deal.org believe that youth can offer valuable solutions to the problems that exist in their communities. In order to facilitate the discussion, themes were selected based on the data col-

lected from the RCMP's Youth Charge Numbers, Aboriginal and Youth Community Plans, and Strategic Priorities. These themes included: Drugs, Bullying, Internet Safety, Organized Crime, Traffic Services and National Security. These themes were a starting point for the exploration of issues more specific to each community.

The emphasis in the forums was on listening to the voices of youth, and ensuring that the participants understood that their opinions are appreciated and valued by the RCMP and by other adults in their community. To begin the session, participants were engaged in the "Cross the Line" icebreaker to break down barriers that could impede group discussion. After the icebreaker, the groups discussed and brainstormed the major issues affecting their community. Once the brainstorming had concluded, participants were assigned a breakout group that met separately for thirty minutes. During this time, each group of participants developed a poster outlining the positive and negative aspects of their community (based on topics highlighted in the brainstorming exercise) and presented the poster to the community's Commanding Officer or designate. Youth were encouraged to be frank, to give their opinions freely and offer solutions.

Additionally, the forums were used as an opportunity to recruit for deal.org's Youth Advisory Committee, a group of Canadian youth who will provide an ongoing source of youth consultation after the in-person forums have been completed. The deal.org Youth Advisory Committee will enable more in depth discussion on specific topics each month and will provide the deal.org program with an organized group of young people with whom regular consultation can be performed.

Objectives

- Solicit opinions from Canadian youth on which issues are important and relevant to them
- Mobilize Canadian youth to get involved and share their opinions
- Promote and recruit for deal.org's Youth Advisory Committee
- Showcase deal.org's unique strategy to engage young Canadians

Impact

It is imperative to remember that the youth forums provided a meaningful opportunity for discussion between youth and police. Situations such as these seldom appear, but can have a positive and long-lasting impact on the youth population. Research clearly demonstrates that youth engagement initiatives, such as the youth forums, impact participants positively.

"At the individual level, the research literature indicates a host of outcomes associated with engagement, nearly all of them positive. One of the most commonly documented outcomes is a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, accompanied by an increased sense of competence and control. Engagement is also associated with an increase in personal and social skills, and a greater sense of direction in academic and career pursuits, greater academic achievement, and a reduction in problem behaviour." (Pancer, Rose-Krasnor & Loiselle, "Youth Conferences as a Context for Engagement", *New Directions in Youth Research Journal*, 2002).

The Campaign

Youth forums were conducted in the following communities:

Campbell River, BC	Yorkton, SK
O'Leary et Montague, PEI	St. John's, NFLD
St. Albert, AB	Thompson, MB
Tracadie-Sheila et Oromocto, NB	Yellowknife, NWT
Yarmouth, NS	Iqaluit, NU

These cities were chosen based on ease of accessibility, pre-existing relationships with youth officers and their ability to fulfill one or more section(s) of deal.org's population targets. In order to accurately reflect the Canadian youth population, deal.org is ensuring that youth from **urban, rural, remote, Francophone and Aboriginal communities** are represented.

Fifteen to forty-five youth participated in each forum.

Press releases were circulated locally, provincially and nationally and a press kit was made available to members of the media.

The press kit highlighted deal.org's recent achievements such as surpassing one million hits per month and reaching the program's 10th anniversary.

Media release forms were distributed to the participating youth, and required a signature prior to the event. Youth under the age of 18 required a parent's or guardian's signature.

One to three uniformed RCMP members were invited to greet participants of the forum, as well as to be present at the conclusion of the forum for media inquiries and photo opportunities.

The deal.org staff facilitated a one to two hour session with the group, which included an ice-breaker and discussion/brainstorming regarding the issue(s) most affecting the community.

Once the discussion concluded, participants were assigned to breakout groups and met for thirty minutes, during media set-up. During that time, the groups created a poster outlining positive and negative aspects of their communities as well as suggestions for improvement. The poster was subsequently presented by the group to the community's Commanding Officer or designate.

At select events, media were invited in to participate and observe the conclusion of the youth forum; they were also provided with an opportunity to speak with the deal.org staff, youth and officers involved in the event.

In this report

In this report you will find the top issues identified through each consultation, which are followed up by recommendations for action for the deal.org program. As the RCMP's "youth voice," deal.org endeavors to adopt the recommendations found within this document to further develop resource materials for the program's website and to provide feedback to National Youth Services in the development and implementation of national programs and policy.

“B” Division - St. John’s

Participants: Youth from all across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Setup: In St. John’s, participants were attending the Commanding Officer’s Youth Advisory Meeting.

About the Province (from Statistics Canada):

Newfoundland and Labrador

Population: 505,469

Median age: 41.7

Median Income (2005): 50,500

Language most often spoken at home, English: 494,345

Language most often spoken at home, French: 650

Aboriginal Identity Population: 23,455

Total Visible Minority Population: 5,720

Youth described Newfoundland and Labrador as follows:

- Peaceful
- Safe

Participants noted that the road conditions in Newfoundland and Labrador are poor, but that they enjoyed the beautiful landscapes of the province. Participants indicated that they value the privacy they have in their communities.

Top issues identified by participants

Boredom

Participants indicated boredom as a major contributing factor to many problems facing youth in their community. Participants said “there’s nothing to do.”

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Substance Abuse

Participants identified marijuana and cocaine as drugs that are used by youth in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be provided.

Emigration/Lack of Economic Opportunity

Participants reported that there were few job opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, and that the high rates of unemployment resulted in a mass exodus of young people emigrating to Alberta, where the economy is stronger.

Facilitator recommendation: Further research into root causes of this issue and possible solutions is required, however, in the meantime, deal.org will research and post links to resources that will help youth create their own economic opportunities through government funding and youth entrepreneurial programs.

Prejudice and Stereotypes

Participants stated that stereotypes are a problem facing youth in Newfoundland and Labrador, because of the preconceived notion of the “stupid Newfie” in the rest of Canada.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same. We will also create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and explore the ways in which to prevent them.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants reported that generally, the relationship between youth and police is negative. Participants stated that the police were only available in the case of a mock disaster or in response to a crime or emergency.

Facilitator recommendation: Since youth stated that police were only available during major events like a “mock disaster” or in response to a crime, deal.org will promote programs and resources aimed at helping youth officers effectively engage youth in schools and communities. One such program is the RCMP’s National Youth Officers program which aims to provide tools and presentations for officers to deliver in classrooms.

Alcohol/ Impaired Driving

Participants stated that alcohol is an even greater problem than illegal drugs for both adults and youth. Participants noted that people sometimes drive vehicles and/or ATVs under the influence of alcohol.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were seen as a major issue. deal.org should provide additional awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties. Furthermore, youth participants from B division noted an important topic that is under-represented in our resources. ATV safety and awareness around operating an ATV while impaired is a key theme that will be included in future resources on the deal.org program website.

Overall Reaction - B Division:

This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on boredom, alcohol and impaired driving, substance abuse, stereotyping and ATV safety.

Participants in attendance demonstrated a strong pride in the culture and history of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“C” Division

Participants: Youth from across Quebec.

Setup: As part of the RCMP’s participation in Historica’s Encounters with Canada, deal.org staff had the opportunity to speak with approximately 100 youth gathered in Ottawa in February 2008, who were separated into groups based on the language most often spoken from home. This forum targeted Francophone youth from Quebec specifically.

About the Province (from Statistics Canada):

Quebec

Population: 7,730,612

Median age: 41.0

Median Income (2005): 46,419

Language most often spoken at home, English: 744,430

Language most often spoken at home, French: 6,027,730

Aboriginal Identity Population: 108,425

Total Visible Minority Population: 654,355

Early in the discussion, some participants shared that they identified primarily as citizens of the nation of Quebec before they considered themselves citizens of Canada.

Top issues identified by participants

Substance Abuse

Participants noted that substance abuse is becoming problematic for younger and younger youth, and that the drugs of choice are “harder” - cocaine, meth, etc.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be provided.

Depression and Suicide

Some participants stated that students at their schools had attempted suicide on school grounds. They indicated that they believe there is a great deal of stigma around suicide and depression.

Facilitator recommendation: Additional depression and suicide resources should be made available on the deal.org program website. deal.org should also create materials to help youth understand the concept of stigma and how it can be overcome.

Teen Pregnancy

Participants indicated that teen pregnancy was common and they think it is on the rise.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information on abortions and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Health Education

Participants were greatly concerned by a recent reform to the education system in Quebec that removed “personal development” from the school curriculum. Many of the participants indicated that health class was one of the only places where they would learn about sexually transmitted infections and safe sex practices, and were concerned about the lack of access to this information in a formal classroom setting. Participants noted that they did not think many adolescents would seek out this preventative information on their own or from guidance counselors. They expressed disappointment that younger youth would not have this information included in their curriculum. Participants indicated that if given the chance, they would reform the curriculum to focus on living skills in order to benefit students.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org should maintain existing information and fact sheets on sexually transmitted infections and safe sex practices and ensure that information stays up-to-date.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants described their relationship with police as mostly negative, indicating that the police in their communities are rarely available when they are needed and focus most of their energies on traffic enforcement. Participants said that there was insufficient police surveillance in their communities, and that they feel the police and other community authority figures generally regard youth as delinquent.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming session where youth are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of police versus roles and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve.

Boredom

Participants stated that they believe boredom is why youth engage in risky and/or illegal behaviour. This statement was supported by youth from both rural and urban communities. Participants said that a lack of public transportation in less urban communities often left youth relying on their parents to get around, which prevented them from participating in some activities they would like to.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Overall Reaction - C Division:

Many of the issues identified corresponded with currently available statistics for Quebec. The youth who shared their experiences were very open. The session with C Division was particularly valuable because youth from right across Quebec were represented, allowing us to obtain a large cross-section of the population. Consequently, deal.org was able to obtain valuable feedback on issues facing youth in C Division. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, depression and suicide.

“D” Division - Thompson

Participants: Youth from Thompson, Manitoba and surrounding communities.

Setup: Both the poster-making activity and the discussion took place. This forum included both Aboriginal youth and youth with disabilities, allowing a greater representation of the diversity of Canadian youth.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Thompson, Manitoba (city)

Population: 13,446

Median age: 29.7

Median Income (2005): 76,882

Language most often spoken at home, English: 12,535

Language most often spoken at home, French: 45

Aboriginal Identity Population: 4915

Total Visible Minority Population: 695

Youth described Thompson as follows:

- hub of the North
- relaxed
- close by to everything
- lots of crime

All participants indicated that they would like to leave Thompson as soon as possible. If given the opportunity to change their community, participants indicated that safety needs to be improved and suggested that increased policing is required. Participants also said they would like to diversify the economy because everyone works in the mines. Participants said they think Thompson has a poor reputation which leads to greater incidents of crime and suicide, creating an ever-worsening cycle. Participants suggested investing in homeless shelters. Further, while they believed there were sufficient resources available to support youth through school such as programs and counselors, they were unaware of resources that were available for adults.

Top issues identified by participants

Violence

Participants shared a number of anecdotes related to violence, some of which was gang-related. Knives and guns were depicted on a number of posters created by the youth.

Facilitator recommendation: As violence is a significant part of popular culture, further information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods should be placed on the deal.org website to demonstrate positive alternatives to violence. Further research is required to determine roots causes and solutions for Thompson.

Substance Abuse

Participants indicated they thought police checks at the entrances and exits to town would limit

the amount of drugs able to come into the community. Participants noted that marijuana use is very common.

Facilitator recommendation: The youth participants in Thompson were extremely concerned with the amount of drugs being brought into the city and noted that gangs were a major issue. Further research and consultation is required however, deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be provided.

Alcohol

Participants suggested raising the price of alcohol so people would not drink as much. They believed that more anti-alcohol awareness programs should be implemented to reduce alcoholism, and many of them shared anecdotes about people they know passed out outside of a popular spot for drinking, the Thompson Inn. Participants believe that alcohol consumption is very common and were keen to learn what to do to help a friend or family member cope with alcoholism.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol abuse is an issue of significant concern, and while deal.org has existing resources in the “Knowzone” as well as various webzine articles related to alcohol consumption, additional materials should be provided to address coping with and the prevention of alcohol abuse.

Teen Pregnancy

Participants indicated that teen pregnancy was a very common issue.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Depression and Suicide

Participants identified suicide as a major problem facing youth. All participants indicated that they personally knew someone who had committed suicide in the community. Some participants shared stories about their family members being found in public places.

Facilitator recommendation: Further research into root causes of these issues is required. Additional depression and suicide resources should be made available on the deal.org program website.

Gangs

Participants reported gang-related violent incidents, which include having family members shot and killed. They stated that being perceived as cool is very important, and is a major reason for joining gangs. Participants indicated that there the gangs were divided among east and west sides of the city.

Facilitator recommendation: In collaboration with DOCAS, additional information to help prevent youth from joining gangs should be available on deal.org’s website. In particular, the youth participants brought up an important point which is the importance of “being cool” or being perceived as “cool”. Deal.org will examine youths’ need to be “cool” and how that related to becoming involved in crime.

Racism

Participants stated there is racism and discrimination in Thompson, particularly targeted at Aboriginals.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same. We will also create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them. Furthermore, deal.org intends to make available more tools and resources for Aboriginal youth in Canada.

Overall Reaction - D Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in D Division, but in the information obtained was mostly related to Thompson and northern Manitoba. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on suicide, violence, racism, substance abuse and alcoholism.

Participants in attendance were very frank, honest and open. We were impressed by their willingness to share extremely personal stories about suicide, violence, gangs and substance abuse.

deal.org recommends that Thompson be considered as a community for a future pilot site for programs related to the youth issues identified above. While Thompson is a community facing many complex issues, the youth are very engaged in finding solutions to problems and the full-time youth officer in the high school is very well-liked and respected by all students.

“E” Division - Campbell River

Participants: Youth from Campbell River, British Columbia and surrounding communities.

Setup: Both the discussion and poster making activity took place. As the forum concluded, an Aboriginal community member spoke to the youth about his experiences with substance abuse.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Campbell River, British Columbia (city)

Population: 29,572

Median age: 42.2

Median Income (2005): 62,665

Language most often spoken at home, English: 28,550

Language most often spoken at home, French: 105

Aboriginal Identity Population: 2540

Total Visible Minority Population: 1100

Youth described Campbell River and surrounding communities as follows:

- Boring, nothing to do
- Many enjoyable mountains, trails, beaches
- Youth have to leave the community to pursue university
- Low SPCA funding (Society for Prevention and Care of Animals)
- Lots of recreation - fishing and hunting
- Somewhat isolated, small, tight-knit community
- Very little diversity, which leads to stereotyping and discrimination

When asked what they would change if they were mayor, participants said the following:

- Increase funding to SPCA
- Provide better arts programming
- Provide better ice rinks
- Attract more businesses to lure tourists
- Build more shopping malls
- Increase police presence downtown to make citizens feel safer

Top issues identified by participants

Boredom

Participants identified boredom as a challenge facing many youth in their community because recreation is limited to drinking, going to parties, joining the cadets and playing sports.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Stereotypes/Prejudice

Participants indicated that there is a Native reserve in the community, and that there are negative stereotypes and prejudices against Aboriginal people.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same. We will also create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them. Furthermore, deal.org will be working with National Aboriginal Policing Services in the creation of Aboriginal content for the website.

Substance and Alcohol Use and Abuse

Participants noted that alcohol and substance use and abuse was a problem amongst the youth in their community. In particular, participants noted that marijuana is the most popular. In addition, participants indicated that many youth brag about the drugs they take because it is often perceived to be linked to status or “being cool”.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website. The program can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services. This youth forum also underlined the importance of creating specific resources on marijuana that will encourage youth to think critically about perceiving drug use as “cool” as well as informing youth of the negative consequences associated with drug use.

Bullying, harassment and violence

Participants said bullying and harassment is common in Campbell River and is usually targeted at gay or lesbian youth, youth with different religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to update its information on diversity, discrimination, and GLBTQ youth. Awareness-raising activities that bring youth together regardless of sexual orientation, race or religion may also be useful in continuing to break down the barriers and fight stereotypes that persist. Emphasizing the link between discrimination, bullying and the negative consequences (depression, suicide) may also be useful.

Overall Reaction - E Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. Participants indicated that they believe the problems facing youth in the community are exacerbated on the reserve. E Division also provided a unique opportunity to explore the dynamic that develops amongst youth when an Aboriginal reserve is located in close proximity to a non-Aboriginal community. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on substance abuse, stereotypes and boredom.

“F” Division - Yorkton

Participants: Youth from Yorkton, Saskatchewan and surrounding communities.

Setup: Both the poster-making activity and discussion were completed at this forum.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Yorkton, Saskatchewan (city)

Population: 15,038

Median age: 42.3

Median Income (2005): 57,865

Language most often spoken at home, English: 14,435

Language most often spoken at home, French: 0

Aboriginal Identity Population: 1,715

Total Visible Minority Population: 280

Youth described Yorkton and surrounding communities as follows:

- Overlooked by the rest of Canada
- Close-knit and friendly
- Slow-paced

When asked what changes they would make if they could, participants said they would repair the roads and ensure they are plowed regularly in the winter. Participants also said they would spend tax dollars on lowering crime.

Top issues identified by participants

Gossip

Participants noted that their close-knit community creates an environment rife with gossip and rumours.

Facilitator recommendation: Since gossip is prevalent in our culture, deal.org should create materials for the website that encourage youth to think critically about gossip and how it can harm relationships with peers. Showing gossip as a form of bullying may increase awareness.

Substance Abuse

Participants stated that marijuana use is very popular among youth in their communities.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website. The program can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services.

Racism

Participants identified racism as an area of significant concern, particularly stereotyping and discrimination against Aboriginals.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives

that do the same. We will also create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants reported that the relationship between the police and youth is mixed. Youth recognized that their positive and negative opinions were based on individual interactions with specific officers. Participants indicated they believe that jail time for young offenders should be raised as a deterrent to crime, and that they think the government is too easy on young offenders.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming session where youth are asked to consider the role and responsibilities of police versus role and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve.

Impaired Driving

Participants stated that a popular pastime for some youth in Yorkton is to drive around town along a familiar route, sometimes impaired by marijuana or alcohol. These rides are referred to as “loser laps”.

Facilitator recommendation: As in the rest of the country, alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were again seen as a major issue. deal.org should provide additional awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties.

Boredom

Participants indicated that most felt there were enough activities to keep entertained in their community, but that there was little interest in partaking in these activities. Participants noted that mostly youth hang out at house parties, or they go on “loser laps”. Guitar Hero is particularly popular at house parties.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Overall Reaction - F Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in F Division. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on gossip, substance abuse, boredom and racism. The feedback that participants provided about police/youth interactions was particularly valuable and will be valuable in future consultations to better understand the relationship between law enforcement and youth.

“G” Division - Yellowknife

Participants: Youth from Yellowknife and surrounding communities, Northwest Territories.

Setup: The forum in Yellowknife was the very first, and as a result the poster-making activity did not take place.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (city)

Population: 18,700

Median age: 32.2

Median Income (2005): 110,135

Language most often spoken at home, English: 16,875

Language most often spoken at home, French: 375

Aboriginal Identity Population: 4105

Total Visible Minority Population: 1830

Youth described Yellowknife and surrounding communities as follows:

- Boring
- Good recreation available
- Prevalent drug use
- Widespread poverty

Top issues identified by participants

Boredom

Participants indicated that there is not a lot to do in Yellowknife, and this is a challenge confronting many youth. They suggested that boredom was a contributing factor to substance use.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Substance and Alcohol Abuse/Addictions

Participants indicated that alcohol is a greater problem than drugs; however, they were also aware of many marijuana and cocaine users. They noted that substance abuse is a problem for youth and adults alike.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services.

Poverty

Youth in attendance stated that poverty is a major issue facing their communities. Often this poverty drives youth and adults alike to turn to alcohol and drugs either as a way to escape or because they cannot afford to get involved in any activities.

Facilitator recommendation: There is a need for deal.org to develop more content that provides suggestions for activities in which youth can become involved even if they do not have a great deal of financial resources. Providing guidance as to how youth can start their own community groups and sporting organizations may also be beneficial.

Impaired Driving

Participants reported that impaired driving was a problem not only in cars but also with skidoos and ATVs. They stated that impaired driving occurs when intoxicated people are trying to get away from the police.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were again seen as a major issue as is common across the country. deal.org should provide additional Awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties as well as information about impaired driving and ATVs and skidoos.

Gambling

The youth in attendance felt that gambling was a large problem in their communities, particularly because many of the people who gamble are already impoverished and cannot afford to lose this money. They also felt that gambling was linked to boredom because there are few accessible activities.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org needs to publish content on gambling addictions and how to help friends and family who have such an addiction. Additionally, resources that explore different activities that can be used to deal with boredom would be useful in targeting this problem.

Overall Reaction - G Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain a moderate amount of feedback on issues facing youth in G Division, but it was very challenging. The youth in attendance were very reserved and not as forthcoming as those in subsequent forums. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on boredom, poverty, addictions and substance abuse.

“H” Division - Yarmouth

Participants: Youth from across southern Nova Scotia

Setup: Due to logistical/timing issues, the full workshop including creating of posters was not delivered in Yarmouth. Instead, discussion/brainstorming around issues affecting Yarmouth and southern Nova Scotia was extended.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Yarmouth, Municipal District

Population: 10,304

Median age: 42.6

Median Income (2005): 50,995

Language most often spoken at home, English: 9920

Language most often spoken at home, French: 170

Aboriginal Identity Population: 900

Total Visible Minority Population: 140

Youth described Yarmouth and surrounding communities as follows:

- Quiet
- Dirty
- Not a lot to do
- Retirement community
- Identified retail as primary employment for youth including drugstore, food services, and retail. Minimum wage is \$7.60 per hour.

When asked if they were mayor for the day participants said they would try to increase tourism to support the local economy and to ensure roads were adequately paved. The participants demonstrated knowledge of infrastructure issues affecting southern Nova Scotia.

Top issues identified by participants

Gossip

Gossip was identified as a major pastime. Participants noted that knowing that everyone would gossip about them is a major barrier to seeking help for a problem (such as safer sex, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, etc). Participants would prefer to have someone to talk to that was integrated into the school (i.e. social worker, nurse) so that the stigma would be diminished.

Facilitator recommendation: Since gossip is prevalent in our culture, deal.org should create materials for the website that encourage youth to think critically about gossip and how it can harm relationships with peers. Showing gossip as a form of bullying may increase awareness.

Rivalry

Participants identified rivalry between schools to be a problem. The main rivalries exist between Francophone and Anglophone students. Participants noted that the rivalry can be so intense that it will stop them from having friendships or relationships with students from rival schools.

Facilitator recommendation: This type of rivalry appears to be a fairly common experience across the country. deal.org could consider creating resources for youth to prevent school rivalries from getting out of hand (i.e. escalating to violence).

Addictions

Participants believe there are adequate services to help people with addictions; however, people do not access them. As with teen pregnancy and other issues, youth are afraid to seek help since gossip is so prevalent. Participants also think that some people do not believe they have a problem and would not seek help.

Facilitator recommendation: The issue of youth not accessing services due to social stigma needs to be more thoroughly examined. In the meantime, deal.org will make available appropriate resources for youth to help educate about warning signs of addictions. Emphasizing the confidential nature of many such services may also be helpful.

Teen Pregnancy

Participants indicated that teen pregnancy was a very common issue that affected many families and noted that there is a lot of gossip around pregnant teens.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information on abortions and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Depression and Suicide

Participants identified suicide as a major problem facing youth. Many participants expressed frustration because they think adults do not take depression and suicidal thoughts seriously. Participants believe adults perceive depression as a phase while teens are actually quite serious.

Many participants were upset about a recent gun related death at a house party in Kentville, Nova Scotia. (Reference: Luc O'Hara who shot and killed himself accidentally at a house party where he may have been drinking)

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org should create awareness messaging for parents encouraging them to view depression seriously and not as a phase. Additional depression and suicide resources should be made available on the deal.org program website.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants reported that there are youth who do not respect police and do not have a good relationship with police. Participants reported the letters "FTP" have been spray painted on police cars. When asked, participants were unsure as to how to improve police/community relations.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming session where youth are asked to consider the role and responsibilities of police versus role and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve.

Parties/ Impaired Driving

Participants stated that the main activity in the evenings on weekends is house parties. Popular activities at parties include listening to music, playing poker and gambling and playing Nintendo Wii and Guitar Hero. Participants identified 14 as the age when most people start drinking at parties. Participants reported that drinking and drug use was common among a range of “crowds” or different types of people and not just the so-called “bad kids”.

Participants shared many stories about impaired driving accidents and cited deaths that have occurred over the past few years. They indicated that they think most people drive drunk because there is no other way to get around.

Facilitator recommendation: Once again, alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were again seen as a major issue. deal.org should provide additional awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties.

Overall Reaction - H Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in H Division (in particular southern Nova Scotia). This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on gossip, bullying, rivalry, depression, suicide, and substance abuse.

Participants in attendance demonstrated a keen interest in sharing their experiences and opinions on their community. Ongoing consultation could be considered for this community in particular in the area of police/youth interaction and improving relationships between both groups.

“J” Division - Oromocto

Participants: 7th and 8th grade students from Oromocto, New Brunswick and surrounding communities, including the Oromocto 26 Indian Reserve.

Setup: The forum was held at Ridgeview Middle School and both the discussion and poster-making activity took place. Youth presented their findings for local media and the RCMP Inspector for “J” Division, district 2.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Oromocto, New Brunswick (town)

Population: 8,402

Median age: 29.6

Median Income (2005): 70,094

Language most often spoken at home, English: 7345

Language most often spoken at home, French: 955

Aboriginal Identity Population: 210

Total Visible Minority Population: 165

Youth described Oromocto and surrounding communities as follows:

- Calm, quiet
- Boring, not a lot to do
- Friendly communities where everyone knows each other

When asked what they would do if they were in charge, participants said they would provide more community services geared towards youth. The participants suggested more sports teams and places for youth to hang out, as well as job opportunities for youth and public transportation.

Top issues identified by participants

Boredom

Participants identified boredom as a major contributing factor to many problems facing youth in their community. Participants suggested that an attitude of “there’s nothing else to do” resulted in experimentation with drugs, alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Participants also inferred that boredom was a root cause of mischief, criminal activity (theft, vandalism) and violence amongst youth.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Substance Abuse

Participants identified drugs as a significant issue for youth in Oromocto. Participants from the Oromocto 26 Indian Reserve specifically noted that snorting pills, marijuana and alcohol abuse were plaguing their community. Participants stated that drugs (particularly marijuana) were very easily accessible in their communities. Some participants also indicated that they found the D.A.R.E. program to be beneficial in their decision not to use drugs.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services.

Underage Drinking/Alcohol

Participants said that it is common for underage drinking to take place on the weekends or at parties. Participants identified that alcohol use can cause increased violence and negative behaviour. Participants did however point out that they were thankful for their local chapter of T.A.D.D. (Teens against Drunk Driving) as both a deterrent to alcohol use and something to occupy their time.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol abuse is an issue of significant concern, and while deal.org has existing resources in the “Knowzone” as well as various webzine articles related to alcohol consumption, additional materials should be provided to address coping with and the prevention of alcohol abuse.

Cigarette Smoking

Participants believe that underage cigarette smoking is a concern, and recognized the dangers that accompany smoking.

Facilitator recommendation: Response from participants indicates that the anti-smoking messages they have received has been successful in both informing youth of the dangers of smoking and in dissuading them from it. Anti-smoking messaging/campaigns should be examined to see how similar tactics could be effective for other areas of concern. deal.org will ensure that substance abuse education information and presentations include tobacco.

Violence

Participants stated that fights among students and rivalries between neighbourhoods that escalate into fights are frequent.

Facilitator recommendation: Because violence is a significant part of popular culture, further information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods should be placed on the deal.org website to demonstrate positive alternatives to violence.

Overall Reaction - J Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics available on this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in J Division. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on substance abuse, violence, cigarette smoking and boredom.

Participants demonstrated an excellent sense of community and candidly shared their experiences and thoughts. Participants were also aware of problems in their communities that did not specifically affect youth such as homelessness, and poor road conditions. Participants acknowledged that the Oromocto 26 Indian Reserve is experiencing amplified social and substance abuse problems that require additional attention.

“J” Division - Tracadie-Sheila

Participants: Youth from Tracadie-Sheila, New Brunswick and surrounding communities.

Setup: The forum was held at a local conference centre and while the discussion was extended, both the discussion and poster-making activity took place. Youth presented their findings for local media and RCMP representatives included District Commander, Inspector Roch Fortin, and the Non Commissioned Officer in charge of Operations (Ops. NCO) Michel Boissonnault.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Tracadie-Sheila, New Brunswick (town)

Population: 4474

Median age: 43.2

Median Income (2005): 49,657

Language most often spoken at home, English: 120

Language most often spoken at home, French: 4125

Aboriginal Identity Population: 20

Total Visible Minority Population: 55

Youth described Tracadie-Sheila and surrounding communities as follows:

- Quiet
- Close-knit
- The great outdoors
- Not a lot of economic development, so there are very few opportunities for youth to work

The youth participants commented that they enjoyed a great deal of freedom in their communities, and that there is a strong sense of Acadian and Francophone pride. When asked what they would do if given the opportunity to make a change in their communities, participants said that they invest in activities and sports for youth. Participants noted that it was easy to get involved in their communities because of how close-knit everyone is.

Top issues identified by participants

Substance Abuse

Participants informed us that they believe youth in these communities smoke a lot of marijuana, mostly because it is easy to access and because it is easier to take drugs than to try and find something else to do. Participants explained that a lot of youth smoke marijuana because they are bored, and that most youth in the region experiment with this drug. Participants noted that while police and school administration do address this issue, casual smokers of marijuana are not usually targeted. Participants expressed frustration that youth who smoke marijuana are reprimanded by school administration and police by being suspended from school, which they feel is an inappropriate response. Participants suggested that students caught for possession of marijuana be required to do community service or attend rehab. The participants also stated the importance of parental and community support for substance abuse issues, as well as that of the school administration and police.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services.

Underage Drinking/Alcohol

Participants identified alcohol consumption to be as prevalent as marijuana use in their communities. They noted that because alcohol consumption is socially acceptable, underage drinking is perceived to be less problematic.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol abuse is an issue of significant concern, and while deal.org has existing resources in the “Knowzone” as well as various webzine articles related to alcohol consumption, additional materials should be provided to address prevention and coping with alcohol abuse.

Bullying/Gossip

Gossip and bullying as a result of the small-town mentality were identified by participants as a challenge for youth in their communities. Participants noted that there were occasionally turf wars (“chicanes de clochers”) but that they rarely escalated to violence.

Facilitator recommendation: Since gossip is prevalent in our culture, deal.org should create materials for the website that encourage youth to think critically about gossip and how it can harm relationships with peers. Showing gossip as a form of bullying may increase awareness. deal.org will also continue to provide resources related to bullying for youth to access.

Boredom

Participants inferred that boredom is a root cause of mischief and leads to experimentation with drugs and alcohol. The participants indicated that they feel there is very little to do in their communities.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Migration/Lack of Economic Opportunity

Participants identified the lack of economic development in their communities as a hindrance for youth in their communities. They noted that there are very few job opportunities for youth, and as such they cannot afford to travel to places where there are things to do. The participants also made reference to the high number of young men and women from New Brunswick who have left the province to work in Alberta where there are more economic opportunities. Some participants were visibly concerned about the future of their communities if the youth left and did not return. Participants also stated that they felt that the lack of economic development in their communities contributed also to a lack of resources to improve programs and facilities for youth.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will research and post links to resources that will help youth create their own economic opportunities through government funding and youth entrepreneurial programs.

Prejudice and Stereotypes

Participants noted that prejudice and stereotyping is problematic for youth in their communities. Participants indicated that these prejudices included those against community members for being part of a Francophone minority, as well as those towards youth in general.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same, and will create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them.

Overall Reaction - J Division:

The information obtained was consistent with current statistical information on Tracadie-Sheila. The youth in this community were very open and highly motivated. They shared a number of creative and valuable solutions for the problems faced by youth in their communities. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in J Division. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on substance abuse, bullying, prejudice and stereotyping, and economic opportunities for youth.

Overall reaction – J Division (combined):

The youth participants in Oromocto and Tracadie-Sheila were highly engaged in the youth forums and extremely willing to share their thoughts and opinions. Deal.org would like to re-visit J Division in order to perform more in depth consultation on subjects of particular concern to the youth in these communities. In addition, deal.org would like to further explore police-youth interaction in J Division and would like to consider the possibility of a facilitated session to explore police/youth partnership in crime prevention.

“K” Division - St. Albert

Participants: Youth from St. Albert, Alberta.

Setup: Both the poster-making activity and the discussion took place.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

St. Albert, Alberta (city)

Population: 57,719

Median age: 38.2

Median Income (2005): 98,401

Language most often spoken at home, English: 55,795

Language most often spoken at home, French: 40

Aboriginal Identity Population: 1640

Total Visible Minority Population: 2525

Youth described St. Albert and surrounding communities as follows:

- Rich
- Close-knit
- Friendly
- Safe

Top issues identified by participants

Violence/Abuse

Participants indicated that violence in schools is a problem. They also suggested that if someone was a victim of violence at home that there was a lack of supportive resources available to cope with the situation. A participant shared a story that when she tried to report abuse she was not believed because the perpetrator had a good reputation in the community.

Facilitator recommendation: Because violence is a significant part of popular culture, further information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods should be placed on the deal.org website to demonstrate positive alternatives to violence. deal.org should develop resources and/or provide links to resources that can help victims of violence and abuse, and also to teach bystanders and friends how to respond appropriately when they learn of abuse or witness violence, including bullying.

Substance Abuse and Alcohol

Participants reported that drug use was related to boredom - a lack of affordable activities to do results in youth partying, drinking and consuming drugs. Participants noted that drugs popular in their community included marijuana, ecstasy and cocaine. Participants indicated they did not think the police cared whether or not youth in St. Albert were using drugs.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were again seen as a major issue. deal.org should provide additional awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties. We will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with

the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be offered.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants stated that they interact with police typically only when something has gone wrong or they are getting into trouble, though they did note that, when applicable, they interact positively with their school resource officer. Participants expressed a desire to have a more positive relationship with police officers in their community, and for more opportunities to express their opinions with police.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming session where youth are asked to consider the role and responsibilities of police versus role and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve. Furthermore, deal.org will continue to promote the National Youth Officer program and its resources for youth officers to engage youth and effectively deliver presentations and lesson plans in a classroom setting.

Prejudice and Stereotypes

Participants indicated that they found stereotypes to be problematic in their community. Youth were concerned that because of their close-knit community, it can be hard to lose a bad reputation and to overcome labels and stereotypes once they are applied.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same, and will create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them.

Teen Pregnancy

Participants stated that they believe teen pregnancy is a problem in their community.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information on abortions and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Overall Reaction - K Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in K Division. The consultation in K Division was also unique in that both Francophone and Anglophone youth were well-represented. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on stereotypes, violence and substance and alcohol use and abuse.

Ongoing consultation could be considered for this community in particular in the area of police/youth interaction and improving relationships between both groups.

“L” Division - Montague

Participants: Youth from Montague, Prince Edward Island and surrounding communities.

Setup: Both the discussion and the poster-making activity took place with the middle-school students at this forum.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Montague, Prince Edward Island (town)

Population: 1802

Median age: 45.4

Median Income (2005): 43,114

Language most often spoken at home, English: 1690

Language most often spoken at home, French: 0

Aboriginal Identity Population: 35

Total Visible Minority Population: 40

Youth described Montague and surrounding communities as follows:

- Peaceful
- Calm
- Boring
- Lots of police in rough areas

When asked if they were mayor for the day participants said they would fix/finish the bridge, allow residents to pay taxes in town instead of having to travel to Charlottetown, build new facilities including a mall, a hockey rink and a theme park. Participants would also open more fast food restaurants and an electronics store.

Top issues identified by participants

Emigration/Lack of Economic Opportunity

Participants believe that one of the greatest issues in their community is that people are continuously leaving PEI to find work elsewhere in Canada, particularly young people. They noted that the jobs available to youth in their community are few and less-than-desirable.

Facilitator recommendation: Further research should be conducted addressing the effects of this migration on youth remaining in PEI. deal.org will research and post links to resources that will help youth create their own economic opportunities through government funding and youth entrepreneurial programs.

Substance Abuse

Participants indicated that substance use and abuse is a concern for youth in their community.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be provided.

Underage Drinking/Alcohol

Participants also noted that alcohol consumption is common by youth in their community.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol abuse is an issue of significant concern, and while deal.org has existing resources in the “Knowzone” as well as various webzine articles related to alcohol consumption, additional materials should be provided to address coping with and the prevention of alcohol abuse.

Mischief (Vandalism and Assault by Chestnut)

Participants noted that youth in their community were constantly getting into trouble for mischief or for committing acts of vandalism such as egging houses, shooting paint balls and toilet-papering structures. They also noted that some youth will gather chestnuts and throw them at people.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org should continue to provide youth with creative and productive ideas on how to use their time, which may discourage their involvement in disruptive behaviour. On a related note, boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Overall Reaction - L Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in L Division. This consultation was unique in that the participants were younger than our typical participants. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on entrepreneurship and substance abuse.

Participants in attendance shared their experiences and opinions on their community earnestly. Ongoing consultation could be considered for this community if it is decided that the RCMP and deal.org will be involved in research on the effects of young people’s westward emigration from the Maritimes on the communities they are leaving behind.

“L” Division – O’Leary and area

Participants: Youth from O’Leary, Tignish, Alberton and Aboriginal youth from Lennox Island, Prince Edward Island.

Setup: Both the discussion and the poster-making activity took place with the high school students at this forum.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

O’Leary, Prince Edward Island (community)

Population: 861

Median age: 46.3

Median Family Income (2005): 32,676

Language most often spoken at home, English: 825

Language most often spoken at home, French: 0

Aboriginal Identity Population: 0

Total Visible Minority Population: 15

Youth described O’Leary and surrounding communities as follows:

- Boring
- Lack of things to do
- Lack of good jobs
- Perceived as “hicks” by the rest of Canada

Top issues identified by participants

Emigration/Lack of Economic Opportunity

Participants believe that one of the greatest issues in their community is that people are continuously leaving PEI to find work elsewhere in Canada, particularly young people. They also noted that the jobs available to youth in their community are few and less-than-desirable.

Facilitator recommendation: Further research should be conducted addressing the effects of this emigration on youth remaining in PEI. deal.org will research and post links to resources that will help youth create their own economic opportunities through government funding and youth entrepreneurial programs.

Underage Drinking/Alcohol

Participants also noted that alcohol consumption is common by youth in their community. In particular, groups of youth congregate in parking lots or in fields drinking alcohol.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol abuse is an issue of significant concern, and while deal.org has existing resources in the “Knowzone” as well as various webzine articles related to alcohol consumption, additional materials should be provided to address coping with and the prevention of alcohol abuse.

Rivalry/Violence

Participants noted that there is a significant rivalry between towns and hockey teams. Fights have

broken out after hockey games and have required police intervention.

Facilitator recommendation: This type of rivalry appears to be a fairly common experience across the country. deal.org could consider creating resources for youth to prevent school rivalries from getting out of hand (i.e. escalating to violence).

Overall Reaction - L Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in L Division, this time from a slightly older group of youth. This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on entrepreneurship and substance abuse.

“V” Division - Iqaluit

Participants: Youth living in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Setup: The forum with Iqaluit youth was held in Ottawa, and RCMP representatives present for the last part of the forum included the National Youth Officer Program Coordinator and the Manager of National Youth Services.

About the Community (from Statistics Canada):

Iqaluit, Nunavut (city)

Population: 6184

Median age: 28.8

Median Income (2005): 92,123

Language most often spoken at home, English: 4015

Language most often spoken at home, French: 180

Aboriginal Identity Population: 3650

Total Visible Minority Population: 200

Youth described Iqaluit as follows:

- Beautiful landscape
- Dirty and unkempt neighbourhoods
- Full of opportunities for youth: be it FANS (Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students), a high minimum wage, job opportunities for students, YOUCAN/Cadets, school and extracurricular activities.

When asked what changes they would implement to improve their community, participants said they would stop the tolerance of alcohol and drug consumption, make drunkenness in school unacceptable, promote a positive attitude for change, have a stricter school system with punishment for bullies and provide rehab for those who need it.

Top issues identified by participants

Discipline and Respect

Participants appeared appalled at the general lack of discipline and respect in their school environments. Many were concerned that students were being given passing grades when they had failed assignments. Participants noted that teachers have to ask students to come to class, there is no discipline when students are late or absent and that teachers are often threatened with violence if they try to enforce any rules. Participants described the classrooms as being ruled by the disruptive students, and they noted that because those students were often their friends, that they felt uncomfortable telling them to respect their teachers and pay attention. Participants expressed concern that perhaps the teachers did not trust or respect the students either.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will provide additional resources promoting self-respect and respect for others, perhaps focused on the relationship between youth and authority figures.

Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Participants believe that marijuana and alcohol use has been normalized in their community.

They indicated that last year there was a significant problem with individuals who were addicted to pharmaceutical drugs.

The participants also noted that products not meant for consumption containing alcohol must be locked up in stores (such as hair spray, cough syrup and hand sanitizer), and that binge drinking with hard liquor is a common pastime for adults and youth alike. Participants spoke of bootleggers and of a tendency for youth to drink as much as they can quickly, without thinking of potential consequences.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but should also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members, as well as offer links to appropriate services.

Teen Pregnancy/Young Parenthood

Participants indicated that there were high rates of teen pregnancy, noting that it is common for pregnant teens to drop out of school. Participants suggested that young and inexperienced parents lacking self-respect were passing those values onto their children. Participants indicated that parents often ignore their children's activities or are permissive by drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana/cigarettes around them or with them. Participants believe that families do not communicate effectively and suggest that this is at fault for a number of the problems facing their community.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information on abortions and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Depression and Suicide

Participants identified suicide as a major problem facing youth, noting that sexual assault and abuse are often contributing factors for those who commit suicide. Participants believed that most of the time, those who commit suicide do not seek help for their problems (depression, addiction, etc).

Facilitator recommendation: Additional depression and suicide resources should be made available on the deal.org program website. deal.org should also create materials to help youth understand the concept of stigma and how it can be overcome.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants reported that they believe there is very little police enforcement. They indicated that the police will often see intoxicated people in public and do nothing but tell them to go home and be safe. Participants stated that the relationship between the public and the police in their community is not very positive. Participants also stated that the police are in the middle school and high school every day, dealing with violent threats against teachers from students.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming session where youth are asked to

consider the role and responsibilities of police versus role and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve.

Violence/Abuse

Participants stated that teachers have been threatened with knives at school, and that it happens as early as in middle school. Participants described 'gang ups' (when multiple aggressors simultaneously target one victim for assault), which they claimed were fairly frequent occurrences. The participants also indicated that alcohol and drugs often play a part in inciting violence.

Participants also noted that they believe there is a high proportion of child abuse and sexual abuse. Participants' comments suggest they believe because of the taboo nature of abuse, no one really talks about it and that this lack of communication leads to suicide. Participants stated that sexual assault happens frequently, particularly date rape, but that victims are ashamed and will not talk about it.

Facilitator recommendation: Further research into the root causes of violence and abuse in this community is required. deal.org should develop resources and/or provide links to resources that can help victims of violence and abuse, and also to teach bystanders and friends how to respond appropriately when they learn of abuse or witness violence. As violence is a significant part of popular culture, further information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods should be placed on the deal.org website to demonstrate positive alternatives to violence.

Prostitution

Participants stated that young teenage girls will frequently have sex with older men in order to gain drugs, alcohol or money and that while this is not discussed, it is widely practiced.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will expand our resources on safe sex. Resources dealing with drug addictions may also be relevant, because youth indicated that drug and alcohol addictions were the primary motivation for underage girls to engage in prostitution.

Gossip

Participants mentioned that rumours are frequently circulating around town, which often escalates the severity of an incident. Participants made reference to the small-town mentality, where everyone knows each other's business. For instance, participants indicated that suicide is not on the news but everyone always hears about it.

Facilitator recommendation: Since gossip is prevalent in our culture, deal.org should create materials for the website that encourage youth to think critically about gossip and how it can harm relationships with peers. Showing gossip as a form of bullying may increase awareness.

Cigarette Smoking

Participants believe that underage cigarette smoking is a concern, and recognized the dangers that accompany smoking.

Facilitator recommendation: Response from participants indicates that the anti-smoking messages they have received has been successful in both informing youth of the dangers of smoking and in dissuading them from it. Anti-smoking messaging/campaigns should be examined

to see how similar tactics could be effective for other areas of concern. deal.org will ensure that substance abuse education information and presentations include tobacco.

Homelessness

At the end of the session, participants added that they believed one of the most significant challenges facing their community was homelessness.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org should create resources related to alternatives youth have to living on the street when they feel there is nowhere else to go.

Overall Reaction - V Division:

Many of the issues identified were consistent with current statistics for this community. deal.org was able to obtain excellent feedback on issues facing youth in V Division (in particular, Iqaluit). This consultation has identified the need for deal.org to develop additional resources on gossip, bullying, abuse, violence, depression, suicide, respect, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse.

Participants in attendance were very open to sharing their experiences and opinions on their community. Ongoing consultation could be considered for this community, as the youth are very aware of the challenges facing them and propose collaborations between youth and authority figures to address them.

Canada

Participants: Youth between the ages of 14-17 from across Canada who speak English as their first language.

Setup: As part of the RCMP's participation in Historica's Encounters with Canada, deal.org staff had the opportunity to speak with approximately 100 youth gathered in Ottawa in February 2008.

About Canada (from Statistics Canada):

Population: 33,143,610

Median age: 39.5

Median Income (2005): 66,343

Language most often spoken at home, English: 20,584,775

Language most often spoken at home, French: 6,608,125

Aboriginal Identity Population: 1,172,785

Total Visible Minority Population: 5,068,090

Top issues identified by participants

Boredom

Participants stated that one of the main reasons youth engage in risky and/or illegal behaviour is out of boredom. This statement was supported by youth from both rural and urban communities. Many participants expressed that an interest in sports alleviated boredom and the desire to engage in riskier behaviours.

Facilitator recommendation: Boredom is a prevalent theme identified by youth nationally, and as such deal.org should continue to create materials that offer solutions for coping with boredom, while also encouraging participation in school-related and extra-curricular activities.

Apathy

Participants expressed frustration at the apathy of other youth in their communities, claiming that while there were many venues for expression and opportunities to have a voice, few youth have an interest in making a difference.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide resources designed to motivate youth to participate in their communities, but should develop additional resources to help youth understand and engage in civic participation, democracy and citizenship.

Gangs and Violence

Participants from Vancouver talked negatively about their experiences with gang-related violence. Participants believe their peers joined gangs to appear cool and feel a sense of belonging. They expressed heightened fear when reading news stories about gun violence in their communities, and shared frustrations over gang-related deaths and violence that they believe stem from a desire to fit in or be seen as cool.

Facilitator recommendation: As violence is a significant part of popular culture, further information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods should be placed on the deal.org website to

demonstrate positive alternatives to violence. In collaboration with DOCAS, additional information to help prevent youth from joining gangs should be available on deal.org's website.

Teen Pregnancy

Participants indicated that teen pregnancy was a very common issue that affected many families and noted that there is a lot of gossip around pregnant teens.

Facilitator recommendation: Further deal.org will further expand its resources on safe sex and contraception, including information on the various types of contraceptives and how to acquire them. Information on abortions and links to relevant resources should also be included.

Bullying/Gossip

Participants discussed being teased and excluded for being different. Participants also identified that in smaller communities and schools, gossip often prevents youth from seeking medical help for issues like mental health and birth control. Because people will be talking if youth are seen going to a counselor or health facility, gossip prevents young people from seeking information and attention.

Facilitator recommendation: Because gossip is prevalent in our culture, deal.org should create materials for the website that encourage youth to think critically about gossip and how it can harm relationships with peers. Showing gossip as a form of bullying may increase awareness. deal.org will also continue to provide resources related to bullying for youth to access.

Depression and Suicide

Participants identified suicide as a major problem facing youth.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org should create awareness messaging for parents encouraging them to view depression seriously and not as a phase. Additional depression and suicide resources should be made available on the deal.org program website.

Police/Youth Interaction

Participants reported mixed feelings about the police. They indicated that most youth have little fear of police or legal repercussions, and that combined with boredom often results in illegal and risky behaviour. Participants stated that they are bored when police give them prevention-related presentations, and suggested that police use pedagogical means that would make the impact of issues personal to be more effective for youth.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org recommends a facilitated session with youth and police to address this issue. This session could include a brainstorming where youth are asked to consider the role and responsibilities of police versus role and responsibilities of youth in order to gain a greater awareness of what the police are trying to achieve.

Alcohol/ Impaired Driving

Participants reported that youth often consume alcohol, despite the laws in place. Participants noted that they would often attend parties in more rural areas where they would consume alcohol, and then due to a lack of public transportation services, would often drive home under

the influence of alcohol. Participants believed that the lack of affordable public transportation resulted in drinking and driving.

Facilitator recommendation: Alcohol, drugs and impaired driving were again seen as a major issue. deal.org should provide additional awareness tools and resources for alternatives to drinking/drugs at house parties.

Substance Abuse

Participants believe that drug use, in particular marijuana, was a contributing factor in the apathy of their peers.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to provide comprehensive information on drugs and alcohol on the website, but can also develop additional resources for youth on coping with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members. Links to appropriate services should also be provided.

Cigarette Smoking

Participants indicated that underage cigarette smoking is a concern, and recognized the dangers that accompany smoking.

Facilitator recommendation: Response from participants indicates that the anti-smoking messages they have received has been successful in both informing youth of the dangers of smoking and in dissuading them from it. Anti-smoking messaging/campaigns should be examined to see how similar tactics could be effective for other areas of concern. deal.org will ensure that substance abuse education information and presentations include tobacco.

Racism and Prejudice

Participants shared stories of exclusion based on their racial or religious background, as well as prejudice based on their sex, sexual orientation, weight and appearance. Participants placed specific emphasis on prejudice based on religious affiliation, while noting that they sometimes face discrimination when crossing the US border. Participants also noted that there was sometimes a clash between Aboriginal and other Canadians, wherein unofficial segregation occurs.

Facilitator recommendation: deal.org will continue to promote diversity and support initiatives that do the same, and will create additional resources to discuss the different kinds of prejudices and discrimination faced by young Canadians and ways in which to prevent them.

Overall Reaction:

Youth were very open to participating in the forum, and indicated that it was a very good way to showcase youth voices and to ensure their experiences and perspectives were represented in our consultation. Many of the youth expressed a desire for a continuing forum to share their ideas.

Participants were invited to join the deal.org National Youth Advisory Committee (NYAC). The NYAC will consist of monthly consultations held online about different issues facing young Canadians.

Final Recommendations

Please remember to keep in mind while reading this report that it is not necessarily reflecting the exact reality of the communities, but it is an assessment of youth's impressions on their communities and the problems they believe are the greatest facing youth.

1. Youth demonstrated a desire and an interest in sharing information with the RCMP in order to improve the circumstances in their communities. The RCMP and deal.org should take advantage of this enthusiasm by establishing the deal.org youth advisory committee. Subsequently, it is strongly recommended that the deal.org youth advisory committee be consulted frequently and at every stage of planning and implementation by RCMP National Crime Prevention Services on initiatives related to the National Youth Strategy and Interventions and Diversion that would directly affect youth.
2. It would be incredibly beneficial if deal.org held these national youth forums on a regular basis - annually if not bi-annually. Many of the youth we met were thrilled by the prospect of sharing their lives and experiences with Canada's police force and influencing policy and planning for an RCMP youth program. This sustained communication would ensure that deal.org has a 'finger on the pulse' of youth-identified issues, challenges and concerns. In addition, if the consultations take place in the same communities, we would be able to support a longitudinal study of youth issues and how the forums and other initiatives have influenced or changed the issues in the community. However, a number of challenges arose in planning the deal.org youth forums. Please see appendix A for recommendations for facilitating planning in the future.

In conjunction with the deal.org youth advisory committee, regular consultations with youth in communities will help us be acutely aware of the challenges facing young Canadians and continue to improve our services and programs to better meet their needs.

3. Collaboration with division youth officers and community stakeholders such as school administration or social workers should try and establish a way for youth to continue their discussions and find solutions in their community. Involving the appropriate community stakeholders may require more planning finesse, but in the end will provide a sustainable community-led, police supported avenue of expression for youth, empowering youth to find creative solutions to the challenges identified at the forum.
4. Enhance partnership between deal.org and DOCAS to address identified issues such as gangs and drugs and create more comprehensive resources for youth to be provided on the deal.org website.
5. The focus of responses to the identified issues should be on education and awareness, in order to further support crime prevention through social development, a core belief behind the deal.org program.

Deal.org Plan of Action

The youth forums provided a meaningful opportunity for discussion between youth and police, and were welcomed by the youth. It is hoped that the forums had a long-lasting impression on the youth and left them feeling more confident in themselves and in their potential to make change. In order to fulfill our commitment to represent the voice of Canadian youth in the RCMP and to continue supporting the force's existing crime prevention initiatives, the following plan of action has been developed.

To tackle the issues identified most, deal.org will:

1. Provide additional resources for youth on the issues of substance abuse and impaired driving. The additional resources shall include information on how to cope with the substance abuse and addiction of friends and family members as well as links to appropriate services.
2. Research and provide information on solutions for coping with boredom, such as encouraging youth to create their own community groups and sporting organizations or creating their own economic opportunities through government funding and youth entrepreneurial programs.
 - This will be complimented by the creation of a Youth Initiatives Database on the deal.org website, which will profile successful youth-led initiatives taking place across Canada.
3. Provide resources and links for victims of violence and abuse, and also teach bystanders and friends how to respond appropriately when they learn of abuse or witnesses violence. Deal.org will also include information on restorative justice and dispute resolution methods to demonstrate positive alternatives to violence.
4. Promote the RCMP's National Youth Officer Program (NYOP), which encourages open dialogue between youth and members, and other programs aimed at helping youth officers effectively engage youth. Deal.org will also promote the idea of facilitated sessions between youth and police to address issues in communities across Canada.
 - To assist in this, deal.org will develop a Youth Engagement Document, which will outline the importance of engaging youth, along with guidelines for effective youth engagement strategies.
5. Create resources on a variety of other unique issues that surfaced in the forums such as gambling, all-terrain vehicle safety and the relation between gossip and bullying.

As a result of information gathered in the forums, deal.org will also:

- Keep our existing information and resources up-to-date.
- Work with National Aboriginal Policing Services (NAPS) to make available more tools and resources for Aboriginal youth across Canada.
- Identify select communities to be pilot sites for future projects.
- Continue recruiting for and operating our National Youth Advisory Committee in order to stay connected with youth issues across Canada.

Reflection

Participants did not talk about internet safety or online bullying, nor issues of national security and economic integrity. Largely, youth were concerned about greater socio-economic issues that are often affiliated with root causes to crime, which may indicate that youth have a greater understanding of issues facing a community.

Many of the issues identified by youth were interrelated: for example, there were clear links between boredom, substance abuse, apathy, impaired driving and violence. However, youth did not always explicitly state the connections, nor did they always recognize that these issues often stem from the same root causes and socioeconomic factors. Further research may be required, but tools and resources should be included on the deal.org website to help youth draw those connections and encourage viable and creative solutions.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

The deal.org national youth forums were not an easy task to undertake. They required the coordination of several individuals across the country, and their efforts have been indispensable in planning and executing the youth forums. deal.org would like to formally thank those involved for their input, cooperation, creativity, assistance and support.