

For Immediate Release

**Campaigns overlook issues important to young voters as they struggle under the weight of the pandemic**

*GenerationZ took the biggest hit from COVID-19 but Youthful Cities analysis shows federal parties still prioritize older votes in the 2021 election*

**TORONTO (SEPTEMBER 15, 2021)**—Canada’s federal parties have been largely silent on issues important to Canadian youth according to analysis from Youthful Cities, an international research organization focused on young people between the ages of 15 and 29. Youthful Cities is concerned the lack of focus on young voters will lower youth voter turnout and has the potential to add to their growing sense of pandemic-related unease.

“For a group of people that have been so deeply affected by COVID-19 and has so many obstacles to navigate today, including employment and finding a career, cost of housing, cost of education, climate change and systemic barriers of oppression, compounded by the recent decision to remove polling stations from College and University campuses, Youth issues and voice felt widely overlooked by our political parties,” says Youthful Cities study co-author Rene Daranjo.

Youthful Cities created a resource for youth to better understand youth-specific programs and policies in each of the major political party platforms. It launches today. The data comes from Youthful Cities open data hub - Pivot Hub- and Stats Canada. The central question posed for this election-related research was: do the federal parties have platforms that are specifically targeted to youth in the areas youth are concerned about most.

Based on the analysis, youth are commanding little to no attention from the federal parties. Some findings from the research include:

- Youth were hardly mentioned during the September 9 English leaders debate; one question was asked by a youth voter and only one partial question connected to youth was posed by any of the moderators or journalists.
- Number times youth or young people mention by leaders in the debate: 6; seniors: 20
- Only the Green Party has specific youth programs and policies in all 6 youth priority areas
- Only the Liberal Party has identified funding amounts specifically for youth in its platform
- Of the six issues youth prioritize - affordability, jobs, safety, health, climate change, diversity and inclusion - only Youth Jobs generated dedicated focus from every party

“It’s difficult for anyone to be engaged when they know they’re not being heard. Young people have been working every day on the frontlines to fight for the futures of our communities, and it can be exhausting when the federal leaders are not prioritizing the issues that we care the most about. It is imperative federal leaders engage with youth so we can start working together” said Adelle Sium, organizer, #ELXN44 Youth Leaders Forum at SFU’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

# YOUTHFUL CITIES

## WHY IT MATTERS:

- In this upcoming election youth (18-29) make up 19.44% of the eligible voting population
- Youth faced significant adversity during this pandemic and need to be prioritized in the recovery plan
- During the leaders debate the word “youth” was mentioned 0 times

## FAST FACTS:

- In May 2020 the peak unemployment rate was close to 30% for 15-24 age demographic compared to approximately 10% for 25-55 age demographic
- In May 2020, at the peak, the youth unemployment rate increased 18.7% (from 10.4% to 29.1%) for the 15-24 age demographic vs 6.9% (from 4.7% to 11.6%) for the 25-55 age demographic
- According to the Pivot Survey done in October 2020 youth who reported poor or very poor overall health increase 13% from 6% to 19% after the pandemic

## LEARN MORE:

- **Youthful Cities:** <https://youthfulcities.com/youthelxn44/>
- **Pivot Hub:** <https://pivohub.youthfulcities.com>

## ABOUT YOUTHFULCITIES:

Since 2013 [YouthfulCities](#) has been measuring cities from the perspective of youth (ages 15-30). Through two global indexes, three Canadian Indexes and two global surveys they’ve measured infrastructure, cost of living, quality of life, access to education and much in between. All of this has been done in order to understand how youth feel about the “youthfulness” of their cities, and which cities place the greatest emphasis on supporting young people and people who identify as “youthful”.

Youthful Cities works in partnership with the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

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