



“The optimism that has come from seeing so many young people working together is incredibly inspiring.”

On March 7th, 2015 the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador held its first Youth Heritage Forum, the first time youth from across the province have been provided the opportunity to come together and discuss their role in the heritage sector. Sixty youth participants, between the ages of 18 and 35, from various backgrounds attended.

The forum was comprised of a guest panel of young heritage professionals followed by a breakout session, during which the participants voiced their opinions and put forth their recommendations for heritage organizations. This report serves as a roadmap for heritage organizations in becoming youth inclusive by incorporating recommendations directly from youth.

WHAT ROLE CAN YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY IN THE HERITAGE SECTOR?

“Youth have unique, relevant, and applicable skills. We just need the opportunity to showcase those skills.”

TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS – Youth are trained to use a variety of multimedia technology and are enthusiastic about the digitization process. Many institutions are weary of digitizing materials, however, youth understand the benefits of such a process.

FORWARD THINKING – Youth are motivated and open to new and inventive ways of sharing heritage. Young people have the ability to offer fresh ideas and energy to stagnant boards or institutions.

FLEXIBILITY – Youth wanting to break into the heritage sector are willing and able to accept unusual projects and work hours outside of the normal nine-to-five to gain beneficial experience.

ADVANCED EDUCATION – Young people are choosing to attain higher levels of education, including graduate school, specialized certificates and diplomas, and cooperative education that are beneficial to heritage organizations and programming.

The future role of youth in heritage is: to frame and share heritage in ways that are exciting, accessible, and fresh; to be the tradition bearers of their generation; and to bridge the gap between young and old generations.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOUTH FACE WHEN IT COMES TO HERITAGE OPPORTUNITIES AND ENGAGEMENT?

“Just because I’m young doesn’t mean I am any less capable or knowledgeable.”

LACK OF EXPERIENCE – Youth face the challenge of needing experience to acquire a job, but being unable to acquire a job due to lack of experience. Many participants named this their biggest and most frustrating challenge.

LACK OF FUNDING AND OPPORTUNITIES – There is a lack of funding and employment / volunteer opportunities for youth. Heritage organizations must strive to improve this situation.

AGEISM – Youth face an implied lack of experience, knowledge, and skills due to their age. They have been unfairly perceived as entitled, lazy, unskilled, and inexperienced. Once given the opportunity to show their skills and knowledge they have very successful experiences.

6 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR HERITAGE ORGANIZATION YOUTH INCLUSIVE

CREATE MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Open seats for youth on executive boards and committees, create volunteer opportunities, plan youth focused programming and workshops, have a youth ambassador, and offer mentorships. You must allow youth a voice within your institution and offer valuable learning experiences.

FOCUS ON FUNDING FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Explore funding for youth specific employment and advocate for these positions.

USE ‘YOUTH FRIENDLY’ CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Use social media to reach a broad audience and engage youth.

BE ACCESSIBLE

When offering opportunities to you, be sure to maintain flexibility with times and locations.

BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND PRACTICES

To further evolve your organization and engage young people you must be open to new ideas and apply them in your operations.

BE SOCIAL

Host youth inclusive events. These events serve as networking opportunities both for youth and for your organization as a potential employer.



“I was excited to hear all of the fantastic ideas everyone brought to the table. These big ideas need to become real world applications.”

ichblog.ca