

2024 NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY WORKING GROUP

Progress Report



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors

The Office of Youth Affairs

2024 NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY
WORKING GROUP
Progress Report

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9 Months of Meetings



10 Youth Engagements

National Mini-Youth Conference
National 18+ Youth Conference and
Zone-Ins



2 Community Consultation Meetings

Dr. Daniel Cavanagh Mental Health Research
Presentation & Raleigh International
Presentation on Anti-social Behavior



2 International Events

Commonwealth Youth Minister's Meeting &
Small Island Developing States - Global
Children and Youth Action Summit



1 Survey Complete

Diversity and Inclusion



1 Workshop Delivered

Safeguarding Workshop

MESSAGE *from the* CHAIRPERSON

As the Chair of the National Youth Policy Working Group, I have the esteemed privilege of introducing this year's progress report on behalf of a passionate and ambitious group of individuals committed to advancing youth work on the island of Bermuda.

This year marks the second year of the working group's existence and we have been able to confidently build upon last year's progress by maintaining momentum, bolstering our base of resources, and facilitating broader community collaboration. This working group report is not only a representation of the work completed to date, but also acts as a framework for our recommendations that will ultimately guide the implementation of goals and aspirations outlined in the National Youth Policy.

Co-creation is at the heart of these initiatives as we make concerted efforts to include young people in a meaningful and genuine way by allowing for their insights to inform and structure our decisions and findings. Almost 50% of our working group is comprised of individuals that fit within the definition of youth, and we feel incredibly empowered and fortunate to have this type of representation around the table.

Additionally, continuity of efforts over time remains a significant priority as we look past our finite term as a working group. As we head towards the future, we aim to sustain the work of the National Youth Policy through the recommendation of a Bermuda National Youth Council, which would be a centralized, democratically formed, and legislatively endorsed body composed of Bermuda's youth, that acts on behalf of their peers and consistently contributes to the National Youth Policy for years to come.

Finally, it would be remiss of me to not recognize the hard work, countless hours and unwavering commitment of the working group members who volunteer their time to help Bermuda progress towards an environment young people can thrive in. I am thankful and proud to be part of this team and I look forward to witnessing the prolonged impact the National Youth Policy will have on the future of this island.

Theo Wolffe
Chairperson

MEETING *Overview*

Over the course of the past year, the National Youth Policy Working Group has congregated monthly to ideate solutions and action initiatives aimed at advancing the National Youth Policy goals.

Due to the far-reaching nature of the policy goals, and their underlying social dynamics, the working group has formed four sub-groups that cater to closely aligned sub-sections of the eight pillars of the National Youth Policy:

- 1** Safeguarding and Minimizing Anti-Social Behavior
- 2** Education, Employment and Civic Engagement
- 3** Sport, Culture and Healthy Lifestyle
- 4** Diversity and Inclusion

Each of these sub-groups met monthly, in between full working group meetings, to hone in on these specific goals.

The working group forms part of a broader set of individuals and entities working collectively to promote youth work in Bermuda under the umbrella of the National Youth Policy. Through collaboration and expansion of efforts, the policy can be mobilized in a comprehensive fashion to target the ever-evolving list of addressable items that pertain to the youth of Bermuda. The following working group progress report highlights accomplishments and endeavors arising both out of the working group and government-level activities on behalf of youth.

SUBGROUP 1: SAFEGUARDING *and* MINIMIZING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

GOALS 1 *and* 3

MEMBERS: Kelly Hunt, Melissa Looby, Davida Morris, Ajai Peets, Terri-Lynn Richardson, Dany Rodrigues, Seon Tatem McKenzie-Kohl Tuckett



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GOAL 1: *Keep Young People Safe and Protected From Harm*

When parents place their children in extracurricular activities it is with the expectation that their child is in a safe environment.

- 1) Hosted safeguarding workshop for organisations that work with young people to help them to establish a safe guarding policy
- 2) Ensured that grants were only provided to organisations that had a safeguarding policy

GOAL 3: *Minimize Anti Social Behavior*

Keeping their child away from untoward influences is the aim of every parent.

- 1) The Gang Violence Reduction Team hosted the Say it Loud Summit for young boys in Bermuda
- 2) The Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors continues with the Multi-Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to address the issues arising from domestic abuse and family violence



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SUBGROUP 1: *Keep Young People Safe, Protected
From Harm and Anti-Social Behaviour*

66%

of young people
feel there are safe
spaces in Bermuda.



33%

of young people do
not feel there are safe
spaces in Bermuda.

SUBGROUP 2: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT *and* CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOALS 2, 4 *and* 7

MEMBERS: Kelly Hunt, Melissa Looby, Terrai Trott,
McKenzie-Kohl Tuckett, Theo Wolffe



GOAL 2: *Achieve Full Potential in Learning Development and Education*

When assessing the current relationship between young people and their future, it is crucial that we ensure preparedness at every level and equip them with tools and skills necessary to maximize their potential in academic, professional and community-based contexts.

- 1) Presented plans for the expansion of signature learning partnerships to increase breadth of offerings to Bermudian students.
- 2) Improved Child Day Care Allowance categories
- 3) The Mirrors Programme hosted the First World Summit in Bermuda in partnership with overseas partners at Quantum Learning Global (QLG). The Summit included an Educators and Youth Workers Workshop, facilitator training, and a SuperCamp Junior Forum for middle school students.
- 4) In support of Education Reform, signed the first wave of Signature Learning Partnerships MOUs
- 5) Education Reform Unit hosted a Signature Immersion Fair for M3 students focusing on STEM, Trades and Professions, Education, and Hospitality and tourism signature learning programs

GOAL 4: *Increase Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities*

The foundation and exposure provided through education can significantly impact the trajectory of a young person's life.

- 1) Aided in the development of the annual Career Expo for Bermudian students. Plans to engage a wider set of career stakeholders in future years are in progress
- 2) Provided training programmes in heavy highway asphalt construction, sustainable and renewable solar energy
- 3) Provided a Department of Workforce Development Graduate Trainee Programme
- 4) The Department of Corrections teamed up with the Bermuda Technical Institute Association to enable inmates to attain IT qualifications



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GOAL 7: *Enable Participation in Civic Engagement*

Young people should be included in decision making in regard to their lives.

- 1) Hosted "Zone-Ins" across the island to provide the youth with a platform to engage with the Minister
- 2) The Office of Youth Affairs hosted the first annual Mini-Youth Conference, a recommendation of the NYPWG to provide students of varying backgrounds with workshops that target key developmental goals for the youth of Bermuda
- 3) Hosted the first National 18+ Youth Conference in July 2024



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SUBGROUP 3: SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE *in* LIVING HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIVES

GOALS 5 *and* 6

MEMBERS: Tejah Bean, David Northcott, Ajai Peets, Seon Tatem, Terrai Trott and Seldon Woolridge



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GOAL 5: *Engage Youth in Sport Culture Recreation*

Engagement in sports, recreational and cultural activities are beneficial to young people developmentally, socially, and potentially economically and are to be encouraged.

- 1) After School Programme Partnerships with Futsal, Bermuda Badminton Association and Bermuda Squash Association.
- 2) A Tea Party at Paget Primary After School Programme to celebrate the coronation of His Royal Highness King Charles
- 3) A Dine Around the World event at the Purvis Primary After School Programme
- 4) Mirrors hosted 7th Annual Student Art and Digital Competition
- 5) Painted mural on the Sammy Wilson Central Zone Community Centre

GOAL 6: *Support Young People to Be Active and Healthy*

Young people's health both physical and mental are of paramount importance to their development. Participation in activities that support both should always be a part of their lives.



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- 1) The Out of School Summer Programme, Play It All hosted members of the Special Olympics Team which had the additional benefit of The Office of Youth Affairs hiring an individual who was neurodivergent.
- 2) Launched Maternal and Child Health Survey
- 3) Hosted a conversation on Adolescent Mental Health – July 19, 2023
- 4) AG and focused prevention week activities on the detriments of vaping after the most recent DNDC National School survey (2019) showed vaping had become an international public health crisis
- 5) Ministry of Health developed a First 1000 Days pathway to strengthen care for mothers and their children

SUBGROUP 3: *Support young people in living healthy active lives***31.25%**

of middle schoolers
are more likely to
participate in sports.

**15.63%**

of middle
schoolers are more
likely watch sports.

**53.13%**

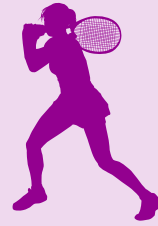
of middle schoolers
are more likely to
watch and play sports.

SUBGROUP 3: *Support young people in living healthy active lives*



53.13%

of middle schoolers do not participate in sports with their families.



81.25%

of middle schoolers participate in sporting activities outside of school.



40%

of middle schoolers participate in cultural activities.



75%

of middle schoolers prefer recreational activities that are group or team based than on their own.



35%

of middle schoolers participate in recreational activities because they want to make friends or be around people with similar interests.



48%

of middle schoolers do not participate in recreational activities with their family.

SUBGROUP 4: ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY *and* INCLUSION

GOAL 8

MEMBERS: David Northcott, Ajai Peets,
Dany Rodriguez and Nadine Henry

GOAL 8: *Encourage Diversity and Inclusion*

It could be said that the current generation of young people are the most diverse of all previous generations due to their varied interests and access to technology. Despite these differences however, all persons, no matter their interests, abilities, or backgrounds want to belong, deserve to have safe spaces to express who they are, and have the ability to participate in society freely.

- 1) The Office of Youth Affairs intentionally hired an individual who was neurodivergent in their After School Programme
- 2) The theme of the first National Youth Mini-Conference was diversity and inclusion with several workshops on varying aspects of D&I over the two days.
- 3) Rock House Oven Housing Unit was renovated to be an accessible home
- 4) A panel discussion on 'Understanding Disability in the Workplace' was hosted



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SUBGROUP 4: *Encourage Diversity and Inclusion*

What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?



83%
Race



50%
LGBTQIA



66%
Religion



66%
Differently
Able



83%
Education



50%
Classism



50%
Body
Positivity



66%
Cultural
Acceptance



50%
Sexism

SUBGROUP 4: *Encourage Diversity and Inclusion*

My school handles D&I concerns well:



33%
Strongly
Agree

16%
Agree

16%
Neither
agree or
disagree

33%
Disagree

HIGHLIGHTS

National Mini Youth Conference

On January 25th and 26th, The Office of Youth Affairs (TOYA) hosted over 160 primary, middle and senior school students for two thought provoking, entertainment filled days. The first annual Big Up Yaself National Mini Youth Conference, held at the Botanical Gardens, was a recommendation of the Nation Youth Policy Working Group and a huge undertaking for The Office of Youth Affairs. The conference was centered on Goal 8- Encourage Diversity and Inclusion of the National Youth Policy Plan.

It was seen as a resounding success in that it was able to engage participants on several important topics related to the National Youth Policy and collect rich meaningful data from young people that will be used to inform future initiatives.



Adolescent Mental Health

While the maintenance of the physical body is of importance, of equal value is mental health. The levels of adolescent anxiety and depression has risen sharply in Bermuda post COVID-19. This is in-line with a worldwide trend, which caused the Working Group to reach out to Dr. Daniel Cavanagh who's work on Adolescent Mental Health will feature heavily in recommendations and activities of the National Youth Policy Working group in the upcoming year.

Addressing adolescent mental health will require the combined efforts of mental health professionals, schools, the Bermuda Government and families. The National Youth Policy Working Group is proud to lend its support to a most worthy cause.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL 1: KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM

- 1) Creation of a public database of social services, agencies and programs that maintain a basic standard set by the Office of Youth Affairs.
- 2) Launch a Youth Safeguarding Ambassador Program, empowering young individuals to advocate for safety within their communities. This initiative would provide training and resources for youth to recognize and address potential risks, promote awareness of safeguarding policies, and serve as liaisons between youth organizations and relevant authorities.
- 3) Create a Grant Fund for Innovative safeguarding initiatives, inviting youth-focused organizations to propose and implement creative projects aimed at enhancing safety for young people. This funding opportunity would support initiatives such as interactive workshops, awareness campaigns, and technological solutions tailored to address specific safeguarding challenges in diverse youth settings.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL IN LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

- 4) Active collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development, Ministry of Labour and Economy and the private sectors to understand gaps in preparation of young Bermudians for the workforce.
 - a) Utilise insights collated by the Ministry of Labour and Economy to shape training and education.
 - b) Round tables or interviews with companies to identify cogent solutions with high probability of impact.
- 5) Focus data gathering efforts on key educational delinquencies through the form of internal forums and stakeholder consultations

GOAL 3: MINIMIZE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

- 6) Adopt a refined definition of anti-social behaviour to be used across all government departments and helping agencies.
- 7) Workshops and/or seminars on the refined definition of anti-social behaviour to promote a shared understanding and collaborative response

- 8) Foster collaboration between local businesses, schools, and community organizations to create more internship opportunities for at-risk youth, providing them with constructive engagement.
- 9) Develop initiatives or events that encourage active parental involvement in youth activities, fostering a supportive environment at home. This would include:
 - a) Family Fun Days or fairs
 - b) Harbour Nights (The Office of Youth Affairs pop-up tent set up);
 - c) Leverage community center programming
- 10) Conduct workshops for parents on effective communication and understanding the challenges faced by their children, aiming to strengthen family bonds.
- 11) Expand vocational training programs to equip at-risk youth with valuable skills, increasing their employability and reducing the likelihood of engaging in antisocial behavior.

GOAL 4: INCREASE EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- 12) Active collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development, Ministry of Labour and Economy and the private sectors to understand gaps in preparation of young Bermudians for the workforce.
 - a) Utilise insights collated by the Ministry of Labour and Economy to shape training and education.
 - b) Round tables or interviews with companies to identify cogent solutions with high probability of impact.

GOAL 5: ENGAGE YOUTH IN SPORT, CULTURE, AND RECREATION

- 13) Creation of a Youth, Sports and Arts Festival, an annual event showcasing a variety of sports, arts, and recreational activities tailored to young people's interests.
- 14) Establish a Youth Mentorship in recreation program, where experienced coaches, artists, and other recreational professionals, mentor young people interested in pursuing their passions in sports, arts, and other recreational activities

GOAL 6: SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

- 15)** Improve recreational infrastructure across the island. Invest in upgrading and maintaining recreational facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and community centers to provide safe and inviting spaces for young people to participate in various activities
- 16)** Create the Youth Wellness Challenge, a year-long wellness challenge for young people, encouraging them to adopt healthy habits and track their progress in physical activity, nutrition, and mental wellness.
- 17)** Youth Health and Fitness Grants to provide financial support for youth-led initiatives focused on promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and mental wellbeing.
- 18)** Healthy Living Workshops a series of workshops and seminars led by health experts, nutritionists, and fitness professionals to educate young people and their families on the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

GOAL 7: ENABLE PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- 19)** Establish a framework for the development of a Bermuda National Youth Council to act as a successor to the National Youth Policy Working Group. This would allow for a consolidated and democratically elected body to act on behalf of the youth of Bermuda and foster civic engagement between multiple parties.

GOAL 8: ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- 20)** Facilitate community focused panel discussions, workshops, or town hall meetings that address diversity and inclusion, and educate more on equity and inspiring youth.
- 21)** Facilitate independent skills training for youth with diverse neurodivergence or physical, cognitive, learning disabilities to create employment opportunities.
- 22)** Collaborate with the Ministry of Health & Ministry of Labour and Economy to form a Protection of Rights for those with diverse neurodivergence or physical, cognitive, learning disabilities in the workplace.

- 23) Consider increasing the scope of the National Youth Policy age range for “youth” to aid those with neurodivergence or physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities.
- 24) Collaborating with Mental Health Professionals, Medical Professionals, Youth Workers to create and establish an Intervention Pathway Standard for youth with diverse neurodivergence or physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities.

PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS



ACCOMPLISHED

- ✓ **Assigned a public officer** to coordinate the NYP goals and objectives.
- ✓ **Revised the composition of the National Youth Policy Working Group Members** to increase youth representation at the table, have larger ministerial involvement and increase collaboration with youth organization
- ✓ **Amended the Working Group's Terms of Reference** to include the Sub-groups and provision for ad hoc groups to be formed for special projects.
- ✓ **Facilitated the Annual Youth Conference** so that the Youth may express opinions on proposed or new government policies.
- ✓ **Conducted a Safeguarding Workshop** to ensure all youth organizations and groups have statements declaring their commitment to protect the youth they meet



IN PROGRESS

- 🕒 **Host a Zone-In 18 plus** to understand the needs of those youth who will transition soon to adulthood.
- 🕒 **Develop a Mental Health Youth Campaign** to heighten awareness and provide information about mental health, substance abuse and available resources.
- 🕒 **Expand the mandate of Premier's Youth Fitness Program** to include Personal Development Plans for every school age child.
- 🕒 **Sponsor formal Youth Debate** to expound on emerging issues deeply affecting youth and develop resolutions.

CLOSING MESSAGE *from* DEPUTY CHAIR

As Deputy Chair of the National Youth Policy Working Group, I'm deeply encouraged by the strides we've made toward fostering a brighter future for Bermuda's youth. Our progress report stands as a testament to our unwavering commitment to the eight goals outlined in the National Youth Policy. With each step forward, we move closer to realizing a reality where young people are not only secure but empowered to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Looking ahead, I see a horizon filled with promise and opportunity. In today's world, young people face a myriad of challenges that can often seem insurmountable. From economic uncertainty to social pressures and mental health concerns, the journey to adulthood is fraught with obstacles. However, amidst these hardships, the existence of a comprehensive National Youth Policy serves as a beacon of hope. It signifies a collective acknowledgment of the struggles faced by young people and a tangible commitment to address them.

By providing a framework for support and empowerment, the policy offers a ray of light in what can sometimes feel like a dark and uncertain landscape. It signifies a promise of tangible action, demonstrating that the voices and needs of young people are not only heard but prioritized. In the face of adversity, the National Youth Policy stands as a symbol of resilience and optimism, inspiring young people to persevere and envision a brighter future ahead. To maintain this momentum, the Working Group going into the future holds this ideology close, for the state of Bermuda's youth is at our utmost priority.

Moreover, our efforts extend far beyond the confines of policy goals. Through meaningful engagement in sports, culture, and civic activities, we're fostering social cohesion and building bridges across diverse communities. By encouraging diversity and inclusion, we're not only celebrating our differences but also tapping into the rich tapestry of talents and perspectives that Bermuda has to offer. Together, we're not just building a brighter future for Bermuda's youth—we're creating a more resilient and inclusive society where every Bermudian can thrive.

Sincerely,

Ajai Peets

Deputy Chair of the NYP Working Group

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY WORKING GROUP



Theo Wolffe
Chair



Ajai Peets
Deputy Chair



Melissa Looby



Seon Tatem



Kelly Hunt



**Terri-Lynn
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Leeya Jeremy



Hana Bushara



Kayla Simmons



Sophia Tessitore



Olly Cherry



**Daelyn Saint-
Surin**



**Taj Donville-
Outerbridge**



Cadre Smith



**Taneesha
Ottley-Morgan**



Zarah Siddiqi



**Destinee Taylor-
Williams**

