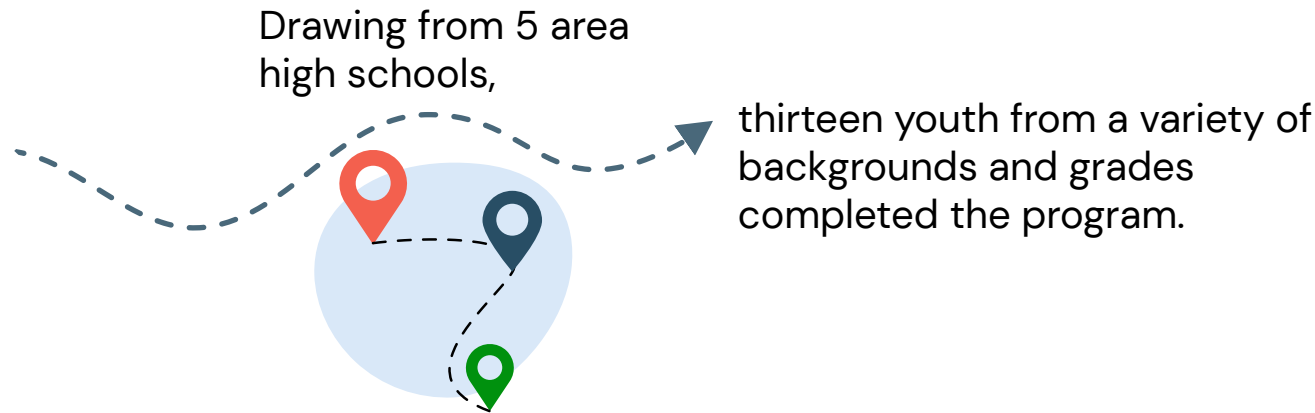


How they got started:





In September 2024, Foundry Abbotsford partnered to pilot the Agenda Gap program to expand their programming.



The challenge:

In working together weekly in-person, with facilitators, the youth went upstream and connected a **lack of political representation** to negative downstream impacts on youth wellbeing.


Here’s how they made a difference:

<p>1. Building a network</p>  <p>In mapping their collective network, they connected with a young adult working in provincial politics. This ally role-modeled and encouraged the youth to act on their goals.</p>	<p>3. Focusing their efforts</p>  <p>With all they learned, the youth advocated to <b>extend the voting age to those aged 16 and 17.</b></p>
<p>2. Finding key allies</p>  <p>Their research identified several other allies who were active in increasing political representation, especially for youth. In meeting with one of these allies, they refined their understanding of relevant policy barriers and learned about achievements in other jurisdictions.</p>	<p>4. Crafting a powerful message</p>  <p>With support, they drafted a letter summarizing the evidence in support of extending the vote, impacts of political representation on youth wellbeing, and made specific ‘Calls to Action.’ Their allies provided positive feedback and recommendations for strengthening their message.</p>


Their change action:

Their finalized letter was circulated as an **online petition** promoted via posters at their schools and the Vote16.ca website. It was **delivered by an ally to the Premier** and **emailed to the BC Special Committee on Democratic and Electoral Reform.**


Ripple effects:



**Acting on Priorities**  
The group identified other priorities during their time together. They successfully applied for a School Health grant and held an affordable nutrition event for youth transitioning out of high school, supported by a variety of community health allies.




**Reimagining Futures**  
The groups’ work inspired at least one youth to consider involvement in politics.



**Connected Communities**  
The program strengthened relationships and increased awareness about Foundry programming among youth and in their school communities.

.....



**Collective Action in Action**  
The group’s allies presented to the BC Special Committee on Democratic and Electoral Reform, citing the petition to make the case for extending the voting age.