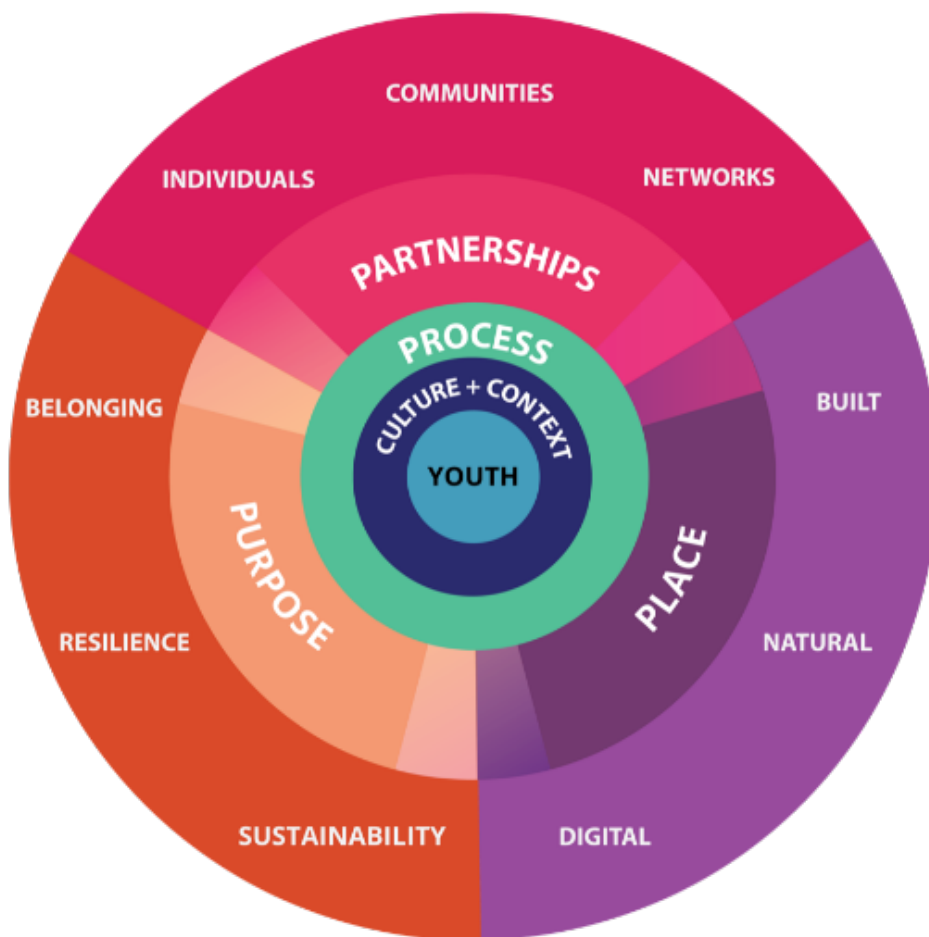


# ResiliencebyDesign Lab 4P Framework for Youth Engagement

## *Principles and Concepts*

The ResiliencebyDesign Lab at Royal Roads University has developed a framework for youth engagement in risk reduction and climate change efforts. It promotes adults as allies working with youth through four key principles: Partnerships, Place, Purpose and Process. The framework encourages meaningful engagement actions that position youth as critical stakeholders and key contributors in strengthening personal and community resilience. The RbD Lab 4P Framework supports purposeful actions that can advance the health, well-being, and resilience of youth, and contribute to everyday personal growth and respect. It responds to the rights of youth as equal citizens in decisions and processes that affect them and their peers, families and communities. The framework was developed through multiple RbD Lab projects, including “Youth Voices Rising: Recovery and Resilience in Wood Buffalo” funded the Canadian Red Cross.

**YOUTH** are at the centre of the 4P Framework as key stakeholders in climate-related decision making. This focus promotes efforts that not only benefit youth and strengthen their own agency, but are inclusive of and responsive to youth in ways that translate their ideas into concrete action. The 4P Framework respects and promotes all youth as creative, innovative citizens with valuable knowledge to share in the context of their own lives and within their larger networks and communities.



The 4P Framework recognizes that each individual, organization and community (whether geographic or a subpopulation within a community) has a unique culture and context. Recognizing the uniqueness of these features affects what and how activities and actions will be designed in your climate change workshop, and how, ultimately, they achieve the desired benefits, impacts and outcomes the youth desire in their climate action plans.

- **CULTURE** describes the beliefs, customs, norms, behaviors, languages, and assumptions acquired through social learning and the unique ways of working and knowing that exist in differing contexts.
- **CONTEXT** describes the unique background and circumstances of people living in a specific geographic region based on their history, culture, economy, geography, governance and social support structures, relationships, prior disaster experience, etc. The 4P Framework recognizes that all youth engagement efforts operate through this nexus of culture and context, which, in turn, shape the four principles of partnerships, place, purpose and process.

The **PARTNERSHIPS** principle promotes activities and actions that convene and connect stakeholders and knowledge holders in ways that support youth, their families and their communities to take action on climate change. This principle highlights the proactive inclusion of youth in collaborative, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships between individuals (inclusive of youth), communities, and networks across diverse sectors and disciplines. The principle promotes the identification and advancement of existing and emergent collaborations that generate opportunities for youth to explore, uphold, promote and act upon their own ideas in culturally responsive, reflexive and relational ways. The principle places a focus on building and strengthening Youth-Adult Partnerships. The principle promotes an inclusive and systematic approach that recognizes that individual youth and adults are connected to multiple, diverse peer groups and communities. A focus on partnerships across diverse sectors and disciplines build on the rich history, existing capacities and abilities, and connections community members have. It also allows you to more effectively identify potential barriers to be addressed for implementing climate action.

- **INDIVIDUALS:** The emphasis on promoting partnerships with individuals starts on the premise that every individual is an expert in their own disaster preparedness and recovery. Each person can provide a unique understanding of their own experiences, strengths, vulnerabilities and capacities. A focus on individuals specifically prioritizes youth as innovative and creative agents of change with the right to participate in decisions that directly affect them.
- **COMMUNITIES:** The emphasis on promoting partnerships with communities recognizes the strength that comes from people working together towards a shared goal. It promotes collaboration with formal groups (i.e., not-for-profits, social profits, schools, faith groups, institutions, governing bodies, industry, public and private sector organizations, etc.), informal groups (i.e., mentors, family members, peers), and others who engage with and support youth.
- **NETWORKS:** The emphasis to align with networks builds on the strength of existing community collaborations (i.e. coalitions, associations, working groups, youth councils, clubs, peer groups, task forces, boards, committees, etc.). Promoting network collaboration includes identifying, creating, and supporting opportunities for new formal and informal groups to emerge at programmatic, research, and policy levels (i.e. youth advisories, youth volunteer corps, social media movements, etc.).

The **PLACE** principle promotes activities and actions that respect and respond to the connection youth have to the physical and symbolic meanings of place (e.g., house versus home). After a disaster event, this includes the implications unique to youth experiences of attachment, loss, and the renegotiation that can occur. Focusing on place is to prioritize climate actions that support or create spaces where youth find purpose and meaning, build relationships, create a sense of belonging and strengthen their resilience.

- **BUILT:** A focus on built environments—physical and material places—captures the need to understand youths' relationships with and requirements for spaces that offer them a sense of belonging; especially for those most at risk before and after disaster. Attention on built environments means deliberately planning for and responding to disruptions that alter youths' access and accessibility to places that can support them in their recovery and resilience.
- **NATURAL:** A focus on natural environments—places that developed naturally rather than man-made—recognizes DRR, recovery, and climate actions require planning for and responding to the sense of trauma, loss, and grief youth might experience when natural landscapes of a place are altered or destroyed (i.e. forests, rivers, lakes, wildlife). It acknowledges that youth may have deep connections to nature that are cultural, symbolic, or activity-based. This is especially the case among groups who hold historic, spiritual, intergenerational, and traditional connections to land (i.e. Indigenous communities).
- **DIGITAL:** A focus on digital spaces recognizes that youth communicate and connect through electronic devices and technology in unique ways. The concept recognizes that digital spaces can cause harm or create barriers, as well as inform and engage youth in ways that are otherwise impeded by physical infrastructure and time constraints (i.e. social media, website, mobile messaging, etc.). It promotes working with youth to create youth-friendly digital spaces as opportunities for disaster-focused, safe spaces to emerge. Such spaces can build collective meaning, engagement as well as support offline mobilization efforts.

The **PURPOSE** principle promotes activities and actions that are meaningful to youth in their unique communities (however they define them) and shifts programs or policies that are harmful or not beneficial for youth. A focus on purpose is to consider action plans that contribute to their and their communities' capacity to anticipate, confront, withstand and recover from challenges they encounter as the climate changes. The principle aims to strengthen youths' sense of belonging and resilience in sustainable ways. Belonging is tied to individuals feeling valued. Resilience is about youth being able to cope with disruption and change through their own agency. Sustainability ensures activities support practices that advance economic, environmental and social development, with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup>

- **BELONGING**: Having a sense of belonging or acceptance to a group or space supports a sense of being valued, and can support youth managing difficult emotions (e.g., loss, stress). Validating youth's ideas, contributions, and concerns can build a sense of belonging and trust. A focus on belonging also includes identifying the places where youth can go to feel safe, brave, supported, connected and confident while navigating their unique roles and responsibilities in their communities.
- **RESILIENCE**: Having the capacity individually and within a wider community to anticipate, adapt to, learn from and even grow from adversity, challenges, stress and trauma. Many people, including youth, demonstrate resilience – behaviours, thoughts and actions that include flexibility, accepting change is a part of living, nurturing a positive orientation, setting goals and working to accomplish them, and learning from experience. A focus on resilience includes nurturing these attitudes and capacities, identifying and addressing the contexts and root causes that create vulnerable situations (e.g., poverty, inequity, exclusion, racism, etc).
- **SUSTAINABILITY**: Ensuring initiatives and programs maintain and advance the environmental, economic and social wellbeing of youth and their communities now and in the future—with particular attention on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A focus on sustainability promotes long-term engagement and solutions that are inclusive, especially for youth facing disadvantage or marginalization in a community.

The **PROCESS** principle promotes activities and actions that stimulate and strengthen youth agency and engagement in culturally and contextually sensitive ways. The focus on process recognizes that the how of actions is as important as the what. This principle invites a consideration of the contextually specific advantages and challenges that youth face in all aspects of their lives. It encourages youth and their adult partners to explore how to co-create and leverage opportunities for building youth resilience through activities and actions that are youth-informed, youth-friendly and youth-driven where possible.

This principle promotes processes that are ethical, safe, sensitive, relevant and acknowledging of and responsive to power dynamics, social stigmas, and inequities. These inequities can be due to age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, class, abilities, sexual orientation and other social identity categories. The principle includes the recognition that processes can have a significant impact on results (they may be potentially transformative in and of themselves) and thus require a clear understanding of the desired outcomes. A focus on process also requires the identification of how much time, space, and resources will be required to achieve those outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals)