

# UP for Learning

Unleashing the Power of Youth-Adult Partnership

## Empowering youth to create, innovate, and lead

*We believe that every young person should...*



**BE KNOWN  
AND VALUED**



**HAVE A SENSE  
OF PURPOSE**



**HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY  
AND ABILITY TO SHAPE  
THEIR OWN LIVES AND  
THE LIVES OF OTHERS**

“When students have a say,  
**they feel like they matter**, and  
what could possibly be more  
important than that for a  
student?”

—high school student,  
Communicating School Redesign

“I was reminded of **how  
much power we have** as  
individuals to change  
our own world and the  
world of others ... for  
the better.”

—middle school student, M3

“School district and  
community visioning is time-  
consuming and arduous  
work; however, in working  
with UP, **every member walks  
away equipped with the tools  
necessary to engage and inspire  
others** toward a common goal.”

—Amy Rex, Milton Town School District  
superintendent

**PHOTOS:** Left, Youth & Adults Transforming Schools Together team shares a joyful break after a day of drafting their action plan. Center, sophomore Maryanne Songhurst of Montpelier High School leads a discussion about youth-centered issues. Right, sophomore Grace Johnson from U-32 High School interviews Jonathan Carrigan of Bellows Falls Union High School at the High School GTY orientation.

Partnership creates ownership. Ownership sparks motivation. Motivation drives learning.



**THE CHALLENGE:**  
Vermont is losing the potential of too many of our young people. A widening opportunity gap is limiting their options.

### HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?



**2 out of 5**

VT youth report that **THEY ARE NOT VALUED** by their community.  
*(Students of color and LGBT students are significantly less likely to feel that they matter to their community.)*

Sources: Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, Search Institute Developmental Asset Survey, Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey



Only **61%** of students believe that **THEY HAVE A VOICE**

in their learning and their lives upon entering middle school.

This drops to **37%** by twelfth grade.



**Less than half**

of youth (44%) report a sense of **PERSONAL POWER**.

### RESULT:

- ↑ **DISENGAGEMENT** from learning
- ↑ Sense of **HOPELESSNESS**
- ↓ Decrease in **CRITICAL LIFE SKILL** development
- ↓ Decrease in high school completion and **POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS**
- ↓ Decrease in **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

### SOLUTION:

Ensure that every young person:

- Is **KNOWN AND VALUED** in their community
- Has a **SENSE OF PURPOSE**
- Has the ability to **SHAPE THEIR OWN LIVES**, and the **LIVES OF OTHERS**

### Communicating School Redesign

Youth-adult teams build support for school redesign.



### Getting to 'Y'

Young people become leaders in improving the health and wellness of their communities.



### Personal Power & Purpose through Partnership

Youth build self-awareness, effective communication, and self-advocacy skills over the course of a school year.



### M3: Mindset, Metacognition & Motivation

Youth master the ways brain-based strategies can drive their learning and share this knowledge with their peers and teachers. Concurrently, M3 teachers engage in professional development to hone their practice.



### Youth & Adults Transforming Schools Together

Students and teachers join together to ensure that learning is engaging and effective for all students, and youth are agents of change.



### Transforming School Culture through Restorative Practices

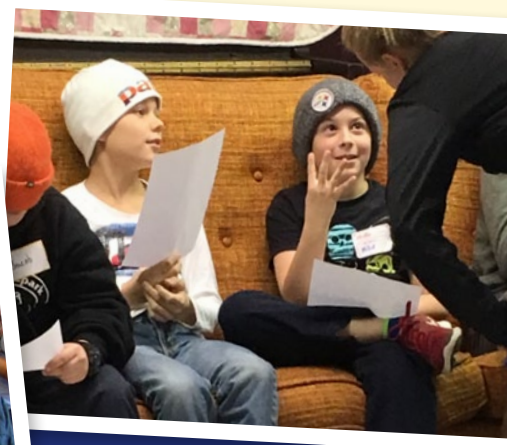
Youth and adults weave restorative principles and practices into the fabric of their school culture.



### Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability

**A partnership with Shelburne Farms**

Youth and adults create year-long projects focused on pathways to building a socially, economically, and ecologically just society.



### Customized Programs & Support

Schools partners with UP for Learning to create a wide variety of opportunities to position youth as change agents in partnership with adults.

I had many opportunities to listen to youth; they reflected such a high level of introspection and passion. My takeaway was simple: **No longer can change occur in education without youth and adults partnering together.**

—CSR principal and team member

"M3 changes the culture at our school. Assignments become opportunities, not obligation; challenges are embraced, not avoided; and **mistakes are viewed as steps to growth, not signs of failure.**"

— M3 teacher advisor



"I now know that education is a collaborative process between students and adults working together... I know that **meaningful action can be taken by anyone** and that it is an important part of democracy."

—CSR youth participant

When people ask me for an example of high quality work on student voice and youth-adult partnerships, **I always send them to UP for Learning. It is the premier nonprofit in the nation** that draws upon evidence-based practice and research to carefully design projects aimed at improving schools and empowering young people.

—Dr. Dana Mitra, Pennsylvania State University

# OPENING DOORS TO YOUTH AS INNOVATIVE LEADERS



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning















# Celebrating 11 Years of Growth

**OUR MISSION** is to shift the youth-adult relationship at the heart of education to partnership and to increase youth agency. This ensures that all young people have opportunities, support, knowledge, and skills to pursue active roles in their learning, their lives, and their community.

**WE ENVISION** a time when all youth will take responsibility for their own learning by collaborating with adults in the educational system to reach their own goals.

## VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Share Responsibility
- Start from Strengths
- Assume Positive Intentions
- Seek Equity & Justice
- Create Open Dialogue
- Employ Data to Drive Change

YEAR 1	YEAR 11
 <b>4</b> high school teams engaged in improving schools	 <b>63</b> high school & middle school teams engaged in improving their schools & communities
 Served schools in <b>4</b> of 14 counties	 Served schools in <b>12</b> of 14 counties
 <b>32</b> youth involved in changing their schools	 <b>550</b> empowered & skilled youth leaders made a positive difference in their schools & communities
 <b>1</b> school transformation program	 <b>8</b> youth-adult partnership programs transforming schools & communities
 <b>0</b> graduate courses	 <b>7</b> accredited graduate classes supporting teachers in their role with youth as co-creators of change
 <b>1</b> faculty founder	 <b>7</b> experienced and passionate educational leaders
 An operating budget of <b>\$60,000</b>	 An operating budget of over <b>\$550,000</b>

## SUPPORTERS & COLLABORATORS

In collaboration with the following foundations and organizations, we are proud to ensure that all young people have opportunities, support, knowledge, and skills needed to pursue active roles in their learning, their lives, and their community.



**WE ARE GRATEFUL** to the individuals, foundations, and organizations who have made our work possible over the past 11 years!