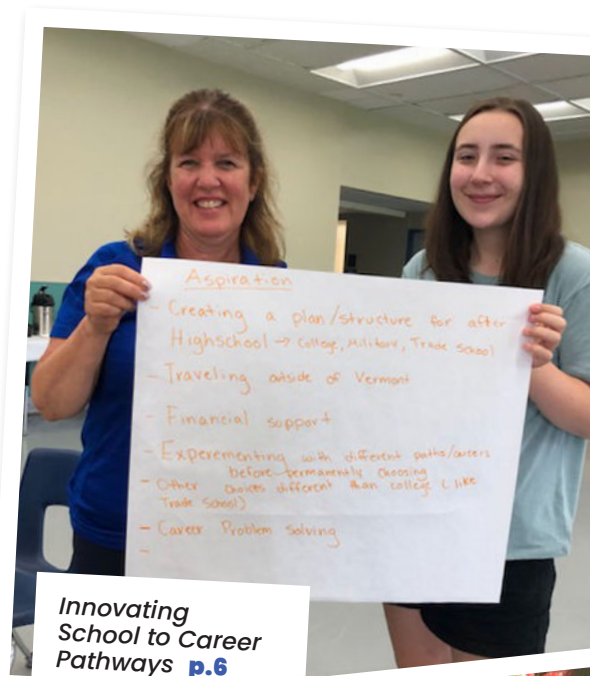


2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

UP for Learning supports systemic transformation in educational communities, engaging all learners, and increasing the authentic voice of youth in learning and decision-making. We believe educational equity is a basic human right and all young people deserve to be meaningfully engaged in their education. In our five primary programs and customized projects we use research-based models to change the student-teacher dynamic to shared ownership and responsibility. Through UP's facilitation, strategies, tools and ongoing coaching, young people can pursue active roles in their learning, their lives, and their community.



UP By the Numbers

Number of
youth-adult teams:

38

426 teams since 2008

96%

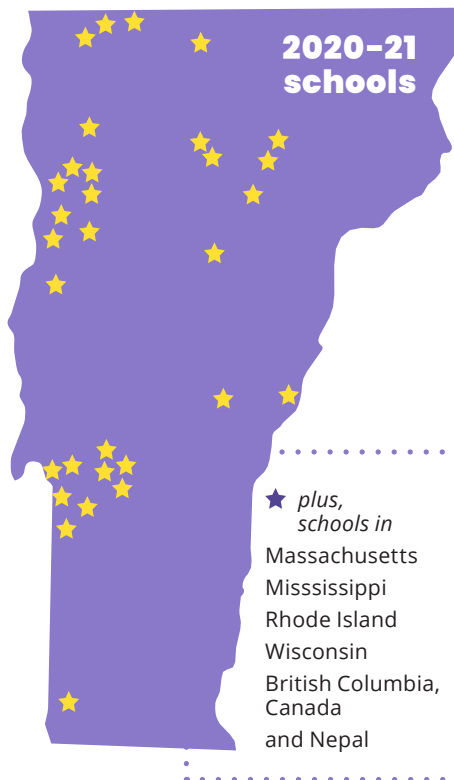
of Vermont
high schools

56%

of Vermont
middle schools

11%

of Vermont
elementary schools



Number of
youth leaders:

332

3,331 leaders since 2008

"My experiences with UP have been transformative. I've gotten to learn in so many different ways and have become more confident in my facilitation abilities and speaking in front of other people. I've also had the chance to meet a lot of different people, both youth and adults, and make connections that I wouldn't have before."

—UP youth facilitator

2 youth voting members on UP's Board of Directors

1 new new part-time position created, Youth Program Specialist, for a high school student

23 Youth Advisory Council members

700+ hours of compensated time for UP's Youth Co-Facilitators

9 monthly virtual racial justice dialogue events led by Vermont and Mississippi youth leaders

2 Virtual Conferences co-designed and co-facilitated by youth (fall 2020 & spring 2021)

13 youth-adult teams focused on implementing restorative practices at their school

Collective Impact = Systemic Change

UP partners with nonprofit and community partners facilitating the role of youth-adult partnership within their organizations and in the community.

Shelburne Farms

Essex Community Justice Center

Burlington Community Justice Center

Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

Spectrum Youth and Family Services

HTI Catalysts/Listening 4 Justice (Atlanta, GA)

Community College of Vermont (CCV)



UP for Learning's programming **significantly improves** youth and adult feelings of agency and belonging.

Source: analysis of 2020-2021 pre- to post-survey data from all participants

2020–21 Highlights



*"Joining the CPS Team, and working with UP, was the first time I worked on changes within the school system. **I realized how much should change so that students' voices can be heard** in classes and designing curriculum."*

—CPS youth participant, age 12

CULTIVATING PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY: LOCAL CHANGE WITH A GLOBAL IMPACT

Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability (CPS) inserts youth voice in building healthy, just communities. This year, CPS virtually engaged teams across Vermont, and from Mississippi and Nepal, in youth-adult partnerships with Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) as the core work. Seven youth facilitators, ages 13-18, joined UP and Shelburne Farms to support school teams as they implemented action for change. New relationships formed between our Vermont school teams and schools from Nepal and Piney Woods, MS. Piney Woods youth brought a passionate, diverse perspective on racial justice and equity in education to our CPS cohort. The multi-racial discussions ignited an ongoing dialogue series, planned and co-facilitated by our Vermont and Mississippi youth. These dialogues brought youth and adults together from across the world to have real and relevant conversations about systemic racism and injustice. The heart of these sessions were sharing personal stories from diverse perspectives, listening for

understanding, connecting as a community, and creating affinity groups for action. School teams focused on one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to address a need in their own community, strengthening pathways to a socially, economically, and ecologically just society.

Examples of team projects: youth driven policy change; youth representation in an administrative board; design and development of a student-centered sustainability program; peer to peer racial justice book talks; LGBTQ+advocacy and outreach in a middle school; environmental justice and action against plastic pollution; and the design and development of solar powered chicken coops for schools. The impact these teams had on their communities is impressive, their commitment to action for change is inspiring, and their enthusiasm for working as a global community is infectious.



A PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE: A SHARED VISION FOR MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Missisquoi Valley School District (MVSD) launched their Portrait of a Graduate Community Engagement project in winter 2021, following the Youth Participatory Action Research cycle. The project goal is to create a Portrait of a Graduate reflecting the hopes and dreams of the whole school community. Julie Regimbal, MVSD Superintendent, envisioned the district coming together to create **“a shared set of values you can carry with you...the lens through which we see everything.”** The task force — composed of a representative group of 5th -12th grade students, teachers/staff/administrators and parents/caregivers and community members — set out to capture and analyze the thoughts and dreams of all stakeholders about learning, programming, wellness and leadership in MVSD. This dedicated team met virtually each month to develop an initial data collection plan and community engagement process to understand the community’s vision for what every graduate of MVSD should experience. The team reviewed the initial data collection work, presented this to the MVSD School Board, and planned next steps for the 2021-2022 year.

Q: “What time is it on the clock of the world?”

A: “Time to close the gap between vision and practice.”

—Grace Lee Boggs and adrienne maree brown

When the pandemic hit, UP quickly pivoted and responded to the needs of our youth-adult teams. UP for Learning met virtually to support our school and community teams with a variety of resources. We now have a deeper understanding of the practice guided by our crystal-clear vision: whether teams meet virtually, in classrooms, or community spaces, UP’s work transcends. The heart and soul of our work — youth-adult partnership — gives communities their clear WHY and allows them to accomplish their goals with purpose. Addressing the needs of all learners is critical to meeting the needs of our time, and UP is committed to helping youth make lasting, concrete changes in their educational communities.



*"UP for Learning provides me an unparalleled opportunity to work on growth both in myself and within my community. I have developed as a leader and facilitator during a global pandemic, and I was able to do so through the support and kindness of those at UP for Learning. I now know that leadership is often mistaken for authority, while **true leadership looks like uniting your community for the benefit of everyone.**"*

—Winooski HS student and UP Youth Program Specialist

RADICAL INCLUSION, EQUITY AND ANTIRACISM: WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT

Deep, sustainable learning and system change is complex, the journey is not linear. UP for Learning facilitated a process with Winooski School District (WSD) guided by a commitment to equitable change and actualization of the identified demands of the Winooski Students for Antiracism. Throughout 2020-2021, UP provided WSD with the structured facilitation to begin to create equitable and antiracist systems, policies and experiences. UP facilitated a radically inclusive process for creating and strengthening youth-adult partnerships between WSD students, teachers, staff and administration, board, and other



community partners. UP has supported the building of an inclusive multi-stakeholder Antiracism Steering Committee and Demand-Based Action Teams to ensure to ensure that youth are centered every step of the way.

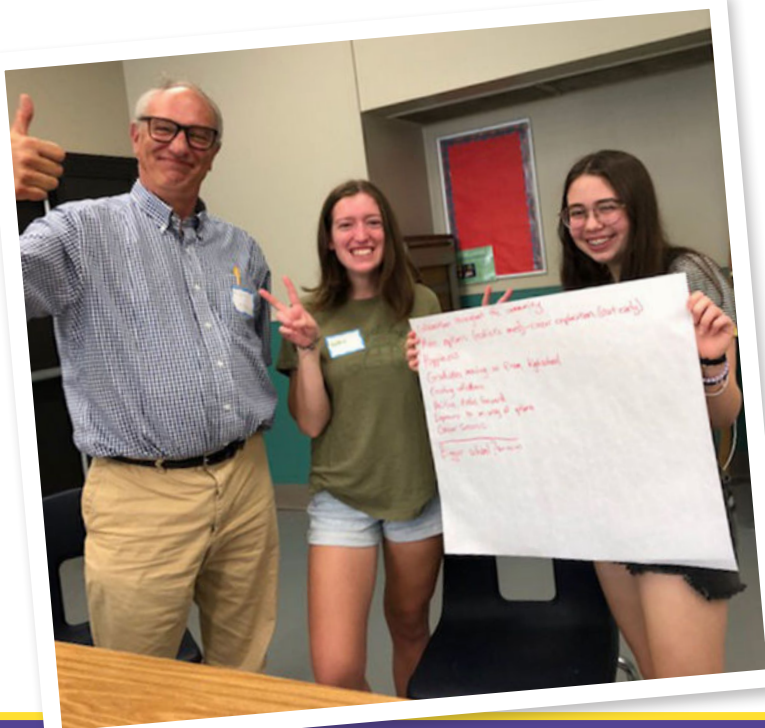
THE HEART OF UP FOR LEARNING: EXPANDING OUR YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth partners are change agents shaping school culture and Vermont with their work as co-facilitators of programs, co-designers and co-presenters at statewide and national conferences, and advocates on issues of health, safety, and wellbeing. The level of youth engagement in partnership and facilitation of our programming and advocacy work has grown, and UP is committed to providing opportunities to engage and support more young people who may have never thought of themselves as leaders. We engage and recruit emerging leaders from diverse racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as those who have been overlooked as leaders in the past. Over the past year, UP's Youth Advisory Council has become a place where youth set the agenda, facilitate the conversation, and lead the follow-up work — all of which contribute to and influence the direction of our organization and our educational system. This academic year, YAC members created a Learning During COVID survey shared with VT youth, analyzed the data, and shared their findings at the local and state level. Youth serve directly as members of UP's Board of Directors, and as members and leaders of our program teams at their schools.



INNOVATING SCHOOL TO CAREER PATHWAYS IN THE MILTON COMMUNITY: MILTON HIGH SCHOOL

The Milton School District is at the forefront of innovation (literally) with the creation of a **Milton Innovation Center** at their high school. With local business partners, the Center will support youth with career opportunities and the necessary skills development to thrive in a competitive job market. This innovative model will offer a direct school-to-career pathway for high school youth, accessible and engaging to all. The visioning team of school staff, middle/ high school youth, and community members gathered input and stories from the Milton community over the last year. The team will analyze the data to use as a road map for Innovation Center design, including programming, staffing, space requirements, equipment needs, and potential business/community partners. UP is currently supporting *Phase 2: Design and Piloting* with *Phase 3: Implementation* anticipated for the 2022-2023 school year. The creativity, ingenuity and out-of-the-box thinking of this project is a model for how youth and adults can reimagine and redesign what school should look like for 21st century learners.



"Our youth are the future of our society and our best hope for solving our global problems. Engaging them in system thinking and leadership activities must be part of our educational system from an early age. Times have changed and schools must adapt."

—Michael Metz, UP Executive Director Advisory Council and Innovation Center Visioning Team member

YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP AT THETFORD ACADEMY: BRINGING MEANING TO THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY DATA

Thetford Academy (TA) joined Getting to 'Y (GTY) and formed two new clubs. Middle and high school youth joined the school's Student Assistance Provider for a year of learning, fun, community engagement and

action. The two clubs met weekly, starting and ending each meeting with team bonding activities, such as sharing a "rose, thorn and pickle" that helped them get to know each other and become a true team. Despite being from different grades and social groups, the members of each GTY team clearly felt a sense of belonging and commitment to each other and to their group, as well as to the greater TA community. The GTY teams presented and led activities using Google Meet, while their peers participated in their classroom pods. After voting on top strengths and concerns as a whole group, the GTY teams planned and led successful remote Community Dialogue Events, shared their work with school and community members, collaborated to add to their list of existing activities and opportunities that support young people at Thetford Academy, and also got ideas on how to improve things. These dynamic GTY teams then moved to action! The groups decided to focus first on their mental health concerns and planned a teacher/staff training which was held in September about how to best support students in need. They have also planned an Open Gym event this fall to help increase connection and healthy activities. The teams set up a resource area in the student lounge to provide information on many mental health, wellness and safety topics and have arranged for an activity fair to reinstitute and expand club options at school. Additionally, two youth GTY team members presented about their experience at the Adolescent Health Institute annual conference. Two of the Thetford team members will join the UP for Learning team to help train other schools in GTY.



FROM A CLUB TO A CULTURE: MONUMENT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

The Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST) team at Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, Massachusetts has an abiding commitment to youth voice and youth-adult partnership. Since 2019, the team has engaged a representative group of youth and adults to persevere through the challenges of system-level change and stayed true to their aspirations to create a student-centered culture. In addition to co-creating and co-facilitating professional learning sessions for the faculty and staff, the YATST team:

- Designed and co-created an interactive app to connect youth, staff and community members
- Established a Principal Advisory Committee with youth representatives from every advisory
- Established student representative positions on the School Board
- Consulted on the design and facilitation of the advisory program

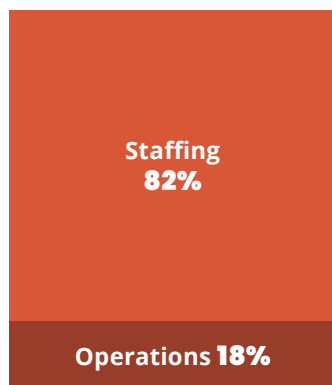
The team accomplished these goals in a fully remote learning environment. Their commitment to meet weekly allowed the team to create systemic change and experience what is possible when youth are at the table.

2020-2021 FINANCIALS

INCOME



EXPENSES



Economic Equity and Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring affordable access to our programs, and prioritizing our work with our most economically challenged and underserved schools. UP for Learning is committed to systemic social justice and closing the opportunity gap — ensuring that all schools have access to UP's work regardless of their ability to pay.

Thanks to our philanthropic supporters, we were able to realize our vision of greater educational equity across Vermont and beyond.

DONATE to support our work!

*Reading a paper copy of the annual report?
Look for a donation envelope tucked in these pages,
or go to upforlearning.org and click "donate."*

UP's Commitment to Anti-Racism

We at UP strive to be actively antiracist in our work and in our lives. UP Faculty, Board of Directors, and Youth Advisory Council members hold ourselves personally accountable, educate ourselves, and take action to combat systemic racism. In conversations, we repeatedly return to the importance of listening to the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). White communities cannot continue to form opinions about racism without hearing BIPOC voices. With our BIPOC community members, we stand in solidarity and we commit to doing the work to fight for liberation. We commit to continuing to deepen and strengthen our organization's antiracist policies and practices as we work towards educational equity and justice for communities across the country and world.

"UP facilitation has definitely enabled me to find more of my voice. Through UP, I have become more knowledgeable about education, and through that lens, more knowledge about interacting with others, facilitating dialogues, and engaging in meaningful conversation."

—Youth Advisory Council Member,
11th grade, Williamstown VT

Core Values and Beliefs

Our fundamental value is to **SEEK EQUITY & JUSTICE.**

We believe that **educational equity is a human right.** All young people have the right to a meaningful and engaging education. **In order to pursue this aim, we are guided by these principles and values...**

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Learning and change must be transparent and must be driven by adults and youth as equal partners.

START FROM STRENGTHS

Youth and adults have the wisdom and capacity to orchestrate change. Beginning with what's working provides hope and energizes a community to embrace change.

SEEK EQUITY & JUSTICE

CREATE OPEN DIALOGUE

Deep conversation is central to changing school cultures. When systems are designed for youth to be engaged as full partners with equal value, the work of school transformation can occur by creating a shared vision for education and the learning process.

EMPLOY DATA TO DRIVE CHANGE

Research is a vitally important way to build credibility between youth and adults. When a community works together to make meaning of their own data, they are strengthened by what they learn and emboldened to take action.

Empowering youth and adults to reimagine & transform education together

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