SPROUT

STUDENTS PLANTING SEEDS OF TOMORROW.

WHAT IS INFORMATION DROP #2?

The following Information Drop will introduce you to various topics to consider during the Sprout Case Competition. Your project may involve one or more of these topics, so consider your own interests and think about how each of these topics relate to one another.

Each topic has a brief overview and a few questions to think about. The best way to use this information drop is to think about your own areas of interest and which of these topics relates to them, and to consider topics that inform one another. The experts who will be at the competition also have some knowledge about one or more of these subject areas. Think about the areas of interest and the problems that you are interested in solving, and how experts in these areas could help you in that endeavor. --- It is ok to think outside the box!

TOPIC AREAS

CITY BUILDING

City building, including the design of buildings, the placement of buildings, and the implementation of buildings is influenced by political, economic, historic, and social factors (Fowler, 1992). City building has now become more about economic gain than anything else (Burke, 2017, p.8). Advances in technology, patterns in immigration, and increasing population size have led to some of the most developed North American cities, specifically Toronto, to become "corporatized" thus increasing public-private partnerships which allow large corporations to "monetize" urban spaces and services (Burke, 2017, p.7).

Consider this:
How does city building impact the city's inhabitants?
How can we build sustainable cities with a positive environmental impact?
How can we build in a way that improves lives and makes money?

HOUSING

There is currently an increasing concern about affordable housing in Canada. Reportedly, in the city of Toronto specifically, residents are spending approximately 60% of their income on housing, when they should only be spending 30%. Some experts argue that the crisis is due to the lack of low cost rental spaces available in large cities like Toronto, and that the majority of rentals are privately owned; and because it is financially beneficial for the government to allow housing to be privately owned, the needs of people who require social housing, specifically people experiencing homelessness, the elderly and people with disabilities, are put on waiting lists for up to ten years. Even less developed areas in the GTA face increasing housing prices as a result of gentrification and increased population growth.

HOMELESSNESS

Toronto is facing a housing crisis. According to The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016, 35, 000 Canadians are homeless on any given night, and at least 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a year (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016., p.5). These statistics disproportionately affect women, youth, the elderly, veterans, and Indigenous people as well as other visual minorities (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016., p.5). Toronto, specifically, is facing a chronic homelessness issue, on any given day, over 8,700 people in Toronto are experiencing homelessness (Homesfirst, 2019). One alarming fact about Toronto's homelessness crisis is that 80% of those experiencing homelessness feel as though the main barrier they face is a lack of affordable housing.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community building refers to the strengthening of community bonds and engagement. Active community building requires a need, and a commonly acknowledged goal, a shared ownership of initiatives, and a feasible and competent course of action. The active involvement of people, beginning with what they define as the needs and goals, results in communal ownership of initiatives, the development of competencies, and reduced vulnerability to crime, and actions that violate the law. Toronto has many community building initiatives varying from community centers like the Harbour Front Centre, to response programs such as Community Safe Networks, to group representatives such as Lived Experience Advisory Group.

Consider this:
Where do you see a vibrant community? Where do you see strug-gling communities?
How do you create meaningful connections?
What drives a strong community?

UNEMPLOYMENT

Employment is a critical part of life for individuals and is re-quired for societies to function; it is crucial for a stable government and self-serving individual citizens. Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Today, there are about 5.79% of Canadians who are without jobs (Pletcher, 2019). In Toronto, the unemployment rate is 6.3% and has been pronounced the highest rate of unemployment in all other cities in Ontario and in Canada (Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade, 2019).

Consider this:
How can we provide training to the unemployed to help them find jobs?
How can we create more jobs to help people build new skills?
What barriers do you see for yourself in relation to entering the job market?

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Canada has a colonial legacy which is rooted in a history of genocide and has aimed to erase the presence of indigenous com-munities to impose a Eurocentric view of life on those who reside in Canada. Of all Canadian cities, Toronto has the fourth largest Indig-enous population, and the largest in Ontario (City of Toronto, 2019). As a result of settler colonialism, this group faces an immense num-ber of obstacles, including but not limited to: access to education, poverty, lack of adequate health care, and inadequate housing, low-er income, higher rates of unemployment, higher levels of incarcera-tion, and higher suicide rates (Ictinc, 2019). Businesses, governments and institutions need to work to recognize treaties and live with re-spect of this lands' original peoples and their culture.

HEALTH CARE

Canadian citizens or permanent residents are able to apply for public health insurance, which allows most health coverage to be paid through taxes. Every province and territory has a personalized health insurance plan. The government of Ontario is recognizing the broken system and is revamping it to "build a health care system centred around the patient." This includes more virtual and online access to healthcare, more accessible health care, and making sure all are supported.

IMMIGRATION

Canada's visible minority population is growing; with Canada's current immigration trend the country could have about 11.1 million immigrants by 2031. Statistics Canada also shows 7.7 million Canadians belong to a visible minority, representing 22.3% of the population. This is an increase from just 4.7% in 1981 and statistics show this potentially rising to about one-third by 2036. In Toronto in 2016 the Canada stats data shows 1,266,005 or 47.0% of the population were immigrants.

EDUCATION

Education in Canada is publicly funded by the provincial and federal governments; however, this only applies to schools that operate under the government, such as public schools. The levels of education are elementary school, high school, and post-secondary (University or College). The school districts in Toronto are Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). Each district has their own distinct aspects to their curriculums that they overlook and manage. As for post-secondary institutions, Toronto has the most in all of Canada. Post-secondary is not publically funded, however, students can apply to OSAP for grants and loans which can be put towards their education.

Consider this:
What counts as education?
What are barriers to education and how can we address those barriers?
What is not currently in the curriculum that should be?

ACCESSIBILITY – BARRIERS FOR SENIORS AND THOSE WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

Accessibility is the concept of enabling access for people with needs for accommodations through the use of assistive technology and or eliminating barriers in the city that would prevent daily activities among certain groups in the city's population. Although the city of Toronto has the accessibility design guideline which includes the practices that should be used by all sectors to plan for barrier free development in the physical environment, there are still many inevitable obstacles. These obstacles are most apparent in the downtown core of the city where there is congested and increased flow of traffic in addition to condensed buildings and construction that creates barriers for those requiring assistance to move around and navigate the city.

Consider this:
What are some non-physical barriers in our city? How can they be addressed?
Think about all the different ways that Toronto presents barriers to its population.
What would a barrier free business look like? Sound like? Feel like?

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation and access to transit is essential as it serves difficult to manage urban cities dense populations, activities and structures. Transportation enables the movement of people and resources from one location to another. Transportation in Toronto is operated by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Via Rail and Metrolinks. The TTC produces subways, streetcars, and busses in the Toronto area, whereas, Via and Metrolinks provide train, and buses within the Toronto area and beyond the Toronto area to other cities. Good transportation can eliminate many barriers for citizens.

Consider this:
How does transportation impact peoples' living and working decisions?
How does transportation eliminate barriers? What barriers does it create?
How do transportation solutions impact our environment?

LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS

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SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE CONCERNS

Nearly half of Canadians had claimed to have used an illicit drug at one point in their lifetime, with cannabis being the most used, followed by hallucinogens, cocaine/crack, and ecstasy. Illicit drug use is an ongoing and escalating problem not just in Canada. iIn recent years the U.S. and Canada in particular have been experiencing an opioid epidemic which has increased the amount of hospitalizations and deaths due to heroin, fentanyl and other opioids. Amongst Torontonians, according to a 2017 City of Toronto research summary, drug use tends to peak amongst people in grades 7 and 8, specifically in solvent use. The use of solvents among Toronto students is higher than any other province. In addition, recreational use of prescription opioids has also peaked, specifically in young women. Of all demographics surveyed, it is homeless youth who has been found to be more at risk than any other group.

Consider this:
What supports are available for those struggling with addiction?
Why do people use drugs? Are there other ways to address these reasons?
Is the population well educated about the risks related to drug use?

BUSINESS

The business field is complex and constantly changing. This change is attributed to a combination of variables, including population growth, economic development, changes in lifestyle, as well as innovations on information and communication technologies (Soldić-Aleksić et al., 2019). Toronto is Canada's business and financial capital. It is a top 10 global and financial center. Toronto is also globally connected, it is known as the political and financial center of North America. It is a place for a wide range of manufacturing projects, cultural innovators, and advanced technological startups.
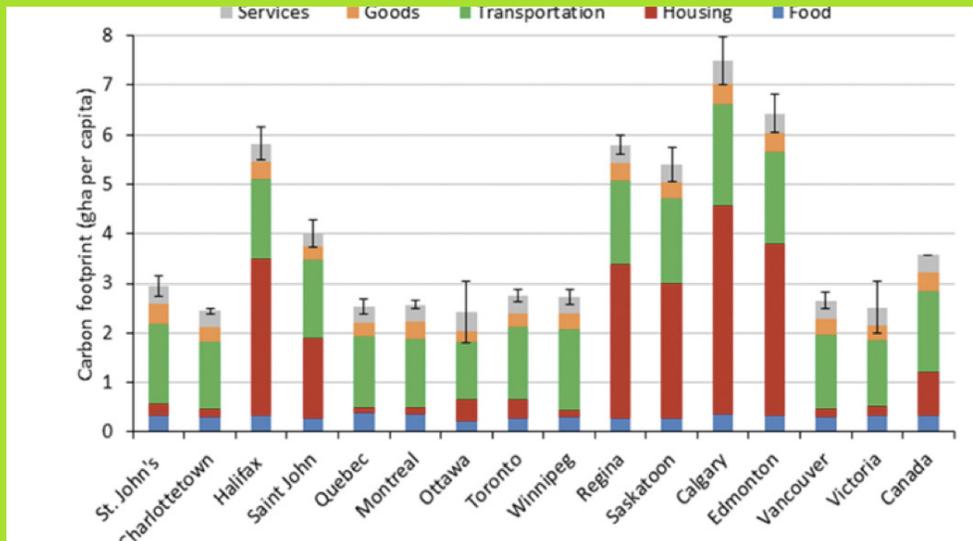
Consider this:
What type of businesses is Toronto missing/need more of (area of need)?
How does business relate to the other areas of interest presented in this drop?
What is a social venture?

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Canada has the third largest ecological footprint of any other country in the world. In Toronto specifically, some of the main environmental concerns include: limited landfill space, large amounts of air pollutants, rising climate change concerns due to extreme weather, and urban sprawl and low-density development. Environmental protectionism includes creating space in businesses for sustainable practices. In Toronto, many initiatives have commenced such as expanding bike lane infrastructures, the King street pilot Project, and Sidewalk Labs development, in hopes to combat environmental degradation.

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POLITICS

Politics is the study of power concentration that follows those who exercise their power in different ways, and studies common trends in political climates around the world. Politics is defined as the total complex of relations between people living in society. Canada has recently re-elected Justin Trudeau of the Liberal Party as Prime Minister of Canada. Doug Ford of the Conservative party is the current Ontario provincial leader, who has made many impactful decisions in his time served thus far which impact many Ontario citizens, specifically those residing in Toronto. The word "politics" is often associated with political leaders who exercise their power in different

ways, and studies common trends in political climates around the world, however, the concept of politics can be used as a framework and applied to many disciplines such as film, social justice, and the environment, to name a few.

Consider this:
How does policy impact change?
How does politics inform business development?
How could good governance and positive policy change the world for the better?

Citations will be provided in information packages during the competition.