



Pick Your Path! August 2021 Final Report

Pick Your Path! (PYP), a Branches Program, is an online learning and mentorship experience for Indigenous youth. The purpose of PYP is to pique youth's interest in post-secondary education by giving exposure to various areas of study they are interested in, as well as providing a mentorship experience.

The Branches team has facilitated two Pick Your Path! cycles: one in Summer 2020 with Indigenous participants from CÉGEP and University and one during March Break 2021 for Indigenous high school students from Kahnawake Survival School and the Cree School Board.

In this cycle of PYP, facilitated during August 2021 (August 2nd to 13th), five Indigenous students attended online sessions led by McGill faculty, staff, and students, from different faculties. These sessions equipped the participants with the tools needed to make informed and empowered decisions about their education – and to pick their path.

Throughout the program, participants worked on their final project, whose goal was for them to trace a plan for their education and career path. To support them with their final project, PYP participants were paired with a mentor, an Indigenous McGill student; the mentor-mentee relationship involved not only working on the final project, but also sharing experiences regarding post-secondary education and studying at McGill.



Participants and Mentors:

We reached out to guidance counsellors across Canada, as well as past partners (including the Kahnawà:ke Education Center, the Cree School Board and Native Montreal), to promote the program. Nine students were identified to participate in the program. We recruited Indigenous McGill students to be mentors and we were glad to receive interest from past mentors that wanted to be part of the program once again. Before the program started, we received notice that only 5 were able to participate due to their availability to take part in the program. The group included participants from Québec, Ontario and the US.

Final Projects:

PYP participants were required to complete a final project. The final project was an opportunity for participants to trace a plan for their education and career path. The project had two parts: a reflection piece, for which participants could use any medium they wanted to complete i.e. a PowerPoint, an art piece, essay, video; and an information piece, in which participants compiled all the important information of their CÉGEP and University of choice. Throughout week, they had the support of their mentor to complete their project.

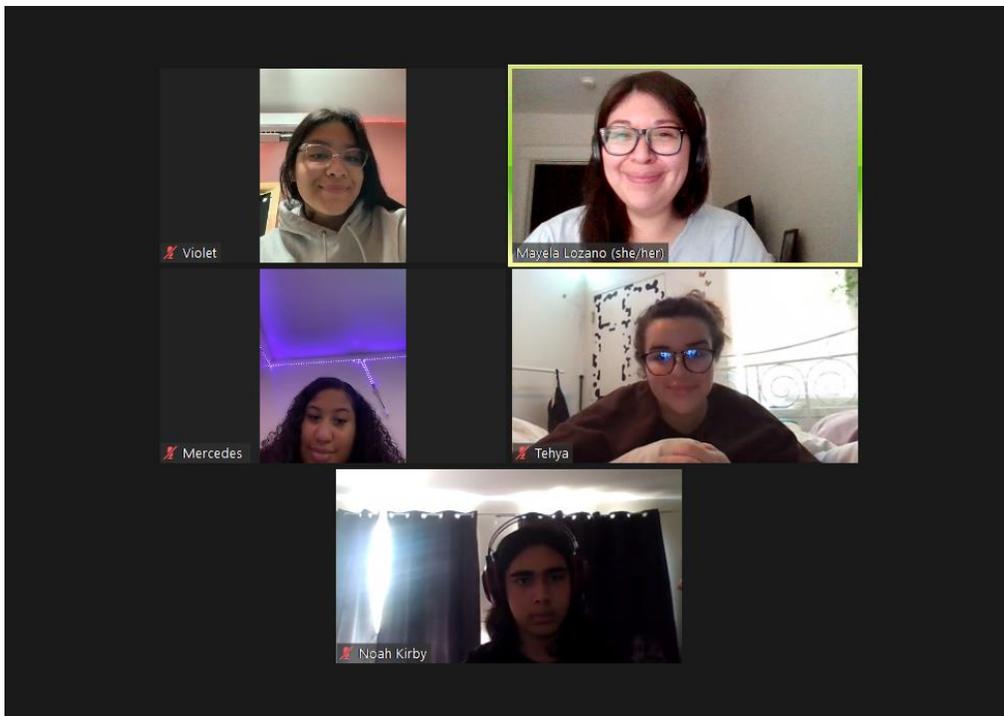
Conclusion:

Overall, we are happy with how this cycle of Pick Your Path! went. The group of participants was great and appreciated the interactive sessions we had. When asked to provide feedback, the participants mentioned they felt more confident about the next steps of their educational path. After asking for their consent, we intend on keeping in touch with the participants once a year or when new program opportunities become available for them.



What's next:

Regarding the future of PYP, we are planning on continuing to expand the reach the program to reach Indigenous students from different educational levels. We are currently developing a cycle of PYP to be facilitated throughout the 2021-2022 academic year with John Abbott College's Crossroads program. It will involve both online and in-person activities, if permitted.



Thank you for being part of Pick Your Path!