

## Uprise Pilot Project: Summary of Key Findings from OTRU Baseline Survey 2015

### **Background**

According to the 2015 OSDUHS Detailed Drug Use Report, tobacco smoking prevalence rates among high school age youth are 8.6%, and have plateaued since 2011. Tobacco prevention efforts in the past aimed to reach the average teen, but today the average teen is likely to be tobacco-free. In order to lower tobacco use prevalence further, a new tailored approach to understand which segment of the population is smoking, what is influencing smoking behaviour and ways to intervene is needed. The pathways to that understanding and influence involve changing knowledge, attitudes and social norms. As well, it's critical to understand the social characteristics these teens possess that put them at risk for tobacco initiation, and how to mitigate that risk.

2015 marks the third year of the Youth Social Identities (YSI) project; a collaborative of the CW and SW TCANs that is based largely on a successful cultural interventions model developed by Rescue The Behaviour Change Agency (formerly Rescue Social Change Group, herein referred to as Rescue). This model uses constructs from psychological and sociological research as well as commercial marketing theory to create social brands designed to infiltrate youth culture and influence positive attitudes, and ultimately behaviours through the depiction of a tobacco-free 'scene'. The social brand ultimately counters the social norms that the tobacco industry has developed through its targeted marketing strategies to subpopulations of youth and young adults. This model also involves selecting tobacco-free youth from the peer crowd who are influencers among their peers (youth ambassadors or members of music bands), to support and promote the brand at various venues and through interaction with peer crowd members via social media. Over time the brand gains traction within the peer crowd as a respected and influential brand and positively impacts attitudes and promotes a tobacco-free lifestyle.

### **Phase 1: Formative Research**

In 2013, Phase 1 research conducted by Rescue in CW/SW ON identified higher tobacco use rates among youth age 13-18 yrs. who are influenced by the alternative and hip hop youth sub cultures (2.3 times more likely to use tobacco than teens not influenced by the alternative and hip hop peer crowds). Values and social characteristics of these youth were identified to provide further insight into how a tobacco prevention campaign could be developed that would be most effective at reaching and influencing these teens. In our study, 26.5% of teens were influenced by the alternative peer crowd compared to only 9% of the sample who was influenced by the hip hop peer crowd. Subsequently, the alternative peer crowd was chosen

and music events were identified as the venues for the intervention. Alternative youth express themselves through the music they listen to and the bands they admire, thus having a presence at music events is a critical component for developing brand authenticity amongst the peer crowd.

### **Phase 2: Brand Development**

The YSI project team and youth who identify with the alternative peer crowd worked with a marketing company to develop and test various design concepts and social brand Uprise was developed and tested with youth who strongly identify with the alternative peer crowd in Phase 2 in 2014.

### **Phase 3: Brand Introduction, Evaluation Planning, and Baseline Data Collection**

In 2015, Phase 3 of the project, Uprise was introduced through its online presence: fueltheuprise.ca, on various social media platforms, and at four music events in CW/SW Ontario. The YSI Evaluation Work Group consulted with OTRU and Rescue to create an evaluation plan for the Uprise project. Measurement of youth engagement with the brand Uprise via the website and social media platforms was reported previously on the CW and SW TCAN Final Activity Reports in 2015. In this report, we outline the Uprise evaluation framework and highlight findings from the 2015 Baseline Survey.

### **Evaluation Framework**

The CW/SW YSI Evaluation Working Group consulted with OTRU and Rescue to develop an evaluation framework pertaining to the new social brand Uprise. Overall, our evaluation aims to understand:

- The level of engagement with Uprise (among alternative youth non-smokers, ever smokers and smokers;
- Alternative youths' understanding of what Uprise represents and its key messages;
- How Uprise influences attitudes towards tobacco and tobacco use

### **Key evaluations questions include:**

- Percentage of alternative and non-alternative youth sampled;
- Smoking prevalence among the sample;
- Awareness of Uprise;

- Support for Uprise among those who knew about Uprise as well as support shown for Uprise among those newly exposed to the brand;
- Level of influence of Uprise on attitudes and behaviour

Evaluation methods included:

A survey developed in consultation with OTRU and Rescue (see Appendix A, Uprise Baseline Survey). Surveys were paper-based and administered by trained peer researchers. Surveys were uploaded to Key Survey;

- Rescue’s I-Base™ Survey, a research instrument designed to measure peer crowd affiliation (see Appendix B, Ontario I Base Survey). It is a proprietary tool created by Rescue Social Change Group and has been used in this study under license. The survey asks respondents to rank photos of teens based on likelihood that they would be included in their peer crowd, in order to ascertain youth social identities. Based on Rescue’s analysis and coding of peer groups, OTRU analyzed data with respect to demographics, smoking status, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (see Appendix C, Uprise Baseline Report).
- Survey questions related to brand awareness were derived from validated tools Rescue has used in more than 50 campaigns.

**Baseline Survey (Sept-Dec 2015)**

The Uprise baseline survey was administered at:

- Branded music festivals (where trained peer researchers interacted with music goers and handed out Uprise branded merchandise);
- Unbranded events (where Uprise was not present);
- Locations where alternative youth were likely to congregate.

Baseline data collection occurred between Sept. 2015 and Dec. 2015 in CW and SW, Ontario. We targeted music festivals, events and locations that were recommended to us by alternative youth and young adults in order to reach large groups of alternative young people. Trained peer researchers collected baseline surveys from three (3) branded music festivals, one (1) unbranded music event and at fifteen (15) locations where alternative youth congregate. Youth sampled at music festivals (both unbranded and branded) totaled 133. Youth sampled at other venues totaled 412. Public Health staff entered survey data into Keys Survey.

Of note, the URL for Uprise, fueltheuprise.ca went live in July 2015 two months before the baseline survey was administered (Sept. 2015). Thus, the likelihood that a young person would have heard about Uprise over these two months is low.

### **Uprise Baseline Survey: Key Findings**

#### **Limitations**

- Findings cannot be generalized to youth beyond those in this sample;
- Due to small sample sizes, particularly in group analyses, comparisons between alt vs non-alt youth need to be made with caution;
- Smoking prevalence among the youth sampled cannot be compared to the provincial prevalence rates due to the difference in sampling (convenience sample vs. population study).
- Surveyors approached youth whose physical likeness or presence at a given location might infer association with the alternative peer crowd.

#### **Respondent Demographic Information**

Five hundred and forty-five (545) youth aged 13-18 years living in CW and SW Ontario completed the Uprise Baseline Survey. The average age of respondents was 16.2 years.

About half of the sample identified as male (49.5%) and half as female (47.5%). Approximately four percent (3.7%) identified as 'other'.

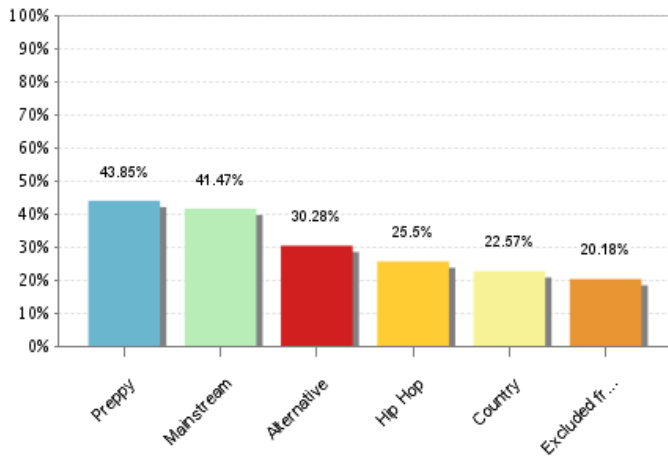
The majority of the respondents identified as being white (73%). Approximately 11.5% identified as Aboriginal.

#### **Peer Groups**

Of the 545 surveys that were completed, 165 (30%) were classified as belonging to or being influenced by the alternative peer crowd. 270 (49%) were non-alternative and 110 (20%) provided inadequate information and were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, among those for whom a social identity could be assigned (n=435), 38% were identified as alternative youth. (Refer to Table 1.) Further, respondents could belong to more than one peer crowd, which is a reflection that youth (people in general) have overlapping social identities.

**\*\*Note:** In this report, we use “alternative youth” and “those influenced by the alternative peer crowd” or “belonging to the alternative peer crowd or sub culture” interchangeably.

**Table 1. Respondents’ peer group assignments (n=545)\***



*\* Respondents could belong to more than one peer group. Thus, proportions do not sum to 100.*

### **Respondent Cigarette Use**

Among 510 respondents, 50.4% had tried a cigarette in their lifetime. Among those who had ever tried a cigarette, 62% had smoked cigarette in the past 30 days; approximately 27.4% were daily smokers.

When we compared non-alternative (n=256) and alternative youth (n=158), 50% of non-alternative and 57.5% of alternative youth had tried a cigarette in their lifetime.

Among non-alternative ever smokers, 52% had smoked in the past 30 days, compared with 72% of alternative ever smokers. These findings suggest that the smoking rates among this sample of youth (alternative and non-alternative) far exceed the provincial rates. This confirms that the events/locations we have targeted are ideal to disseminate messaging as they provide access to our target audience (youth with high smoking rates- both alternative and non-alternative youth).

## **Awareness of Uprise**

Overall, 21% (n=116) reported being aware of Uprise. Among the 104 youth who answered the question, 40% reported hearing of Uprise on the day of the event, and nearly 40% reported hearing of Uprise over the past week or month. Among alternative youth, 22% (n=36) were aware of Uprise.

## **Influence of Uprise**

Respondents who had previously heard about Uprise (n=89) were asked about the brand's influence as follows:

- 50% said the brand Uprise had made them stay smoke-free
- 35% said the brand made them think more negatively about the tobacco industry
- 28% said Uprise made them think more negatively about smoking
- 27% said the brand had not influenced them in any of the ways listed
- 12% said it made them want to quit or try quitting
- 9% said it made them want to quit smoking in the future

## **Support for Uprise**

When respondents had not heard about Uprise, we told them about what it meant (supporting a smoke-free scene).

After explaining the purpose of Uprise, 71% (88/124) of alternative youth reported being likely (to various degrees) to support the brand (32% somewhat, 31% very, 8% extremely likely). About 78% (158/202) of non-alternative youth reported being likely (to various degrees) to support the brand (30% somewhat, 34% very, 14% extremely likely).

Table 2. Alternative Youth Support of Uprise (n=124)

Likelihood of support	%	n
Not at all likely	10.48	13
Not very likely	18.55	23
Somewhat likely	32.26	40
Very likely	30.65	38
Extremely likely	8.07	10

Data suggests that there are moderately high levels of support for the brand among the youth (alternative and non-alternative) in this sample.

### **Likelihood of Telling Friends about Uprise**

Among 94 respondents who had heard about Uprise before the survey, about 70% were (to various degrees) likely to tell their friends about the brand (45% somewhat, 16% very and 10% extremely).

Among 124 alternative respondents who had no exposure to Uprise prior to the survey, 58% were (to various degrees) likely to tell their friends about the brand (39% somewhat, 17% very, 2% extremely likely). Among 205 non-alternative youth who had no exposure to Uprise prior to the survey, 64% were (to various degrees) likely to tell their friends about Uprise (39% somewhat, 18% very, 7% extremely likely).

Table 3. Alternative Youth Likelihood of Telling Friends about Uprise (n=124)

Likelihood	%	n
<b>Not at all likely</b>	16.13	20
<b>Not very likely</b>	25.81	32
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	38.71	48
<b>Very likely</b>	16.94	21
<b>Extremely likely</b>	2.42	3

### **Summary**

The Uprise Survey Report indicates that nearly one third (30%) of respondents were influenced by the alternative peer crowd. Given that we were attending music events deemed to be popular with alternative youth, we would have expected this percentage to be higher. Reasons for this could be related to the fact that alternative music appeals to youth from different peer crowds, thus not only alternative youth attend alternative music festivals. As well, those administering the survey self-selected youth to fill out the survey, relying on visual cues to identify alternative youth which is subjective and thus prone to error.

Although the number of alternative youth reached was lower than expected, the smoking rates among all youth surveyed were astounding. Just over 50% of youth ever smoked a cigarette, and among those ever smokers, 62% had smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days. Just fewer

than 30% of youth were daily smokers. These rates far exceed smoking rates observed in other studies amongst Ontario teens where past year smoking rates do not exceed 9% and confirms the importance of targeting subgroups of youth with tailored public health interventions. When those influenced by the alternative peer crowd were examined, past 30 day smoking prevalence jumped to 72%. This is nearly double the prevalence observed in Phase 1 research whereby 42% of youth influenced by the alternative peer crowd reported cigarette use in the past 30 days. It is of note that there were some demographic differences, especially for gender. More females (60%) were captured at the music events, compared to other venues (43%). There were also some difference with race and among those who smoked a cigarette in past 30 days (46% had not smoked a cigarette in past 30 days at music events compared to 34% of those at other venues). It could be that the relatively lower smoking rates in the music event sample is due to the higher % of females in this sample compared to those surveyed in other venues (females generally have lower smoking rates).

Overall, these findings suggest that attending alternative music venues will continue to reach a large proportion of youth tobacco users and those at risk for initiation.

Awareness of the brand Uprise was very low amongst the sample of youth. We would expect this low percentage because the brand is new. This confirms the importance of employing strategies to our work that target sub populations of youth with tailored messages.

Youth in the baseline survey (alt and non-alt) seem to accept and support what Uprise stands for, however many participants appear to be somewhat hesitant in their level of support or likeliness to recommend Uprise to a friend. As Uprise gains credibility within the alternative peer crowd over time, we would expect to see a positive shift in how alternative youth view the brand and an increase in support for Uprise and wanting friends to know about the social brand.

### **Future Plans**

Uprise was fully implemented in 2016, with attendance at 6 alternative music events in CW and SW Ontario. In consultation with OTRU and Rescue, an updated evaluation plan and 5 year logic model has been submitted to the Youth Social Identities committee. The participant survey was revised based on feedback from Rescue and OTRU on the 2015 baseline survey. Our goal with the Uprise Survey is to administer in early 2017 after the completion of the message packages (social media engagement) and events have taken place in 2016. We want to assess whether we are reaching alternative youth at events and through digital and online platforms and to what extent, which platforms are performing well, to what extent alt youth are aware of Uprise



messages, to what extent the brand is gaining social authority within the sub culture and youth are engaging with the brand through participation with online and digital components.

Knowledge exchange presentations which highlighted outputs and outcomes from 2015 were made to tobacco program staff and managers of CW/SW public health units and the provincial TCAN committee (Tobacco managers and YDS) in April and June 2016 respectively.