

MARCH 2022

PROJECT ECHO PROGRESS REPORT



ECHO
Étude communautaire

ABOUT PROJECT ECHO

Project ECHO (*Étude communautaire sur l'hésitation à la vaccination contre la COVID-19*) is a community-based participatory research study that aims to;

1. Understand local perspectives around COVID-19 vaccination,
2. Co-develop and implement strategies with community researchers to enhance vaccine confidence for children and adolescents, and
3. Support youth and families experiencing negative impacts of the pandemic

The ECHO team consists of parent and youth researchers from the communities of **Montreal-Nord and Parc Extension**, who are supported by public health researchers, design thinking specialists and community-based partners. ECHO community researchers reflect the diversity of their neighbourhoods: many are immigrants from different parts of the world and together they speak at least 14 different languages.

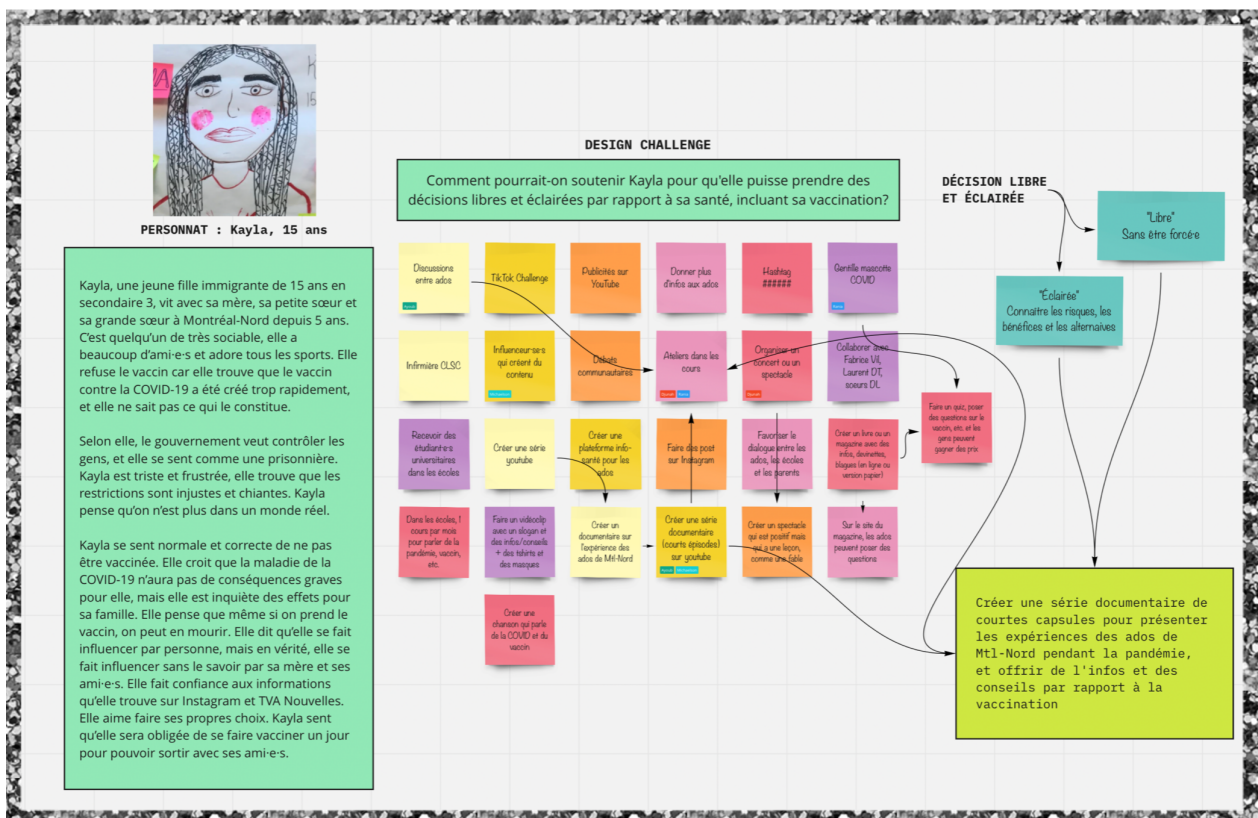


This report provides an update for participants, collaborators, and community members about our work and results through the first phase of the project. We are excited to share with you some highlights from our journey!

A COMMUNITY-LED, HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH

PROJECT ECHO INTEGRATES COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITH HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN TO:

- actively engage and co-develop solutions with communities
- create and implement innovative, accessible and effective solutions that address community needs



HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PHASES FOR PROJECT ECHO

1. Understand

Community researchers conduct interviews with vaccine hesitant parents and youth to understand their needs and frame a design challenge (i.e., the problem they want to solve).

2. Ideate

Teams brainstorm ideas to create initial solutions to address their design challenges. They build prototypes (models of their solution), which are tested by gathering feedback from the community.

3. Implement

Teams create their final prototype and implement it under real world conditions in the community. They collect data to understand if and how the solution creates positive changes for users.

MAIN ACTIVITIES TO DATE

SINCE LAUNCHING THE ECHO PROJECT IN DECEMBER 2021, ECHO COMMUNITY RESEARCH TEAMS HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO LEARN AND APPLY HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN AND RESEARCH SKILLS. THIS REPORT PRESENTS RESULTS FROM TWO MAIN ACTIVITIES:

SURVEYS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS



In the neighbourhoods of Montreal-Nord and Parc Extension, **314 secondary school students** aged 14 and older and **152 parents of primary school children** completed a short online survey between Jan 19 and March 14, 2022. The survey included questions about COVID-19 vaccination, impacts of the pandemic on the health and well-being of young people and families, and opinions about public health restrictions and mandates.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS AND YOUTH



ECHO parent- and youth-led teams conducted interviews with **25 unvaccinated adolescents** and with **17 parents of unvaccinated children** aged 5-11 years. Teams analyzed the information collected in order to understand reasons for vaccine hesitancy in their community. This detailed information helps teams design tailored strategies to improve vaccine confidence for youth and children.

ECHO RESULTS - YOUTH

MOST YOUTH HAVE BEEN VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19, BUT MANY HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT VACCINE PASSPORTS AND MANDATES

74%*

were adequately vaccinated against COVID-19 (2+ doses)

Most unvaccinated adolescents believe the vaccine is either **not necessary/not effective** or they are concerned about its **side effects/ newness**.

"Maybe there are no side effects now, but I feel that in 5 years, people who took two, three doses, there will be a side effect on their health."

(male adolescent)

Youth are more likely to be vaccinated if their **friends and family are vaccinated**, and if they believe COVID-19 vaccines are **safe and effective**.

	Agree	Disagree
Most of my friends and family members are vaccinated	79% are vaccinated	47% are vaccinated
COVID-19 vaccines are safe	93% are vaccinated	53% are vaccinated
Vaccines are an effective way to reduce the risk of getting COVID-19	86% are vaccinated	61% are vaccinated

WHO PARTICIPATED?

314 secondary students completed the survey

- **56%** identified as female
- **15.4** average age (years)
- **73%** from Montreal-Nord
- **53%** identify as Black and/or Arab
- **66%** born in Canada

25 unvaccinated youth were interviewed by ECHO youth researchers

- 16 girls and 14 boys
- 14 from Parc Extension, 11 from Montreal-Nord

68%

Agree
COVID-19 vaccination should be required for health care workers

52%

Agree
the vaccine passport is a good strategy to encourage COVID-19 vaccination

26%

Agree
with requiring the unvaccinated to pay a "health contribution" tax

53%

Agree
the severity of the pandemic has been overstated

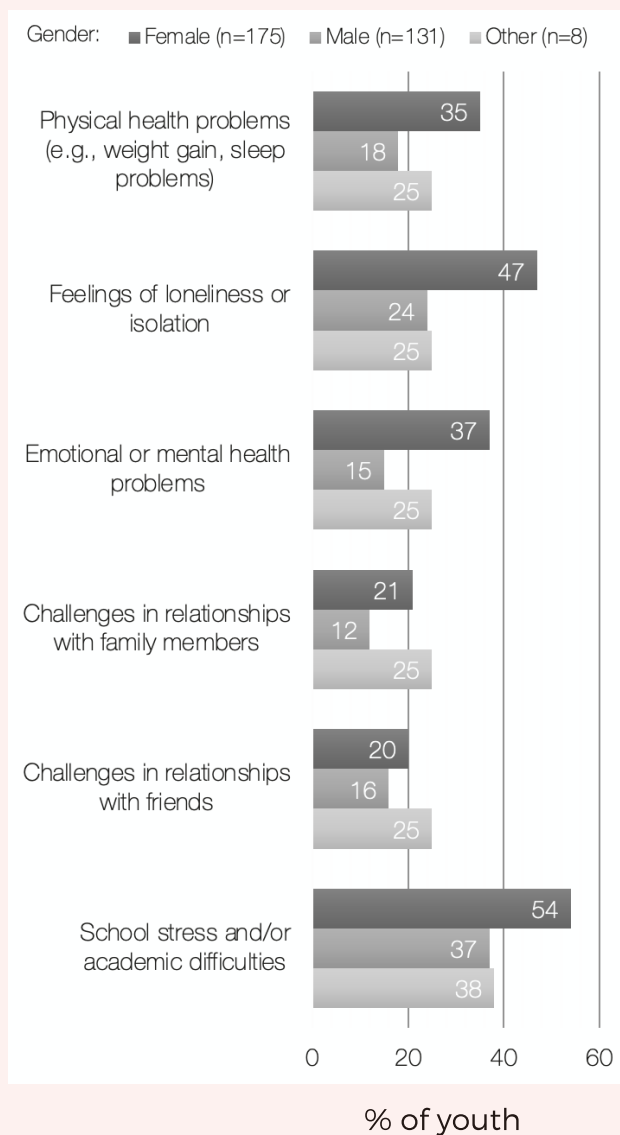
"If anything should change, it would be to abolish the vaccine passport, which destroys the lives of young people who are afraid or unable to take the vaccine." (female adolescent)

*According to Sante Montreal official statistics, 70% and 69% of Montreal-Nord and Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc Extension youth aged 12-17 years, respectively, are adequately vaccinated

ECHO RESULTS - YOUTH

MANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON YOUTH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING, ESPECIALLY FOR GIRLS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, young people are experiencing **more school stress**, increased feelings of **loneliness and isolation**, and **greater physical and mental health problems**. Female youth have been especially impacted.



"COVID-19 is destroying the social life and mental health of adolescents. I speak from experience and also from my observations. It is horrible to see how psychologically ill we have become. We are so tired that we don't care about the risks of COVID." (female adolescent)

Over the past 6 months:

18% of girls **9%** of boys **Felt depressed every day**

29% of girls **13%** of boys **Felt anxious every day**

19% of girls **12%** of boys **Had difficulties sleeping every night**

"Covid-19 prevents teenagers and young people from enjoying their "youth" which creates problems like depression and exhaustion. The inability to see friends/family because of this disease also has a negative mental effect." (female adolescent)

ECHO RESULTS - YOUTH

ECHO YOUTH RESEARCH TEAMS ANALYZED AND INTERPRETED THEIR RESULTS TO DEFINE THEIR DESIGN CHALLENGES

PARC-EXTENSION

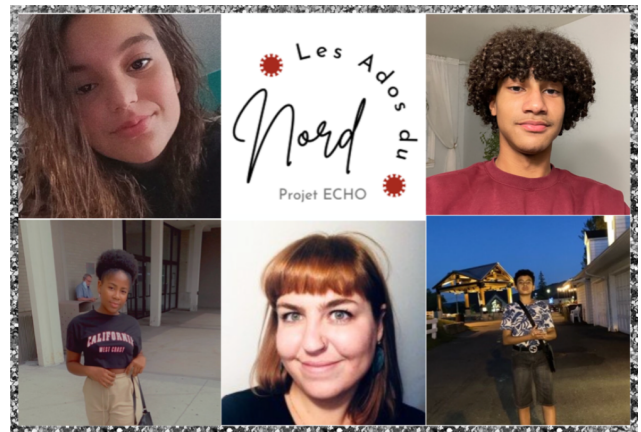


In our community of Parc-Ex, we identified a need to empower youth to make informed decisions during public health emergencies, particularly regarding how to navigate information. To address this need, our solution will support youth to develop confidence to make informed decisions regarding their health, including vaccination. We will consider how youth can navigate family disagreement around health decision making, and ensure youth can access information while avoiding informational overload.

Stay tuned to see what innovative solution we create for the youth of Parc-Ex!

- TEAM APEX (Adolescent.e.s de Parc-Ex)

MONTREAL-NORD



In Montreal-Nord, we found that youth lack sources of reliable, adolescent-specific information that can help them make informed decisions about COVID-19 vaccination. With little or no discussion about vaccination in schools, youth tend to get their information from friends and via social media, where they are often exposed to misinformation. Our solution will aim to increase youth agency to make free and informed decisions by facilitating access to reliable, adolescent-friendly information.

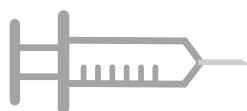
Follow us on instagram @lesadosdunord_ and find out how our ECHO project will support young people in Montreal-Nord!

- Les Ados du Nord

ECHO RESULTS - PARENTS

MOST PARENTS WHO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO VACCINATE THEIR 5-11 YEAR-OLD EXPRESS WORRY AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE VACCINE

68%* of children 5-11 years had received at **least one dose** of a COVID-19 vaccine



80% of unvaccinated children **are unlikely** to be vaccinated

MOST COMMON REASONS CHILD NOT VACCINATED:

- Worry about possible side effects
- Not necessary because risk of COVID-19 to child's health low
- Not enough information about the safety of the vaccine

"We don't know what the composition of the vaccine is. What am I going to inject into the body of a 7 year old child? So I refuse, that's it! Apart from the fact that there are side effects of the vaccine, I'm not talking about that, but at least I'm talking about knowing **WHAT** I'm going to inject into the body of a 7-year-old child." (parent, Parc Extension)

WHO PARTICIPATED?

152 parents with primary school-aged children completed the survey

- 72% female parent
- 72% from Montreal-Nord
- 45% have a university degree
- 59% born outside Canada
- 7.8 average age of their child

17 parents of unvaccinated children aged 5-11 were interviewed by ECHO parent researchers

- 16 mothers and 1 father
- 11 from Parc Extension, 6 from Montreal-Nord

Parents have made different decisions about COVID-19 vaccination for their children, but all base their decision on what they believe is in the **best interest of their children.**

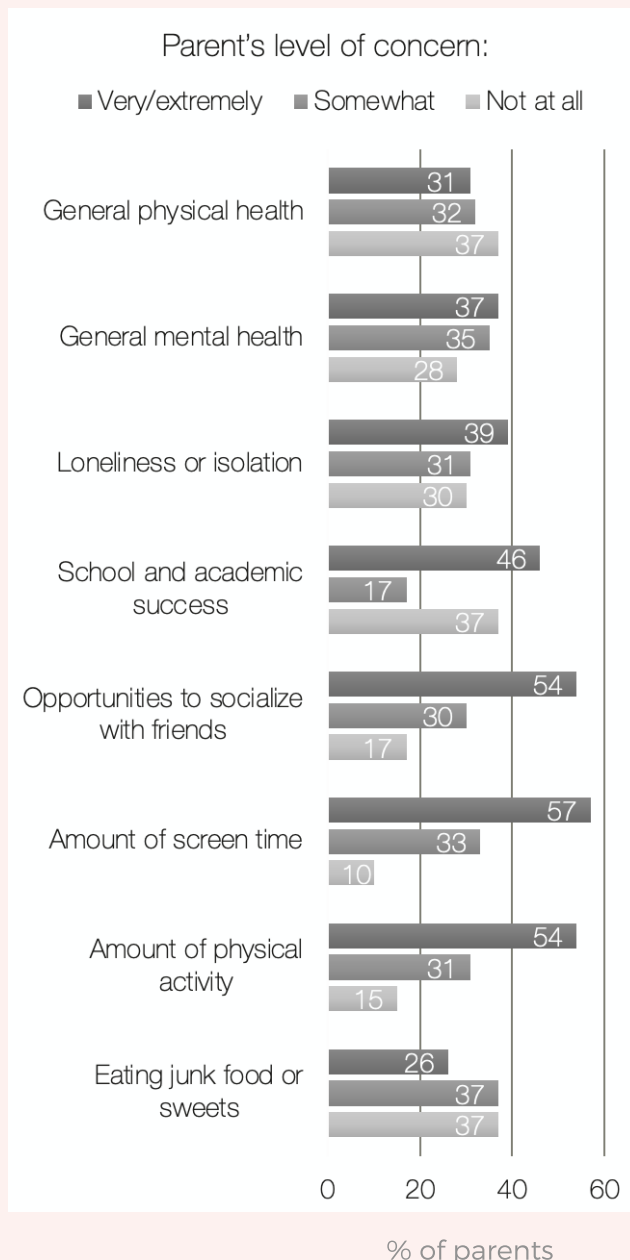
"I am concerned about the low vaccination rate of the children in my neighborhood because my son is with them at school. It is a situation that bothers me a lot and I feel that my son is not safe despite his two doses and that his school year will be impacted by the closing of his class." (mother of a 7-year old)

*According to Sante Montreal official statistics, 32% and 54% of Montreal-Nord and Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc Extension children aged 5-11 years, respectively, have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose

ECHO RESULTS - PARENTS

MANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON BOTH CHILDREN AND PARENTS

More than half of parents are very or extremely concerned about their child's amount of **screen time**, lack of **physical activity**, and reduced **opportunities to socialize** with friends due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



"When we go out, to tell the child when daddy comes home, don't run to daddy to give him a hug! Give him time to, to change, to wash himself before going... All this, it was, it was, it was frustrating for our children! They don't understand! "Why not?" The child runs! Then you say "STOP! Don't come!" They do not understand! I can say that this was the most difficult for me. They don't understand! Even if you explain it to them, they don't understand."
(parent, Montreal-Nord)

Parents have experienced many negative impacts due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

23%
lost a job or income

36%
feel lonely and/or isolated

22%
experience physical health problems (e.g., weight gain, sleep problems)

34%
experience emotional distress (e.g., grief, worry, anger)

20%
have difficulty meeting financial obligations

19%
experienced the death of a family member or friend

ECHO RESULTS - PARENTS

ECHO PARENT RESEARCH TEAMS ANALYZED AND INTERPRETED THEIR RESULTS TO DEFINE THEIR DESIGN CHALLENGES

PARC-EXTENSION



In our community of Parc Extension, many of the parents we interviewed expressed concerns about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and the lack of coherent information about vaccination from scientists, doctors, and other experts. Parents, especially mothers, expressed the need for trustworthy sources of information, so they can confidently take the decision to vaccinate their children without fear of making the wrong decision and jeopardizing their children's health and future. With our ECHO project, we want to support parents to feel less overwhelmed and anxious during the decision-making process so they have confidence to make informed decisions about vaccination for their children.

We look forward to sharing our vision to empower other mothers in Parc Extension!

- Vision of Parc Ex Mothers Team

MONTREAL-NORD



Our Montreal-Nord community has one of the lowest levels of child vaccination in Quebec, and our interviews with parents revealed a complex mix of ethnocultural and socioeconomic factors that may underlie this inequity. Both a lack of access to information (e.g., barriers to technology) and misinformation about vaccination are issues faced by parents in our neighbourhood. Our solution will aim to create community for the parents of Montreal-Nord and provide a space that can support them to make well-informed decisions about the health of their children, including vaccination.

Stay tuned to find out our plans to connect and support the parents of Montreal-Nord!

- Équipe ECHO du Nord



NEXT STEPS

ECHO COMMUNITY RESEARCH TEAMS WILL BE BUSY OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, BRAINSTORMING POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR THEIR DESIGN CHALLENGE, DEVELOPING PROTOTYPES, AND IMPLEMENTING THEIR PROJECTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

DESIGN AND TEST PROTOTYPE SOLUTIONS

Each ECHO team has defined the problem they are trying to solve (i.e., their design challenge). The next step is to come up with possible solutions to the design question - through brainstorming sessions and analyzing solutions from other contexts - and then choose one idea to build a prototype (model of the solution). Teams conduct interviews to test their prototypes with parents and youth in their communities, as well as among relevant experts and community leaders. Testing is an iterative process that uses information collected to tailor and improve the prototype in real time.

IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE SOLUTIONS

Once teams have settled on a final prototype solution, they begin the implementation phase. Each team has a budget of \$15,000 to create, implement and evaluate their solution. Teams will co-develop plans to evaluate their projects, by defining and collecting data to understand if and how the solution creates positive changes in the community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PROJET ECHO HAS BENEFITED FROM THE SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY OF SO MANY:

- Parents and youth of Montreal North and Parc-Extension who participated in our surveys and interviews
- Participating schools: Lucien Pagé, Barthélémy-Vimont, Sinclair-Laird, Camille-Laurin, Henri-Bourassa, René-Guénette, Sainte-Colette, Saint-Vincent-Marie and Gérald McShane, and their school boards (CSSDM, CSSPI, EMSB)
- Community organizations in Montreal-Nord and Parc Extension: ACCESSS, Afrique au féminin, Centre d'Action Bénévole de Montréal-Nord, Éco-quartier Montréal-Nord, Jeunesse Unie, Les fourchettes de l'espoir,
- Community-based Action Research (CBAR) Network in Parc-Extension, CoVivre program
- Community and subject-matter experts: Sasha Dyck, Ashley Vandermorris, Cécile Rousseau, Ève Dubé, Laurence Monnais, Roxane de la Sablonnière, Ananya Banerjee, Caroline Quach, who accompanied the teams in contextual analysis of their results

MANY THANKS TO ALL

We look forward to continued collaboration!

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? IDEAS?

Learn more about the project and read our blog at:

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