



SOUTH BRUCE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: REPORT

JANUARY 28, 2021

SUBMITTED TO:

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(NWMO)

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ACRONYMS

APM	Adaptive Phased Management
CLC	Community Liaison Committee
DPRA	DPRA Canada
Municipality	Municipality of South Bruce
NWMO	Nuclear Waste Management Organization
OYAP	Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
Strategy	Youth Engagement Strategy
Working Group	Youth Engagement Strategy Working Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) and the Municipality of South Bruce (Municipality) have identified youth engagement as a priority and are working in collaboration to develop a Youth Engagement Strategy (Strategy) for the South Bruce community related to the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) project. This Report documents the Strategy development process, engagement activities and feedback that was collected as part of Strategy development, and identifies key strategic actions for future youth engagement.

Community workshops and discussions documented in *Guiding principles for exploring partnership – Community conversations update* (NWMO, 2018), provided the basis for how the Municipality of South Bruce and the NWMO will work together on the APM project. Seven principles emerged from the community discussions, including the following two principles that identify youth specifically:

“#5 Inclusive and collaborative – We will work together collaboratively.

All negatives and positives will be heard. There are no exclusions. We seek opportunities to engage our youth.”

“#6 Community betterment – There must be a broad benefit across the community now and in the future.

Project benefits must extend across the community. The project should be a platform for the future, including providing opportunities for youth. It should inspire innovation and managed growth in the community – physically, financially and socially. It should recognize, support and enhance the unique character and attributes of community, and ensure they are not compromised.”

The importance of youth engagement is also highlighted in the Municipality’s Strategic Plan (MDB Insight Inc., 2014).

The Strategy recognizes youth as the leaders of the future and acknowledges how critical it is that their voices are reflected in plans, initiatives and decisions that will directly affect them. The Strategy also seeks to empower youth and support them in the community. The APM, being a long-term project, offers a unique opportunity for youth to be part of shaping their community’s future; therefore, engaging youth in project planning is essential. It should be noted that while the Strategy aims to inform youth engagement as part of the APM project, it also serves to inform the Municipality on engaging youth in the broader community, beyond the project.

A Youth Engagement Strategy Working Group (Working Group) was formed on November 20, 2020 to undertake Strategy development. Ensuring a ‘for youth by youth’ approach throughout Strategy planning and implementation was a priority for the Working Group. To guide the development of the Strategy, the Working Group established a vision statement:

“To see youth fully engaged, informed, and thriving in their community of South Bruce.”

The vision encompasses three focus areas: 1) fully engaged youth, 2) informed youth, and 3) youth who are thriving in their community. With this ultimate vision in mind, the Working Group proceeded to identify Strategy goals and guiding principles as presented below.

Strategy Goals:

- a) Foster youth well-being as it relates to youth interactions with the project and community at large, including livelihood, health, training and skills, among other considerations.
- b) Understand youth 'priorities' and address and/or support these priorities.
- c) Create awareness and understanding of the NWMO/the APM project so youth can make informed decisions about the APM project.
- d) Engage youth in a manner that is accessible, and age/life-stage appropriate, by understanding how and when they want to be involved.
- e) Retain youth by understanding how best to engage them over time so they will remain in the community.
- f) Employ a youth engagement process that is sustainable and accessible to the Municipality even if the APM project does not move ahead.

Guiding Principles:

- a) Employ a 'for youth, by youth' approach by developing mechanisms for youth to be directly involved in Strategy development and implementation.
- b) Employ a mix of engagement methods and customized engagement (and discussion questions) based on age group, life-stage, and interests.
- c) Make it fun! Engagement needs to be enjoyable for those who choose to participate. This includes asking youth what they consider to be fun as part of Strategy development as well as ensuring this is considered as part of Strategy implementation.
- d) All engagement will seek to create a space that fosters open, respectful, and inclusive dialogue.
- e) Create an environment where youth recognize the value they bring to the process and are motivated and want to engage.
- f) The NWMO and the Municipality of South Bruce will undertake a collaborative approach to planning and implementation of the Strategy.

With the establishment of the Strategy vision, goals and guiding principles, the Working Group subsequently initiated the Strategy development process by engaging community youth, and other individuals/groups who work directly with youth, to understand youth needs, aspirations, and challenges, and most importantly, how, and when youth want to be involved in the APM project and their community, in the future.

The Working Group hosted three virtual youth workshops (high school to post-secondary) and three interviews with local elementary school principals between December 15-17, 2020, to gain insights for Strategy development. The Working Group also sought feedback from other sources, and previous relevant work done with youth in the community as part of the Strategy development process. Valuable and insightful feedback was collected from engagement activities which were reviewed by the Working Group and directly contributed to the development of the Strategy.

Based on feedback received, the Working Group identified the following five **key strategic actions** that seek to address Strategy goals and realize the ultimate vision of the Strategy:

- 1. Develop a social media approach for youth engagement
- 2. Continue to build on project outreach through interested schools

3. Provide APM project information that is factual, clear, and easy to understand
4. Host and support family and community initiatives
5. Connect with youth and provide the support and information they need to create the future they want for themselves

Based on feedback received from community engagement, example activities have been proposed in response to the five key strategic directions that were identified. These activities can be utilized by the Municipality and the NWMO to implement youth engagement initiatives; some initiatives may be undertaken collaboratively while others may be undertaken independently by each organization. Subsequent youth engagement planning will need to include the preparation of plans for specific initiatives. Youth engagement planning should also identify how youth voices will inform and be reflected in ongoing planning and implementation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) in collaboration with the Municipality of South Bruce (Municipality) requested DPRA Canada's (DPRA) services to support the development of a Youth Engagement Strategy (Strategy) for the South Bruce community related to the Adaptive Phased Management (APM) project.

Community workshops and discussions documented in *Guiding principles for exploring partnership – Community conversations update* (NWMO, 2018), provided the basis for how the Municipality of South Bruce and the NWMO will work together on the APM project. Seven principles emerged from the community discussions, including the following two principles that identify youth specifically:

“#5 Inclusive and collaborative – We will work together collaboratively.

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The importance of youth engagement is also highlighted in the Municipality's Strategic Plan (MDB Insight Inc., 2014).

The Strategy recognizes youth as the leaders of the future and acknowledges how critical it is that their voices are reflected in plans, initiatives and decisions that will directly affect them. The Strategy also seeks to empower youth and support them in the community. The APM, being a long-term project, offers a unique opportunity for youth to be part of shaping their community's future; therefore, engaging youth in project planning is essential. It should be noted that while the Strategy aims to inform youth engagement as part of the APM project, it also serves to inform the Municipality on engaging youth in the broader community, beyond the project. For the purpose of the Strategy, the term 'youth' refers to those under the age of 30.

This Report has been prepared by DPRA to document the details of the Strategy development process and the engagement activities that were conducted to inform the development of the Strategy. The Report also identifies key strategic actions for youth engagement over the next three years (coinciding with the APM project siting process). The Strategy will be reviewed by the Municipality every five years.

1.2 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

The development of the Strategy was spearheaded by the Youth Engagement Strategy Working Group (Working Group), made up of representatives of the Municipality, NWMO and DPRA (see **Appendix A** for a list of Working Group members). The Working Group's core responsibilities were to:

- Provide overall direction to the development of the Strategy
- Support and host engagement (as part of Strategy development)
- Review Strategy-related materials; and identify key strategic directions for youth engagement

The first Working Group meeting was held on November 20, 2020 to discuss assumptions, the scope of the undertaking and timing of the development of the Strategy. A total of six meetings were held with the Working Group between November 20 and December 18, 2020. A summary of topics discussed at these meetings is provided in **Appendix A**.

Several key considerations and assumptions were identified by the Working Group to guide the Strategy development process. These included the following:

1. Involve youth and reflect youth voices and input (i.e., embracing a 'by youth for youth' concept).
2. Focus on the area within the spatial boundaries of the Municipality of South Bruce as a priority, with an understanding that the Strategy may influence, and may be influenced by, the broader region.
3. Focus on a three-year period (coinciding with the APM project siting process), but ensure the process is sustainable through review by the Municipality every five years.
4. Build on work previously done in the community through both the Municipality and NWMO-led initiatives.
5. Draw on input from existing youth-oriented groups that could provide valuable contributions to the discussion.
6. All engagement during the development of the Strategy will be virtual (i.e., no in-person meetings or events) due to restrictions and safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 WHY A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY?

Youth engagement has been identified as a priority by both the Municipality and the NWMO. Recognizing this priority, the Strategy is needed because:

1. 'Youth are the leaders of the future' – it is critical that their voices are reflected in plans and initiatives that affect their future. Youth voices need to be reflected in planning for both the APM project and community development at large.
2. APM is a multi-generational project which provides a unique opportunity for youth to be part of shaping their community's future. It is critical that youth have access to information in order to make informed contributions to project planning.
3. To empower youth and support their role in the community and their ability to initiate change and be actively involved in the decision-making process.
4. Understanding what youth need, their aspirations and desires, is important to the

Municipality's and the NWMO's planning process (e.g., reflecting youth interests/input into official plans).

The Strategy is centered on listening to youth and providing them with the opportunity, and means to get the information they need, and the ability to help shape the future they want for themselves in the community of South Bruce.

2 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Strategy development process involved three key steps (**Figure 1**). Each step is described in **Sections 3** through **5** of this Report. The Municipality of South Bruce and NWMO will use this Strategy to inform collaboration on shared youth engagement work as well as initiatives undertaken independently.

Figure 1: Strategy Development Process



2.1 STEP 1 – STRATEGY VISION

The initial step in the Strategy development process included identifying the Municipality's and the NWMO's collaborative 'vision' for youth engagement, to ensure all plans and activities undertaken as part of Strategy development and implementation are focused on achieving the vision. This step also included identifying supporting Strategy goals and guiding principles, which established a clear understanding of what the Strategy needs to achieve and the way these goals are to be achieved.

2.2 STEP 2 – INFORMATION GATHERING

A priority of the Strategy development process was to ensure it reflected a "for youth by youth" approach during planning and implementation. With this priority in mind, the next step in the process included gathering feedback from community youth (and other individuals who work directly with youth) to understand youth priorities and aspirations; challenges and obstacles; and how and when youth want to be involved. Feedback was gathered through a variety of engagement activities that included virtual workshops, feedback forms and interviews.

2.3 STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The third step in the Strategy development process included reviewing and reflecting on feedback gathered through engagement activities to determine key strategic actions for overcoming obstacles,

achieving Strategy goals, and realizing the Municipality's and the NWMO's vision, as it relates to youth engagement.

2.4 IMPLEMENTATION

The Municipality and the NWMO will use this Strategy to inform youth engagement planning and implementation taking into consideration the key strategic actions identified in Step 3. Subsequent youth engagement planning will need to outline all details required for successful implementation, including but not limited to: identifying required resources (including level of effort, materials and budget), roles and responsibilities of the implementation team, engagement methods, tactics and timelines. Youth engagement planning should also identify how youth voices will inform ongoing planning and implementation.

3 STEP 1 – STRATEGY VISION

3.1 STRATEGY FOCUS

The vision statement for the Strategy developed by the Working Group is:

“To see youth fully engaged, informed, and thriving in their community of South Bruce.”

The vision encompasses three focus areas: 1) fully engaged youth, 2) informed youth, and 3) youth who are thriving in their community. Focusing on the vision, the Working Group proceeded to identify Strategy goals and guiding principles as presented below. As part of the Strategy development process, these goals and guiding principles were also circulated to other key individuals in the Municipality and the NWMO (outside of the Working Group) for review and approval.

3.2 STRATEGY GOALS

- a) Foster youth well-being as it relates to youth interactions with the project and community at large, including livelihood, health, training and skills, among other considerations.
- b) Understand youth 'priorities' and address and/or support these priorities.
- c) Create awareness and understanding of the NWMO/the APM project so youth can make informed decisions about the APM project.
- d) Engage youth in a manner that is accessible, and age/life-stage appropriate, by understanding how and when they want to be involved.
- e) Retain youth by understanding how best to engage them over time so they will remain in the community.
- f) Employ a youth engagement process that is sustainable and accessible to the Municipality even if the APM project does not move ahead.

3.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a) Employ a 'for youth, by youth' approach by developing mechanisms for youth to be directly involved in Strategy development and implementation.
- b) Employ a mix of engagement methods and customized engagement (and discussion questions) based on age group, life-stage, and interests.

- c) Make it fun! Engagement needs to be enjoyable for those who choose to participate. This includes asking youth what they consider to be fun as part of Strategy development as well as ensuring this is considered as part of Strategy implementation.
- d) All engagement will seek to create a space that fosters open, respectful, and inclusive dialogue.
- e) Create an environment where youth recognize the value they bring to the process and are motivated and want to engage.
- f) The NWMO and the Municipality of South Bruce will undertake a collaborative approach to planning and implementation of the Strategy.

4 STEP 2 – INFORMATION GATHERING

Following the identification of Strategy goals and guiding principles, the Working Group began the process of planning activities to gather feedback by addressing the following fundamental questions:

1. What information or feedback is needed?
2. Who needs to be engaged?
3. How should they be engaged?

4.1 WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION IS NEEDED?

Addressing this first question was driven by the Working Group's understanding of the Strategy vision, goals and guiding principles identified in Step 1 (**Section 3** above).

4.2 WHO NEEDS TO BE ENGAGED?

The Working Group identified a list of existing youth-oriented groups that could be considered during engagement planning. The list included youth groups such as established sports teams, extra-curricular activity groups and previously engaged youth, with whom the Municipality and/or the NWMO had existing connections (e.g., February 2020 Youth Visioning Workshop participants and youth who expressed interest in an active role through the Community Liaison Committee (CLC). The list also included individuals and organizations connected to youth, such as local schools and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP).

Recognizing the need to ensure a 'for youth by youth' approach to Strategy development, it was important to engage youth directly to get their feedback on Strategy development. It was also important that youth across various age-groups/life stages were reflected in the engagement plans. Given the timeframe in which engagement activities on Strategy development needed to be completed (i.e., by December 18, 2020), the Working Group prioritized activities that could be mobilized quickly, conducted efficiently and within the allotted timeframe, recognizing that further engagement may need to be undertaken.

Three youth groups with existing connections to the Municipality were identified as 'priority groups' for engagement as part of the Strategy development process. Youth in these groups spanned the ages 14 to 29 years old. Feedback from local elementary school principals was identified as an alternate means of gaining input on behalf of elementary school aged youth.

4.3 HOW SHOULD THEY BE ENGAGED?

Virtual workshops were selected as the best method for engagement with youth groups, and individual interviews were identified as the appropriate method for collecting feedback from local elementary school principals. All engagement activities were conducted between December 15 and 17, 2020 and the Municipality assumed responsibility for invitations and advertising of engagement activities, given the existing relationships with local elementary schools and youth in the community. Where contact information was available, invitations were sent directly to community youth and elementary school principals. An invitation to youth in the wider community was also shared/advertised on the Municipality's website and posted on their Facebook account.

4.4 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Three virtual workshops were held over Zoom with high school and post-secondary students on December 15 and 16, 2020, targeting different groups of youth within the community. The general aim of each workshop was to create an opportunity for an engaging dialogue among participants where they could share their thoughts and recommendations and provide the Working Group with valuable feedback that would inform development of the Strategy. The workshops included a short NWMO APM project youth presentation (provided in **Appendix B**).

Interviews (virtual meetings via Zoom and Microsoft Teams) were held with three local elementary school principals between December 16 and 17, 2020. The intent of these interviews was to collect feedback on student interests, priorities, and challenges; understand best practices/lessons learned from past engagements; and discuss the potential for future engagement opportunities with schools.

In addition to the targeted engagement, two other sources were included for the collection of feedback as part of the Strategy development process: 1) a discussion with a representative from the OYAP, to gain insight from their experience and inform the development and implementation of the Strategy; and 2) drawing on specific feedback received from participants at the February 2020 Youth Visioning Workshop which directly served to inform the Strategy.

Additional details on the virtual workshops, interviews with elementary school principals, and other information sources are provided in **Appendix C**.

4.5 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED THROUGH ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

By means of facilitated workshops and interview questions, feedback was sought from participants to specifically understand:

- How and when to engage youth
- Barriers and challenges to youth engagement
- How to make engagement 'fun' for youth
- Youth priorities
- Community values and connections
- How to create APM project awareness
- How to build APM project confidence
- How to maintain or improve community cohesion

- Youth retention
- Jobs and career interests

All feedback was documented and reviewed by the Working Group and directly informed the identification of key strategic actions for youth engagement, as detailed in **Section 5**. A summary of all feedback received and detailed feedback from the virtual workshops is provided in **Appendix D**.

5 STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

On December 18, 2020, the Working Group reviewed feedback received from engagement activities discussed in Step 2 (**Section 4**, above). Strategy goals and guiding principles were also revisited in light of feedback received, and in some cases, edits were made to the goals and guiding principles to better reflect insights gained.

Following review of, and discussion on, the feedback received during the virtual workshops and interviews, the Working Group undertook a consensus-building activity to identify key strategic actions that address the vision and goals set out at the start of the Strategy development process. Results of this activity are shown in **Figure 2**, **Table 1** and presented in **Appendix E**.

Figure 2: Google Jamboard Consensus-Building Activity to Identify Key Strategic Actions



The Working Group identified the following **five key strategic actions**, based on feedback received:

1. Develop a social media approach for youth engagement
2. Continue and build on project outreach through interested schools
3. Provide APM project information that is factual, clear, and easy to understand
4. Host and support family and community initiatives

5. Connect with youth and provide the support and information they need to create the future they want for themselves

Developing a social media approach for youth engagement, continuing project outreach through interested schools and providing APM project information and community related information that is factual, clear and easy to understand were noted as priorities during the December 18, 2020 workshop.

Table 1: Key Strategic Actions for Youth Engagement

Vision	Goals	Strategic Actions
<i>Guiding Principles</i>		
<p><i>To see youth fully engaged, informed, and thriving in their community of South Bruce.</i></p>	<p>Fully Engaged Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage youth in a manner that is accessible, and age/life-stage appropriate by understanding how and when they want to be involved. • Employ a youth engagement process that is sustainable and accessible to the Municipality even if the APM project does not move ahead. <p>Informed Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness and understanding of the NWMO/the APM project so youth can make informed decisions about the APM project. • Create awareness of community opportunities and programs, not related to the APM project. <p>Youth Thriving in their Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster youth well-being as it relates to youth interactions with the project and community at large, including livelihood, health, training and skills, among other considerations. • Understand youth ‘priorities’ and address and/or support these priorities. • Retain youth by understanding how best to engage them over time so they will remain in the community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a social media approach for youth engagement 2. Continue and build on project outreach through interested schools 3. Provide APM project information that is factual, clear, and easy to understand 4. Host and support family and community initiatives 5. Connect with youth and provide the support and information they need to create the future they want for themselves

5.1 EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Table 2 below provides example activities and considerations for each of the key strategic actions identified. Each activity is associated with varying level of effort and budget requirements. Consideration should be given to the ‘sequencing’ of activities to leverage efficiencies where possible (e.g., elements of content development associated with key strategic action #3 that will feed into key strategic actions #1 and #2). It is also recognized that some activities could be led by the NWMO and others by the Municipality and/or a combination of both.

Table 2: Example Activities and Considerations for Key Strategic Actions

Key Strategic Actions	Example Activities	Considerations
1. Develop a social media approach for youth engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate youth focused social media campaign for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awareness, content, and project information sharing ○ Advertising/invitations for programs and events ○ Project milestone updates ○ Collecting feedback and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short- and long-term social media outreach and planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Municipality of South Bruce and NWMO specific campaigns with collaborative/shared elements ○ On-going maintenance and monitoring required • Videos, polls, surveys, and contests • Targeted YouTube videos for different age groups/life stages • Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.
2. Continue and build on project outreach through interested schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-specific in school workshops and presentations • Teacher presentations and information sessions • Board and trustee presentations and information sessions • Student champions • Fairs and events (host, participate, etc.) • High school co-op opportunities (with NWMO and Municipality of South Bruce) • Curriculum development for different grades/age groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize for age groups (JK/SK, 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, post-secondary) • Plan for different learning styles (e.g., visual, tactile, auditory, etc.) and abilities (physical and intellectual) • Games and polling (e.g., Kahoot! and Mentimeter) • STEM and robotics programs • Schedule during school hours (e.g., at recess, over lunch, in-class, etc.)
3. Provide APM project information that is factual, clear, and easy to understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop youth-focused questions and answers on various topics related to the APM project shared through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Info sessions ○ Newsletters ○ Websites ○ Social media <p><i>Activity would directly inform/provide content for key strategic actions 1 and 2</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify misinformation and provide specific factual, clear, and easy to understand responses • Customize for age groups (JK/SK, 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, post-secondary) • Plan for different learning styles (e.g., visual, tactile, auditory, etc.) and abilities (physical and intellectual) • Use a café/young leader meeting template. Include time for presentations and Q&A sessions at a monthly gathering of young people

Key Strategic Actions	Example Activities	Considerations
4. Host and support family and community initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand youth needs and gaps in currently available events, programs, and initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Host community events and programs ○ Connect with existing community groups and seek opportunities to partner/sponsor ○ Participate at existing community events, programs, and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free • Benefits for participation beyond incentives (i.e., builds skills, knowledge, etc.) • Family-oriented (particularly for younger age groups) • Sports and extra-curricular activities have been highlighted by youth and educators as an effective mechanism to encourage engagement
5. Connect with youth and provide the support and information they need to create the future they want for themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a youth engagement working group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on APM project • Youth project ambassadors to promote learning about the project • Identify and communicate project (and/or municipal) related job, skills and training opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a mentorship program to connect youth to job and training opportunities ○ Provide information to schools (e.g., teachers and guidance counsellor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth ambassadors from different age groups/life-stages • Provide easy to understand job and training descriptions

6 NEXT STEPS

Planning and implementation of the Strategy in 2021 will be done collaboratively by the Municipality and the NWMO, and will be informed by ongoing input from youth. Subsequent youth engagement planning will need to include the preparation of plans for specific initiatives. Youth engagement planning should also identify how youth voices will inform and be reflected in ongoing planning and implementation, including mechanisms for reporting back to youth on how their input has been considered and has informed the APM project planning process.

7 REFERENCES

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8 APPENDICES

- A. Working Group Information
- B. NWMO APM Project Overview Youth Presentation
- C. Engagement Activity Details
- D. Feedback Received Through Engagement Activities
- E. Feedback from Working Group Key Strategic Actions Workshop (Google Jamboard Frame)