

Summary of the Evaluation Exchanges Canada Program

(2014-15 to 2018-19)

OVERVIEW

The goal of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) is to **strengthen the sense of national belonging and identity among Canadian youth**. ECP funds eligible not-for-profit organizations to provide young Canadians with a range of exchange and forum opportunities throughout the country.

ECP has two components:

1 **Youth Exchanges Canada (YEC)** supports **12- to 17-year old** Canadians to participate in exchange activities.

↓ A sub-component of the YEC, the **Summer Work / Student Exchange (SWSE)** offers 16- and 17-year olds 6-week summer work opportunities in their second official language.

2 **Youth Forums Canada (YFC)** supports **14- to 25-year old** Canadians to attend national forums across Canada.

This evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of ECP from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

RELEVANCE

- 🍁 ECP contributes positively to young Canadians **sharing, expressing, and appreciating** their Canadian identity.
- 🍁 ECP objectives and activities are aligned with Canadian Heritage (PCH)'s strategic outcome. The program **supports key government priorities** on **reconciliation, diversity and inclusion, and official languages**.

- 🍁 ECP is **complementary** to other programming for youth. Key features of ECP are its **focus on promoting knowledge of Canada, a sense of belonging to the country and its resources to support travel**.

EFFECTIVENESS

ECP provided **exchange and forum experiences** to **64,663 Canadian youth** through **106 projects**. ECP participants **improved their knowledge and understanding of Canada, created new connections** with other Canadian youth, and **developed an enhanced appreciation** of the shared aspects and diversity of the Canadian experience.

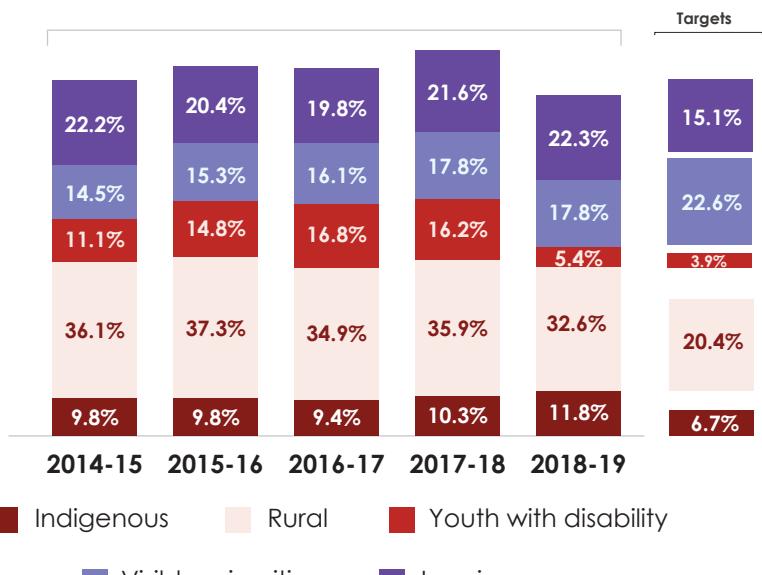
To ensure equitable participation, **ECP provides funds to reduce barriers to participation, and sets targets for organizations to recruit a diversity of participants**.

Overall, ECP participants reflected the diversity of youth from across Canada. There were **some challenges**:

ⓘ Low participation from visible minorities

♀ > ♂ Higher proportions of female to male participants across ECP

ECP Percentage of subgroups participants, 2014-15 to 2018-19



Summary of the Evaluation Exchanges Canada Program

(2014-15 to 2018-19)

EFFICIENCY

ECP management has **improved administrative efficiency** by implementing **multi-year funding arrangements**, **new timelines for contribution agreements** and **digitized data collection**.

DIGITIZED DATA COLLECTION

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

NEW TIMELINES FOR CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS

ADMINISTRATIVE COST RATIO EFFICIENCY

Improved from 8.9% to

8.2%



Just over **\$98 million** were spent over the five years by the program, including **\$90.7 million in grants and contributions** and **\$7.4 million in operating costs**.



Travel represents the largest contributions of the program followed by the **participant wages** included in the SWSE sub-component.

LOOKING FORWARD

The finalization of the evaluation was delayed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. To ensure the evaluation recommendations included the context of the pandemic, the evaluation team conducted rapid review of its implications on the programming. For example, in 2020-21 and 2021-22, **ECP allowed organizations to deliver virtual exchanges** since travel was restricted. There are **other opportunities for the program to consider emerging youth needs and preferences for engagement moving forward**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community Identity Sector:

1 Takes any supplemental measures required to better understand the changing needs and preferences among youth, including the influence of virtual innovation, to further improve the program and to ensure its ongoing relevance to youth across Canada.



2 Examine and implement any needed measures to further reduce barriers and improve program participation among diverse groups.



3 Review expected program outcomes to ensure that performance data continues to support decision-making, evaluation and reporting, without placing undue administrative burden on the beneficiaries or the program.

