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Evaluation of the Youth Take Charge Program

2010-11 to 2013-14

Evaluation Services Directorate

December 29, 2015



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Contribution Agreement
DPR	Departmental Performance Report
ECP	Exchanges Canada Program
ESD	Evaluation Services Directorate
FAA	<i>Financial Administration Act</i>
GC	Government of Canada
Gs&Cs	Grants and Contributions
GSS	General Social Survey
IPMEC	Integrated Planning, Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee
KI	Key Informants
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PAA	Program Alignment Architecture
PCH	Department of Canadian Heritage
PMERS	Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Risk Strategy
PRG	Policy Research Group
RPP	Report on Plans and Priorities
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
YTC	Youth Take Charge Program

Executive Summary

Overview of the Program

The Youth Take Charge Program (YTC) was launched by the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) at the beginning of fiscal year 2010-11. The objective of YTC is to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement, while addressing one or more thematic areas. YTC provides opportunities for Canadian youth to become more engaged and more connected to their communities. Youth play a significant role in the design, delivery and evaluation of the projects. Through the opportunities provided by the program, youth are expected to gain awareness of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen.

With the overall objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement, YTC supports youth-led projects that demonstrate the ability to strengthen youth attachment to Canada, provide opportunities for youth to participate in their community and involve youth in collaborative activities while addressing one or more of the following four thematic areas:

- History and Heritage
- Civic Engagement and Youth Service
- Arts and Culture
- Economic Activities

Program activities are carried out through grant and contribution agreements with the following eligible recipients:

- Canadian registered not-for-profit or charitable organizations; and
- Aboriginal governments (First Nation, Inuit, or Métis) and equivalent organizations.

In addition, organizations must have adequate security and safety policies and procedures in place as well as a minimum of three years of experience in serving youth on a significant national or provincial/territorial scale.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The objective of the evaluation is to provide credible and neutral information on the ongoing relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy) of YTC for the period 2010-11 to 2013-14, which accounted for a total estimated expenditure of \$14,042,958.

The questions for the evaluation were selected based on the YTC logic model and in line with the five core issues of relevance and performance as outlined in the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) *Directive on the Evaluation Function* (2009).

The following methods were implemented for the evaluation:

- Document review
- Literature review
- Administrative data review
- Survey of funded and non-funded applicants
- Interviews with key stakeholders

Conclusions

Relevance

YTC remains relevant. All lines of evidence indicate that there is a demonstrated need for programs such as YTC that strengthen youth attachment to Canada through opportunities for engagement. The need is driven by evidence that indicates a need to engage youth, particularly marginalized and at risk youth, with communities; to enhance belonging and connection among youth; to increase civic engagement; and to engage youth in less traditional, participatory and collaborative activities.

To a certain extent, YTC is responsive to the needs of youth. However, the demand for funding exceeds the available resources. Across the period covered by the evaluation, PCH funded 26 percent of eligible applications (56 of 213), representing 852,982 participants. The YTC delivery model is also flexible, as evidenced by the broad scope of its four thematic areas: History and Heritage; Civic Engagement and Youth Service; Arts and Culture and Economic Activities. Involving youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life aligns with the needs of youth. However, relative to other themes, fewer projects with Economic Activities as a primary theme were funded and projects with an economic theme had fewer participants. Only 1 percent of YTC participants were engaged in a project with an Economic Activities theme. This may be explained in part by the departmental focus on history and heritage, leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, for the latter period of the evaluation coverage (i.e. 2013-14).

The YTC objectives and expected results align with federal government priorities as outlined in Speeches from the Throne and recent federal Budgets. Similarly, a review of the YTC program objectives and outcomes concludes that they are closely aligned with PCH priorities and the strategic outcome: Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity.

The evaluation showed that the delivery of YTC is an appropriate role for the federal government given its national scope and expected results in the areas of attachment to Canada and shared Canadian identity.

Performance – Achievement of Expected Outcomes

YTC is making progress toward the achievement of its immediate outcome: *Youth have opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in identified thematic areas*. A broad range of youth from across Canada are being provided with diverse opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in the four thematic areas. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, YTC contributed

approximately \$12.1 million for projects to strengthen youth attachment through engagement. However, the demand for funding exceeds the resources available.

During that period, more than 850,000 youth participated in 56 YTC projects. YTC projects are contributing to opportunities for youth to engage in youth-led projects primarily in the areas of Civic Engagement and Youth Service and, to somewhat lesser extents, in the thematic areas of History and Heritage and Arts and Culture. The largest proportion of projects had a primary theme of History and Heritage (32 percent), followed by Arts and Culture (29 percent) and Civic Engagement (23 percent). The smallest proportion of projects had a primary theme of Economic Activities (16 percent). During the period covered by the evaluation, there were proportionally fewer youth participating in opportunities with a primary focus on Economic Activities, despite a number of projects funded in this area. The larger projects with the greatest reach were in the areas of Civic Engagement and Youth Service.

Although YTC has a relatively broad age eligibility (7-30), opportunities are being provided primarily to younger youth under 18. YTC opportunities are distributed across a broad demographic profile including traditionally underrepresented youth (e.g., Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities and visible minority youth).

The three anticipated intermediate outcomes—*youth are aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen, youth serving organizations are relevant to youth and youth are engaged in communities*—are being achieved to some extent by approximately three-quarters of participants (and strongly by between one-third and one-half). Findings from the post-participation surveys of youth indicate that, as a result of their participation in YTC-funded projects, a large proportion of youth agreed that they had the opportunity to participate in various aspects of community engagement: get involved in the place where they live (70-76 percent), collaborate with youth from other communities (67-74 percent), learn about an issue important to them (76-78 percent) and take action on an issue they cared about (73-78 percent). A large proportion of youth also agreed that as a result of participation in YTC projects they recognized the importance of being an active and engaged citizen (80-86 percent).

The majority of youth agreed that the organization which coordinated their activity was relevant to youth and understood their needs (80-84 percent). Funding recipients indicated that YTC funding had contributed to increasing the relevance of their organizations to youth through aspects such as growth, increased leveraged funding and an increased profile within the community and by some participants later joining the organizations as staff/interns.

The two ultimate outcomes—*youth having a sense of attachment to Canada and a shared Canadian identity*—as a result of participating are being achieved to some extent by approximately two-thirds of participants (and strongly by between one-quarter to one-third). On post-participation surveys, youth reported being more attached to community/region (69-72 percent), province/territory (59-67 percent) and Canada (62-67 percent) as a result of their participation. It was noted that the strongest areas of impact appeared to be at the level of community/region, compared with the levels of province/territory or Canada. Also, between 79 and 82 percent of youth realized a sense of shared Canadian identity.

Performance: Efficiency and Economy

The evaluation noted, based on a review of the available data, that there was minimal variance between YTC budgeted resources and actual program expenditures. The overall low variance between expenditures and reference levels was 2 percent. While there was some variability from year to year, this is attributable to the start-up stage of the program combined with funding being allocated from other programs, causing the reference values to fluctuate, while the expenditures remained relatively steady.

Across the period of the evaluation, the PCH ratio of O&M expenditures to total expenditures was 14 percent. Excluding the start-up year, the administration ratio averaged 11.5 percent. This ratio is higher than for other PCH Gs&Cs programs (e.g., Exchanges Canada Program, Young Canada Works Initiative and the Canada History Fund). These programs are more mature and have established processes. YTC demonstrates efficiency through its low PCH contribution per participant and the leveraging that is occurring at the project level.

Based on a sample of project financial reports of 12 organizations, the ratio of administrative costs to total project costs ranged from 1 percent to 20 percent with an average of 7 percent.

The evaluation observed that there is no single resource that describes PCH's approximately \$75.6 million investment in programs which directly or indirectly benefit youth. While several resources have been developed by the program to respond to requests for information about PCH youth programs from various audiences, this information is generally not available to a broader audience. A general analysis of PCH programs that either directly or indirectly service youth (Exchanges Canada Program and components of other programs including the Young Canada Works Initiative, the Canada History Fund and initiatives funded through the Official Languages Support Program (Explore, Destination Clic and Odyssey) was undertaken for the purposes of the evaluation. The analysis indicated that while there are programs similar to YTC, when objectives, results, activities and delivery mechanisms were examined within the context of the evaluation, there was limited evidence of overlap with other programming.

The evaluation did not find evidence of alternative approaches that would achieve similar or better results than YTC.

Performance – Design and Delivery

The YTC design and model provides adequate flexibility and guidance for effective delivery of the program and is a contributing factor to achieving outcomes.

There are many aspects of YTC delivery and management which are generating high levels of satisfaction among funding recipients, including availability of services in the official language of choice, services received from YTC staff and eligibility criteria/standards. In addition, there are a few areas with lower levels of satisfaction. The two main challenges are:

- Timeliness of notification of funding decisions, which is having an impact on delivery of projects. The time between submission of an application and notification of a decision is perceived by funding recipients as too long and is having an impact on the delivery of projects and potentially project outcomes. During the period of the evaluation, YTC was

not meeting its service delivery standard of 26 weeks for all funding applications; and

- Complex application and reporting processes that increase the administrative burden and costs for funding recipients.

Performance - Performance Measurement and Monitoring

A PMERS was developed and implemented for YTC. PCH officials have deemed it adequate to support their needs for monitoring the performance of the program. While the main components are in place and have been implemented as planned, there appear to be some challenges with respect to the post-participation survey instrument and data collection processes:

- YTC funded project participants are generally between the ages of 7 and 30, but only youth 13 and older receive the survey questionnaire. As 40 percent of participants are under 13 years of age, this represents a significant gap in the information on the achievement of outcomes for this age group.
- As part of the reporting requirements specified in their contribution agreements, recipients are responsible for ensuring that participants receive and complete the YTC survey and for measuring and reporting on the attainment of the anticipated results. Response rates for the post-participant survey are generally low, averaging 7 percent for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 surveys. The response rate is even lower (i.e. 1 percent or less) for some projects, in particular those with large numbers of participants. While a valid sample, the absence of data on some, particularly larger, projects does not allow for a comparative analysis of the relative effectiveness of projects in achieving YTC outcomes.

Recommendations

The following three recommendations emerge from the evaluation findings.

Recommendation #1

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should take the opportunity in the selection of eligible projects to consider projects with an economic component while ensuring alignment with PCH and Government of Canada priorities.

Recommendation #2

To improve efficiency, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should streamline the application decision process to reduce its complexity, as well as the funding decision process to ensure the timeliness of the release of funds.

Recommendation #3

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should review the approach to the collection of outcome data for YTC. The review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following:

- language and content of the post-participation survey instrument;
- improvements to administering the post-participation survey to ensure that funding recipients are maximizing the completion of the survey by participants; and
- the development of an approach to assess the extent to which outcomes are being

achieved for participants under 13 years of age, given that 40 percent of participants fall into this age group.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the 2014-15 evaluation of the Youth Take Charge Program (YTC). The evaluation of YTC was undertaken to fulfill the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act* (1985) and the Treasury Board of Canada *Policy on Evaluation* (2009) to conduct an evaluation of all ongoing grant and contribution programs every five years.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide comprehensive and reliable evidence to support decisions regarding continued implementation of the program. The evaluation report provides information on YTC, the evaluation methodology and the findings for each of the evaluation questions, as well as overall conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation was included in the *2014-2019 Departmental Evaluation Plan*. The evaluation was led by the Evaluation Services Directorate (ESD) of PCH with contributions from the PCH Policy Research Group (PRG) and a consulting firm. The evaluation covered the period from 2010-11 to 2013-14.

In accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat *Directive on the Evaluation Function* (2009), the evaluation addresses the five core evaluation issues relating to the relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy) of YTC.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 presents an overview of YTC.
- Section 3 presents the methodology employed for the evaluation and the associated limitations.
- Section 4 presents the findings related to the evaluation issue of relevance.
- Section 5 presents the findings for performance (including those related to achievement of outcomes and efficiency/economy).
- Section 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations.

2. Program Profile

2.1. Background and Context

YTC is a relatively new PCH program. In October 2009, the Government of Canada announced new investments in youth programs. In March 2010, YTC was created with the mandate to provide funding to organizations to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through opportunities for youth engagement in the fields of History and Heritage, Civic Engagement and Youth Service, Arts and Culture and Economic Activities.¹

YTC addresses the need to provide opportunities for Canadian youth to become more engaged and more connected to their communities. Evidence about the level of engagement of young Canadians, including limited knowledge of Canadian history and civic institutions, low voter turnout and little awareness of the role of government, supported the need for the program.

In March 2009, PCH held round-table discussions on youth engagement with 100 organizations and 40 youth participants from an initiative funded by the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP), which identified the specific needs of a youth clientele. Discussions indicated that youth-led initiatives are a significant asset in encouraging youth participation in Canada because they provide youth with ownership, real responsibility and tangible opportunities to become active participants in their communities.

YTC supports youth-led projects that demonstrate the ability to strengthen youth attachment to Canada, provide opportunities for youth to participate in their community and involve youth in collaborative activities while addressing one or more of the four thematic areas.

Examples of YTC projects include:

- TakingITGlobal Youth Association Defining Moments. Discovering our Canadian Stories (2010-11 to 2012-13). This was a national digital media arts and citizenship project that took participants on a journey through accounts of Canadian identity. The project consisted of a program of youth-run workshops, art contest, traveling exhibition and an interactive website which explored how the lives of youth have been, and continue to be, shaped by key events (defining moments) in Canadian history.
- Scouts Canada, Youth in Action Project (2012-13). In this project, youth between the ages of 7 and 26 participated in three key activities: (1) engagement in their community through doing good deeds (2) Participation in Youth Leadership Training Forums where they learned about Canada's history and how today's youth can make history through key contributions to Canada and (3) "Medal of the Maple" awards recognizing exceptional character and extraordinary community service.

¹ Projects addressing Economic Activities are defined as projects which involve youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life in order to strengthen their attachment to Canada. It should be noted that YTC is not designed as a youth employment program.

- Canadian Red Cross Society, Stand up to Bullying and Discrimination in Canadian Communities (2013-14). This project empowered youth to play a leadership role in bullying prevention. Youth facilitators aged 13 to 17 were trained to deliver two or more prevention workshops and other activities in their communities across Canada on various topics, including types and dynamics of power, definitions and types of bullying and harassment, impacts, interventions and prevention. Each youth facilitator committed to reaching 20 other youth aged 7 to 17 through in-classroom workshops. In addition, youth planned, delivered and participated in three symposia on Humanitarian Issues.

Program activities are carried out through grant and contribution agreements with eligible recipients who have adequate security and safety policies and procedures in place and a minimum of three years of experience in serving youth on a significant national or provincial/territorial scale.

Significant national or provincial/territorial scale is assessed through an organization's mandate and main activities and is defined by a number of factors such as:

- Geographic reach: the reach of the organization's activities beyond its immediate regional community across a particular province/territory or across Canada;
- Demographic impact: the number of youth reached and engaged, taking into account geographic (provincial/territorial versus national) and demographic diversity (which includes but is not limited to age, gender, Aboriginal and culturally diverse youth, youth at risk, youth living in official language minority communities and youth with a disability); and
- Track record: the organization's reputation amongst other youth-serving organizations, its public visibility, as well as its history of accomplishments.

To be eligible for funding, projects must meet all of the following program requirements:

- Actively encourage youth engagement through an event, program or activity demonstrating the ability to:
 - Strengthen youth attachment to Canada;
 - Provide opportunities for youth to participate in their community; and
 - Involve youth in collaborative activities.
- Propose activities in one or more of the program's thematic areas;
- Be youth-led, in that youth (generally between the ages of 7 and 30) play a significant role in the design, delivery and evaluation of the project;
- Demonstrate cash and/or in-kind support from community partners and other sources; and
- Use information and communication technologies as engagement tools.

In addition, measures are in place to support the development of official-language minority communities in Canada, as well as to promote the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. Recipients must demonstrate how the proposed project takes into consideration the participation of youth from both official-language communities, including official-language minority communities.

Youth play a significant role in the design, delivery and evaluation of the projects. Through the opportunities provided by YTC, it is expected that youth will gain awareness of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen in their communities.

2.2. Objectives and Outcomes

YTC's overall objective is to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement. The activities and outputs of YTC contribute to the achievement of the following expected immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes:

Immediate Outcome

- Youth have opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in identified thematic areas.

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Youth are aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen.
- Youth-serving organizations are relevant to youth.
- Youth are engaged in communities.

Ultimate Outcomes

- Youth have a sense of attachment to Canada.
- Youth have a sense of shared Canadian identity.

YTC supports the PCH mandate to strengthen Canadian identity and values and build attachment to Canada. It is part of the "Attachment to Canada" Program presented in the PCH Program Alignment Architecture. The program contributes to the Strategic Outcome: Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity.

The YTC logic model is attached as Appendix A.

2.3. Program Management and Governance

YTC is managed by the Citizen Participation Branch, Citizenship, Heritage and Regions Sector and is housed in the Youth Participation Directorate. The program is delivered centrally at Headquarters in the National Capital Region, through grant and contribution agreements with funding recipients. PCH program officers oversee the funding agreements to ensure that adequate performance monitoring occurs and that all program financial and activity reporting requirements are met.

Program governance is also defined by the Terms and Conditions that guide the program's delivery and set out the program's objectives and expected results, project eligibility requirements, the nature of eligible expenditures, Gs&Cs maximum amounts and recipient reporting requirements.

2.4. Target Groups, Key Stakeholders and Delivery Partners

The primary beneficiaries of YTC are its participants, young Canadians generally between the ages of 7 and 30.

Target Population	Canadian youth, generally between the ages of 7 and 30.
Key Stakeholders	Youth-serving organizations and Aboriginal governments or organizations with a strong track record in serving youth on a significant national or provincial/territorial scale.
Delivery Partners (recipients)	Eligible applicants include: - Canadian registered not-for-profit or charitable organizations with a strong track record in serving youth on a significant national or provincial/territorial scale and - Aboriginal (First Nation, Inuit and Métis) governments and equivalent organizations with a strong track record in serving youth on a significant national or provincial/territorial scale.

For-profit enterprises, federal/provincial/territorial/municipal governments, Crown corporations and other federal institutions and public institutions, such as schools and universities, school boards or commissions and public library boards are ineligible.

2.5. Program Resources

Total expenditures for the period covered by the evaluation were \$14,042,958, which included \$1,982,157 in Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures and \$12,060,801 in Gs&Cs expenditures (see Table 1).

Table 1: Budgeted and Actual Expenditures

Resources	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Total
Budgeted resources					
Operations & Maintenance	\$0 ¹	\$533,619	\$397,138	\$910,953	\$1,841,710
Actual expenditures					
Operations & Maintenance	\$449,279	\$514,007	\$466,270	\$552,601	\$1,982,157
Budgeted resources					
Grants & Contributions	\$0 ¹	\$5,481,680	\$3,481,680	\$3,453,023	\$12,416,383
Actual expenditures					
Grants & Contributions	\$319,514	\$3,927,898	\$4,177,209	\$3,636,180	\$12,060,801

¹In its first year of operation, YTC received its budget through the Supplementary Estimates (A).

Source: STAR system

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1. Evaluation Scope, Timing and Quality Control

The objective of the evaluation is to provide credible and neutral information on the ongoing relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy) of YTC for the period 2010-11 to 2013-14.

The evaluation was designed and conducted in accordance with the TBS *Policy on Evaluation* (2009) and other components of the TBS evaluation policy suite. The evaluation meets PCH accountability requirements in relation to the FAA and the TBS policy requirement that all direct program spending be evaluated every five years. It also provides PCH management with analysis and recommendations to inform the continued implementation of YTC.

This is the first evaluation of YTC, as it is a new program. The evaluation focused on the design and delivery of the program to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as on the achievement of immediate and intermediate outcomes. Given the short history of the program, data on longer term outcomes was more difficult to assess. Furthermore, it is understood that it is difficult to attribute ultimate outcomes (youth have a sense of attachment to Canada and youth have a sense of shared Canadian identity) solely to the program's activities.

Although covering the period April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2014, the evaluation focused on three years (2011-12 to 2013-14). Fiscal year 2010-11 was considered not representative as it was the start-up year and only \$319,514 could be provided that year. While not directly within the scope of the evaluation, the significant reduction in the Gs&Cs budget that occurred in 2014-15 was explored by the evaluation to determine possible implications on the design and delivery of the program going forward.

The evaluation was led by the Evaluation Services Directorate (ESD) of the Department of Canadian Heritage. ESD ensured the quality of the evaluation through their conduct of the planning of the evaluation, including the approval of the Terms of Reference for the evaluation by PCH's Integrated Planning, Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (IPPMEC). ESD reviewed and approved the evaluation data collection tools and deliverables produced by PCH's Policy Research Group (PRG) and the consultants. The evaluation report was reviewed by ESD and the evaluation working group, including YTC employees and departmental senior management.

3.2. Evaluation Questions by Issue Area

The evaluation addresses the five core issues of relevance and performance as outlined in the TBS *Directive on the Evaluation Function (2009)*:

Relevance

- Issue #1: Ongoing need for the program
- Issue #2: Alignment with government priorities
- Issue #3: Alignment with federal roles and responsibilities

Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)

- Issue #4: Achievement of expected outcomes
- Issue #5: Demonstration of efficiency and economy

The evaluation questions were selected based on the YTC logic model and the need to gather information on the design and delivery of the program, given it is a new program. The questions and indicators by core issue are set out in the evaluation matrix in Appendix B.

Table 2 presents the evaluation issues and questions addressed by the evaluation of YTC.

Table 2: Overview of Evaluation Issues and Questions

Issues	Questions
Relevance	
Continued need for the program	• To what extent is there a demonstrated need for the program? • Is YTC responsive to the needs of Canadian youth?
Alignment with government priorities	• To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with federal government priorities? • To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with PCH priorities and Strategic Outcomes?
Consistency with federal roles and responsibilities	• Is the delivery of the program an appropriate role or responsibility for the federal government?
Performance – Effectiveness	
Achievement of expected outcomes	• Has the program provided youth with opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in identified thematic areas? • To what extent has the program helped youth to be aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen? • To what extent are youth-serving organizations relevant to youth? • To what extent have funded projects engaged youth in their communities? • Has the program provided youth with a sense of attachment to Canada? • Has the program provided youth with a sense of shared Canadian identity?

Performance – Efficiency and Economy	
Demonstration of efficiency and economy	• Are the resources dedicated to the program being used economically and efficiently to maximize achievement of outcomes? • Are there other interventions (not necessarily involving the delivery of grants and contributions programming) or alternative approaches to achieve similar objectives/results?
Other	
Other evaluation issues(s)	• Has the program's design contributed to: ○ Coherence between program's logic model and Terms & Conditions? ○ Adequate management/administrative systems in place for effective program delivery? ○ Achievement of the desired outcomes? • What have been the implications of the 2014-15 budget reductions on the design and delivery of the program? • Is an adequate performance measurement strategy in place to account for program results?

3.3. Evaluation Methods

Preliminary Consultation

Before undertaking the evaluation, preliminary discussions were held with the YTC working group, composed of management and staff, which led to the development of the Terms of Reference for the evaluation. The Terms of Reference included a description of the evaluation scope and issues, the methodological approach and a detailed evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix (Appendix B) identifies the evaluation questions, associated indicators and lines of evidence to respond to each question.

Lines of Evidence

The evaluation featured important strengths, including the mix of qualitative and quantitative lines of evidence, the mix of primary and secondary data sources and multiple lines of evidence to allow for the triangulation of evidence. The evidence was organized and analyzed by core issue, evaluation question and indicator and consolidated into an overall evidence matrix.

The evaluation methodology incorporated five lines of evidence:

- Document review
- Literature review
- Administrative data review
- Interviews with key informants
- Survey of funding recipients and non-funded applicants to YTC

Document Review

A review of program and government documents was conducted to assess the relevance and performance of YTC, particularly its alignment with federal government and departmental priorities and strategic outcomes. Documents reviewed for the evaluation included:

- Government of Canada documents, including Budgets and Throne Speeches;
- Departmental documents, including Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPP) and Departmental Performance Reports (DPR); and
- Program documents, including a sample of recipient contribution agreements, financial reports and final project reports, administrative data and reports and the Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Risk Strategy (PMERS).

Literature Review

A literature review provided evidence for the relevance of YTC, including in particular the continuing need and responsiveness of the program. The review focused on grey and peer-reviewed literature published between 2000 and 2014. The sources consulted during the literature review were derived from academic publications, monographs, government and non-governmental research reports, international treaties on youth and websites. Search topics were determined based on an assessment of the issues in the evaluation matrix.

Administrative Data Review

The administrative data review provided quantitative information on YTC activities and results and thus provided an important source of evidence for evaluation questions pertaining to performance (including effectiveness and efficiency).

The administrative data review included a sample of contribution agreements and final reports from a sample of 12 funded organizations, results from post-participation surveys conducted by the program and various compilations of project-level administrative data, including financial information and project characteristics. The sample of funded organizations was selected on the basis of region, size of contribution agreement and thematic area.

Financial data for YTC was also analyzed for the period of the evaluation, including reference levels and expenditures for YTC O&M and Gs&Cs.

Interviews with Key Informants

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to gather in-depth information, including opinions, explanations, examples and factual information with respect to all evaluation issues and questions. Key informants were selected based on their involvement, knowledge and experience with YTC. Interview evidence was analyzed first at the respondent type level, then overall.

A total of 18 interviews were conducted as follows:

- PCH officials (n=5)
- Representatives from organizations that received YTC funding (n=13)

Surveys of Funding Recipients and Non-Funded Applicants

An on-line survey of both funding recipients and non-funded applicants was conducted. The survey obtained perceptions and views on the relevance and performance of YTC, as well as on the design and delivery of the program.

The survey was administered online through an email invitation. During the course of the survey timeframe, two survey reminders were sent to those that had not responded to the survey. The invitation to the survey was sent to 40 funding recipients and 93 non-funded applicants.

A total of 23 funding recipients and 16 non-funded applicants responded to at least one of the survey questions. These numbers represent response rates of 58 percent for funding recipients and 17 percent for non-funded applicants.

The following guidelines were used to report the findings of the surveys and key informant interviews:

Quantifiers	% of Respondents/Key Informants
All/almost all	Findings reflect 90% or more of the observations
Large majority/most	Findings reflect 75% or more, but less than 90% of the observations
Majority	Findings reflect at least 51%, but less than 75% of the observations
Half	Findings reflect 50% of the observations
Some	Findings reflect at least 25%, but less than 50% of the observations
A few	Findings reflect less than 25% of the observations

Methodological Limitations

While the methodology offered a number of important strengths, including the mix of qualitative and quantitative lines of evidence and the mix of primary and secondary data sources, the evaluation did encounter some challenges and there were some limitations to the methodology. The following were some of the key challenges and limitations of the evaluation as well as some mitigation strategies:

- **Potential bias of data sources.** Much of the data on the achievement of program outcomes was self-reported and therefore potentially biased. This included data collected from groups with a vested interest in the program. Many of the interview key informants were either directly involved in the program or program beneficiaries. Respondents to the evaluation survey were either direct beneficiaries or had not received funding. The potential bias was mitigated by triangulating the findings from the various sources of evidence.

- **Wide variability among projects in terms of the number of participants and the level of participant engagement.** The number of participants and the nature of the participant experience appear to vary considerably across projects. For example, some projects reported as few as six participants per year with participants directly engaged in the design, development and implementation of a project, i.e. very involved, while other projects reported 136,000 participants per year (and extremely low average cost per participant) with participants less involved in the project. This wide variability in the numbers and the nature of participation presented some challenges to the evaluation. Often the “unit of analysis” is the participant; however, the methods normally used for undertaking program level measures (e.g., cost per participant, average scores on satisfaction, etc.) are not as valid given the wide diversity and variability in what defines a participant. To accommodate some of this diversity, the evaluation team undertook some additional analyses to understand the impact of including/excluding some projects with significantly large numbers of declared participants.
- **Response rate for post-program participant surveys.** The assessment of progress toward the achievement of participant outcomes relies on the post-program participant survey, the results of which were analysed as one component of the administrative data review. Overall, for the period covered by the evaluation, the surveys had a low response rate (7 percent).² Participants from 30 of the 38 funded organizations with a confidence interval of 95 percent are included in the survey results. Given the low response rate, the uncertainty of the representativeness of the responses that were obtained and the difficulty of attributing results solely to the program, the survey results have been used as an indication of potential outcomes for youth participants and triangulated, where possible, with other lines of evidence.
- **Gaps in the performance data.** Post-participation outcome data are not available for approximately 40 percent of participants as the post-program participant survey is not administered to youth under the age of 13. The program’s decision to administer the post-participation survey only to youth 13 and over was based on an assessment of the complexity of the concepts that are included in the YTC questionnaire and the logistics associated with the need to obtain consent from a parent or responsible adult when surveying children.
- **Generalizability of findings for the evaluation survey of unfunded applicants.** The survey of unfunded applicants had a very low response rate of 17 percent, so results from this line of evidence should be interpreted with caution. The timeline for the survey was quite short (3 weeks) within a normally quite busy period of the fiscal year for organizations.

² YTC-funded project participants are generally between the ages of 7 and 30, but only youth 13 and over receive the survey questionnaire. The response rate is based on estimated participation of youth 13 and over for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14.

4. Findings - Relevance

The following sections present the key evaluation findings related to relevance.

4.1. Core Issue 1: Continued Need for the Program

Evaluation Question:

To what extent is there a demonstrated need for YTC?

Is YTC responsive to the needs of Canadian youth?

KEY FINDINGS

The evidence points to a continued need for federal investment in programs for youth that strengthen youth attachment to Canada through opportunities for youth engagement. The evidence points to a need to engage youth, including traditionally under-represented and at-risk youth, with communities; to enhance belonging and connection among youth; to increase civic engagement among youth; and to engage youth using less traditional, experiential, participatory and collaborative activities. The literature highlights, in particular, the potential negative community and societal-level consequences for those countries that do not effectively engage youth within their communities.

YTC provides opportunities to a large and diverse range of youth. Since its launch in 2010-11, YTC has responded to the need to strengthen youth attachment through engagement by funding 56 projects with 852,982 participants, the majority of whom were between the ages of 7 and 17 (89 percent).

Further evidence of YTC's responsiveness to addressing some of these needs is the flexibility of its delivery model, including the broad scope of the four funding theme areas (i.e. History and Heritage, Civic Engagement and Youth Service, Arts and Culture and Economic Activities); emphasis on youth-led projects; and consideration of changing styles of engagement (e.g., through technology).

Although YTC is responsive because it is in high demand, as evidenced by the number of funding proposals received, it can be perceived as only partially responsive because the demand for funding is greater than the resources available. Across the period covered by the evaluation, PCH funded 26 percent of eligible applications (56 of 213).

Involving youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life aligns with the needs of youth. However, relative to the other three primary themes, fewer proposals under the Economic Activities theme were received, fewer projects with Economic Activities as a primary theme were funded and projects with an economic theme had fewer participants. While 16 percent of projects involved youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life, they accounted for only 1 percent of participants. This may be explained in part by the departmental focus on history and heritage, leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, for the latter period of the evaluation coverage (i.e. 2013-14).

Continuing Need to Strengthen Youth Attachment to Canada through Engagement

Evidence from the key informant interviews and the evaluation survey of funding recipients confirms the findings from the literature review, indicating a continuing need to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through opportunities for youth engagement. Lower levels of belonging and connection and the decline in levels of civic engagement generally and specifically among youth were identified in the literature and confirmed through some key informant interviews and the evaluation survey of funding recipients. The literature review outlined the negative consequences of not engaging youth with their communities, while key informants identified the challenges that particularly more marginalized Canadian youth face when trying to develop a sense of belonging and attachment and a shared understanding of history, identity and values. The potentially negative consequences of youth disengagement support the establishment of a program like YTC that has as its overall objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement.

The evidence from the literature review and key informant interviews identified the need to strengthen youth attachment and the importance of engagement in fostering that attachment:

- **Lower national belonging rates for youth.** Results from the 2013 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Identity found that 56 percent of youth aged 15-24 described their sense of belonging to Canada as being very strong, compared to 63 percent of Canadians generally and 77 percent of seniors aged 75 years and older.³ A few evaluation survey respondents noted that it is important for youth to be able to define their own communities of importance when they engage, which in turn contributes to a stronger sense of belonging. Similarly, in key informant interviews a few funding recipients emphasized the need for youth to define Canadian identity on their own terms, rather than necessarily subscribing to established definitions. Another challenging trend noted among key informants with respect to developing a Canadian identity is that globalization has resulted in youth with a stronger sense of global and local identities in some cases than a sense of national identity.
- **Lower rates of civic engagement among youth.** Voting is often seen as an important form and measure of engagement. The 2011 Ontario election experienced an historic low voter turnout “with less than 50 percent of eligible voters casting a ballot.”⁴ Young Canadians have also become less likely to join political parties than their counterparts in the previous two generations.⁵ These declining trends in both voter turnout and other forms of democratic participation indicate that Canadians are becoming increasingly disengaged in active expressions of citizenship. According to Brown, this “lack of

³ Statistics Canada, *General Social Survey. Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey: Sense of belonging to Canada, the province of residence and the local community*, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015004-eng.htm>. (Accessed September 16, 2015).

⁴ R. Brown, *Ready or not? Preparing Youth for 21st Century Responsible Citizenship, Executive Summary*. (Toronto: Learning for a Sustainable Future, 2012), 1.

⁵ L. Young and W. A. Cross, *A Group Apart: Young Party Members in Canada Charting the Course for Youth Civic and Political Participation* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research, 2007), iii.

participation threatens our form of government, creating an urgent need to increase civic engagement.”⁶ .

- **Prevalence of other, less traditional, forms of youth engagement.** Youth of today engage differently through alternative, less traditional, experiential, participatory and collaborative activities. Much of the literature also focuses on alternative and less traditional channels youth are using to engage with civil society.^{7, 8, 9, 10} Instead of joining a political party, youth will often become a member of a more specialized group (e.g., environmental). Although these groups are important, Young and Cross argue that “Canadian democracy also needs internally democratic, participatory political parties in order to function well. And the foundation for such political parties is laid when Canadians are drawn into partisan political life as young adults, for there is compelling evidence showing that individuals who join parties when they are young remain the activist core of these parties when they are older.”¹¹

While the literature repeatedly acknowledges the need for the education system to play a larger role in developing engaged youth,^{12,13} authors indicate civics education must go beyond learning about political structures and incorporate political participation: “An education system that allows youth to see themselves as important members of political institutions, and develop the competencies to effectively participate in them can prepare them for participation. Learning through experiential and collaborative activities can help children develop the skills deemed essential for constructive participation in society.”¹⁴ For youth to be acknowledged and their needs to be considered important, youth need to be present within the democratic process.

Some key informants echoed the findings of the literature review that youth need to be present within the democratic process by highlighting the importance of youth-led projects. Similarly, the findings from the evaluation survey of funding recipients noted the importance of youth being able to recognize that they are making a difference, see the results of their work, to feel their views are taken into consideration.

⁶ Brown, *Ready or not?*, 1.

⁷ R. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Boston: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

⁸ Daniel Hart and Robert Atkins, “Civic Competence in Urban Youth,” *Applied Developmental Science* Vol. 6, no. 4. (2002): 227-236.

⁹ S. Fuller, *Youth Participation in Arts, Heritage, Culture and Community: A National Conversation* (Atlantic Evaluation Group Inc. for Canadian Heritage, Citizen Participation Branch, 2009).

¹⁰ M. McKinnon, S. Pitre, and J. Watling, *Lost in Translation: (Mis) Understanding Youth Engagement* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2007).

¹¹ Young and Cross, *A Group Apart*, 1.

¹² Brown, *Ready or not?*, 3.

¹³ Young and Cross, *A Group Apart*, 2.

¹⁴ Brown, *Ready or not?*, 3.

- **Negative community and societal-level consequences for those countries that do not effectively engage youth with their communities.**^{15, 16, 17, 18} These negative consequences can include an erosion of democratic processes; diminished capacity of public institutions to respond to youth's needs; and increased social and economic marginalization of youth from potentially vulnerable groups such as religious minorities, immigrants, economically disadvantaged and Aboriginal. Key informants echoed this finding by describing a number of specific needs/gaps with a particular emphasis on considerations to increase youth engagement opportunities for at-risk and marginalized youth.

Related to the needs of youth, the survey of funding recipients asked respondents to describe changes or trends in the needs of youth-serving organizations over the past five years. Among the changes or trends noted by respondents are the following:

- Fewer youth-serving organizations and many of these organizations have programs managed and run by adults to serve youth. At the same time there has been an increase in some youth councils and youth advisory groups;
- Increased challenges in engaging adult mentors, possibly as a result of an increase in perceived risks;
- Increased need and desire to collaborate among youth-serving organizations;
- An increased need to keep up with technological changes. At the same time, youth have increasingly advanced technological skills;
- More youth who are experiencing mental health challenges;
- Increased need for support in engaging youth to provide meaningful volunteering experiences; and
- Limited availability of funds for organizations.

YTC's Responsiveness to the Need to Strengthen Youth Attachment to Canada through Engagement

Youth is a time for socialization and the gradual construction of a self-identity – using a life course perspective, youth is considered by various theorists and researchers as a time for choosing values and the ideals that they represent.^{19 20} As a person evolves from childhood into youth, there is traditionally an initial distancing from the family home accompanied by less rigid forms of socialization with family, peers and friends and the need to find their social and economic niche in society.²¹ By focusing on broad thematic areas such as History and Heritage, Arts and Culture, Civic Engagement and Youth Service and Economic Activities, YTC is designed to assist youth with some of these transitions as they find their social and economic niches.

¹⁵ Erik Amna, "How is civic engagement developed over time? Emerging answers from multidisciplinary field," *Journal of Adolescence* Vol. 35, Issue 32 (2012): 611-627.

¹⁶ Meghan Brooks, "Imaginer le Canada, négocier l'appartenance : comprendre le racisme vécu par les Canadiens de couleur de la deuxième génération," *Diversité canadienne* 6, 2 (Printemps 2008): 84-88.

¹⁷ Brown, *Ready or not?*, 1.

¹⁸ Lori Wilkinson, "Portrait de l'identité et du sentiment d'appartenance chez les jeunes immigrants de deuxième génération à Winnipeg," *Diversité Canadienne* 6, 2 (Printemps 2008): 93-96.

¹⁹ M. Molgat, *The Values of Youth in Canada – Research Paper*. (Ottawa: Policy Research Initiative, 2010), 7.

²⁰ G. Pronovost and C. Royer, *Les valeurs des jeunes* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de L'Université du Québec, 2004).

²¹ Molgat, *The Values of Youth in Canada*, 8.

YTC is responsive in that the program's design reveals alignment with many of the needs identified through the various lines of evidence. With emphasis on both youth-led projects (defining their own terms) and on thematic areas which are broad and flexible, YTC is able to respond to PCH and GC priorities while also addressing the various interests and needs of youth:

- **History and Heritage.** Findings from the literature review indicate a strong need among youth to understand the role of history and heritage. Canadian youth are not sufficiently engaged in Canadian history and heritage.²² Youth tend to be uninterested in Canadian history and do not necessarily see the relevance of increasing their knowledge in these areas. A recent survey found that only 20 percent of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 29 reported that they have a general interest in history.²³ Following in the same direction, only 5 percent of youth between the ages of 18 and 24 reported that sharing history helps to unite the country.²⁴ This thematic area is addressing the need for a better understanding of the role of history and heritage. However, during key informant interviews, some representatives from funded organizations noted YTC's more recent focus on elements of value within Canadian history and heritage²⁵ has made YTC more restrictive, which may have an impact on youth's freedom to identify themes important to them.
- **Civic Engagement and Youth Service.** The literature indicates that while rates of political engagement and action were as high among youth in 2000 as they were in the early 1980's, the approaches to engagement were quite different.²⁶ It has become more common for youth to be politically engaged through non-electoral activities such as defending issues, causes or rights, rather than attending a political rally.^{27, 28} This would indicate that by funding youth-led projects which emphasize civic engagement and youth service, YTC enables youth to define their own areas of political interest and methods of political engagement (issues and causes).
- **Arts and Culture.** By focusing on themes such as Arts and Culture, YTC is engaging youth through an area and activities that hold a strong attraction for many youth. Data from the Canadian youth cohort from the most recent World Values Survey, and confirmed by other research, indicates that while the participation of youth in political parties and political action organizations has steadily decreased over the past 30 years, during the same time period there has been a marked increase in the number of youth that

²² Mairi Cowan and Christopher Landon, "The Missing Links in History Education," *Canadian Journal for Social Research* Vol. 4, No.1 (Spring 2011): 28-30.

²³ David Northrup, "Canadians and Their Pasts," *Canadian Journal for Social Research* Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2011): 12-13.

²⁴ Jack Jedwab, *What Keeps Canada Together?* (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 2014), 2.

²⁵ This focus is in line with the departmental priority on history and heritage, leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. See *Canadian Heritage, 2014-15 Report on Plan and Priorities* (Gatineau: Canadian Heritage, 2014), 6.

²⁶ Molgat, *The Values of Youth in Canada*. 4.

²⁷ A. Quéniart, J. Jacques, and C. Jauzion-Graverolle, « Consommer autrement : Une forme d'engagement politique chez les jeunes », *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* 20(1) (2007): 181-195.

²⁸ McKinnon, Pitre and Watling J., *Lost in Translation*. iii.

belong to art, music and cultural organizations.²⁹ More Canadian youth than adults participate in cultural activities (79 percent for youth; 61 percent for adults)³⁰ and in drama, dance or music activities (47 percent for youth; 21 percent for adults).³¹

- **Economic Activities.** Given the challenges encountered by many youth in participating fully in the labour market, and the importance that Canadian youth place on this activity along with education, by involving youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life as one of its four thematic areas, YTC aligns with needs of youth.

The economic needs of youth are outlined in a recent report to the House of Commons from the Standing Committee on Finance (2014). The report indicates that in 2013 the rate of unemployment among youth under 30 years of age was approximately twice that of people over 30 years of age. The report outlined a number of significant challenges that youth face with respect to participating fully in the labour market. These include areas such as the cost of post-secondary education combined with insufficient financial support; delays between finishing studies and finding employment; labour market integration for some more vulnerable groups of youth; and discrimination in the labour market. Youth continue to place a high value on work and view education as of utmost importance for future employment and assisting them to integrate in society.³²

This was reflected in the responses from a few of the funding recipients in the survey of organizations in which youth needs with respect to employment, skills development, entrepreneurship, working experience and engaging in successful team work were highlighted.

However, although the economic theme aligns with the needs of youth, a review of the administrative data indicated that overall PCH received fewer proposals under the Economic Activities theme. The number of proposals increased in the two years when the Economic Activities theme was identified as one of the priority areas for funding but declined when it was no longer a priority theme.

YTC is responsive to the changes that have occurred or are occurring that impact the manner in which youth engage with their communities. As previously noted, the literature indicates that youth are placing less value on traditional forms of political participation and instead are finding alternative forms which often include technology and connectedness through the Internet (e.g., online petitions, discussion groups, information campaigns).³³ This is allowing new forms of connection and communication among youth that are unprecedented and likely to continue to grow. Similarly, globalization and generational changes have impacted the way youth associate with their countries and communities.³⁴ YTC can be viewed as addressing the need of youth to

²⁹ Molgat, *The Values of Youth in Canada*. 30.

³⁰ Decima Research Inc., *The Arts in Canada: Access and Availability – 2004 Research Study Final Report* (Gatineau: Department of Canadian Heritage, 2004), 30.

³¹ Ipsos-Reid Corporation, *Reconnecting Government with Youth* (Ottawa, Ipsos-Reid, 2004), 44.

³² Molgat, *The Values of Youth in Canada*. 36.

³³ Ibid. 39.

³⁴ Susan Franke, *Current Realities and Emerging Issues Facing Youth in Canada: An Analytical Framework for Public Policy Research, Development and Evaluation - Research Paper* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Policy

engage differently with their communities by supporting youth-led projects that have the flexibility to use technology as a vector of engagement. YTC also encourages active participation within a group setting with fellow Canadians, connects people, makes them engaged and is important in identity formation.

Some PCH officials indicated that the need for YTC and its responsiveness are demonstrated by the high number of funding proposals received. However, the program's responsiveness is constrained by the availability of resources. As shown by Table 3, YTC received significantly more applications for funding than it was able to fund, with 324 applications received during the period covered by the evaluation, of which 213 projects met the eligibility criteria. Funding was provided for 56 projects, representing 26 percent of eligible applications.

Table 3: Demand for YTC Funding (counting multi-year projects only once)

Intake	Applications	Eligible Projects	Funded Projects
June 2010	91	56	8
November 2010	141	81	16
November 2011	43	35	11
October 2012	49	41	21
Total	324	213	56

Source: Administrative data

Funding recipients also viewed YTC as responsive to needs and trends related to Canadian youth. The large majority of respondents to the evaluation survey of funding recipients indicated that YTC was responsive (61 percent) or partially responsive (26 percent) to the needs of Canadian youth. Similarly, the key informants noted that YTC is responsive considering the level of resources available. Approximately one half of key informants indicated that the program is responding to one or more traditionally under-represented groups, including Aboriginal and culturally diverse youth, youth at risk, youth living in official-language minority communities and youth with disabilities. Among key informants, the main aspects of YTC highlighted as contributing to the responsiveness to Canadian youth needs was the “youth-to-youth” model and the flexibility encouraged in how to best engage different groups of youth (i.e. different delivery models and themes).

4.2. Core Issue 2: Alignment with Government Priorities

Evaluation Question

To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with PCH priorities and strategic outcomes?

To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with federal government priorities?

KEY FINDINGS

YTC's objectives and expected results align with PCH's priorities and one of its three strategic outcomes and with federal government priorities.

YTC is aligned with PCH Strategic Outcome "Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity" and with two specific PCH priorities:

- Celebrating our history and heritage
- Investing in our communities

YTC is aligned with federal government priorities as outlined in the 2011 budget speech, which makes direct references to supporting a creative economy and investment in heritage, culture and the arts, and with the 2012 budget speech, in which the government outlines the importance of providing a breadth of opportunities for youth.

Alignment with PCH Priorities and Strategic Outcomes

The document review combined with key informant interviews demonstrated that YTC's objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement aligns with one of PCH's three strategic outcomes and priorities. The document review found evidence of alignment between YTC and PCH's PAA. The PAA, as articulated in PCH's 2013-14 Departmental Performance Report (DPR), confirms that the activities associated with YTC's objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement support the achievement of Strategic Outcome 2—Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity—and more specifically falls under the "Attachment to Canada" Program Activity.

The review of PCH's 2013-14 RPP confirmed that YTC's objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement aligns with the following two PCH priorities:

- **Celebrating our history and heritage.** PCH has "a role in promoting a strong national identity that is based on attachment, shared values and knowledge and experiences of Canada that emphasize the legacy of its history and heritage."
- **Investing in our communities.** The 2013-14 RPP identified as one element of its plan to address this priority to "maximize opportunities for Canadian youth to strengthen their sense of attachment to Canada, through renewed youth programming."

All PCH officials agreed that the objective of YTC is well aligned or consistent with current PCH priorities. They noted that it fits in well with the departmental PAA as well as the Road to 2017.

Alignment with Government of Canada Priorities

The document review and key informant interviews demonstrated that the YTC objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement aligns with Government of Canada (GC) priorities. Budget speeches during the period covered by the evaluation indicated the importance of youth, often focusing on their employment and skill needs to actively participate in the labour market and various dimensions of the economy.³⁵ While not a youth employment program, YTC offers opportunities for youth to gain experience in leading projects (e.g., planning, implementation and evaluation).

In the 2011 budget speech there are direct references to supporting a creative economy and investment in culture and the arts. Similarly, in the 2012 budget speech, the Government outlines the importance of a breadth of opportunities for youth. Though there is no explicit mention of YTC, there is mention of supporting programs for Canada's youth. YTC is aligned with these priorities as, among other things, it seeks to fund and support projects that create economic activities and provide cultural opportunities for youth.

The Speeches from the Throne for the First Session (2011) and the Second Session (2013) of the 41st Parliament outline the federal priorities related to the importance of valuing Canada's heritage. YTC's objective and expected outcomes align with this federal priority.

4.3. Core Issue 3: Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation Question

Is the delivery of the program an appropriate role or responsibility for the federal government?

KEY FINDINGS

Delivery of YTC is an appropriate role for the federal government. The PCH mandate is established in the *Department of Canadian Heritage Act* and other statutes and includes various responsibilities for "Canadian identity and values, cultural development and heritage."

Key informants indicated that it is necessary and/or legitimate for the federal government and PCH to play a role in strengthening youth attachment to Canada, noting that the GC has the responsibility to promote Canada and a Canadian identity and that it is important that the GC work at both the national and the community levels to develop a healthy civic participation.

³⁵ For example, youth were mentioned in: "Leading the Way on Jobs and Growth – Budget 2010," "Jobs Growth and Long-Term Prosperity: Economic Action Plan 2012," and "Jobs Growth and Long-Term Prosperity: Economic Action Plan 2013."

According to PCH's Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPPs) for the period covered by the evaluation, YTC aligns well with some of the key responsibilities of PCH. As noted in the PCH 2012-13 RPP:

The Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for programs and policies that help all Canadians participate in their shared cultural and civic life. The Department's legislative mandate is set out in the Department of Canadian Heritage Act and other statutes for which the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages is responsible and presents a wide-ranging list of responsibilities for the Minister under the heading of "Canadian identity and values, cultural development and heritage."³⁶

The objective of YTC to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement is within the PCH roles and responsibilities as outlined above.

All PCH officials and almost all funding recipients agreed that it is necessary and/or legitimate for the federal government and PCH to play a role in strengthening youth attachment to Canada. All PCH officials agreed that YTC is aligned with federal and departmental roles and responsibilities, with a few noting that the GC is the only level of government with the responsibility to promote Canada and a Canadian identity. Key informants identified the GC's role as a funder of youth programming. A few key informants mentioned that the GC's role should extend further, through policy development, as an advocate of youth and as a convener of youth-focused stakeholders.

Funding recipients confirmed the need for YTC. They highlighted that it is important that GC work at both the national and the community level to develop a healthy civic participation. A quote from one funding recipient sums up the general view of interviewees: "The federal role is an opportunity to ensure that the voices of the millennial generation are taken into account. It is a federal responsibility to engage with youth and to showcase and provide funding that invests in the future and not just in the existing economy."

³⁶ Canadian Heritage, *Canadian Heritage 2012-13 Report on Plans and Priorities* (Gatineau: Canadian Heritage, 2013), 3.

5. Findings: Performance

The following sections present the major evaluation findings related to performance: effectiveness.

5.1. Core Issue 4: Achievement of Expected Outcomes

Evaluation Question

To what extent did YTC achieve its expected outcomes?

KEY FINDINGS

YTC has made progress toward achieving its immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes. A broad range of youth are being provided the opportunity to engage in youth-led projects in the four thematic areas. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, YTC contributed approximately \$12.1 million for projects to strengthen youth attachment through engagement. During that period, more than 850,000 youth participated in 56 YTC projects. YTC projects included participants from traditionally under-represented groups. Demographic data indicates that young women and men were equally represented. Compared with representation in the 2011 Census, Aboriginal youth were represented, but visible minority youth and youth with disabilities were under-represented.

The largest proportion of projects had a primary theme of History and Heritage (32 percent), followed by Arts and Culture (29 percent) and Civic Engagement (23 percent). The smallest proportion of projects had a primary theme of Economic Activities (16 percent). This distribution of projects may be explained in part by the departmental prioritization of history and heritage, leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, for the latter period of the evaluation coverage (i.e. 2013-14).

In 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Economic Activities theme was identified as a priority in the funding guidelines and there was a corresponding increase in the number of applicants and number of projects funded with Economic Activities as a primary theme.

The distribution and number of participants varied by thematic areas. The large majority participated in projects with a primary theme of Civic Engagement (72 percent). Smaller numbers participated in projects with a primary theme of either Arts and Culture (14 percent) or History and Heritage (13 percent). Very few participants were associated with projects with a primary theme of Economic Activities (1 percent).

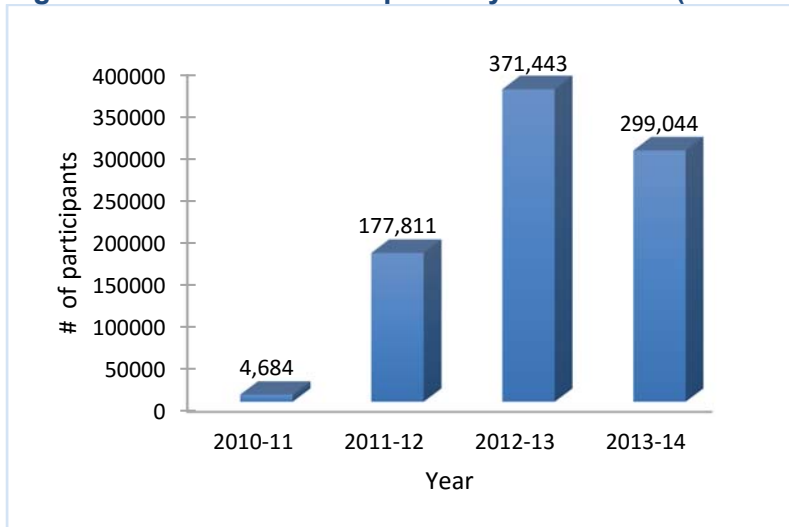
As a result of their participation in YTC-funded projects a large proportion of youth agreed that they had the opportunity to participate in various aspects of community engagement: involvement in the place where they live (70-76 percent), collaborate with youth from other communities (67-74 percent), learn about an issue important to them (76-78 percent) and take action on an issue they cared about (73-78 percent). A large proportion of youth also agreed that as a result of participation in YTC projects, they recognized the importance of being an active and engaged citizen (80-86 percent); felt more attached to community/region (69-72 percent), province/territory (59-67 percent) and Canada (62-67 percent); and realized a sense of shared Canadian identity (79-82 percent).

The majority of youth agreed that the organization that coordinated their activity was relevant to youth and understood their needs (80-84 percent).

Opportunities to Engage in Youth-led Projects in Identified Thematic Areas

Across the period covered by the evaluation, more than 850,000 youth participated in YTC-funded projects. Administrative data for 2012-13 and 2013-14 show that YTC is capable of reaching over 300,000 youth annually. For example, in 2012-13, YTC projects reached over 371,000 youth. In 2013-14, they reached approximately 300,000 youth (see Figure 1). The number of participants in a project per year varied considerably, ranging from as low as 6 participants per year in one project to a high of 136,008 in another, with a median of 505 participants, reflecting the flexibility of the program to offer a diverse range of opportunities.

Figure 1: Number of Participants by Fiscal Year (2010-11 – 2013-14)

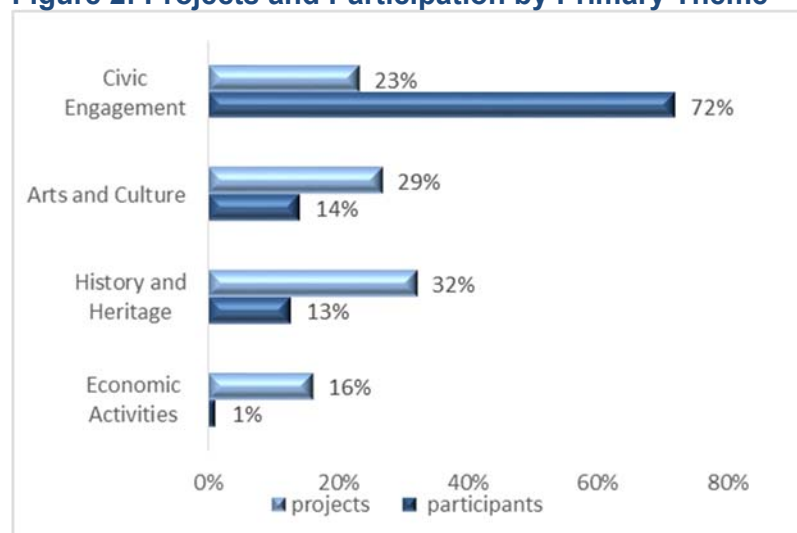


Source: Administrative data

Of the more than 850,000 participants between 2010-11 and 2013-14, 72 percent were in projects with a primary theme related to Civic Engagement. Smaller proportions of participants were associated with projects that had a primary theme of either Arts and Culture (14 percent) or History and Heritage (13 percent). Projects which had a primary theme of Economic Activities accounted for 1 percent of the participants (See Figure 2).

The project distribution was considerably different when considered by primary theme. The highest proportion of projects had a primary theme of History and Heritage (32 percent), while the proportions of projects found within the primary themes of Civic Engagement and Arts and Culture were 23 percent and 29 percent respectively. Sixteen percent of projects were identified as having a primary theme of Economic Activities. This difference in proportions between participation and projects would indicate that the Civic Engagement projects account for 23 percent of the projects and 72 percent of participants compared with the Economic Activities projects that account for 16 percent of projects, but only 1 percent of participants. The majority of the projects with a primary theme of Economic Activities had fewer than 1,000 participants.

Figure 2: Projects and Participation by Primary Theme



Source: Administrative Data (2011-2014)

The 2011 and 2012 guidelines identified the History and Heritage and Economic Activities thematic areas as priorities.^{37,38} Table 4 shows that this approach was effective in attracting a greater number of applications with Economic Activities as the primary theme. The June and November 2010 intakes had an estimated 7 percent and 4 percent of applications, respectively, with a primary theme of Economic Activities.³⁹ In the case of the November 2011 intake, Economic Activities was the primary theme for 26 percent of applications. Similarly for the October 2012 intake, Economic Activities was the primary theme for 33 percent of applications. The two years which had Economic Activities as a priority also had a larger number of projects with Economic Activities approved for funding.

Although outside the 2010-11 to 2013-14 evaluation timeframe, the evaluation looked at the December 2013 and 2014 intakes to assess the impact of removing Economic Activities as a priority area for funding in the guidelines. The analysis shows that organizations which applied for funding had fewer projects with Economic Activities as a primary theme; i.e. only one of the 19 projects had Economic Activities as a primary theme (i.e. 5 percent) and this project was approved for funding. This trend has continued for the latest intake of funding applications (December 2014); there were no applications with Economic Activities as a primary theme. It is noted, however, that the History and Heritage thematic area has had priority for funding leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017.

³⁷ Canadian Heritage. *Youth Take Charge Guidelines* (Gatineau: Canadian Heritage, 2011).

³⁸ Canadian Heritage. *Youth Take Charge Guidelines* (Gatineau: Canadian Heritage, 2012).

³⁹ Data on the number of applicants for each theme was not historically compiled for all applications; for the June 2010 intake, data was available on 45 of 90 applications and for the November 2010 intakes data was available on 81 of 140 applications. Note that 2010-11 was the start-up year and is not considered representative.

Table 4: Percentage of Applications with Economic Activities as the Primary Theme

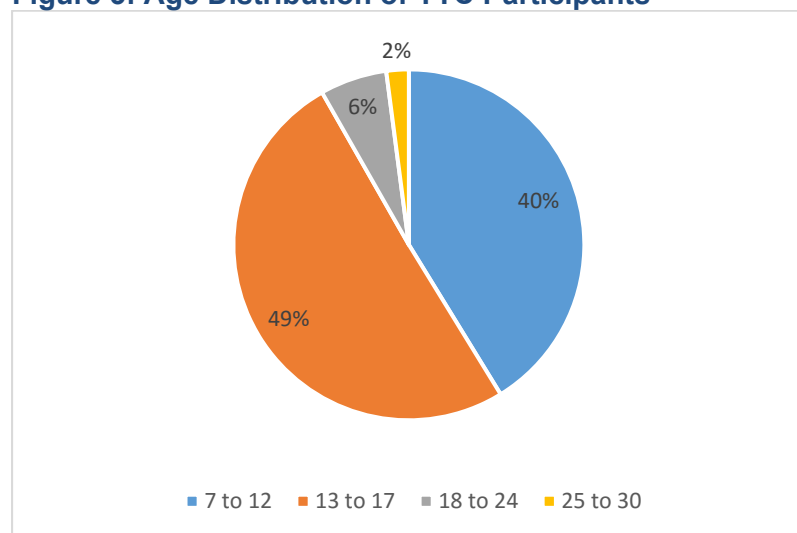
Intake	% of total applications sampled	% of applications sampled with primary theme Economic Activities	Percentage of funded projects with a primary theme Economic Activities	Percentage of Participants
June 2010	50%	7%	0%	0%
November 2010	56%	4%	6%	.2%
November 2011	96%	26%	27%	3.2%
October 2012	100%	33%	24%	1.6%
December 2013	87%	5%	5%	0.6%
November 2014	68%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Administrative data

Profile of Participants

According to the program's Terms and Conditions among the criteria against which applications are assessed is the "reach, diversity and number of youth involved in the project."⁴⁰ According to the program's administrative data collected from funding recipients, over the period of the evaluation equal numbers of male (46 percent) and female (47 percent) youth participated in YTC projects.⁴¹

The age eligibility for YTC participants is quite broad, ranging generally from 7 to 30. Overall, the majority of participants over the period of the evaluation were aged 7- 17 (89 percent). Approximately 6 percent were between the ages of 18 and 24. A small proportion (2 percent) of participants were between the ages of 25 and 30 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Age Distribution of YTC Participants

Source: Administrative data (2011-2014)

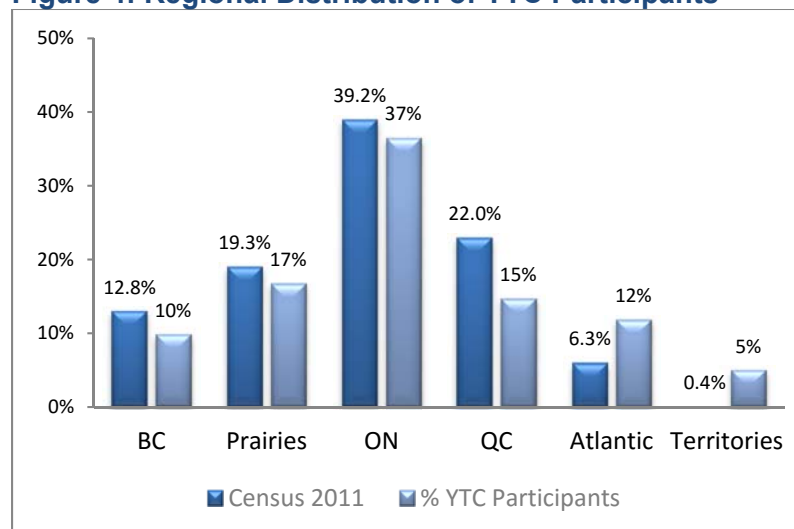
⁴⁰ Canada, Canadian Heritage. *Terms & Conditions – Grants and Contributions in Support of the Youth Take Charge Program*. (Gatineau: Canadian Heritage, April 1, 2013).

⁴¹ Results for the profile of participants are based on the percentage of the total number of youth participants (i.e. 852,982). Reports were not available from all projects; therefore, the total does not add up to 100 percent. Also, there may be underreporting for some groups since not all youth will self-identify (e.g., as Aboriginal or with a disability).

Based on data collected by funding recipients, the representation among YTC participants of Aboriginal youth was 5 percent (5 percent in the 2011 Census). Visible minority youth were under-represented at 12 percent (18 percent in the 2011 Census) as were youth with disabilities at 1 percent (8 percent in the 2011 Census). Youth identifying as being from an official-language minority community accounted for 3 percent.⁴² However, it should be noted that youth may choose to not disclose whether they belong to any of these groups.

The broad demographic reach of YTC was noted in interviews with key informants and demonstrated in the findings from the participant surveys. Based on demographic data collected through the post-participation surveys, the regional distribution of YTC participants was relatively close to the distribution of youth according to the 2011 Census (see Figure 4) except for the Quebec and Atlantic regions. Quebec was under-represented, whereas the Atlantic Region was over-represented.

Figure 4: Regional Distribution of YTC Participants



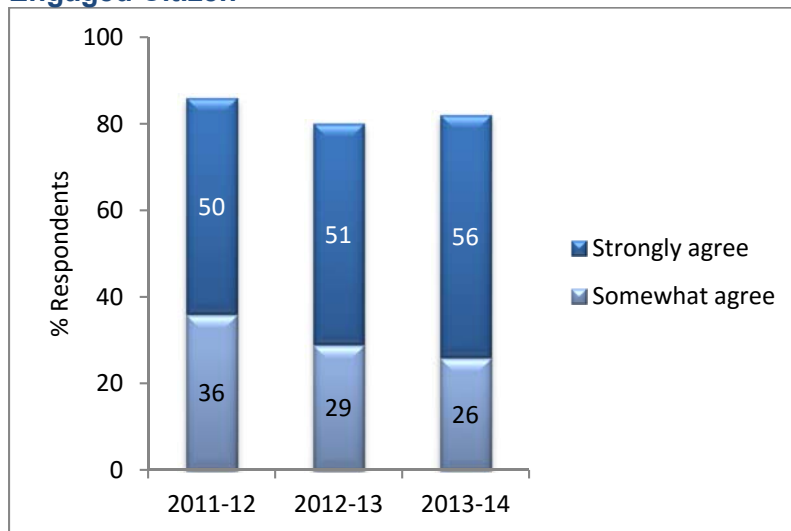
Source: Post-participation surveys (2011-2014)

Awareness of the Importance of Being an Active and Engaged Citizen

The post-participation survey showed that a large majority of participants across the three years (80 percent - 86 percent) agreed that as a result of their participation in YTC projects they recognize the importance of being an active and engaged citizen (see Figure 5). More than half indicated strong agreement with this outcome. This finding was also supported through the interviews and survey of funding recipients. In interviews, funding recipients all indicated that their projects contributed a great extent to increased awareness among the participants of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen. Similarly, all funding recipients on the evaluation survey either strongly agreed (83 percent), or somewhat agreed (17 percent) that their projects had contributed to participants' recognizing the importance of being active and engaged citizens.

⁴² As part of its design, the Program does not have targets for under-represented groups.

Figure 5: % Respondents Who Recognized the Importance of Being an Active and Engaged Citizen



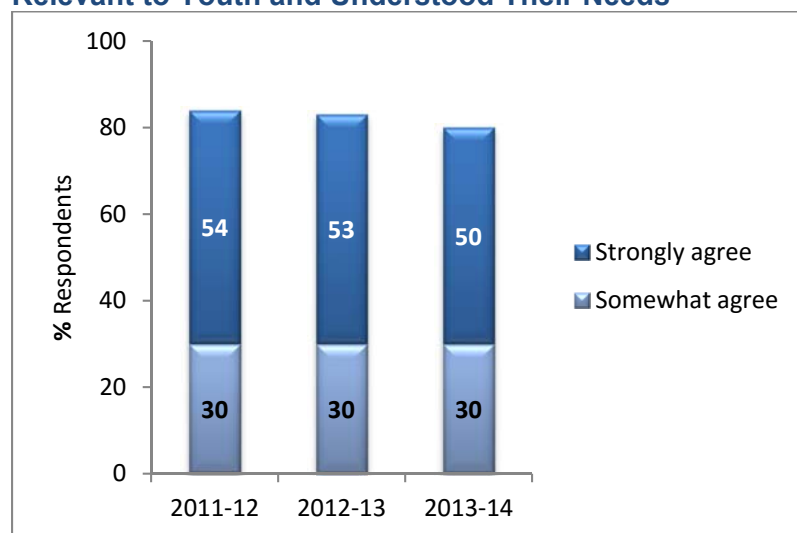
Source: Post-participation surveys (2011-2014)

Relevance of Youth-serving Organizations to Youth

The findings from the post-participation survey indicated that the large majority of participants agreed that the youth organization which coordinated their activity was relevant to youth and understood their needs (80 percent - 84 percent)

Interviews and the survey of funding recipients supported the findings of the post-participation survey. Funding recipients who were interviewed indicated that their YTC project contributed to increasing the relevance of their organization to youth. Respondents on the survey agreed strongly (61 percent) or somewhat (30 percent) that as a result of their project's being funded by YTC, their organizations are more relevant to youth. Examples provided by key informants included providing the organizations with a more prominent profile in the community, youth participants' returning to the organization to work as staff members/interns, increasing growth of the organizations that receive funding and increased leveraging from other funding resources as the result of receiving YTC funding. All of these were viewed as contributing to the capacity of organizations to be more relevant to youth.

Figure 6: % Respondents Agreeing YTC Funded Organization Offered an Activity That Is Relevant to Youth and Understood Their Needs



Source: Post-participation survey (2011-2014)

Community Engagement

Funding recipients noted various contributions that the YTC projects had made with respect to participants' becoming more engaged in their communities. These findings were corroborated by the participants themselves on the post-participation survey.

In interviews, almost all funding recipients indicated that their project contributed to a fair or great extent to increased youth engagement in their communities. Similarly, all the respondents to the survey of funding recipients strongly (65 percent) or somewhat (35 percent) agreed that as a result of their project's being funded by YTC, youth are more involved in the community in which they live. Respondents to the survey and interviews provided examples, such as project alumni have created their own community projects for youth and/or have gone on to pursue a career that serves their community, or have engaged in more civic participation such as running for local office. A few organizations did note that it is challenging to determine success on this outcome beyond the time of the project in part because they do not systematically track past participants for data.

The findings from the interviews and survey of funding recipients were confirmed with the findings from the post-participation surveys. Engagement in communities was measured according to participants' level of agreement on a number of statements about the extent to which the project gave them the opportunity to get involved in the place where they live, collaborate with youth from other communities, learn about an issue important to them and take action on an issue they cared about. As well, participants were asked if they intended to be more involved in their communities in the future.

Over the period 2011-12 to 2013-14, the majority of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that participation in the YTC project gave them the opportunity to:

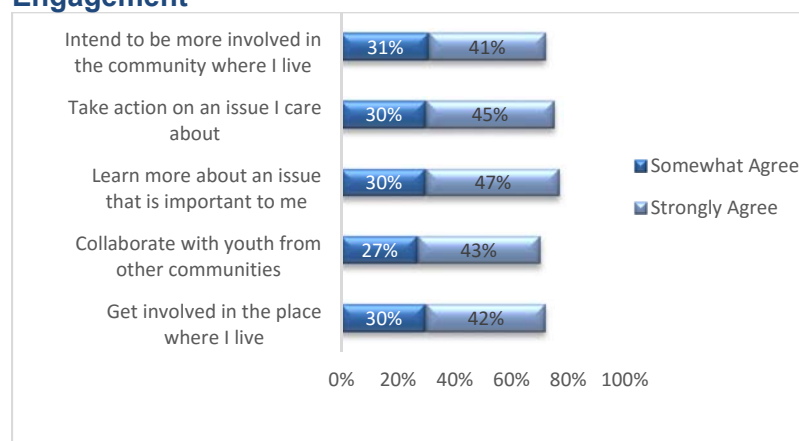
- Get involved in the place where they live (70 percent - 76 percent);

- Collaborate with youth from other communities (67 percent - 74 percent);
- Learn more about an issue important to them (76 percent - 78 percent); and
- Take action on an issue they cared about (73 percent - 78 percent).

In addition, the majority of participants indicated that as a result of their participation in the project, they intend to be more involved in the community where they live (70 percent-73 percent).

Figure 7 summarizes the average results for the period 2011-12 to 2013-14.

Figure 7: % Respondents Agreeing That YTC Contributed to Various Aspects of Engagement



Source: Post-participation surveys (2011-2014)

Attachment to Community/Region, Province/Territory and Canada

Results from the post-participation survey, the evaluation survey and interviews with funding recipients indicate that YTC is contributing to increased attachment to community/region, province/territory and Canada. On post-participation surveys, the majority of participants agreed that as a result of their participation in the YTC project they felt more attached to their community/region, province/territory and Canada. The impact on attachment to community/region was stronger than that to their province/territory or to Canada. In interviews and on the survey, the large majority of funding recipients indicated that their project contributed to increased youth attachment to Canada. A few respondents clarified that their project focused on the community or global level and not directly on the national level. The pattern of responses on the survey of funding recipients was similar to that for participants with the strongest agreement on attachment to community/region when compared with attachment to province/territory or to Canada.

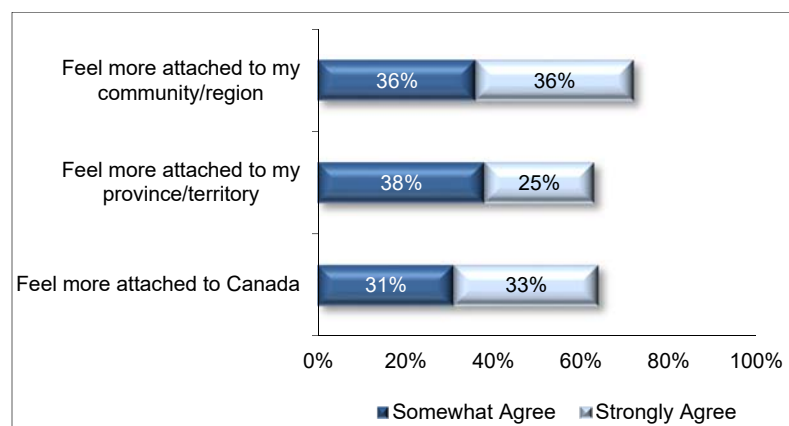
In interviews, most funding recipients indicated that their project contributed to a fair or great extent to increased youth attachment to Canada, with some indication that projects had developed and implemented activities with this specific goal in mind. A few respondents clarified that their project focused on the community or global level and not directly on the national level, which in some cases was viewed as a step to eventual attachment to Canada. It was noted that representatives of two organizations working specifically with Aboriginal youth viewed “increased attachment to Canada” as not necessarily an appropriate outcome to measure

against when working with Aboriginal youth. They explained that Aboriginal youth focus on attachment to their “nation” or community.

The findings were similar for the survey of funding recipients. The majority of funding recipients agreed that youth have been given opportunities to help strengthen their attachment to Canada (74 percent strongly agree and 13 percent somewhat agree). In addition, a large majority of funded recipients indicated that that as a result of their project’s being funded by YTC, youth feel more attached to Canada (61 percent strongly, 17 percent somewhat), their province or territory (44 percent strongly, 39 percent somewhat) and their community or region (57 percent strongly, 39 percent somewhat).

YTC participants responding to the post-participation survey agreed that their participation had contributed to a greater sense of attachment to Canada (62-67 percent), their province/territory (59-67 percent) and their community/region (69-72 percent).⁴³ It was noted that the strongest areas of impact appeared to be in the more proximal level of community/region, compared with the levels of province/territory or Canada (See Figure 8).

Figure 8: % Respondents Agreeing YTC Contributed to Various Levels of Attachment



Source: Post-participation surveys (2011-2014)

Sense of Shared Canadian Identity

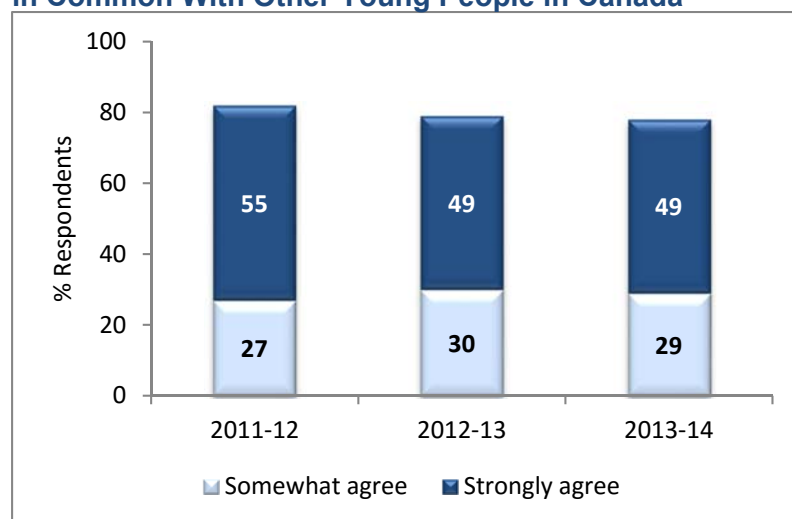
Findings from interviews and the survey of funding recipients and supported by findings from the post-participation surveys indicate that YTC has led to an increased sense of shared Canadian identity. In interviews, most funding recipients indicated that their project contributed to a good or great extent to achieving this outcome among their project participants. This was accomplished, for example, through promoting shared values of citizenship and democracy or strengthening community ties. A few respondents emphasized the difficulty of measuring this outcome, noting that the focus of projects, in particular for historically marginalized groups, is on creating an identity at the local community level.

The survey of funding recipients showed that the large majority of recipients indicated (52 percent strongly, 30 percent somewhat) that as a result of their project’s being funded by YTC, youth have an increased sense of shared Canadian identity.

⁴³ It should be noted that the extent of participation in a project and from one project to another, varies.

The findings from funding recipients were corroborated with those from the post-participation surveys. A large majority of participants (79 percent to 82 percent) indicated that their participation increased their sense of a shared identity and that they somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement “As a result of my participation in this project. I realize that I have something in common with other young people in Canada” (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: % Respondents Agreeing YTC Contributed to Realizing They Have Something in Common With Other Young People in Canada



Source: Participant Surveys (2011-2014)

5.2. Core Issue 5: Demonstration of Efficiency and Economy

This section summarizes the findings related to the efficiency and economy of YTC.

Evaluation Question

Are the resources dedicated to the program being used economically and efficiently to maximize achievement of outcomes?

KEY FINDINGS

Overall, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, total expenditures were approximately 2 percent lower than reference levels (i.e. \$14.04 million vs. \$14.29 million).

Across the period of the evaluation, the PCH ratio of O&M expenditures to total was 14 percent. Excluding the start-up year, the administration ratio is was 11.5 percent. This is higher than other recently evaluated PCH programs with a Gs&Cs component (e.g., Exchanges Canada, Young Canada Works and Canada History Fund). Based on a sample of project financial reports of 12 organizations, the ratio of administrative costs to total project costs ranged from 1 percent to 20 percent with an average of 7 percent.

There are relatively high levels of leveraging of the PCH contribution. The PCH contribution is about 47 percent (median) of Total Costs of the project. Therefore, recipients are raising approximately one-half of Total Costs of the project from other sources.

Given the wide range of funding amounts and number of reported participants, the PCH contribution per participant ranges from \$1 to \$5,000 with an average of \$14. If we remove the six large atypical projects that account for 77 percent of declared participants, the average PCH contribution is \$54 per participant. This is lower than that of other PCH programs targeting youth. Among the reasons for the differences among programs are the costs associated with travel. When total project costs are taken into account (PCH contribution plus leveraged funding), the average total cost per participant is \$51 (or \$129 when the six large projects are removed from the calculations).

While various youth programs share the common characteristics of serving youth, they appear to differ with respect to their specific objectives and are generally complementary.

PCH invests about \$75.6 million annually in youth programming. It was observed that while PCH has developed a variety of resources that enable it to respond to questions from various audiences about PCH programs that benefit youth, this information could be consolidated into a single resource and made more broadly available.

The evidence does not suggest that there are other more economical alternatives to YTC that would achieve the same or better results.

The efficiency and economy of YTC were assessed using a number of indicators, such as variance between actual expenditures and reference values, ratios of different types of expenditures and financial contributions per participant.

Variance between Budgeted and Actual Expenditures

As illustrated in Table 5, over the period covered by the evaluation (2010-11 to 2013-14), the variance between YTC budgeted O&M resources and actual expenditures was approximately 8 percent higher than reference levels (i.e. \$1.98 million vs. \$1.84 million). The expenditures for Gs&Cs were 3 percent below reference levels (i.e. \$12.06 million vs. \$12.42 million). Total expenditures (O&M and Gs&Cs) were approximately 2 percent lower than reference levels (i.e. \$14.04 million vs. \$14.29 million).

As well, it is noted that there is considerable variation across years for O&M reference levels, despite expenditures remaining relatively constant. Funding was not directly budgeted to YTC in the start-up year of the program (2010-11). Resources were from the Supplementary Estimates (A). While there was some variability from year to year, this is attributable to the start-up stage of the program combined with funding received through Supplementary Estimates, causing the reference values to fluctuate, while the expenditures remained relatively steady.

Table 5: Budgeted and Actual Expenditures

Resources	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Total
Budgeted resources					
Operations & Maintenance (Vote 1)	\$0 ¹	\$533,619	\$397,138	\$910,953	\$1,841,710
Actual expenditures					
Operations & Maintenance (Vote 1)	\$449,279	\$514,007	\$466,270	\$552,601	\$1,982,157
Variance					
Operations & Maintenance (Vote 1)	-\$449,279	\$19,612	-\$69,132	\$358,352	-\$140,447
Budgeted resources					
Grants & Contributions (Vote 5)	\$0 ¹	\$5,481,680	\$3,481,680	\$3,453,023	\$12,416,383
Actual expenditures					
Grants & Contributions (Vote 5)	\$319,514	\$3,927,898	\$4,177,209	\$3,636,180	\$12,060,801
Variance					
Grants & Contributions (Vote 5)	-\$319,514	\$1,553,782	-\$695,529	-\$183,157	\$355,582

¹In its first year of operation, YTC received its budget through the Supplementary Estimates (A).

Source: STAR

Ratio of O&M Expenditures to Total Expenditures

One indicator of efficiency is the ratio of O&M expenditure to total expenditures. Across the period of the evaluation, the PCH ratio of O&M expenditures to total expenditures is 14 percent (i.e. excluding the administration costs of the delivery organizations); 2010-11 was the start-up year for the YTC and not representative. In the most recent three years covered by the evaluation, the administration ratio ranged from 10 to 13 percent with the average for the three years at 11.5 percent. This ratio is higher than others found in recent evaluations of PCH programs with a Gs&Cs component. For example, the ratio for ECP was assessed at approximately 9 percent; that for the Young Canada Works initiative at 6.2 percent and that for the Canadian Studies Program/Canada History Fund at 5.5 percent. However, these programs are more mature and have established processes.

Administrative Costs at Project Level

While the ratio of O&M expenditures to total expenditures reflects the costs of delivering YTC from PCH's perspective, an additional layer of administrative costs can be assessed at the project level.

The Terms and Conditions of YTC indicate that administration costs may not normally exceed 15 percent of the total amount of the grant or contribution agreement. When warranted and when the project itself is at stake, these expenses may attain 20 percent of the total of the agreement. Prior approval from the program is, however, required in these exceptional circumstances. The program collects but does not roll-up data on the administration costs associated with the PCH grant or contribution amount. However, the evaluation reviewed financial reports from 12 organizations (out of 40) and determined that within this sample the ratio of administrative costs to total project costs (including in-kind) ranges from 1 percent to 20 percent, with an average of

7 percent. The evaluation observed that one of the projects sampled exceeded the maximum amount allowed (i.e. 15 percent).

PCH Contribution as Proportion of Total Costs

The ratio of PCH contribution to total project costs is an indication of the extent to which the PCH contribution is being leveraged by organizations to obtain additional funding. The evaluation found that the portion of total project cost covered by the contribution from PCH ranged considerably from 2 percent to 76 percent. Overall, there is considerable leveraging of PCH contributions with the median PCH contribution as portion of total project costs calculated at 47 percent. Interviews of funding recipients highlighted the important role that YTC funding plays in leveraging funding from other sources.

PCH Contribution per Participant

Another indicator of efficiency is the PCH contribution per participant. For the period covered by the evaluation, there were approximately 850,000 participants in YTC projects, with the number of participants per project per year ranging widely from 6 to 136,008. Similarly, there was a wide range in value of PCH contributions, from \$40,000 to \$625,000 per project.

Given the wide variability in number of participants and level of PCH contributions, the average contribution per participant ranged from \$1 to \$5,000 with an overall average of \$14 for YTC. In examining this value (\$14), it is important to note that this value is skewed by the presence of six projects that reported reaching more than 50,000 participants each. These six projects account for 659,000 participants, representing over three-quarters (77 percent) of all YTC participants. When the evaluation excluded these six atypically large projects, the average PCH contribution was calculated at \$54 per participant.

This level of average PCH contribution per participant is much lower in comparison with other youth-focused programming at PCH, where similar calculations resulted in an average PCH contribution per participant of approximately \$4,500 for Young Canada Works, \$900 for the Youth Forum component of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP), \$1,200 for the Youth Exchanges component of ECP and \$6,000 for the Summer Work Exchange component of ECP. In interviews, PCH officials noted, when making cost comparisons between youth programs, some programs involve higher contributions per participant due to the lower overall number of participants reached but provide greater in-depth experience. In addition, some youth programs cover travel costs for participants, thus, increasing the PCH contribution per participant.

Total Project Costs per Participant

An indicator of project-level efficiency is the calculated total project costs per participant, particularly given the relatively high level of leveraging that appears to be occurring with YTC contributions. Total project costs ranged from \$87,000 to over \$9.5 million. The evaluation found that the average total project cost (with funding from PCH and other sources) per participant was \$51; however, as was noted in Section 5.2, there were six projects that accounted for a very high proportion of participants. Once the data from these six projects was temporarily removed, the total project cost per participant rose to \$129.

Alternative Approaches to Achieve Similar Results

In interviews, PCH officials indicated that the activities of YTC could not be fully or partially transferred to the provincial/territorial level, private sector or non-profit sector. Reasons provided were:

- The program would lack a national presence (e.g., it is unlikely that there would be interest on the part of P/Ts to offer a program focusing on ‘attachment to Canada’).
- Other organizations lack the financial capacity (not-for-profit sector), or have their own objectives (private sector) that may not align with PCH objectives.

Interviews with funding recipients found that there was agreement with PCH officials. Funding recipients noted that the Government of Canada has a unique role to play in supporting national initiatives and attachment to Canada. Some funding recipients highlighted the complementary role that other organizations and levels of government (e.g., provinces, foundations, private sector) have in funding initiatives like YTC.

Duplication or Overlap with Existing Programs or Initiatives

Currently, PCH has a number of programs that target youth either directly or as part of a broader target group. PCH invests about \$75.6 million annually in a suite of programs that benefit youth and that support a range of objectives, including attachment to Canada, linguistic duality, arts and heritage and inclusion.

The evaluation observed that a single resource that describes the PCH programs which directly or indirectly benefit youth does not exist. While program officials indicate that they have developed several resources to respond to requests for information from various audiences about PCH youth programs, this information is not generally accessible to a broader audience. Consolidation of this information into a single document that would include a description of the range of PCH programs in terms of their objectives, target groups, reach, delivery mechanisms, main outcomes and respective roles in and contributions to the achievement of the PCH mandate could be an effective tool to communicate PCH’s investments in youth programming to a broader audience.

Therefore, as one component of the document review, the evaluation systematically examined PCH documentation on various PCH programs and initiatives related to youth to assess the level of duplication or complementarity among these existing programs and initiatives. These included the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP), the Young Canada Works Initiative and youth-related programming offered through the Canada History Fund. In addition to these programs, the document review identified additional initiatives funded by PCH through the Official Languages Support Programs and delivered by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada: Explore, Destination Clic and Odyssey.

The document review summarized each initiative's objectives and characteristics in terms of target groups, age of participants, delivery mechanisms, main outcomes, number of participants per year, costs to participants, reach (national or regional), contribution to official languages and resources or budget. A summary of PCH programs benefiting youth is attached in Appendix C.

The various PCH programs with a youth component appear to complement each other rather than duplicate or overlap. The document review found that these initiatives share the common characteristics of serving youth; however, they differ in their specific objectives. For example, when comparing the objectives of ECP and YTC, YTC has as its objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement, whereas ECP's objectives are to help Canadian youth gain a better understanding of their country, connect with one another and experience the diversity and commonality of Canada's communities, languages and cultures.

While all may contribute directly or indirectly to the development of official languages, some (Explore, Destination Clic and Odyssey) have this as their main mission. The official languages initiatives help provinces and territories to deliver second official-language learning. Funding supports language assistants and bursaries for students to study a second language or, for Francophones, to come together to strengthen their language.

Other programs such as ECP⁴⁴ and the Canada History Fund aim primarily to enhance experience and knowledge of Canada. ECP offers opportunities for youth to connect and learn about and understand Canada, including linguistic duality, through different mechanisms such as reciprocal exchanges of groups of youth, forums and work experiences in a second official language. Still others focus on youth engagement (YTC) or labour market skills (YCW).

Interviews with PCH officials indicated that both ECP and YTC are perceived to be complementary programs for promoting attachment and engagement. They listed several aspects that distinguish YTC from ECP, namely:

- YTC has a mentoring component and ECP does not.
- The design of ECP is more prescriptive and activities are more limited relative to YTC. YTC's model gives PCH and organizations space for innovation because it is more flexible.
- YTC projects are designed by youth for youth; ECP projects are typically designed by adults for youth.

In addition, the PCH officials interviewed mentioned the following distinctions in terms of results achieved:

- ECP focuses more on understanding other communities in Canada/the national level picture. Conversely, YTC focuses more on what youth can do in their own community.
- ECP may overall have a deeper impact on participants relative to YTC projects, but YTC reaches relatively more participants.

Another indication of complementarity of YTC with other programs is that the organizations receiving funding through the various programs revealed that their funding was for different projects.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that ECP also has a focus on official languages. For instance, SWSE participants work in their second official language. A significant percentage of the exchanges are related to official languages.

5.3. Other Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions

Has the program's design contributed to:

- a) Coherence between logic model and Ts&Cs;*
- b) Adequate management administrative systems; and*
- c) Achievement of the desired outcomes?*

What have been the implications of the 2014-15 budget reductions on the design and delivery of the program?

Is an adequate performance measurement strategy in place to account for program results?

KEY FINDINGS

Satisfaction levels were high among respondents for many of the dimensions of YTC management and delivery including: availability of services in official language of choice, service received from YTC staff by phone and email, eligibility criteria/standards and clarity of application guidelines. Three main areas cited for potential improvement: 1) timeliness of funding decisions; 2) complexity and burden of the application and reporting processes; and 3) more multi-year funding agreements.

Both PCH officials and funding recipients agreed that a national delivery model is the most appropriate to achieve the desired outcomes. The flexibility of the model was also identified as a strength. Funding recipients and PCH officials also agreed that the program design elements of YTC are important (encourage youth engagement; address one or more of the four thematic areas; be youth-led; demonstrate cash funding and/or in-kind support; and include the use of information and communication technologies).

Expected results, indicators, data sources, timing and reporting requirements of the YTC PMERS are clearly presented and are reflected in other key documents and agreements.

The current performance measurement and other monitoring mechanisms are considered to be adequate and the information collected from recipients is being used in policy and program development decisions.

Most funding recipients indicated that the post-participant survey is problematic in terms of both its design and implementation.

Design and Delivery

The respondents to the survey of funding recipients generally supported the YTC design. Overall, most respondents (91 percent) indicated that the YTC design either fully (78 percent) or partially (13 percent) supported the achievement of its objective to strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement.

Overall, funding recipients and PCH officials agreed that all five program design elements of

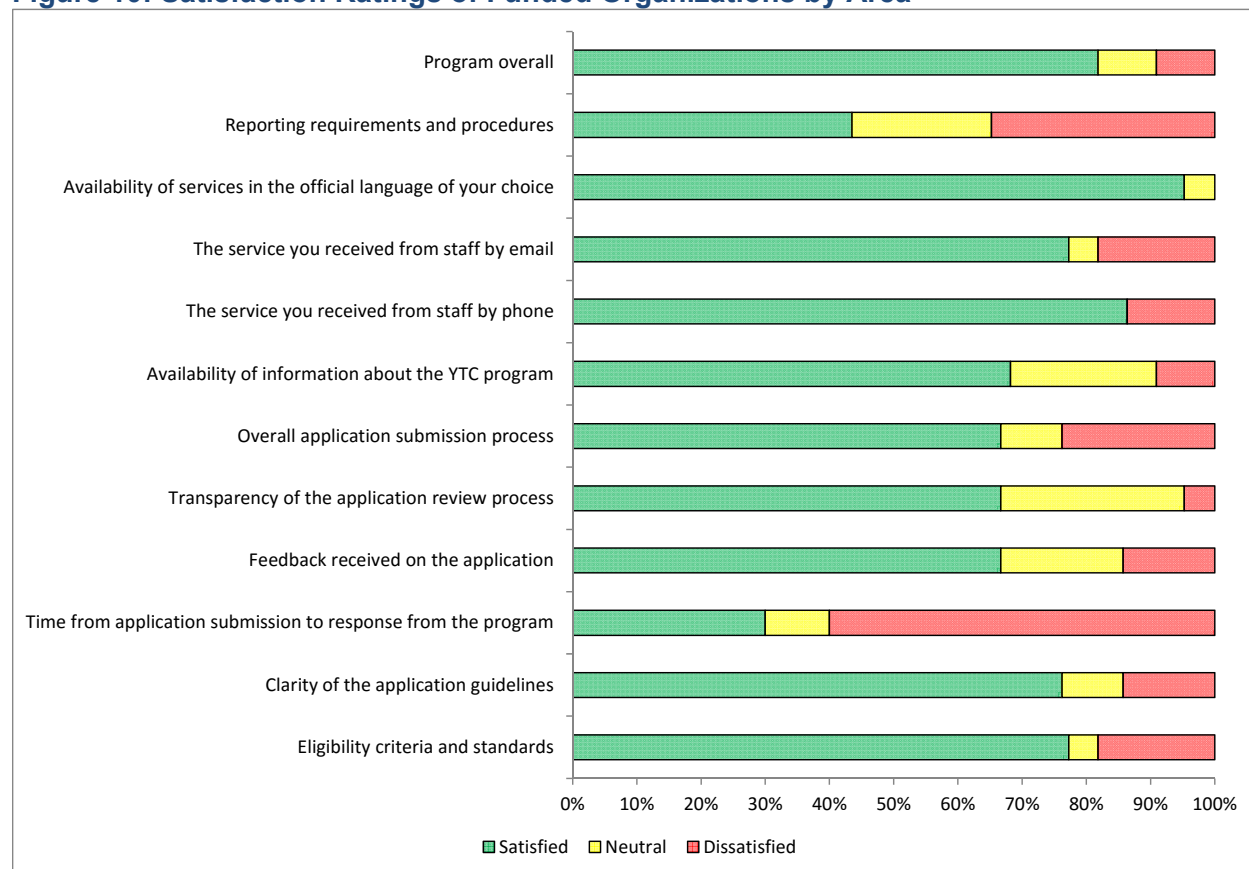
YTC (encourage youth engagement; address one or more of the four thematic areas; be youth-led; demonstrate cash funding and/or in-kind support; and include the use of information and communication technologies) are important. Some respondents indicated that the element of using information and communication technologies to engage youth is relatively less important. They stressed that a mixture of technology and traditional communication methods should be used because in-person engagement is important and some youth (e.g., low income, those in isolated communities) do not have wide access to technology. Regarding the ‘youth-led’ element, some funding recipients emphasized the importance of also having adult support.

The survey of funding recipients found that 78 percent agreed strongly and the remaining 22 percent agreed somewhat that their project had included a role for youth in the design, delivery or evaluation of the project.

In terms of the YTC delivery model, interviews with both PCH officials and funding recipients indicated that a national delivery model is the best placed to achieve the desired outcomes. Another successful aspect of the design that was highlighted in interviews is the flexibility of the model.

Funding recipients were asked through the survey of funding recipients to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the delivery of YTC and information and services from PCH. Funding recipients reporting through interviews and the survey were satisfied with various aspects of the design and delivery of YTC. As illustrated in Figure 10, some of the most frequently cited areas of high satisfaction were availability of services in official language of choice, service received from YTC staff by phone and email, eligibility criteria/standards and clarity of the application guidelines.

Figure 10: Satisfaction Ratings of Funded Organizations by Area



Source: Survey of funded organizations (n=23)

From the interviews and survey of funding recipients, three areas for potential improvement emerged: improving the timeliness of funding decisions, reducing the complexity and burden of the application and reporting processes and more opportunities for multi-year funding

Timeliness of Notification of the Funding Decision

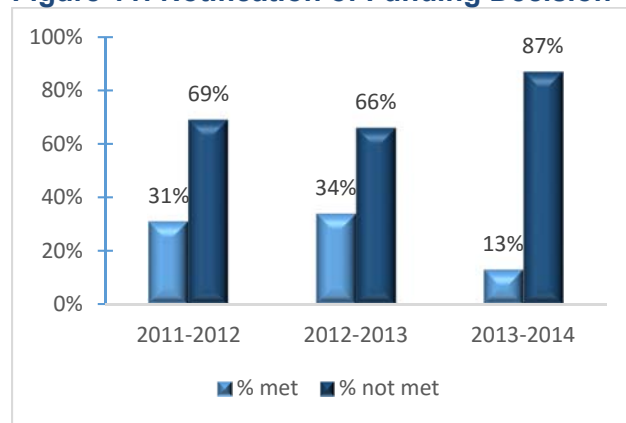
During the period of the evaluation, YTC had a service standard to provide the applicant official written notification of the funding decision within 26 weeks following the program's application deadline date.⁴⁵ Program staff indicated that for the September 2015 intake for projects starting in 2016-17, the service standard will be 24 weeks.

Funding recipients reported through both the survey and key informant interviews that they had the impression that the time between submitting an application and receipt of notification of the funding decision was long. They reported that these perceived long wait times cause resource and planning difficulties for their organizations. In interviews with PCH officials, the perception is that delays are due to the high workload created from the higher than originally anticipated number of applications received.

⁴⁵ Canadian Heritage. *Service Standards for the Youth Take Charge Program* (Accessed September 25, 2015).

An analysis of the average time between application deadline date and written notification of the funding decision for the YTC application intakes over the period covered by the evaluation is provided in Figure 11. The program did not meet its service standard of 26 weeks for all applications in any of the three years assessed.

Figure 11: Notification of Funding Decision – % of Applications Meeting Service Standard



Source: GCIMS data

Another issue raised by funding recipients is that the start date of projects does not correspond to the GC fiscal year start date.

Complexity and Burden of Application and Reporting Processes

Funding recipients perceived the application and reporting processes to be overly complex and burdensome. As seen in Figure 10, the results of the survey of funding recipients indicates that, with the exception of the time for application submission to response from the program, funding recipients rated their satisfaction with reporting requirements and procedures and the overall application submission process lower than other dimensions of their interaction with the program. Program staff attributed this complexity in part to limited funds and the need, as part of the competitive process, to obtain enough information to make informed decisions.

Of particular mention were the reporting requirements for cash-flows and the mandatory departmental requirement for audited financial statements. A directive from the PCH Centre of Expertise defines the requirement for and frequency of audited financial statements. Funding recipients indicated that the audited financial statements are costly. For the period from April 2010 to March 2014, the departmental directive required Audited Financial Reports or Statements for projects receiving a total contribution of \$200,000 or above. For the period covered by the evaluation, it is estimated that 27 out of 56 (48 percent) of projects were required to provide either an audited financial report or audited financial statement. Some funding recipients suggested a two-phased approach to this accountability requirement such as a financial review and then, if warranted, an audited financial statement.

Multi-Year Funding

Among those funded organizations that did not receive multi-year funding, there was a request to consider the benefits of multi-year funding as it would contribute to reduced administrative costs and give some stability to organizations to allow for improved planning and project design.

According to program staff, YTC was designed with multi-year project funding in mind, which was in line with comments heard at the round-table discussions before the program was created. An analysis of the program's use of multi-year funding during the period covered by the evaluation shows that for the first two intakes in June and November 2010, the majority of projects received multi-year funding. However, in the two subsequent intakes (November 2011 and October 2012) funding was approved for one year for the majority of projects. Program staff indicated that the decision to not commit funds on a multi-year basis was due to the fact that the program was up for renewal and there was uncertainty about future funding levels for the program, as well as the desire to review the project results on a year-by-year basis. In the more recent intakes, (December 2013 and November 2014), the program has reinstated some multi-year funding for organizations with an established track record in their youth programming and a solid multi-year plan in place for the funding. For the December 2013 intake, 58 percent of approved projects received multi-year funding. For the December 2014 intake, 25 percent of approved projects received multi-year funding.

Implications of the 2014-15 Reductions to the Gs&Cs Budget Going Forward

PCH officials noted a few changes to YTC's design and delivery in response to budget reductions in 2014-15. These include reducing the maximum amounts available, ensuring geographic coverage with a smaller number of projects and working to develop greater efficiencies with respect to the application and review processes.

PCH officials noted in the interviews the following changes to YTC's design and delivery in response to the significant Gs&Cs budget reductions that will impact 2014-15 and onward:

- Potentially fewer projects funded. While funded organizations are generally national, ensuring that there continues to be national coverage is a greater challenge. This has required additional consideration of projects' geographic reach so that adequate coverage is still maintained by the smaller number of projects in total; and
- Increased involvement of program officers at the application and review stages. Program officers have worked to increase efficiencies within the application and review process by encouraging organizations to call PCH program staff to confirm their eligibility before sending in an application. To further increase efficiencies, Program officers work more closely with applicants to ensure that they select projects that can achieve the maximum results with the allotted funds. This is felt to be even more important given the fewer resources.

Performance Measurement

The document review found that the Youth Take Charge Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Risk Strategy (2010) clearly outlines the expected results, indicators, data sources, timing and reporting requirements and that these are reflected in other key documents and agreements. For example, the 2010 Terms and Conditions for Youth Take Charge Program contributions incorporate key elements from the YTC Performance Strategy, including expected outcomes and performance indicators. A review of sample contribution agreements identified clear indications of implementation of the PMERS through the agreement via the reporting requirements for each agreement. Funding recipients are expected to report on project/programming activities, results measurement, official languages, heritage and history content, participation, distribution, outreach activities and special conditions.

Interviews with PCH officials found that the current performance measurement and other monitoring mechanisms implemented are adequate and that the information collected from recipients is being used in policy and program development decisions and public reporting. Data is collected directly from participating youth via a survey designed by PCH and administered by funding recipient organizations.

PCH examines the quantitative data collected via the youth surveys. At this point, qualitative data is not being analyzed. Survey results are reported in the DPR.

YTC funded project participants are generally between the ages of 7 and 30 but only youth 13 and older receive the survey questionnaire. Given that 40 percent of participants are under 13 years of age; this represents a significant gap in the information on the achievement of outcomes for this age group. In 2011-12, the program developed a methodology to assess outcomes for younger participants. A workshop model was developed and tested but not implemented as it was deemed to be too labour-intensive (as it would have involved obtaining consent from parents, etc.) and it would have also called for in-house capacity or outsourcing of expertise on the methodology of consulting with young people in a systematic way. As the program has a limited budget, it was deemed that this type of surveying would be too costly to implement.

Response rates for the post-participant survey are generally low, averaging 7 percent for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 surveys. However, the response rate is even lower for some projects, in particular those with large numbers of participants. The majority of the projects with an estimated participation level of 20,000 or more reported a response rate of 1 percent or lower. As a result, there is little outcome data for projects with a large number of participants.

In interviews and the survey of funding recipients, most recipients indicated that the design and implementation of the participant survey is problematic:

- The design and content are not youth friendly.
- Design and content may not be appropriate for some demographic groups (e.g., Aboriginal, those who identify as transgender, youth with disabilities and immigrant groups) and some youth do not want to self-identify.

- For some organizations, using a survey tool for data collection in general is problematic due to:
 - lack of access to technology
 - low-literacy rates
 - other preferred styles of communication among youth
 - survey fatigue

A few respondents suggested other ways to collect data from youth, or additional considerations for the survey:

- reducing the required survey sample size
- submitting results from their own surveys
- using methods they consider more appropriate for youth such as focus groups or storytelling

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

Relevance

YTC remains relevant. All lines of evidence indicate that there is a demonstrated need for programs such as YTC that strengthen youth attachment to Canada through opportunities for engagement. Evidence indicates a need to engage youth with communities, particularly marginalized and at-risk youth; to enhance belonging and connection among youth; to increase civic engagement; and to engage youth in less traditional, participatory and collaborative activities. The demand for this type of program is demonstrated by the large number of applications received from organizations for projects that align with the objectives of the program and attract youth.

To a certain extent, YTC is responsive to the needs of youth. The program has funded 56 projects reaching over 850,000 participants. However, the demand for funding exceeds the available resources. YTC funded 26 percent of eligible projects over the period covered by the evaluation. The YTC delivery model is flexible, as evidenced by the broad scope of its four thematic areas: History and Heritage; Civic Engagement and Youth Service; Arts and Culture and Economic Activities. Involving youth in activities related to the economic sphere of Canadian life aligns with the needs of youth. However, relative to the other three themes, fewer projects with Economic Activities as a primary theme applied for funding, particularly when it was not identified as a PCH priority, fewer were funded and projects with an economic theme had fewer participants. Only 1 percent of YTC participants were engaged in projects with an Economic Activities theme. Program staff explained that history and heritage is a departmental priority leading up to Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017 and, therefore, priority is being given to eligible projects aligned with the History and Heritage theme.

The YTC objective and expected results align with federal government priorities as outlined in Speeches from the Throne and recent GC Budgets. Similarly, they are closely aligned with PCH priorities and the strategic outcome: Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity.

The evaluation concludes that the delivery of YTC is appropriate for the federal government given its national scope and expected results in the areas of attachment to Canada and shared Canadian identity.

Performance – Achieving Expected Outcomes

YTC is making progress toward the achievement of its immediate outcome: *Youth have opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in identified thematic areas*. A broad range of youth are being provided the opportunity to engage in youth-led projects in the four thematic areas. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14, YTC contributed approximately \$12.1 million for projects to strengthen youth attachment through engagement. During that period, more than 850,000 youth participated in 56 YTC projects.

YTC projects are contributing to opportunities for youth to engage in youth-led projects primarily in the areas of Civic Engagement and Youth Service and, to somewhat lesser extents, in the thematic areas of heritage and history and Arts and Culture. The largest proportion of projects had a primary theme of History and Heritage (32 percent), followed by Arts and Culture (29 percent) and Civic Engagement (23 percent). The smallest proportion of projects had a primary theme of Economic Activities (16 percent). During the period covered by the evaluation, there were proportionally fewer youth (1 percent) participating in opportunities with a primary focus on Economic Activities, despite there being a number of projects funded in this area. The larger projects with the most reach were in the area of Civic Engagement and Youth Service.

Available evidence indicates that the three anticipated intermediate outcomes—*youth are aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen*, *youth serving organizations are relevant to youth* and *youth are engaged in communities*—are being achieved to some extent by approximately three-quarters of participants (and strongly by between one-third and one-half). Findings from the post-participation surveys of youth indicate that, as a result of their participation in YTC-funded projects, a large proportion of youth agreed that they had the opportunity to participate in various aspects of community engagement: get involved in the place where they live (70-76 percent), collaborate with youth from other communities (67-74 percent), learn about an issue important to them (76-78 percent) and take action on an issue they cared about (73-78 percent). A large proportion of youth also agreed that as a result of participation in an YTC project they recognized the importance of being an active and engaged citizen (80-86 percent).

The majority of youth agreed that the organization that coordinated their activity was relevant to youth and understood their needs (80-84 percent). Funding recipients indicated that YTC funding had contributed to increasing the relevance of their organizations to youth through aspects such as growth, increased leveraged funding, increased profile within the community and some participants' later joining the organizations as staff/interns.

The two ultimate outcomes —*youth having a sense of attachment to Canada and a shared Canadian identity*—as a result of participating in a YTC project are being achieved to some extent by approximately two-thirds of participants (and strongly by between one-quarter to one-third). On post-participation surveys, youth reported being more attached to community/region (69-72 percent), province/territory (59-67 percent) and Canada (62-67 percent). The strongest areas of impact appeared to be in the more proximal level of community/region, compared with the levels of province/territory or Canada. Also, between 79 and 82 percent of youth realized a sense of shared Canadian identity.

Performance – Efficiency and Economy

YTC demonstrates good economy by having an overall low variance between expenditures and reference levels of only 2 percent. While there was some variability from year to year, this is attributable to the start-up stage of the program combined with funding being allocated from other programs, causing the reference levels to fluctuate, while the expenditures remained relatively steady.

O&M expenditures to total expenditures for YTC were higher than for other PCH Gs&Cs programs. However these programs have greater maturity and established processes. As well, YTC demonstrates efficiency through its low PCH contribution per participant and the leveraging that is occurring at the project level.

The evaluation observed that there is no single resource that describes PCH's approximate \$75.6 million investment in programs which benefit youth. While several resources have been developed to respond to requests for information about PCH youth programs from various audiences, this information is generally not available to a broader audience. A general analysis of youth programming at PCH was undertaken and indicates there are programs that complement YTC. When objectives, results, activities and delivery mechanisms were examined within the context of the evaluation, there was limited evidence of overlap with other programming.

The evaluation did not find evidence of alternative approaches that would achieve similar results for YTC.

Performance – Design and Delivery

The YTC design and model provides adequate flexibility and guidance for effective delivery of the program and is a contributing factor to achieving outcomes.

There are many aspects of YTC delivery and management which are generating high levels of satisfaction among funding recipients, including availability of services in the official language of choice, services received from YTC staff and eligibility criteria /standards. There are a few areas with lower levels of satisfaction. The two main challenges are:

- Timeliness of notification of funding decisions, which is having an impact on delivery of projects. The service delivery standard of 26 weeks is perceived by funding recipients as too long and is having an impact on the delivery of projects and potentially project outcomes. YTC is not meeting its service delivery standard of 26 weeks (182 days) for all funding applications; and
- Complex application and reporting processes that increase the administrative burden and costs for funding recipients.

Performance - Performance Measurement and Monitoring

A PMERS was developed and implemented for YTC. PCH officials have deemed it adequate to support their needs for monitoring performance of the program. While the main components are in place and have been implemented as planned, there appear to be some challenges with respect to the post-participation survey instrument and data collection processes:

- YTC funded project participants are generally between the ages of 7 and 30 but only youth 13 and older receive the survey questionnaire, owing to complexity of concepts and logistics associated with surveying younger youth. As 40 percent of participants are under 13 years of age, this represents a significant gap in the information on the achievement of outcomes for this age group.
- Response rates for the post-participant survey are generally low, averaging 7 percent for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 surveys. They are even lower (i.e. 1 percent or less) for some

projects, in particular those with large numbers of participants. While a valid sample, the absence of data on some, particularly larger, projects does not allow for a comparative analysis of the relative effectiveness of projects in achieving YTC outcomes.

6.2. Recommendations

The following three recommendations emerge from the evaluation findings.

Recommendation 1		
The Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should take the opportunity in the selection of eligible projects to consider projects with an economic component while ensuring alignment with PCH and Government of Canada priorities.		
Statement of Agreement /Disagreement		
Management agrees with this recommendation.		
Management Response		
In assessing applications, the Program will consider projects with an economic component while ensuring alignment with PCH and Government of Canada priorities. The Program will also start gathering data on secondary themes to monitor the different thematics of the Program, including economic activities.		
Deliverable(s)	Timelines	OPI
Monitor the uptake of Economic Activities, both as a primary and secondary theme.	December 31, 2015 and on-going	Director, Youth Participation
Report indicating the number of applications received and the related thematic, both at the primary and secondary levels.	September 30, 2016 and on-going	Director, Youth Participation
Recommendation 2		
To improve efficiency, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should streamline the application decision process to reduce its complexity, as well as the funding decision process to ensure the timeliness of the release of funds.		
Statement of Agreement /Disagreement		
Management agrees with this recommendation.		

Management Response		
To reduce the complexity of the application process, the program will work with the Chief Information Officer Branch to make its application form available online as the program transitions to the Enterprise on-line system. The Program will aim to meet its new 24-week standard for notification of funding decisions for projects starting in 2016-17 (September 2015 intake), which will contribute to ensuring timeliness of the release of funds.		
Deliverable(s)	Timelines	OPI
The program will implement a compliance monitoring process for the new 24-week standard for its next intake in fall 2015, for funding of projects starting in 2016-2017.	May 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
A new application form will be developed in collaboration with the Chief Information Officer Branch as the program prepares for the Department's Enterprise on-line application system.	December 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
The program's new streamlined application form will be available to applicants online.	December 31, 2017	Director, Youth Participation
Recommendation 3		
The Assistant Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Heritage and Regions should review the approach to the collection of outcome data for YTC. The review should include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following: • language and content of the post-participation survey instrument; • improvements to administering the post-participation survey to ensure that funding recipients are maximizing the completion of the survey by participants; and, • the development of an approach to assess the extent to which outcomes are being achieved for participants under 13 years, given that 40 percent of participants fall into this age group.		
Statement of Agreement /Disagreement		
Management agrees with this recommendation.		
Management Response		
The program will work with the Department's Strategic Policy, Planning and Research Branch and program stakeholders to revise the language and content of the post-participation survey instrument with a view to making it more user-friendly for youth, while still capturing the data necessary to demonstrate achievement of the program's expected results. The program will work with recipients to develop innovative ways to increase the rate of survey completion by project participants.		

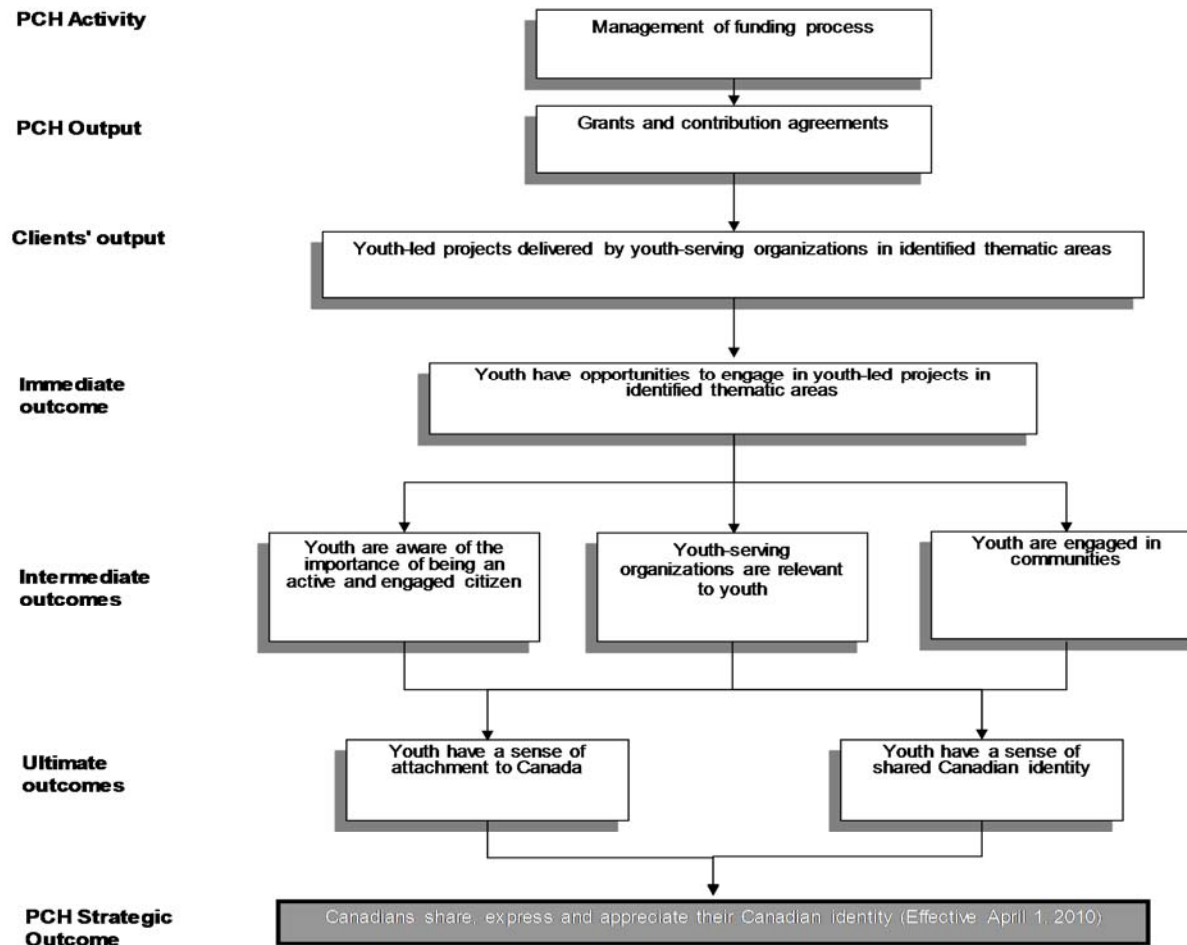
The Program will also collaborate with the Evaluation Services Directorate, the Department's Strategic Policy, Planning and Research Branch and program stakeholders to develop an approach to assess outcomes achieved for the 7-12 age group of participants that is both functional and reflective of expected results for the program.

Deliverable(s)	Timelines	OPI
New post-participation survey instrument (for projects taking place in 2016-2017).	March 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
The program will work with the Department's Strategic Policy, Planning, and Research Branch and program stakeholders to research approaches to administering the post-participation survey, and determine an optimal approach for increasing response rates.	March 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
Share the updated survey and directive regarding its administration with the funded organizations.	May 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
The program will work with the Department's Strategic Policy, Planning, and Research Branch, the Evaluation Services Directorate and pertinent recipient organizations to develop an approach to assess the expected outcomes achieved for the 7-12 age group of participants.	December 31, 2016	Director, Youth Participation
The program will implement the approach developed to assess the outcomes being achieved for the 7-12 age group of participants and transmit directives to recipients, if needed.	March 31, 2017	Director, Youth Participation

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Logic Model

Logic Model - Youth Take Charge Program



Appendix B: Evaluation Matrix

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
Relevance				
Issue #1: Continued need for program				
Assessment of the extent to which the program continues to address a demonstrable need and is responsive to the needs of Canadians	1. To what extent is there a demonstrated need for the program? 2. Is YTC responsive to the needs of Canadian youth?	To what extent is there a need for continued investment in strengthening youth attachment to Canada through engagement?	- Interviews with PCH staff - Literature - Program documents - Administrative data - Funded recipients	- Literature review - Document and file review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) - Survey (unfunded recipients)
Issue #2: Alignment with government and department priorities				
Assessment of the linkages between program objectives and (i) federal government priorities and (ii) departmental strategic outcomes	3. To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with federal government priorities? 4. To what extent are the program's objectives and expected results aligned with PCH priorities and strategic outcomes?	- Extent to which program objectives and expected results are linked to the federal government priorities - Extent to which program objectives and expected results support departmental strategic outcomes (PAA)	- Literature - Program documentation, such as PCH PAA, Speeches from the Throne, budget documents - PCH staff - Funded recipients	- Literature review - Document review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients)
Issue #3: Alignment with federal and department roles and responsibilities				
Assessment of the role and responsibilities for the federal government in delivering the program	5. Is the delivery of the program an appropriate role or responsibility for the federal government?	Evidence of the appropriateness and legitimacy of the role and responsibility of Canadian government in the program's areas	- Literature - Program documentation (e.g., Speeches from the throne from the last 5 years, budget documents,	- Literature review - Document and file review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients)

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
			Program planning documents) • PCH staff • Funded recipients	
Performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy)				
Issue #4: Achievement of expected outcomes				
Assessment of progress toward expected outcomes (incl. immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes) with reference to performance targets and program reach, program design, including the linkage and contribution of outputs to outcomes.	<i>Immediate outcome</i> 6. Has the program provided youth with opportunities to engage in youth-led projects in identified thematic areas?	Number of youth participants per funded project per identified thematic areas	• Program documentation (component description, Program applications and final activity reports, participants questionnaires)	• Document review • Administrative databases review
	<i>Intermediate outcomes</i> 7. To what extent has the program helped youth to be aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen?	• Number and percentage of youth participants who are aware of the importance of being an active and engaged citizen • Opinions from youth participants regarding the importance of being an active and engaged citizen • Opinions from funding recipients • Perceptions of PCH staff	• Program documentation • Administrative data (e.g., participants' questionnaires) • Program participants • Funding recipients • PCH staff	• Document review • Administrative databases review • Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) • Survey (funded recipients)
	8. To what extent are youth-serving organizations relevant to youth?	• Existence and use of mechanisms/processes for consultation of youth in decision making in youth-serving organizations	• Program documentation • Administrative data (participants' questionnaires)	• Document review • Administrative databases review • Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) • Survey (funded recipients)

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
		- Opinions from youth participants regarding the relevance of youth-serving organizations to them - Opinions from funding recipients - Perceptions of PCH staff	- Program participants - PCH staff - Funded recipients	
	9. To what extent have funded projects engaged youth in their communities?	- Number and percentage of youth participants who are engaged in community life on a regular basis - Opinions from youth participants regarding their engagement in communities - Opinions from funding recipients regarding youth engagement in communities - Perceptions of PCH staff	- Literature - Administrative data - Program documentation - Participants' questionnaires - Funded recipients - PCH staff	- Literature review - Document review - Administrative databases review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff and funding recipients) - Survey(funded recipients)
	<i>Ultimate outcome</i> 10. Has the program provided youth with a sense of attachment to Canada?	- Number and percentage of youth participants who report a sense of attachment to Canada - Opinions from youth participants regarding their sense of attachment to Canada - Opinions from funding recipients - Perceptions of PCH staff	- Administrative data (participants' questionnaires) - Program documents - PCH staff - Funded recipients	- Administrative databases review - Document review - Literature review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) - Survey (funded recipients)
	11. Has the program provided youth with a	Number and percentage of youth participants who	Administrative data (participants' questionnaires)	- Administrative databases review - Document review

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
	sense of shared Canadian identity?	have a sense of shared Canadian identity - Opinions from youth participants regarding their sense of shared Canadian identity - Opinions from funding recipients - Perceptions of PCH staff	- Program documents - PCH staff - Funded recipients	- Literature review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) - Survey
Issue #5: Demonstration of efficiency and economy				
Assessment of resource utilization in relation to the production of outputs and progress toward expected outcomes	12. Are the resources dedicated to the program being used economically and efficiently to maximize achievement of outcomes?	- Planned vs. utilized financial and human resources - Program's operational costs in relation to overall budget (PCH and funded recipients' administration costs) - Overall program costs per participant - Program delivery costs compared with other similar programs - Average project costs per participant - Evidence of efficiencies	- Administrative data - Program documentation - PCH staff	- Document review - Literature review - Key informant interviews (PCH staff) - Administrative databases review

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
	13. Are there other interventions (not necessarily involving the delivery of grants and contributions programming) or alternative approaches to achieve similar objectives/results?	• Evidence of more cost-effective alternative approaches to meet the program's objectives (programs, delivery mechanisms at PCH or at other federal departments or at the municipal, provincial/territorial, national or international levels) • Evidence of other interventions (not necessarily involving the delivery of grants and contributions programming) that achieve similar objectives/results? • Given that Youth Take Charge and Exchanges Canada use different approaches to achieve similar long-term outcomes related to attachment and identity, are there key differences between the two programs in terms of approach and results achieved?	• Program documents • Literature • Funded recipients • PCH staff	• Document review • Literature review • Key informant interviews (PCH, funded recipients)
Additional Evaluation Questions: Performance (Design and Delivery)				

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
	14. Has the program's design contributed to: a. Coherence between program's logic model and Terms & Conditions. b. Adequate management administrative systems in place for effective program delivery? c. Achievement of the desired outcomes	• Program terms and conditions relative to the expected outcomes – need for modifications to the logic model / outcomes for the program • Perceptions regarding the extent to which the program is delivered effectively, including the application process, review process, funding decisions, administrative structures, selection criteria, impact on non-funded projects of not receiving funding, etc. • The design of Youth Take Charge includes innovative elements, such as a) youth leadership and b) the use of information and communication technologies, as requirements for all projects. How important are these elements to the achievement of the program's desired outcomes? • Unexpected outcomes (benefits, negative aspects) of program delivery	• Application forms, grants and contributions agreements, application mapping process • Interviews with program officers • Funded recipients • Unfunded applicants	• Document review • Administrative databases review • Key informant interviews (PCH staff, funded recipients) • Survey (funded and unfunded recipients)

Core Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of collection
	15. What have been the implications of the 2014-2015 budget reductions on the design and delivery of the program?	Evidence of changes to program design and delivery in response to budget reductions	PCH staff	Key informant interviews (PCH staff)

Appendix C: PCH Programs and Initiatives that Benefit Youth

Target Groups	Target Age Groups	Delivery mechanism (2014-2015)	Main outcomes	Average Reach/ Participants per year	Support for official languages	Annual Budget (2014-2015)	Strategic Outcome (2014-2015) ⁴⁶	PAA
Youth Take Charge: <i>Strengthens youth attachment to Canada and supports youth-led projects that help young people to become active and engaged citizens.</i>								
Youth	7-30	Contribution agreements with delivery organizations	Civic engagement and attachment to Canada	300,000	Funding applicants are asked about measures to include youth from official language minority communities	\$1.5M	#2	2.1.6
Exchanges Canada Program: <i>Provides youth with opportunities to learn about Canada, connect with one another and appreciate the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience.</i>								
Youth	12-17 (YEC)	Contribution agreements with delivery organizations	Knowledge of Canada, connection to others, appreciation of Canadian experience	6,700 (YEC)	Activities funded by ECP offer opportunities to promote English and French in Canadian society.	\$8.1M (YEC)	#2	2.1.5
	14-25 (YFC)			5,000 (YFC)		\$4.6M (YFC)		
	16-18 (SWSE)			850 (SWSE)		\$5.1M (SWSE)		
Young Canada Works Initiative: <i>Provides work experiences and internships in Department of Canadian Heritage priority areas (official languages and heritage institutions)</i>								
Youth	16-30	Grant and Contribution agreements with delivery organizations	Employability	2,300	Funding recipients are selected to ensure that services and funding are available to	\$11.3M	#1 and #2	N/A

⁴⁶ Strategic Objective #1: Canadian artistic expressions and cultural content are created and accessible at home and abroad.
Strategic Objective #2: Canadians share, express and appreciate their Canadian identity.

Target Groups	Target Age Groups	Delivery mechanism (2014-2015)	Main outcomes	Average Reach/ Participants per year	Support for official languages	Annual Budget (2014-2015)	Strategic Outcome (2014-2015) ⁴⁶	PAA
					heritage employers and youth from both official language minority communities.			
Canada History Fund – <i>Encourages Canadians to learn about Canada's history, civic life and public policy by supporting the development of learning materials, activities and experiences. Some projects supported are targeted specifically at youth, including the Government of Canada History Awards for high school students and teachers.</i>								
All Canadians	no age limit	Grant and Contribution agreements with delivery organizations	Knowledge and dissemination of Canadian history	tens of thousands of young Canadians	No	\$1M ⁴⁷	#2	2.1.4

⁴⁷The program targets all Canadians. Overall annual budget (2014-15) was \$6.2 million; estimated budget for projects targeting youth is \$1,032,357.

Target Groups	Target Age Groups	Delivery mechanism (2014-2015)	Main outcomes	Average Reach/ Participants per year	Support for official languages	Annual Budget (2014-2015)	Strategic Outcome (2014-2015) ⁴⁶	PAA
Official Languages Support Programs: <i>Offers language-learning initiatives, work experiences and internships for youth, approximately 7,200 summer language bursaries and 300 official language monitor jobs.</i>								
Youth	Grade 8 and above	Initiatives are delivered by the Council of Ministers of Education ⁴⁸	Knowledge of official languages	7,500	Yes	\$24M	#2	2.3
Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Endowment Fund for Study in a Second Official Language Award: <i>Encourages young Canadians who wish to improve their proficiency in their second official language to pursue studies, on a full-time basis, at a university which functions in the other official language and in a milieu in which that language predominates.</i>								
Youth	University students (Bachelor's degree)	Awards (\$7K)	Knowledge of official languages	Up to 3	Yes	\$21K	#2	2.3
Canada Arts Training Fund: <i>Contributes to the development of Canadian creators and future cultural leaders by supporting the training of artists with high potential through organizations that offer training of the highest calibre.</i>								
Artists with high potential	No age limit	Operational funding for training organizations	Canadian institutions offer arts training of the highest calibre	4,000 (3,500 youth)	No	\$20M ⁴⁹	#1	1.1.4

⁴⁸ Excludes transfers to the provinces and territories.

⁴⁹ The program targets Canadian artists of all ages. Overall annual budget (2014-15) was \$22.8 million; estimated budget for projects targeting youth \$19,950,000.

Appendix D: Bibliography

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