Beyond Measure?
Evaluation and Action in Ontario's Youth Sector

YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange

Graphic Recording by Patricia Kambitsch
www.playthink.com

On March 24th, 2015, YouthREX held its first knowledge mobilization event, *Beyond Measure? Evaluation and Action in Ontario's Youth Sector*.

This event was an opportunity for over 60 stakeholders – youth workers, youth sector leaders, policy makers, funders and more – to convene around the theme of this year's *YouthREX State of the Youth Sector* survey and pending report on evaluation and action.

AT A GLANCE

EVENT SUMMARY

> **"YouthREX's hub model is designed to ensure that we are responsive to local contexts – while we share much in common, there are significant differences based on location.**
>
> **At the Central Hub, we are very excited about our work and the possibilities that lay ahead of us as we collaborate with and serve the youth sector in our region."**
>
> **- Rebecca Houwer, Central ON Regional Hub Manager**

AT ITS BROADEST, KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION encompasses all of the processes, methods, and tools that enable the movement of knowledge into action. At YouthREX, we seek to facilitate the movement of knowledge between diverse stakeholders: youth, academic researchers, youth workers, policy makers, and organizational leaders. Our goal is to ensure that all YouthREX stakeholders have access to relevant knowledge from practice, from research, and from experience, and that this knowledge can be used to inform their work.

This event, hosted in Toronto by YouthREX's Central Hub, was designed to help us actualize this objective. Our aim was to create a space for frank and critical conversations about the current context of evaluation and action in Ontario's youth sector. To do so, we welcomed speakers with diverse experiences and perspectives around evaluation from the youth sector. We also shared preliminary findings from our inventory of youth serving organizations across Ontario and our emerging research about the state of evaluation in the youth sector. This was followed by a few rounds of World Café where participants exchanged ideas and reflections on everything shared throughout the day. The outcomes of the resulting conversations will inform our final *State of the Youth Sector* report, which will be released in September 2015.

This is just the beginning of a larger conversation about the complexities and possibilities for evaluation and action in Ontario's youth sector. This event and the activities that will follow are part of our commitment to working *with* youth-serving organizations and other youth sector stakeholders to promote the wellbeing of Ontario's youth.

We look forward to connecting, collaborating and with you as we tackle the many questions and possibilities ahead.

FRAMING THE DAY: PERSPECTIVES FROM YOUTH SECTOR LEADERS

In order to ground our conversations about evaluation and action in the everyday experiences of people who work in grassroots, youth-serving organizations in Ontario, we invited three individuals leading youth organizations to speak to their experiences with evaluation.

The speakers were asked to reflect on a set of prompts, and share their insights with the larger group. These "day in the life" examples helped us anchor an abstract conversation about evaluation in the complexities of youth work in Ontario.

Visit www.youthrex.com/kmexpo for a video recap of their reflections.

LINDA BUI

> "Think of [evaluation] as a dynamic process, not just an end goal. What we learn today, we can use right away; not just at the end of a reporting process."

www.facebook.com/
girlsempowermentmovement

https://twitter.com/peelgems

https://girlsempowerment
movement.wordpress.com/

Founder
Girls Empowerment Movement (GEMS)

About GEMS

The Girls Empowerment Movement (GEMs) aims to provide high school girls with mentorship, leadership and empowerment opportunities. GEMS was founded November 2013 by two recent high school grads. Inspired by their mentors and personal experiences, GEMs' co-project leads, Annaleshia Jamieson and Linda Bui, want to share their stories. They hope GEMs will inspire girls to "be the change you wish to see in the world."

What word comes to mind when you think of evaluation?

"Change - change for the better and changing evaluation in and of itself."

What does evaluation mean to your organization:

- It should be more than just a check mark. It starts with asking people at your program, 'what is it you want to get out of this?' what do we want to work towards?"

- It is an opportunity to reflect on what we have done and what we have done well

- When it comes to evaluation, we value flexibility from funders (ie. the ability to talk with funders on the phone, to share what isn't able to be expressed in written reports) and capacity-building opportunities such as workshops and webinars.

How is evaluation integrated in your every day activities?

- Use of conversational/informal processes

- Begin each meeting by debriefing about our last meeting using the *Rose – Bud – Thorn* strategy (see below for description)

- Continuously revisit our vision and mission statement to ensure our activities are in line

- Use and revisit living documents. Ask: "What is it we want to get out of this meeting? How do we want to do this together?" Revisit answers throughout meetings and planning.

STRATEGY: Rose – Bud – Thorn

ROSE What was your favorite part of the day? What did you really like? What should we keep doing?
BUD What are you looking forward to? What is something we can include for next time?
THORN What is something that we can change? What didn't work for you?

CHRIS PENROSE

> "At the heart of evaluation, is this idea of distrust – 'how do we ensure that funds are being used? That you're really doing the work? That you're having the maximum impact?' – I don't think that's in line with the spirit of what we want it to be about."

www.twitter.com/SuccessBL

http://www.successbl.com/

Executive Director
Success Beyond Limits

About Success Beyond Limits

Success Beyond Limits (SBL) is a youth empowerment and mentorship organization based in the Jane and Finch community of Toronto. SBL supports educational attainment and transitions to high school. It provides programming and supports that improve educational outcomes, expand possibilities and support youth along their individual paths to success.

What word comes to mind when you think of evaluation?

"Funder" and "trend"

What does evaluation mean to your organization:

- It started as a paradox: how are we supposed to prove, that something that didn't happen, didn't happen?

- Now, evaluation can potentially help us get better at the things we aim to do.

- Evaluation can be a tool as well – we want to see after school employment prioritized in relation to education. How can evaluation convince the people that need to be convinced, that this works? We need evaluation and research that show that it works and how it works.

How is evaluation integrated in your every day activities?

- Surveys, documentation and social media

- Focus groups in partnership with university partners.

- Advocacy efforts: When systemic policies aren't in line with each other and negatively affect the youth they serve, how can we use research and evaluation to prove this and show what would work?

Challenges when it comes to evaluation

- How can we respond to trends in evaluation and research without needing to either rearticulate what we're are doing within new frameworks, or start new programming that fits in with 'trendy' approaches?

- How can we measure the impact of programming without doing a longitudinal study that deprives some youth of supports?

TERRENCE RODRIGUEZ

Founder
REXPride

> "At the very beginning I said [to our program participants]: 'I'm queer, but I am not the end all and be all. I don't know your story. I don't know your journey. I don't know your challenges. I'm here to help you: tell me what you need.'
> That to me, is what evaluation should be. It shouldn't lead, it should support. That way, it can evolve."

About REXPride

Founded in June 2012, REX Pride's mission is to create a safe-space in Rexdale/Etobicoke and give youth who identify as LGBTTIQQ2SPA the opportunity to utilize artistic mediums and create a message for social change in the community. Participants can explore the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity in various, self-guided ways. The organization also supports local schools, agencies and residents through raising awareness, education, networking and sharing of resources.

What word comes to mind when you think of evaluation?

"Statistics" and "labels"

What does evaluation mean to your organization:

- Our approach: "Tell me what you need and I'll try my best to make it happen"
- Evaluation should be about supporting, learning and growing, just like programming
- Lack of inclusivity in evaluation questions from funders that don't reflect the LGBTQ community; REXPride allows youth to express criticism of evaluation questions in order to help support the evolution of evaluation
- Because of evaluation, partnerships with Rexdale Community Health Centre and the Toronto Police Services LGBTQ Liaison Officer position have been formed in order to address needs expressed by program participants.

How is evaluation integrated in your every day activities?

- Online forms via e-mail instead of paper surveys
- Check-ins and check-outs at the beginning and end of each program session

Challenges when it comes to evaluation

- It is problematic to frame evaluation as a process to support evolution, when the questions required are problematic and violent towards LGBTQ youth. Evaluation and the process of evaluation needs to change in order for a breakthrough to happen, instead of breakdown.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

After offering participants a perspective from the frontlines, we invited our next speakers to share their insights about evaluation and action from their perspectives working in senior leadership positions in the youth sector.

The first speaker offered insights about her organization's work to become a community impact organization, supporting evaluation across the system and using it internally to guide decision making and practice.

MARKETA EVANS

> "What can we do together, as practitioners, funders and academics to make [evaluation] compelling? Not as an afterthought – a tedious report to write at the end of a project – but to really inform our critical thinking and make our work better? We need to make the case, in a world of scarce resources, for why evaluation and evidence matters."

> "We need a better understanding of what works and also, what doesn't. That does mean we might have to have some honest conversations about failures...in order to improve services delivery."

Vice-President of Strategy
United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT)

UWGT Perspectives on Evaluation

1. Evidence-based is key: UWGT is on a journey to become a community impact organization. UWGT wants to see lasting and measurable improvements in social conditions – understanding root causes and what drives transformative change is imperative to this

2. Evaluation should facilitate learning: UWGT strives for evaluative research that "tells us how we are doing and what we should do next,"

3. Broad definition to evaluation and research: it is important to have a variety of research methods deployed to support work.

Emerging Youth Work: UWGT Youth Success Strategy

1. Focus is on employability: What needs to be true for youth facing multiple barriers to get on the path to a job with a future?

2. Enhancing employability includes a combination of soft skills, work-related networks and employer-recognized credentials puts young people on a path to life long earning potential.

3. The development of the strategy included a survey of academic literature and serious engagement with experiential practitioner learning.

Sector Challenges around Evaluation

1. Increasing pressure on social services sector

2. Increasingly rigid funder criteria and funding streams

3. Increasing need for services - paradox is doing more without more resources, sometimes even less

4. Lack of resources designed to support data collection or evaluation

Moving Forward

1. Social innovation – new ways of doing this work, in sense-making, dissemination and application

2. Continuous learning is key because things are changing so much in real time

3. Bringing a more thoughtful approach to qualitative measures along with providing quantitative numbers.

4. What we want is to see are changes in practice that results in improvement.

"One of the things we deal with is the issue of how to deliver the right resources to the right people at the right time and in the right place. 4 variables. 3 out of 4 could mean a total failure... The evaluation process for us is critical because we know a lot of vulnerable youth are asking for help, but they aren't in the right place at the right time. So how can they get the right resources? We call them the 'shadow people' because they live, eat and sleep in the shadows. They do not come out in the 9-5, but they decide on the level of violence in our city."

Louis March, Zero Gun Violence Movement

"Rather than evaluating just the impact of one program, what does it look like over the course of a young person's engagement or involvement when you combine a sports-based program with an art-based program etc.? Sometimes we're silo-ing our look at evaluation rather than actually looking at the cumulative impact of our work as a sector and as organizations that collaborate together."

Stoney McCart, The Students Commission

"I'm very interested in the notion of place in the context of all of this. The youth sector is not some generic thing. It looks different in different places...How do we think about space and place in the context of all of this? Our responses will need to be different, even if we have a collective understandings of what needs to be changed."

Jane Wedlock, United Way York Region

"We're really good at making frontline staff accountable for service delivery, but we don't even talk about an 'accountability up' regime for making policy makers, funders and managers for innovation up. How are we making systems accountable for innovation?"

Scott Milne, York Region District School Board

"When you work with youth, what is so important is how they impact what we do. The importance of evaluation being not just a bunch of numbers, how powerful stories are. How do we bring stories in to evaluation and allow youth to influence how [evaluation] is done?."

Tim Greenwood, JVS

SETTING THE CONTEXT: THE STATE OF THE UK YOUTH SECTOR

Having spent the first part of the morning digging in to the state of evaluation in the youth sector locally, we provided participants with an opportunity to contrast what they'd heard with a presentation about the state of research and evaluation in another context – London, England.

STEPHEN BEDIAKO

"We're trying to get the London system to appreciate, learn how to use, and generate evidence based systems. We're also developing a repository of validated projects that can inform those who are commissioning or developing programs on what to do next"
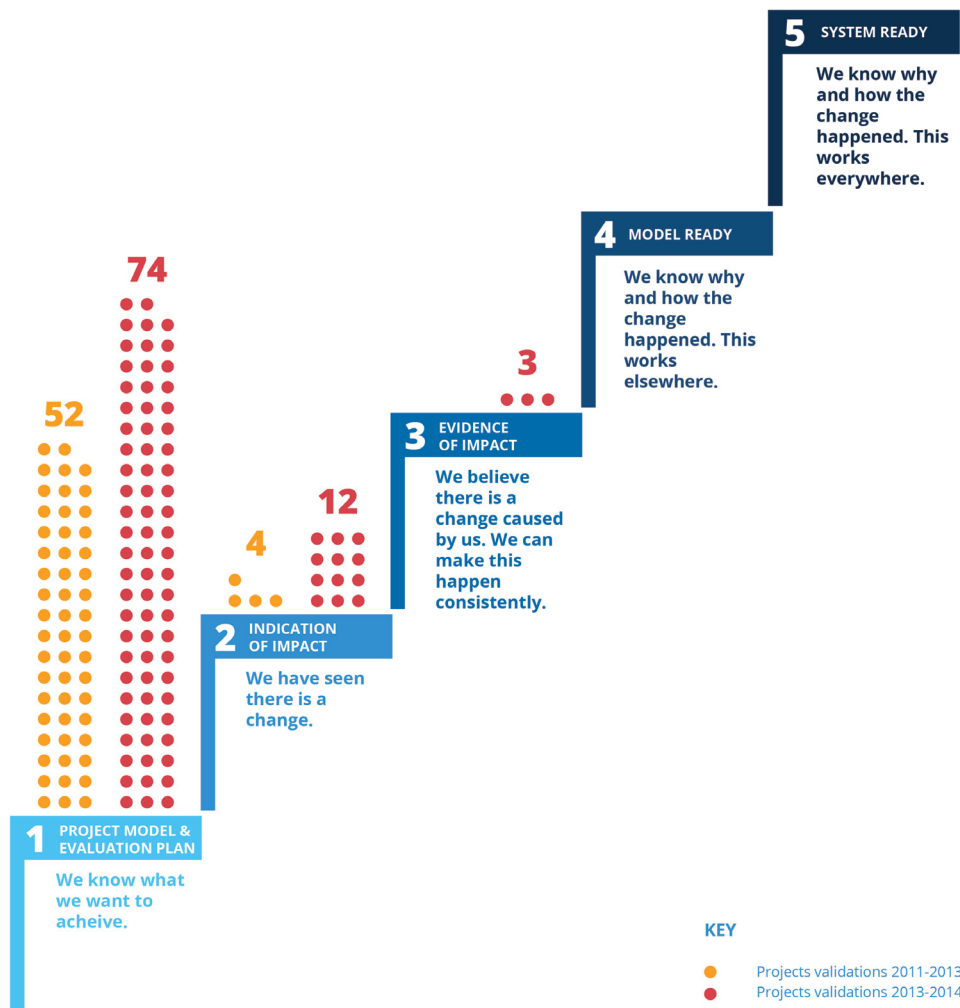
Co-Director, Project Oracle
Founder, The Social Innovation Partnership

Project Oracle is London's first children and youth evidence hub, funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Project Oracle is improving the chances for children and young people in the capital by promoting quality evidence of what works, supporting services to improve the delivery of youth programs and informing the funding process.

The Social Innovation Partnership (TSIP) is an advisory social business. TSIP are experts in delivery with a strong record of successful partnerships across the social, public and private sectors. The business specializes in innovation and evaluation to solve some of the most intractable problems in society. Project Oracle is one of the main projects undertaken by TSIP.

Project Oracle Model

5 SYSTEM READY

We know why and how the change happened. This works everywhere.

4 MODEL READY

We know why and how the change happened. This works elsewhere.

3

3 EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

We believe there is a change caused by us. We can make this happen consistently.

74

52

12

4

2 INDICATION OF IMPACT

We have seen there is a change.

1 PROJECT MODEL & EVALUATION PLAN

We know what we want to acheive.

KEY

- Projects validations 2011-2013
- Projects validations 2013-2014

"Our work emerged from a deficit model, initiated by the government. What we've done, by stealth, is turned it into a sector-led model. We've encouraged the sector to embrace our approach and build this work from a learning perspective.

A lot of the organizations that get involved with us don't do it because they have to, it's because they want to learn, and continually improve what they're doing"

Standards of Evidence

How do you create a space for people to want to adopt this work and go on a journey of building and improving their evidence-base? The goal of Project Oracle is to design a sustainable system for funders, service providers, academics etc. to engage with this set of standards.

Visit www.youthrex.com/kmexpo to watch a video of Stephen's full speech from this event.

STATE OF THE YOUTH SECTOR 2015

After lunch, we introduced participants to preliminary findings from YouthREX's State of the Youth Sector research. Our 2015 research – Beyond Measure? Evaluation and Action in Ontario's Youth Sector – is based on the findings from a province-wide survey of approximately 150 youth-serving/led organizations across Ontario and as well 50 key informant interviews with leadership staff. Ultimately, the report will provide a snapshot description of evaluation issues in the youth serving sector - current practices, barriers, capacities, perceptions and aspirations that relate to evaluation.

At this event, we described our research approach and methods, and presented and discussed preliminary findings from the survey. The full report is scheduled to be released in September 2015.

Visit www.youthrex.com/soys2015 for updates.

Research Objectives

The State of the Youth Sector research seeks to:

1. Situate the state of evaluation in the youth sector in Ontario, providing a contextualized examination of strengths, challenges and areas of opportunity in the sector when it comes to evaluation

2. Encourage and engage in strategic, critical conversations across diverse stakeholder groups about the state of evaluation in the youth sector, and how to move forward from knowledge to action, given the report findings

3. Raise the profile of issues that influence the capacity and positioning of the youth sector

> **"Some funders choose evaluation as learning opportunities, others use it as decision making. The pressure to evaluate is not a bad thing - it's the disconnect between what funders require and what would be meaningful to measure."** – Anonymous Survey

Key Research Questions

1. What are the strengths, gaps, opportunities and challenges in the sector's evaluation and research practices?

2. What are the sector's perspectives of, and experiences with, evaluation, research strategies and approaches?

3. What are the capacity building needs of the sector, with specific interest around in the needs of grassroots groups and organizations?

> **"Our funders are on different funding schedules....This has made statistics hard to compare. It looks like we are giving entirely different numbers to different funders when we are only looking at different snapshots of the year."** – Anonymous Survey Respondent

Preliminary Results: Analysis

1. Grassroots initiatives and mainstream organizations both reported practicing a range evaluation activities, although mainstream organizations reported more instances of conducting focus groups and using internal tracking measures than grassroots groups/organizations.

2. There is concern among youth-serving organizations

32 QUESTIONS AVAILABLE IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

94 RESPONDENTS AS OF MARCH 19

300 OUR GOAL FOR THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLETED SURVEYS

> **"Generally, there is not a learning mindset in the space. There's a lot of talk of it, but not embedded in how we truly operate.."** – Anonymous Survey Respondent

that the evaluation approaches required by funders may not be appropriate for measuring their impact.

3. The vast majority of both grassroots and mainstream youth-serving initiatives expressed that evaluation was an important procedure for program improvement but only approximately 1/3 of respondents felt that funders accept failure as an opportunity for learning and improvement of services.

> **"Funding available for the program is barely sufficient for front-line workers to deliver the program/service...[There is] no time or dedicated resource to focus on evaluation of the program/service."** – Anonymous Survey Respondent

4. Grassroots groups/organizations were significantly more likely to report that insufficient financial resources, limited staff time, and limited staff expertise in evaluation were key challenges to undertaking program evaluation.

5. Grassroots groups/organizations expressed a substantially greater need for capacity building across the full range of evaluation practices (e.g. collecting and managing data)

6. Grassroots groups/organizations involved youth in evaluation much more frequently than mainstream organizations.

WORLD CAFÉ

In order to allow some of the rich insights and experiences shared throughout the day to sink in, we held three rounds of a World Café. This gave participants the opportunity to reflect, share insights and brainstorm ideas for moving forward. This time for discussion was an integral part of the day, especially for YouthREX, as we continue to reference the harvest from these conversations in our State of the Youth Sector research. The following pages capture some of the key themes and ideas as shared by participants in response to the three World Café questions.
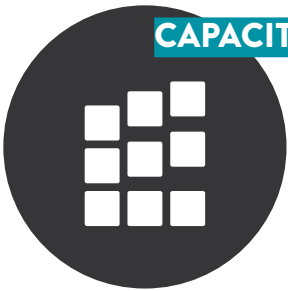
1. Given what you've heard and your own experience, what is your vision for evaluation and action in the youth sector?

CULTURE

- Landing on a consistent and shared language and approach to evaluation across the province
- Focus on collaboration over survival/competition
- Evaluations that are more inclusive and accessible

CAPACITY

- Development of common tool that can be used by many organizations
- To see the face of evaluation change to better represent/capture the intangible aspects of success

YOUTH

- For youth to be involved in all areas and for this process to embedded in the everyday
- Deepened impact of evaluation on youth

APPROACH

- Approaches that are flexible and adaptable to specific capacities of each organization
- Let's not evaluate, let's track instead!
- System level approach with shared language, common goals and data sharing

2. What did we learn about the state of the youth sector today that has implication for this vision? Challenges? Opportunities?

CHALLENGES: POWER & SYSTEMIC CONTEXT

- How do we think about power in all of this? Where is it? Who has it? Does something need to shift?

- The youth sector cannot solve structural problems on its own.

- Policy decisions and funding decision that are made irrespective of the effectiveness of own work, largely determine outcomes and options for youth. We need to be critically aware of those forces and be in evaluative mode upwards in order to advocate for and with youth.

- We have to evaluate and observe what we're doing and the impact we're having but always against the backdrop of broad political and environmental landscapes that profoundly shape and impact any outcomes we're trying to achieve in any sector.

OPPORTUNITIES: COLLABORATION & CONNECTION

- Collaboration: we need to work more collaboratively across sectors with shared ownership

- Grassroots voices need to be included in 'non grassroots' boards

- Share responsibility to track complex/collaborative exchange/opportunities

How can we bring in evidence of responsiveness to innovation?

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#YouthREX2015

WHAT WE NEED: CAPACITY BUILDING/POTENTIAL APPROACHES

- Using tools that youth are familiar with to capture outcomes/impact

- Education on how to successfully evaluate programs. Create consistent frameworks in place to we can share the same language

- Think of ways to embed research into programming

- Embed evaluation into programs so it is practical and natural

- Developmental evaluation

- Make evaluation more impactful by changing the face of it to be more user friendly

- Holistic approach

- Government regulated, steered and guided by youth

- Youth co-building evaluations

- Curiosity/observations of changing process = opportunity for innovation/growth

Can we measure the things that really matter? How can we do this without leaving certain youth behind?

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#YouthREX2015

What would evaluation look like for evaluating managers and up? Instead of always focusing just on frontline staff?

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#YouthREX2015

Values are a key part of evaluation. What is our understanding of our values and the value of our work?

#SoYS2015
#YouthREX2015

3. How do we move from where we are today to where we want to go? Specifically, what are the roles and responsibilities of particular stakeholders?

GOVERNMENT, MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP, FUNDERS, FRONTLINE STAFF.

- Funders & government need to work with the people on the ground about what we should be evaluating in their programming, so that they have a more accurate view of what to invest in more.

- Ensuring youth are involved in the evaluation process, especially 'mainstream orgs' – opportunities include increased participation and knowledge sharing through meetings etc.

- Funders should be allotting money for evaluation

- Evaluation needs to be youth savvy – tech based; funding to allow for evaluation to be measureed in the way youth are moving

- More coordination and connection across ministries, groups and individuals

- More accountability on all levels /shifting what 'accountable' meansff

- Lets implement structures to capture changing evaluation/expected outcomes; programs change, unexpected outcomes happen

The profession of evaluation is distanced from the communities being evaluated.
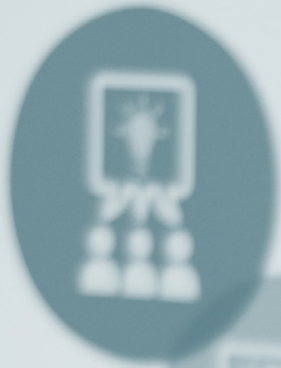
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Not every program can be or should be scalable. How do eval standards account for contextual factors?

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#YouthREX2015

We need evaluation and research to show HOW it works, not just that it works.

#SoYS2015
#YouthREX2015

REFLECTIONS FROM YOUTH SECTOR LEADERS

After the World Café, we welcomed back our three youth sector leaders who opened the event. Linda, Chris and Terrence, shared reflections on the discussions they participated in, insights they heard and lingering questions and opportunities they had from the event.

"Much like you, I have more questions than answers, but 3 things stuck out to me: 1. We need to involve storytelling in the evaluation process; 2. We need to support groups in facilitating evaluation; and 3. We need to continue to share and have these conversations beyond these walls"

Linda Bui, Founder of Girls Empowerment Movement

"I didn't know so many people would be interested in achieving 'gold standard' research that originates from our work and our sector – this is an opportunity! I think it's really exciting.

We want innovation but everyone who writes, thinks, acts around innovation all note that it doesn't happen without risk. To what degree are we willing to take the risks that are required for the kind of innovation that we want? I think we're at a point where we're ready for big risks – I think they're going to work and I think they will pay off."

Chris Penrose, Executive Director, Success Beyond Limits
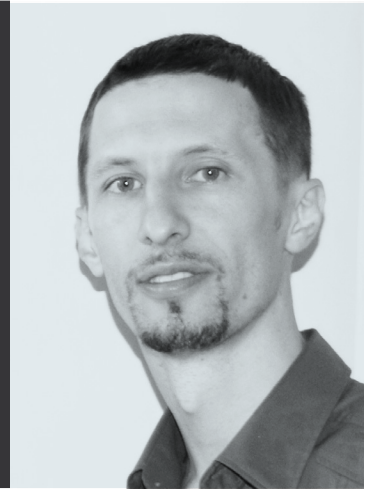
Funders need to be aware that they have power, and with that, there is a particular dynamic. We need to level up the playing field and open up dialogue – this would contribute to addressing competition, and pressure to report certain things. Frontline workers are juggling way too much – we're 'jacks of all trades' but masters of none. It's all band-aid fixes until we're all supporting each other to achieve the same thing. Times are changing, so let's work together."

Terrence Rodriguez, Founder of REXPride

MOVING FROM ISSUES TO ACTION

To bring the day to a close, we had one final speaker share his reflections on how we can move from identifying issues that influence evaluation and action in Ontario's youth sector, to identifying an agenda and strategies for change.

MICHAEL HALL

> "In my view, there is a divide between program delivery and evaluation and by setting them as two different things we've confused the issue. You hear things like, 'we don't have enough money to do evaluation after we've delivered the program'. We've set up a false dichotomy. At the YMCA, we're embedding evaluation as part of our program delivery – its part and parcel of the same thing."

Vice President, Program Research & Development,
YMCA of Greater Toronto

Why Evaluate? This question is fundamental to everything you do after you answer that question. It has consequences to how you think about measurement as you go forward and how you build a measurement approach into your program.

Potential Reasons for Evaluation

1. Funders/Funding: Responding to funder's questions about where to direct scarce resources

2. Organizational: Making the case for fundraising/donor purposes and so that organizations know internally where to invest money

3. Youth: It's the right thing to know whether you're delivering on your promise of providing positive developmental opportunities for young people
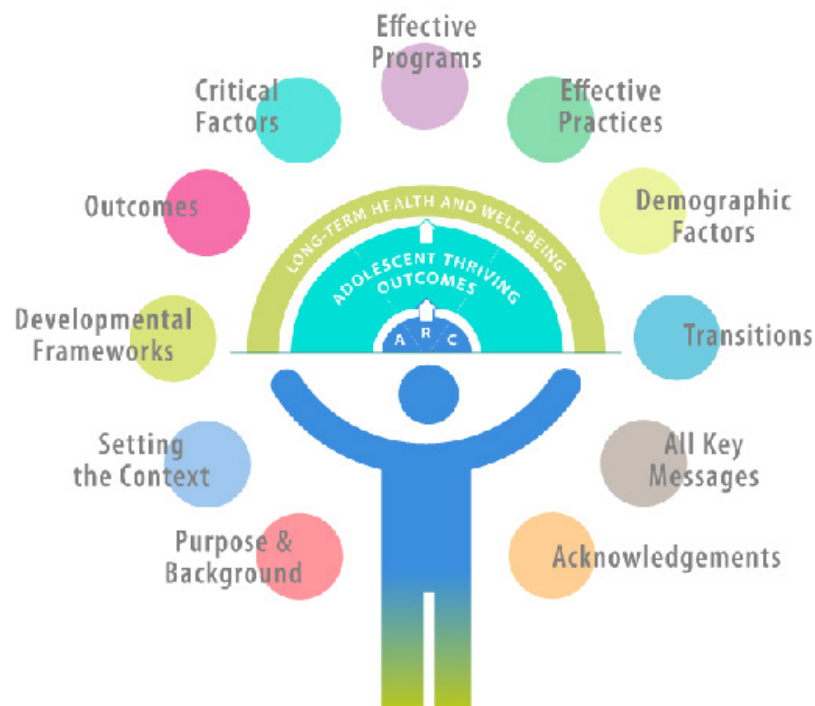
Critical Factors for Youth Development

Partnering with United Way Toronto, the YMCA has launched a resource called Youth Who Thrive (created by The Students Commission of Canada and the Social Program Evaluation Group (SPEG) at Queen's University).

> "But if [something doesn't] work, it's not the end of the deal because we have embedded, a measurement system for the next time. This is the engine for ongoing innovation, which is much different than if you think of evaluation as a finished produce. For us, continuous learning is key to continuous improvement."

Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness are the three factors that were identified as critical to promoting youth who thrive. These factors can also be applied to evaluation:

COMPETENCE

What does competence mean?

What kind of skills do we need? How do we understand what the important factors to focus on in our programs are? How do we measure them and use that measurement to improve our work?

AUTONOMY

How can we achieve autonomy in the work we're doing?

If you start with thinking evaluation is fundamental to the work, you build it in and start to have an autonomous approach to measuring your impact. We need to have skills to be able to negotiate that because we have to understand the value of this work – why it's important and where it will lead us.

RELATEDNESS

How do we draw on our relationships to make it work?

Relatedness is important for us as a sector because we need to have our own evidence about what works and what doesn't work. We don't have as much attention when it comes to research and resources, as you will see for other age groups. If we all start developing these kinds of strengths and resources in our programs, we can start to pool our expertise.

CLOSING WORDS

Sean Twyford, Director of Youth Strategies Branch, Strategic Policy and Planning Division, Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services

"This initiative – and the innovative space that it occupies – is very much due to the advocacy of the grassroots groups and youth leaders on the frontlines calling for a new way of doing business. For us, the real work going forward, in partnership with YouthREX, is making sure that this initiative is indeed valuable to these leaders – this is about putting knowledge into action. Working together to create and really mobilize a knowledge base is incredibly important to the sustainable project that we're trying to build.

The stakes are high. Research tell us that every moment, every interaction we have with young people can have an impact on their developmental trajectories. Our vision for YouthREX is something that is grounded, practical and that makes evaluation a part of the everyday that work we do, because we owe it to those young people to work with them to improve their outcomes."

YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange

OUR VISION

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth.

OUR MISSION

To make research evidence and evaluation practices accessible and relevant to Ontario's grassroots youth sector through knowledge mobilization, capacity building and evaluation leadership.

ABOUT US

The Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) is a province-wide initiative based at York University with five regional Hubs across Ontario that promote the integration of research evidence and evaluation in the development and delivery of Ontario's youth programs. YouthREX regional hubs engage local grassroots youth serving organizations, academic partners, youth and policy stakeholders in capacity building, knowledge mobilization, research and evaluation opportunities.

YouthREX is primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services with extensive contributions from York University and the three YouthREX partner universities.