

**2016/2017 Annual Report**

**Connecting  
Shared Knowledge  
to Youth Work**



**YOUTHREX**  
Research &  
Evaluation eXchange

**“I’ve recommended YouthREX to almost every youth organization that I’ve talked to that doesn’t have evaluation support. I recommend them one, because they’re free and most organizations don’t have the opportunity to pay for something, and secondly, we were over the moon ecstatic about our end results so I know that most organizations would feel the same way.”**

**– CUSTOMIZED EVALUATION SUPPORTS PARTNER ORGANIZATION**

# Introduction

Welcome to our Year Three Annual Report! We are delighted to share our accomplishments from April 01, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

## THE YOUTHREX STORY

Launched in December 2014, the Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) builds on the work of Ontario's Youth Opportunity Strategy (2006) and Youth Action Plan (2012) by supporting the youth sector's capacity to measure and understand program impact.

YouthREX's **vision** is an Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth and our **mission** is to make research evidence and evaluation practices accessible and relevant to Ontario's grassroots youth sector through capacity building, knowledge mobilization, and evaluation leadership.

YouthREX's mandate is focused on grassroots and youth-led organizations, especially those serving racialized youth, newcomer youth, Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities or special needs, youth in and leaving care, Francophone youth, LGBTTTQ youth, youth living in rural & remote communities, youth from low-income families and youth in conflict with the law.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has entrusted YouthREX with an ambitious but achievable mandate centred around three objectives.

### #1: Knowledge Mobilization

To enhance knowledge of research and evaluation practices, tools, resources and techniques within youth-serving organizations; to leverage practical experiences and knowledge within the youth serving sector (e.g. lessons learned and promising practices) and facilitate the transfer/exchange of this knowledge across the sector.

## The YouthREX Journey

### Y1: DISCOVERY PHASE

**November 2014 to March 2015**

In Year One, we focused on outreach, engagement and deepening our understanding of the experiences of Ontario's youth, youth workers, and youth-serving organizations. We laid out the foundation for the processes to support our deliverables, building and strengthening our networks to help us understand the needs of our stakeholders.

### Y2: ACTION PHASE

**April 2015 to March 2016**

In Year Two, we launched and piloted significant deliverables, including our Customized Evaluation Supports, while hosting events, workshops, and community of practices across the province.

### Y3: LEGACY PHASE

**April 2016 to March 2017**

In Year Three, we expanded and solidified various deliverables, focusing on capturing and sharing the legacy of the valuable work youth organizations do in Ontario. We also held our provincial Knowledge to Action Exchange, *The Youth. The Work. The System.* bringing together over 300 youth sector stakeholders for three days to engage and share knowledge for youth wellbeing.

### #2: Capacity Building

To build the capacity of youth-serving organizations, in particular, small-scale/grassroots groups, to conduct their own program evaluations and improve services based on evidence.

### #3: Direct Evaluation Supports

To provide direct program evaluation and data analysis services to individual youth serving organizations in particular smaller scale and grassroots groups – measuring the impact of their youth programming and identifying opportunities for improvement.

# Our Communities Our Reach

by the Numbers  
April 2016 – March 2017



**500** face-to-face  
workshop participants



**83** CES programs  
engaged



**393** Online Evaluation  
Certificate Participants



**104** NOISE youth fellows



**1,167** webinar registrants



**36** eXchange blog posts



**1,644** visitors to  
youthrex.com every month



**1,865** Twitter Followers



**3,625** Newsletter  
Subscribers



**13,767** visits to the  
eXchange for Youth Wellbeing



**72** Critical Youth Work  
Certificate Participants

# Top 5 Year Three Accomplishments

- 01. The Youth. The Work. The System
- 02. The eXchange
- 03. Workshops
- 04. Youth Outreach Worker Collaboration
- 05. NOISE

# 01. The Youth. The Work. The System.

Knowledge to Action for Youth Wellbeing

#KtA2016 | October 27 - October 29, 2016

**The movement of knowledge to action requires opportunities for people to come together and learn with and from each other.**

**WITH THIS IN MIND**, YouthREX held a Knowledge to Action (KtA) Exchange, The Youth. The Work. The System, on October 27-29, 2016. The goal of this exchange was to bring youth sector stakeholders from across the province of Ontario together to share and engage with practice-relevant knowledge from research, youth work practice, and lived experiences. Over three days, the KtA Exchange for Youth Wellbeing offered a learning space to approximately 300 stakeholders, facilitating the movement of knowledge into action to support and improve youth wellbeing.

## **OCTOBER 27, 2016**

### **PRE-EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS**

#KtA2016 started off with three full-day workshops for 60 youth workers from across the province.

#### **Workshop Topics:**

- Unpacking Our Stories: Using Critical Narrative Practices in Youth Work
- Indigenizing Youth Work: Towards a New Relationship
- Where Does the Data Go: Using Spreadsheets to Manage Youth Program Evaluation

## **OCTOBER 28, 2016**

### **EXCHANGE DAY**

The main event was a full day experience for 200 youth sector stakeholders, starting off with an inspiring keynote address from Daniele Zanotti on the power of community in leading change. Participants then attended an hour long workshop on a youth wellbeing related topic. Next, they headed off to for a delicious lunch, lots of networking and conversation with each other, and a quick peek at YouthREX eXchange online hub. When everyone came back together, it was to laugh, learn, and for some of us, even shed a tear during an epic keynote address from Dr. Sean Lessard, Associate Professor in Teacher Education and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Alberta. He spoke about exploring the potential and possibilities of youth both in and outside of school places, sharing elements of his own personal stories and experiences.



**“We ask the question what sustains you? Not what retains you”**

@nametoplace #KtA2016

**“You are the answer. Community is the answer to our biggest social issues. Today and when you leave, from wherever you lead, make community the answer. Harness the abundance of the young people you work with...and rage for change. You are the leaders that will ensure that old school, vintage community, remains the answer.”**

– #KTA2016 KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
DANIELE ZANOTTI, PRESIDENT & CEO,  
UNITED WAY YORK REGION AND TORONTO

ALWAYS GO HOME

SHARING  
STORIES

A LIVING CURRICULUM  
STORIES AS HEALING

RED WORN  
RUNNERS:  
EXPLORING SPACES for  
FIRST NATIONS YOUTH  
IN & OUTSIDE  
SCHOOL

Dr. Sean Lessard  
AFTERNOON  
KEYNOTE

YOUNG PEOPLE  
WILL ALWAYS  
KEEP US ACCOUNTABLE

SHAPING  
INFLUENCES

EARLY EXPERIENCES  
at the Borderlands

What sustains you...  
NOT RETAINS YOU?  
NAME

ANIMATING  
LIFE TRANSITIONS

CREATE SPACE  
IN THE INSTITUTION

ROOTED  
IN  
EXPERIENCE  
PLACE

CREATE A  
DIFFERENT NARRATIVE  
LISTEN

CREATE A SPACE  
TO LEARN  
TOGETHER

250  
CONVERSATIONS

G.Y.M. JUST PLAY  
SELF  
ASSESSMENT

NO SPORTS  
NO LOSERS

PANEL:  
TALKING BACK  
to THE SYSTEM

WE ALL  
HAVE A  
ROLE  
TO PLAY

WE  
CAN WORK  
ON A  
BETTER LIFE  
FOR EVERYONE

HOW ARE WE  
DOING TODAY?

YOUTH SECTOR  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS

INTEGRATED  
METHODS &  
TRACKING

INVOLVE  
THE  
YOUTH



## BY THE NUMBERS

2

Keynote  
Speakers

4

Panelists

10

Concurrent  
Workshops

25

Spotlight  
presentations,  
posters, and  
performances

50%

Over half of the workshops  
and sessions were either youth-led  
or included youth

300+

Stakeholders attended the  
#KtA2016 events over three days

95%

Of our participants found the  
Exchange topics important and relevant  
to their work with youth

100%

Of our participants rated the  
Keynote address from Dr. Sean Lessard  
as valuable or very valuable

## How do we move towards a system that collaboratively supports youth in every context & scale of development?



**I want to do what Sean Lessard suggests: create space to live differently together.**

The afternoon began with another breakout session – this time, participants engaged in roundtable sessions, learning from multiple perspectives on a diversity of topics.

We then brought everyone together again for a dynamic panel discussion on ‘Talking Back to the System: Perspectives on Addressing Complex (aka ‘Wicked’) Problems’. The day ended on a high note as YouthREX celebrated five Ontario youth organizations by awarding them our Youth Sector Excellence Award for their commitment to evaluation through YouthREX’s through our Customized Evaluation Supports.



**“One way to get people to care is to be relentless and never stop” @Jleerankin on his work on #carding #KtA2016**

OCTOBER 29, 2016

**POST-EXCHANGE DESIGN DAY –  
COLLABORATIVE DESIGNING FOR  
YOUTH WELLBEING**

#KtA2016 wrapped up with our Design Day. Through a series of facilitated activities rooted in design thinking, 60 youth sector stakeholders tackled four challenges, or ‘Idea Labs’ that youth workers experience. Participants engaged in a full day of collaboration, dialogue, and critical thinking that resulted in eight prototypes for youth wellbeing.

**Learn more about #KtA2016:**  
[youthrex.com/exchange-2016/](http://youthrex.com/exchange-2016/)



- 01. Nnali Simon and Edwin White Chacon, Hosts and Coordinators, YouthREX Youth Advisory Council
- 02. Daniele Zannotti, Keynote Speaker, President & CEO, United Way York Region and Toronto
- 03. Dr. Sean Lessard, Keynote Speaker, Associate Professor, Uni. of Calgary
- 04. Roundtable session on the Intersections of Art, Identity and Social Change
- 05. Breakout session
- 06 - 07. Scenes from the Design Day



## 02. The eXchange

[www.exchange.youthrex.com](http://www.exchange.youthrex.com)



**The eXchange brings youth development knowledge from research, practice and lived experience together in one online space. The eXchange includes a Library for Youth Work, an Evaluation Toolkit and a growing online learning community.**

While we launched the eXchange Online Hub for Youth Wellbeing in Year Two, Year Three is when we focused on using the platform to highlight and mobilize the many diverse types of knowledge mobilization content YouthREX regularly creates. From factsheets, to research summaries, to blogs and research to practice reports, YouthREX is consistently creating and looking for different types of knowledge and relevant youth wellbeing topics to mobilize in accessible formats for our youth wellbeing stakeholders.

### **THE EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER: THE ROUND-UP**

Each month, YouthREX sends out the eXchange newsletter, which typically includes 4-6 eXchange key resources,

often times correlated with a specific theme for the month or report launch. We often ask staff or youth to pick resources that speak to them from the Library for Youth Work and highlight sector-related report launches and events. For example, when we launched the Game On report on Sport Participation as Vehicle for Positive Development for Youth Facing Barriers, the eXchange newsletter included a link to the report, the accompanying blog post, a featured related factsheet, and a related report from ParticipACTION.

The Round-Up newsletter is currently sent to our growing list of 3000+ subscribers and has an open rate that is almost 10% higher than industry standard.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

**6,855**

Site visitors

**33,000**

Page visits

**50%**

Of our visitors return to the eXchange

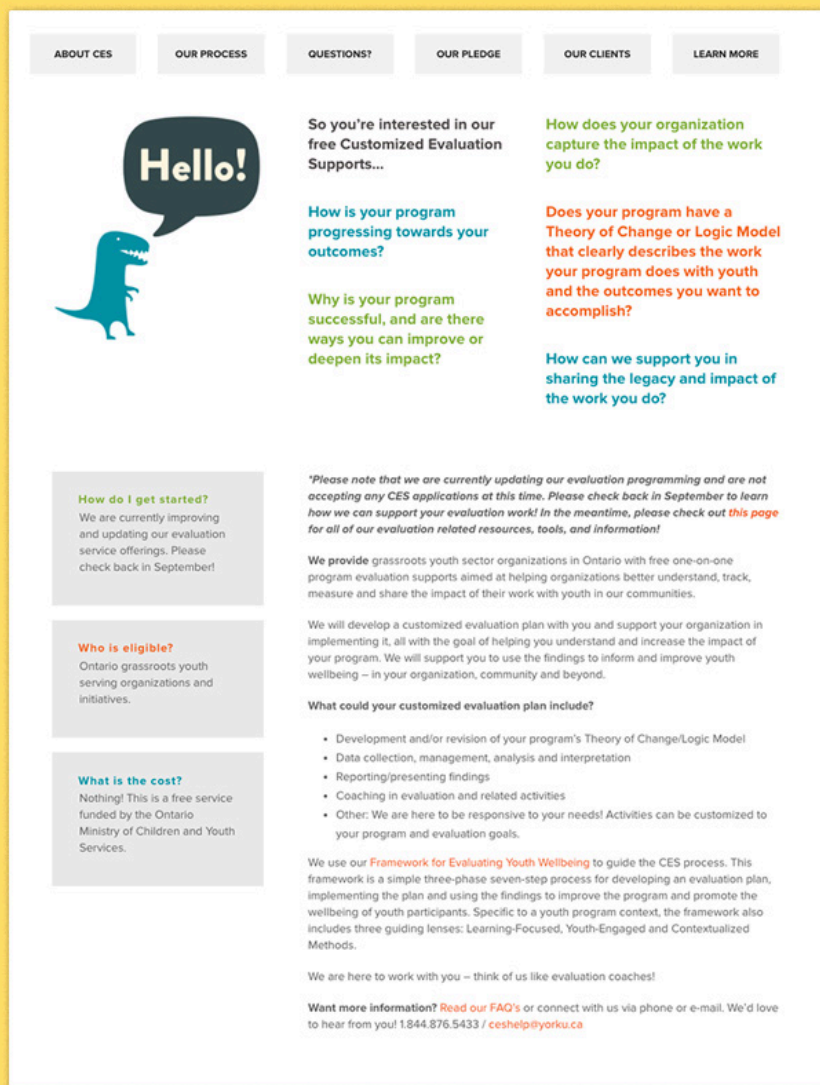
**500+**

Resources uploaded to the Library in Year 3

**105**

Resources featured in the library were created by YouthREX



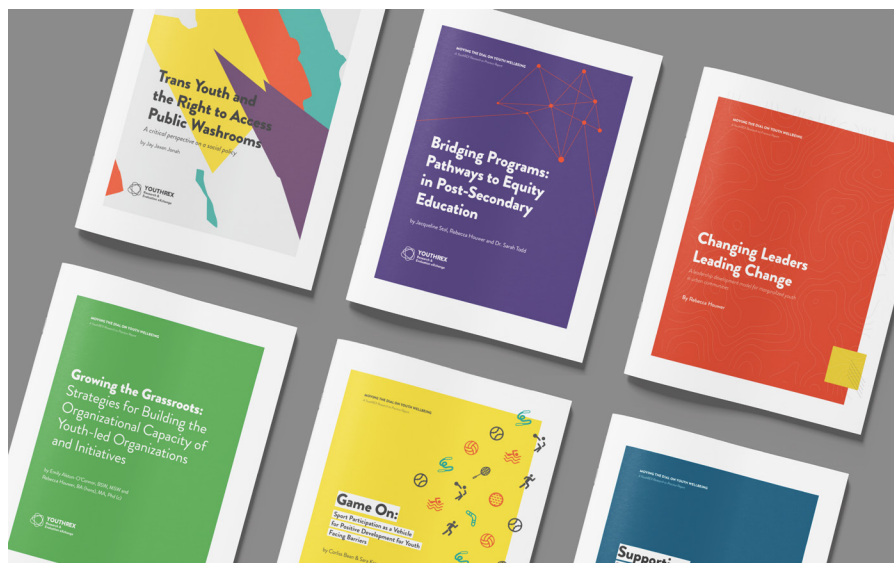


## TOP 3 DOWNLOADED YOUTHREX REPORTS

1. Game On: Sport Participation as a Vehicle for Positive Development for Youth Facing Barriers
2. Changing Leaders Leading Change
3. Collaborative Designing for Youth Wellbeing

## TOP 5 VIEWED BLOGS

1. Youth Perspectives | Taking Care During Times of Anti-Black Trauma
2. Youth Perspectives | Seeing Ourselves: Representations of “Successful” Students and the Erasure of Black Youth
3. Moving in the Right Direction: Integrating Positive Development in Youth Sport
4. Using Arts-based Activities to Collect Program Evaluation Data
5. Youth in the News | Ontario Launches the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan



## 03. Workshops

**In Year Three, YouthREX facilitated 21 workshops across Ontario for around 500 participants.**

Over the last couple years, workshops have evolved to be one of our most in-demand activities. YouthREX workshops provide structured, interactive opportunities for our stakeholders to engage with and apply new ideas and skills in a face-to-face environment. All of our workshops are free of charge, and are designed to improve evaluation and/or critical youth work capacity. Some are designed to support skills development in a particular area, while others will be designed to introduce people to new ideas and practice, support critical thinking and extensions to practice – it all depends on what the needs and requests of our stakeholders are!

### EVALUATION 101 AND 102 WORKSHOPS

Evaluation provides youth programs with the tools to understand, measure and track if their programs achieved their intended outcomes and impacts. Evaluation also helps programs understand why they are successful and how they can be improved. It can support youth programs to do what they do, better.

We have found that youth programs sometimes struggle with how to understand and measure these outcomes and articulate the impact of their programs to their stakeholders – including parents, funders, and youth themselves.

With that in mind, YouthREX developed two core workshops that we have offered through each of our provincial hubs, Eval 101 and 102. This workshop series supports participants to develop an evaluation plan, implement it and use the findings to improve their programs and share their impact. It provides participants with a foundational understanding of the main concepts, approaches and practices relevant to conducting evaluation of programs and initiatives within a youth sector context.

### UNPACKING OUR STORIES: USING CRITICAL NARRATIVE PRACTICES IN YOUTH WORK

What insights do stories offer us about how we come to know ourselves and others? How can engagement with narration and narrative ideas support our commitments to social justice with/in the youth sector?

**Narrative Practices can support us to “unpack” stories that frame young people’s lives. It also helps us access powerful narratives of resistance, change and hope.**

**“As a result of this workshop I will think more critically of how I can weave narrative practice into my community work. This was so great! Thank you deeply.”**

**October 2016 Workshop Participant**

YouthREX has offered this workshop, led by Dr. Harjeet Badwall, YouthREX Academic Lead, Assistant Professor, York University School of Social Work, multiple times, supporting youth workers to learn about the possibilities of Critical Narrative Approaches in their work. This workshop introduces the foundations of Narrative Practices from a critical perspective and facilitate interactive and hands-on activities.

### By taking part in this workshop, participants:

- develop an understanding of Critical Narrative Approaches to youth work
- gain practicable skills that can be applied to work with youth in community-based settings
- consider the application of Critical Narrative Approaches to collective social change work
- receive take-away resources and materials that outline key components of Critical Narrative Practice

**“I am happy that I was able to be a part of this experience. It has really opened my eyes to some new things, and made me think about the work I do in a different light. I think more courses like this need to be available regularly so the conversations and dialogues can continue.”**

– PARTICIPANT, YOUTHREX'S CRITICAL YOUTH WORK COURSE

# 04. Youth Outreach Worker Collaboration

## YOW Learning Hub

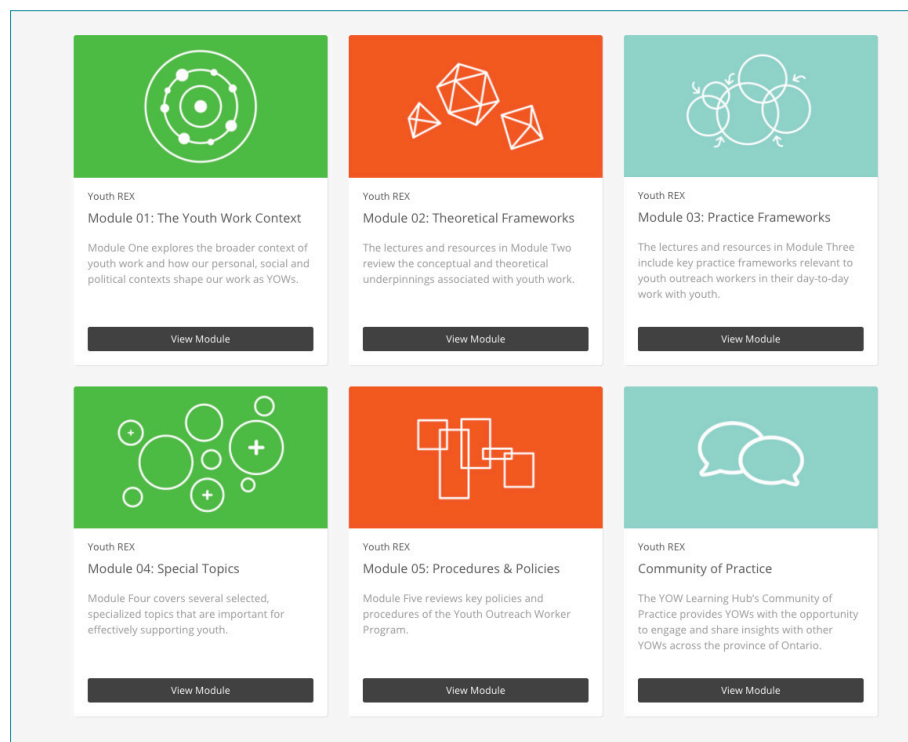
YouthREX is constantly open to opportunities that go beyond the scope of our contractual deliverables but allow us to share our resources, capacity and knowledge around youth work and youth wellbeing. With this in mind, we were very excited to collaborate with East Metro Youth Services for an online professional development resource for Youth Outreach Workers across the province.

The YOW Learning Hub brings knowledge and information relevant to the context of youth outreach work together in one place. It was designed to keep in mind the diverse educational and practice backgrounds of YOWs, introducing new ideas while giving participants the opportunity to re-familiarize themselves with key terms and concepts, and engage with fellow YOWs across Ontario. We look forward to continuously refining and updating the YOW Learning Hub based on feedback we receive as YOWs begin to engage with the Hub after its May 2017 launch.

### The Learning Hub has three main sections:

#### 01. Youth Work Curriculum

One of the main features of the Learning Hub is a Youth Work Curriculum that is specifically developed for YOWs. This curriculum is framed by a commitment to youth work within a context of equity, respect, anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices. The Youth Work Curriculum is organized around five modules that cover the context of youth work, youth work theory and practice, specialized topics and YOW policies and procedures. Each module has several lessons and each lesson has multiple lectures.



#### 02. Community of Practice

The Learning Hub has a Community of Practice that provides YOWs with the opportunity to engage and share insights with other YOWs across Ontario about outreaching and supporting youth.

#### 03. Evaluation Corner

The third section of the Learning Hub is an “Evaluation Corner”. The Learning Hub is envisioned as a dynamic platform that will be responsive to YOW learning needs. As such, the Evaluation Corner will allow YOWs to provide feedback so YouthREX and EMYS can assess if the Learning Hub is meeting their learning goals.

#### Learning Hub Objectives

01. The Learning Hub provides accessible training opportunities to YOWs. As a

virtual learning opportunity, the Learning Hub is available anytime from anywhere YOWs are thereby addressing challenges that YOWs experience with accessing training supports and professional development such as competing demands for time, limited travel resources and the infrequency/inflexibility of currently available opportunities.

02. The Learning Hub supports practice consistency by offering all YOWs across the province the same learning opportunities.

03. The Learning Hub’s Community of Practice provides an opportunity for YOWs to share knowledge from their practice and lived experiences with one another.



## 05. NOISE

### New Opportunities for Innovative Student Engagement



**The NOISE program is a research-informed model for enhancing the academic success of youth through engaged learning opportunities that energize and support their civic engagement and psychosocial wellbeing.**

NOISE was developed at the School of Social Work at York University as part of the research to action activities of the Assets Coming Together for Youth project ([www.yorku.ca/act](http://www.yorku.ca/act)).

NOISE provides YouthREX with a really great opportunity to work closely with youth in prototyping our ideas and tools while contributing to their leadership and civic engagement through research and evaluation.

In Year Three, the NOISE program was offered at four of our provincial Hubs for 104 youth in our Eastern, Central, Northeastern and Southwestern Hubs combined. Two exciting developments in Year Three include our Eastern Hub hosting a Francophone NOISE, and our Central Hub collaborating with For Youth Initiative to host a NOISE program at For Youth Initiative (FYI).

#### **FRANCOPHONE NOISE**

One of the notable areas of action for YouthREX's Eastern Hub for Year Three was working more closely with the francophone youth work community in Ottawa. As a result of this work, which included developing a francophone community of practice and hosting a francophone knowledge mobilization event, the Hub also hosted a NOISE program in French, which was heavily requested from the community.

From October 2016 – January 2017, 27 francophone youth took part in NOISE, learning about social action through learning research, advocacy and leadership skills. Youth also learned from Youth Active Media, who supported youth to learn video and media skills so that they could express their ideas meaningfully through media.



“At the beginning of the program I was really shy when interacting with other youth, but I am much freer now and feel much more at ease interacting with others.”

– NOISE youth participant



“I really appreciated the program for many different reasons, primarily for the diversity of people that came to the workshops and that all share a common goal in changing the community.”

– NOISE youth participant

The following themes were covered by the francophone NOISE cohort:

#### 1) Intimidation in schools:

What kind of intimidation programs can be developed in Samuel-Genest high school in order to better reach youth

#### 2) Financing and education:

How can schools better help youth know their options for post-secondary education and financial help?

#### 3) Newcomers:

Is there a need to put in place activities and programs for newcomers in francophone high schools? What kind of programs would newcomers like to see?

#### 4) Afterschool programs:

Is there a need for afterschool activities other than the sport concentration at Louis-Riel high school? What kind of activities would students like to see?

# **Our Five Regional Hubs**

# Northeastern Hub

## CORE TEAM

Dr. Diana Coholic  
Academic Director

Vivian Oystreck  
Hub Manager

Sidney Shapiro  
Research Assistant

## LOCATION

School of Social Work  
Laurentian University  
Sudbury, Ontario

Timiskaming Nipissing Parry Sound Muskoka  
Greater Sudbury/Grand Sudbury Algoma  
Manitoulin Sudbury Cochrane

### 01. Youth Engagement

In Year Three, we worked with two cohorts of youth graduates from the NOISE program, once in May 2016, and again in January 2017, celebrating the graduation of 20 NOISE youth in total. The NOISE program has been a great success in our region and has generated much interest and participation. We are incredibly proud of the youth's accomplishments and feel that we have supported youth leadership in Sudbury by offering this program. All the youth expressed enjoying the experience and asked to take the program again if offered!

The Northeastern Hub also had the pleasure of working with four youth interns from the NOISE program graduates. It was incredible to witness the accomplishments of these youth as they developed the skills and knowledge they had learned in the NOISE program. Two of these youth returned as youth facilitators for the NOISE program in September 2016.

They also created a video to help in the recruitment of the second cohort of NOISE youth that you can watch here: <http://youthrex.com/northeastern-hub/>

### 02. Community of Practice (Youth Worker Café Series)

The Youth Worker Café series was a welcome and generative space our Hub facilitated, partnering with local organizations to host four events during Year Three. Each meeting featured a topic and expert speaker, and included time for discussion

and networking. The youth sector in Sudbury expressed that they found this event meaningful and beneficial to their work with youth, appreciating the opportunity to connect and talk about challenges and successes in their work. The topic covered include: Building Bridges for Youth Wellbeing, Cultural Competency and Working with Aboriginal Youth, and Working with Trans Youth.

### 03. Excel Evaluation Videos

Throughout our work with our Customized Evaluation Supports partner organizations, our team noticed that these organizations needed a feasible way to track and measure their work with youth. As a result, we created a series of videos and hosted two webinars how to use Excel to do just that! These videos are now available in the eXchange Library for Youth Work. We feel that we have created something that will lend to the sustainability of grassroots youth organizations across the province.

# Eastern Hub

## CORE TEAM

Dr. Sarah Todd  
Academic Director

Dr. Stephanie Rattelade  
Hub Manager

## LOCATION

School of Social Work  
Carleton University

Leeds and Grenville Ottawa Lanark  
Prescott and Russell Haliburton Northumberland  
Frontenac Renfrew Durham Stormont  
Prince Edward County Kawartha Lakes  
Dundas and Glengarry Lennox and Addington  
Hastings and Peterborough

### 01. Francophone Engagement

In Year Three, the Eastern Hub focused on expanding and strengthening ties with the Francophone youth sector community. Building on our work in Year Two, we continued to reach out to francophone youth, stakeholders and various organizations to better understand how francophone organizations can improve their services while catering to particular community issues. As a result, we worked with francophone organizations to provide program evaluation, developed a community of practice, hosted a Francophone-focused knowledge mobilization event and even offered the New Opportunities for Innovative Student Engagement (NOISE) program in French.

### 01. Customized Evaluation Supports

This third year also allowed us to continuing improving the quality of our evaluation collaborations through YouthREX's Customized Evaluation Supports. One of our most thorough and exciting collaborations was with Osgood Youth Association (O-YA), who even worked with through the entire seven-step YouthREX Evaluation Framework. We were so impressed with O-YA's commitment to evaluation that we nominated them for YouthREX's Youth Sector Excellence Award at the October Knowledge to Action Exchange, which they won! Additionally, we have had the pleasure of presenting at events hosted by our CES partner organizations and have experienced an increase in CES applications in our region. at events they are hosting. There has also been an increase in CES applications in the last year and there is now a waitlist for services.

# Southwestern Hub

## CORE TEAM

Dr. Peter Donhue,  
Academic Director

Laura Hogarth  
Hub Manager

## LOCATION

School of Social Work  
King's University College  
Western University

Essex Middlesex Haldimand-Norfolk Brant  
Hamilton Bruce Oxford Lambton Huron  
Chatham-Kent Perth Elgin Niagara

### 01. YouthHACK2017

Held in February 2017, YouthHACK2017 was definitely the biggest highlight for our hub this year. It was a full-day event where students, design thinkers, youth workers, youth community members and policy makers formed teams to participate in a collaborative effort to create solutions for complex challenges posed by five youth organizations in our region. At the end of the event, we had a number of participants from other organizations asking if they could be put on a list to be “hacked” at the next Hackathon – a real indicator of how well the event was received by participants! Learn more about this event here: <http://youthrex.com/youthhack-2017/>

### 02. Youth Research Assistants

We were pleased to employ and train three young adults in program evaluation, as well as host a practicum for a social work student from our Hub home, King's University College. These members of our team were invaluable, supporting our work, engaging the community and sharing their own important perspectives to enhance our Hub's learning.

### 03. Partnership Development

New partnerships were made this year that created new opportunities for our Hub. We developed a presence at Innovation Works downtown, and this allowed increase accessibility for our stakeholders to engage with us at meetings events at this location. Further, simply being with all the other organizations who utilize that space increased awareness of our work and YouthREX's mission. We also developed a new partnership with Boys and Girls Club of London to increase interest, attendance and accessibility for our evaluation workshops.

# Central Hub

## CORE TEAM

Dr. Carl James  
Academic Director

Jessica Noble  
Hub Manager

## LOCATION

York Centre  
for Education and  
Community  
York University

Toronto Dufferin Halton Peel Simcoe  
Waterloo Wellington York

### 01. Customized Evaluation Supports (CES)

The Central Hub dedicates most of its time to supporting an extremely high CES demand for our region. Of the 46 CES collaborations we worked on during Year three, 33 logic models were created, 22 evaluation service plans, and 20 final reports. CES is a challenging, invigorating and meaningful process that we undertake and we are consistently inspired by the value and commitment our partner organizations bring to the process and to youth wellbeing in general. We are also proud to share that the Evaluation Leads from many of our CES partner organizations reported that through CES they were able to enhance their own evaluation capacity and the capacity of their organization.

### 02. Knowledge Mobilization with CES clients

A key element of YouthREX's three-phase, seven-step evaluation framework is knowledge mobilization – sharing findings and learnings from the evaluation process with the public and other stakeholders. The Central Hub team was happy to support this process through invitations to present on collaborative evaluations at two conferences that were hosted by our CES clients (CMHA Mood Walks, Safe City Mississauga Crime Prevention Council) and one by a non-CES client, Parks and Rec Toronto. One highlight during our knowledge mobilization efforts was presenting at the Parks and Rec conference with our Eugenia Duodu from Visions of Science (VoSNL). VoSNL was one of our CES partner organizations and recipient of YouthREX's Youth Sector Excellence Award recipient. In the presentation, Eugenia discussed the importance of evaluation and the positive impact YouthREX has had on their large youth organization (VoSNL) (e.g., creating logic model to understand program, identifying outcomes and measurable indicators, asking the right questions during the evaluation).

# Northwestern Hub

## Rainy River Kenora Thunder Bay

### CORE TEAM

Dr. Edward Rawana  
Academic Director

Karli Brotchie  
Hub Manager

### LOCATION

Centre of Education and  
Research on Positive  
Youth Development  
Lakehead University

### 01. Critical Youth Work Certificate

In November 2016, our Hub was offered the YouthREX certificate, Critical Youth Work: Bridging Theory and Action to a group of 23 youth sector frontline workers in our region. This professional development course included three modules: the policy and personal context of youth work in Ontario, theorizing critical youth work and bringing theory into action. Youth workers were challenged to critically analyze key issues and explore issues for creative and viable forms of transformative practices that support and strengthen youth well being. The experience included presentations from experts from across the region, including Erin Beagle from Roots to Harvest, Dr. Rawana from the Centre for Education and Research on Positive Youth Development.

### 2. CES with OYIPP

The Northwestern Hub also worked with the Ontario Youth Indigenous Partnership Program through YouthREX's Customized Evaluation Supports program. This process was grounded in Indigenous research methods and adhered to the First Nations principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession). This collaboration was a great learning experience highlighting the importance of relationship building, trust, and reciprocity. We will be creating and sharing a final evaluation report based on this collaboration with OYIPP.

**“This felt a very critical space for folks in the field to discuss the challenges we all face in regards to funding, limits to what we can do, the vocabulary used that can negatively affect the populations we work with, etc. I’m really appreciative of this opportunity and the knowledge gained in this time.”**

– PARTICIPANT, YOUTHREX’S CRITICAL YOUTH WORK COURSE





#### **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 the School of Social Work 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.

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**[www.youthrex.com](http://www.youthrex.com) // [exchange.youthrex.com](http://exchange.youthrex.com)**

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