

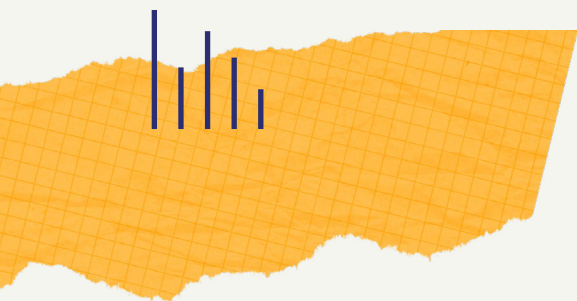


“INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY
IN OUR
ORGANIZATION”

THE IMPACT OF YOUTHREX

HIGHLIGHTS FROM INTERNAL EVALUATION DATA

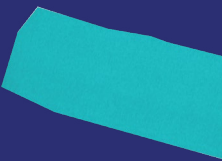
(2021-2022)



YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange



Evaluation is a powerful strategy for improving practice, enhancing program delivery, addressing sustainability, and creating a culture of both equity and learning within organizations.



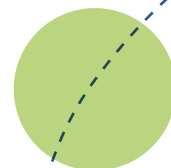


ABOUT THE YOUTH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION EXCHANGE

Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX) is an Ontario province-wide initiative based at the School of Social Work at York University, primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

OUR VISION is an Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth!

OUR MISSION is to make research evidence and evaluation practices accessible and relevant to Ontario's grassroots youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building and evaluation leadership!





EVALUATION APPROACH

YouthREX understands that the most important statement that we can make about the importance of ‘evidence-based practice’ is our willingness to open up our own practices to examination and embrace an ongoing, reflexive, multidimensional, and multi-method approach in evaluating the outcomes of our deliverables.

Our willingness and openness to fully document, measure, and track if and how YouthREX is achieving our intended outcomes is a powerful way of communicating and reaffirming the value we place on understanding the impact of one’s work.

YouthREX’s evaluation strategy weaves in the following four principles:

1. **Ongoing:** An ongoing and continuous evaluation approach that creates a more intimate understanding of the change process and reinforces our message that evaluation is primarily for improving rather than just *proving* (accountability).
2. **Reflexive:** Reflexive practice that locates or situates one’s practice and experience in relation to the context of wider social and political culture.
3. **Multidimensional and Multi-Method:** A multidimensional approach that focuses on multiple dimensions of our work and a multi-method approach that includes both qualitative methods and quantitative methods. The integration of multiple methods allows us to tell richer and more nuanced stories of our work that acknowledge the complexity and dynamism of the youth sector’s research and evaluation context.

4. Youth Voice and Youth Leadership:

A commitment to keep exploring more meaningful ways to fully engage youth in our work.

The following evaluation questions guided our internal evaluation in 2021/2022:

- **Reach:** *What is our ‘reach’ and who are we ‘reaching’? What is our geographical reach? What communities/groups remain a challenge to reach?*
- **Participants’ Satisfaction:** *How did participants experience our offerings and services? How satisfied were participants?*
- **Impact on Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes:** *What did participants perceive as the benefits and learnings they gained from accessing YouthREX offerings and services? What impact did these have on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes? What impact did our offerings and services have on their work with youth?*

Evaluation Data Sources

Our internal evaluation data sources come mainly from **registration forms and surveys**, which track the individuals that access YouthREX supports and services, and **feedback forms**, completed after individuals have accessed such supports and services.

For more information about YouthREX’s evaluation approach and data sources, please see pages 67 to 70 in the [**2021-2022 Annual Report**](#).

EVALUATION FINDINGS

01/YouthREX's Reach

*What is our 'reach' and who are we 'reaching'?
What is our geographical reach? What communities/
groups remain a challenge to reach?*

In 2021/2022, **more than 6,000** individuals and organizations accessed YouthREX's services – Certificates, Workshops, Skill-Ups, Webinars, Teach-In, and Customized Evaluation Supports.

Table 1: Number of Registrants / Organizations for Offerings and Supports

OFFERING / EVENT / SUPPORT	NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS OR ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING SUPPORTS
Learn by YouthREX (n = 5,482)	
Certificates	3,798
Live and Online Workshops	1,414
Skill-Ups	270
Knowledge Exchange (n = 721)	
Webinars	491
Teach-In	230
Customized Evaluation Supports (n = 55)	
Customized Evaluation Supports Consultations	50
Fee for Service Evaluations	5
TOTAL	6,258

YouthREX reached and supported additional individuals and organizations through our online channels and platforms, including the Knowledge Hub, which received over **17,000** unique visitors in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Our REXTV YouTube channel had over **1,800** views and allowed us to keep reaching our stakeholders even after a live event had ended.

Table 2: Reach of Online Platforms

YouthREX.com Unique Visitors	50,311
Knowledge Hub Unique Visitors	17,196
Active Newsletter Subscribers	8,372
Twitter Followers	3,301
Instagram Followers	1,994
LinkedIn Followers	817
Facebook Page Likes	749
YouTube Channel Subscribers	103
YouTube Video Views	1,867
TikTok Followers	9
TikTok Views	1,370

Geographical Reach

YouthREX's mandate is focused on Ontario's youth sector. We reviewed registration forms from our offerings for 2021/2022 to understand how successful we were in reaching this target population – youth sector stakeholders **across** Ontario. Table 3 summarizes the geographical locations of participants who registered for our offerings. The majority of registrants and organizations are from Ontario, and are from all regions in Ontario. As can be expected, most are from the Central Region (61%), a region with the largest proportion of youth programs, followed by nearly equal representation from the Eastern and Southwestern Regions.

Our reach is in keeping with the expectations of our registration requirements – none of the organizations supported through our Customized Evaluation Supports, a service that is only open to Ontario youth programs, are from outside Ontario, while about 20% of participants for our Knowledge Exchange services, which have no registration restrictions, are from outside Ontario (8%), with just over 10% from outside Canada (12.8%).

Table 3: Geographical Reach

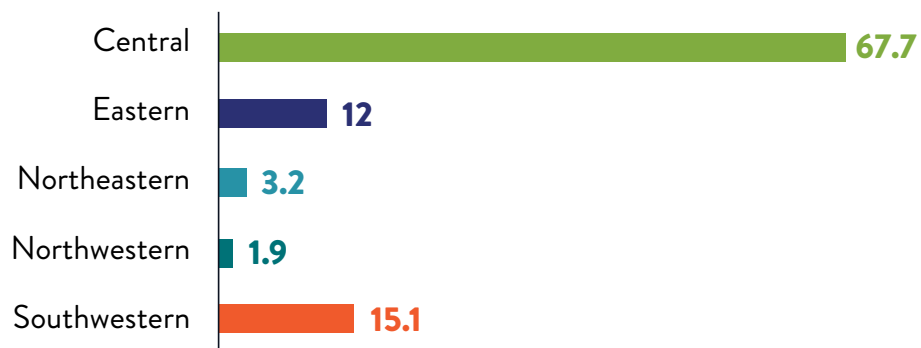
	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE	LEARN	CUSTOMIZED EVALUATION SUPPORTS	TOTAL
Central	391 (54.6)	2,328 (61.9)	31 (75.6)	2,750 (61.0)
Eastern	68 (9.5)	415 (11.0)	4 (9.8)	487 (10.8)
Northeastern	19 (2.7)	120 (3.2)	1 (2.4)	130 (2.9)
Northwestern	11 (1.5)	68 (1.8)	-	79 (1.8)
Southern	78 (10.9)	532 (14.1)	5 (12.2)	615 (13.6)
Outside Ontario, Canada	57 (8.0)	246 (6.5)	-	303 (6.7)
Outside Canada	92 (12.8)	53 (1.4)	-	145 (3.2)
Total	716	3,762	41	4,509



Table 4: Registrants / Organizations Supported by Region in Ontario

	KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE	LEARN	CUSTOMIZED EVALUATION SUPPORTS	TOTAL
Central	391 (69.0)	2,328 (67.2)	31 (75.6)	2,750 (67.7)
Eastern	68 (12.0)	415 (12.0)	4 (9.8)	487 (12.0)
Northeastern	19 (3.4)	120 (3.5)	1 (2.4)	130 (3.2)
Northwestern	11 (1.9)	68 (1.9)	-	79 (1.9)
Southern	78 (13.7)	532 (15.4)	5 (12.2)	615 (15.1)
Total	567	3,463	41	4,061

Figure 1: Geographical Reach of YouthREX in Ontario



Socio-Demographic Characteristics of YouthREX's Stakeholders

Table 5: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

		NUMBER	%
	UNDER 18	17	0.4
Age	18-24	736	17.3
	25-34	1,575	46.5
	35-44	828	19.6
	45-54	469	12.8
	55-64	174	3
	65+	19	0.3
	Total	3,818	100
Gender Identity	Cis	1,245	26.5
	Non-Binary	115	2.4
	Man	469	9.9
	Questioning/Exploring	26	0.6
	Trans	32	0.68
	Two-Spirit	6	0.1
	Woman	2,688	57.2
	Prefer Not to Answer	105	2.2
	Other	12	0.25
	Total	3,453	100



Table 5 (continued)

Race/Ethnic Identity	Arab or Middle Eastern	97	2.5
	Black (African, Caribbean, etc.)	993	25.8
	Central Asian	26	0.6
	East Asian	113	2.9
	Hispanic or Latin American	76	1.9
	Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit)	86	2.2
	Pacific Islander	8	0.2
	South Asian	274	7.1
	Southeast Asian	79	2
	White	1,678	43.7
	Multi-Racial/Ethnic	149	3.8
	Prefer not to Answer	138	3.5
	Other	117	3
Total		3,834	100

Table 5 summarizes the socio-demographics of stakeholders who participated in YouthREX's offerings. The majority of participants (57.2%) identified as women and just under 10% identified as men, with remaining participants identifying as trans, Two-spirit, and gender non-binary, among others. With regards to race/ethnicity, almost half of the participants were white (43.7%), followed by Black (25.8%), and South Asian (7.1%). More than one-third (37%) of participants were between the ages of 25 and 34, while almost one-fifth (17.7%) of participants were youth – under 18 or between 18 and 24 years.

Professional Backgrounds and Experiences of Registrants

Table 6 summarizes the professional backgrounds of registrants and the nature and length of their experiences. The majority are frontline workers (44%), followed by trainees in social service programs (11%) and managerial staff (10%). About a third (37.1%) have less than five years of experience working in the youth sector.

Table 6: Professional Backgrounds

		N	%
Professional Role	Frontline Staff	1,649	44
	Volunteer / Board Member	125	3
	Placement/Practicum/Intern	371	10
	High School Student	16	0
	Undergraduate Student	219	6
	Graduate Student	129	.03
	Community Researcher	91	2
	Management-Level Staff	423	11
	Administrative Staff	146	4
	Senior Leadership	135	4
	Staff of Funding Organization	38	1
	Child and Youth Worker	7	0
	Social Worker	2	0
	Child and Youth Services Manager	2	0
	Superintendent / Director of Education	2	0
	Other	433	11
	Total	3,788	100



Table 6 (continued)

Length of Time in Youth Sector	Less than 1 year	417	11.4
	1-2 years	422	11.5
	3-4 years	522	14.2
	More than 5 years	1,949	53.2
	Do not work w/Youth	356	9.7
Total		3,666	100
Highest Level of Education	No Formal Schooling	7	0.18
	Elementary School	21	0.5
	High School/GED	168	4.3
	Some College or University	443	11.5
	College Diploma	631	16.4
	University Degree	1,543	40
	Professional or Graduate Degree	1,022	26.6
Total		3,835	100

Just 9% said they do not work with youth, which shows that YouthREX is reaching its target population – participants from the youth sector. The youth programs that participants are affiliated with span the wide breadth of Ontario’s community and youth sectors. The issues they tackle include mental health, community education, and mentorship, among others. Table 7 shows that one-quarter of the participants work with agencies and/or organizations that are primarily focused on mental health (25%), while 17% work in agencies that have a primary focus on education, respectively.

Table 7: Organizational Characteristics

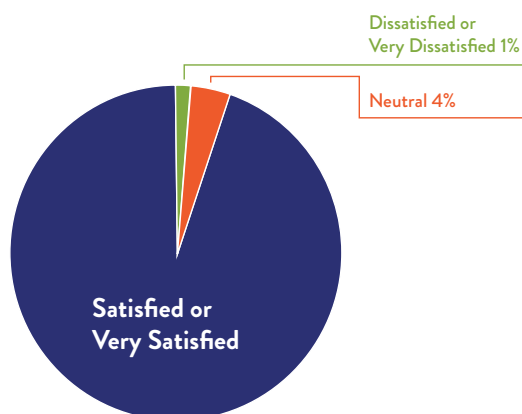
		Number	%
Primary Service Area	I don't work with youth	323	9
	Mental Health/wellness	925	25
	Legal	61	2
	Case management/systems navigation	228	6
	Community educational/recreational programming	472	13
	Anti-domestic violence	20	1
	Family wellness	41	1
	Research	59	2
	Program grants	23	1
	Settlement for newcomers	63	2
	Career navigation (resume-building, job hunting, etc.)	127	3
	Shelter/temporary housing	74	2
	School-related (e.g. school social worker, teacher, etc.)	615	17
	Mentorship	72	2
	Drop-in	119	3
	Primary Care	38	1
	Child Welfare	65	2
	Advocacy	93	3
	Other	249	7
	Total	3,667	100

02/Satisfaction with YouthREX

How did participants experience our offerings and services and how satisfied were they with these offerings and services?

Participants' Satisfaction focuses on how well participants liked the YouthREX services they received or participated in. Assessing satisfaction is particularly important when participants engage in the learning process voluntarily, as they do in YouthREX's offerings (McRoberts & Leitch, 1998¹). Figure 2 shows that participants' satisfaction across YouthREX's services and events is at an extremely high level. Ninety-five percent of participants who completed feedback forms reported being *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the offerings or events they participated in or support they received, and only 1% said they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*, while 4% were neutral.

Figure 2:
Level of Satisfaction Across YouthREX



¹ McRoberts, R., & Leitch, R. (1998). Best of the old alongside the new: Evaluating an integrated training programme for part-time youth workers. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 50(1), 21-40.

Data collapsed across Certificate Modules, Online and Live Workshops, Webinar Feedback, and Evidence Request Survey. Survey items asked participants to rate their level of satisfaction with offerings.

Figure 3 shows that across YouthREX services, nearly all participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they would recommend the service to others, another indicator of their positive reactions to YouthREX supports and services.

The qualitative data from feedback forms provide further evidence of participants' satisfaction:

"Again, excellent module. I love how the information is presented in a tangible straightforward way that we can begin to implement in our daily practice. Amazing job YouthREX Team."

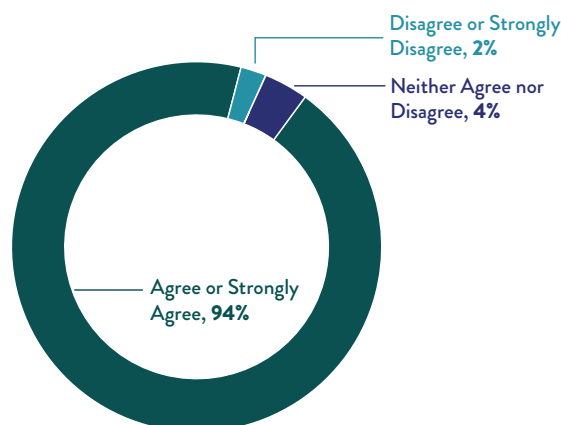
- Workshop Participant

Participants were satisfied with the accessibility features of our online offerings. For example, the ability to work through material at their own pace — a feature of our online certificates and workshops — was positively described by participants:

"I love the flexibility and how all the modules were open to work at our own pace. Also, the content was varied and I learned a lot from excellent experts. It was also really nice that the information came in a variety of formats that best suit the learner (i.e., audio, just slides, increase speed of audio, etc.)."

- Certificate Participant

Figure 3: Would Recommend YouthREX Offerings, Events or Supports and Services to Colleagues



Data collapsed across feedback forms for Certificates, Skill-Ups, Webinars, Teach-In, and Evidence Request Survey, which asked participants whether they would recommend the event, support or service to a colleague or friend.

Some participants wanted additional interactive components, such as closed captioning for lectures, to keep them better engaged with the material:

“The only recommendation I have is to add closed captioning to your videos for improved accessibility (in other words, so that one doesn’t need to choose between reading the transcript or watching the provided video).”

- Certificate Participant

Participants suggested that more direction would be helpful when receiving the Evidence Briefs from their Evidence Request (Customized Evaluation Supports), and that the referencing of evidence should indicate what sources are from Canada:

“Highlight/distinguish where sources and evidence were taken from outside of Canadian contexts. And within Canadian contexts the specific research that was done to acquire the data – essentially provide caution to the reader.”

- Evidence Request Survey Respondent

In summary, participants who received services from YouthREX had high levels of satisfaction and would highly recommend YouthREX to others.

03/Impact on Participants’ Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

What did participants perceive as the benefits and learnings they gained from accessing YouthREX offerings and services? What impact did these have on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes? What impact did our offerings and services have on their work with youth?

Participants who completed the modules of our four certificates were asked to retrospectively rate their knowledge before and after taking the modules. Responses were from 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. To assess whether there was a statistically significant increase in knowledge after completing the modules, we conducted paired samples t-tests.



Table 8: Pre-Post Knowledge Gains Across Certificate Modules with Significance-Level

Program Evaluation for Youth Wellbeing Certificate				
Knowledge Questions		Before	After	
I am knowledgeable about...	N	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	p-value
... Fundamentals of program evaluation.	24	3.0 (1.0)	4.08 (.77)	.001
... Program theory and logic models.	13	3.07 (1.03)	4.38 (.65)	.002
... Data analysis (a).	15	2.91 (.93)	4.20 (.67)	.008
... Data analysis (b).	9	3.22 (1.20)	4.44 (.53)	.027
... How to advance my program's legacy.	12	3.36 (.67)	4.08 (.67)	.011
Using Spreadsheets in Program Evaluation Certificate				
... Using quantitative data in program evaluation.	20	3.55 (1.05)	4.35 (.49)	.003
... Data inventories and how to organize them.	16	3.18 (.91)	4.06 (.57)	.002
... Using and calculating descriptive statistics.	12	2.83 (1.19)	3.91 (.79)	.006
... Data visualization and storytelling.	11	2.41 (1.68)	4.56 (.56)	.001
Cannabis and Youth Certificate				
... Cannabis use and its impacts.	199	3.54 (.97)	4.32 (.79)	.001
... Cannabis legalization and criminalization.	147	3.19 (1.08)	4.27 (.68)	.001
... Talking with youth about and lowering their risk in using cannabis.	108	3.15 (1.00)	4.27 (.67)	.001
... Social determinants of health, anti-oppressive practices, anti-Black racism, and Indigenous practices.	106	3.67 (.82)	4.27 (.67)	.001
... Theory-based practices.	120	3.50 (1.06)	4.11 (.80)	.001
Centering Black Youth Wellbeing Certificate				
... Connections between historical and current anti-Black racism (ABR) in Canada.	504	3.14 (1.01)	4.40 (.62)	.001
... Impact of ABR on wellbeing of Black youth.	546	3.52 (.92)	4.46 (.58)	.001
... Practices and strategies for supporting Black youth wellbeing.	511	3.16 (.91)	4.29 (.58)	.001
... Ongoing commitment required to address ABR.	529	3.39 (.98)	4.39 (.67)	.001

Table 8 show the findings of the analyses. There were statistically significant mean differences between perceived knowledge after completing a module in all cases. The majority of these were highly significant, at or beyond the .01 alpha level ($p < .01$). The findings show that self-reported knowledge was *significantly higher* after the completion of the modules than before. Participants overwhelmingly reported gains in their level of knowledge after completing the modules.

Qualitative data also supported these significant findings from retrospective assessments of knowledge before and after completing a certificate module. Participants described being exposed to new perspectives that build their capacity to better support youth and promote social change, and they acknowledged the value associated with enhancing their knowledge around topics covered through the offerings and events:

“Very informative. Even though I thought I had knowledge about cannabis beforehand it introduced me to more concepts and knowledge that I think will be helpful when working youth.”

- Workshop Participant

“This module was very informative, interesting and easy to follow. While I feel that I had knowledge coming into this training, I have gained a lot more information and understanding from these lectures.”

- Certificate Participant

“I love the fact that the skill up helped me see a new perspective to things and open my mind to new evidence-based practice.”

- Skill-Up Participant

“It’s important to learn about anti-black racism. This training is accessible and free! The certification is a bonus and the learning is invaluable on its own.”

- Certificate Participant

Participants in workshop and certificate offerings with an explicit focus on anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice frequently said that the course content made them reflect and (re)consider ways in which their identities and histories contributed to systems of oppression and white supremacy. Many participants who identified as white described how the content made them reflect upon and openly acknowledge the privileges of their whiteness and how they want to use this knowledge and self-reflection to better support Black and racialized youth they work with.

04/Relevance and Applicability of Knowledge to Supporting Youth

In addition to the knowledge participants gained, the quantitative and qualitative evaluation data revealed that participants felt that this knowledge was relevant and could be applied to their work with youth. As can be seen in Table 9, participants were in strong agreement that the YouthREX offering, event or service was relevant and valuable to their work with youth. Across objectives, of the 3,177 participants who were asked this question, **93% agreed or strongly agreed** that the supports received and the knowledge gained were relevant to the needs of their work.

Data collected from the Teach-In, Workshops, Certificates, and the Evidence Request Survey suggested that participants also intended to apply the knowledge gained to their work within the youth sector. Of the 3,185 individuals across the three YouthREX objectives who responded to questions related to the intention to apply the knowledge, **90% agreed or strongly agreed** that they intended to apply their new knowledge to practice.

Table 9: Relevance of Offerings and Services to Supporting Youth

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Learn						
Certificates	31 (1.0%)	10 (.34%)	160 (5.4%)	1,138 (39.1%)	1,575 (54%)	2,914
Workshops	1 (.53%)	1 (.53%)	13 (7%)	57 (30.4%)	115 (61.4%)	187
Knowledge Exchange						
Webinars	1 (2.5%)	-	1 (2.5%)	17 (42.5%)	21 (52.5%)	40
Teach-In	-	-	-	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	25
Customized Evaluation Supports						
Evidence Request	-	-	-	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	11
Total	33 (1%)	11 (.3%)	531 (16.7%)	876 (27.6%)	1,726 (54.3%)	3,177

Learn data has been collapsed across Certificates and Workshop feedback form items that asked whether the content was relevant and valuable to youth work. Knowledge Exchange data has been collapsed across Webinar and Teach-In feedback forms; items asked whether the event was relevant/valuable to their work with youth. Customized Evaluation Supports data is based on the Evidence Request Survey item that asked participants whether evidence and resources met their needs.

Intention to Apply Knowledge to Supporting Youth

The pre-post quantitative data showing that participants highly ranked their intention to apply new knowledge from modules to their work is supported by qualitative comments from the open-ended questions in which participants describe their intentions to apply the knowledge to their work settings:

It had valuable information that I found useful to keep in mind when designing an online program for youth.

– Evidence Request Survey Respondent

Table 10: Intention to Apply Knowledge from Offerings and Services to Supporting Youth

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Learn						
Certificates	24 (.8%)	14 (.4%)	246 (8.4%)	1,532 (52.5%)	1,098 (37.3%)	2,914
Workshops	1 (.5%)	-	12 (6%)	83 (44%)	92 (49%)	188
Skill-Ups	-	-	5 (10.4%)	17 (35.4%)	265 (4.1%)	48
Knowledge Exchange						
Webinars	<i>data not available</i>					
Teach-In	-	-	-	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	25
Customized Evaluation Supports						
Evidence Request	-	-	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	10
Total	25 (.8%)	14 (.4%)	265 (8.3%)	1,647 (51.7%)	1,234 (38.7%)	3,185

The qualitative data provides further indication of participants' intent. Evidence Request Survey respondents, for example, noted the different ways they have used or intend to use the evidence and resources received. These include program-specific usages and organizational and operational-specific usages. For program-specific usages, participants mentioned how the evidence and resources would help inform the design and implementation of specific programming, serve as a reference point when consulting with other stakeholders on their programs, and support changes in how certain programs will be implemented:

"The evidence briefs provided were on how to effectively engage youth, whether it be through platforms or in-person. These tools will be used when designing a career mentorship program for youth aged 16-25 to ensure youth engagement."

- Evidence Request Survey Respondent

Furthermore, for organizational and operational-specific usages, participants mentioned how the evidence and resources would help develop strategic opportunities for their organization, secure funding, and inform discussions and developments on initiatives at the board level:

"We have used it to secure funding, improve our evaluation, better tell our story of impact and to make intentional improvements to programs."

- Evidence Request Survey Respondent

Overall, participants reported increases in knowledge because of their YouthREX interactions. In some instances, these knowledge gains were significantly higher **after** participation in the YouthREX offering. Most participants agreed that this knowledge was relevant and intend to apply this knowledge to better support the youth they work with in their respective programs and organizations.

Participants across a diverse range of program services and supports overwhelmingly agreed that YouthREX provided them with the requisite tools and information needed to better support young people. Participants often spoke about the extent to which offerings provided critical knowledge and new perspectives, or helped "deepen [their] understandings" of strategies or practices to support their youth work. They described being impressed by the depth of knowledge and evidence-based research across a variety of topics and in the courses they took.

The evaluation findings are particularly important when considering research in the professional development literature, which suggests that adults pursuing continuing education are more motivated to learn when the curriculum is relevant. This becomes further pronounced when learners appreciate that they can take the insights and knowledge gained from their training back to their workplaces as valuable tools to enhance their work (Broad & Evans, 2006²). Our evaluative data described above makes it quite clear that, overall, our stakeholders positively valued the knowledge gained from their specific YouthREX experience.

Considering what we know from research that there is a positive relationship between intention and action (Webb & Sheeran, 2006³), the findings imply that participants will apply knowledge from YouthREX supports and program services in supporting youth.

2 Broad, K., & Evans, M. (2006). *A review of literature on professional development content and delivery modes for experienced teachers*. University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

3 Webb, T. L., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Does changing behavioural intentions engender behavior change? A meta-analysis of the experimental evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(2), 249-268.

Implications of Evaluation Findings for 2022-2023

Overall, our internal evaluation data show that YouthREX's offerings and services **reached our target stakeholders** – Ontario's youth sector – and that these stakeholders are **very satisfied with our services and offerings** and are experiencing **increases in their knowledge**; these **knowledge gains were significantly higher** after participation in YouthREX's offerings and services. Participants also reported that the **knowledge gained was relevant to their practice** and that they will **apply this knowledge** to better support youth.

Key findings from our internal evaluation data and actionable implications for 2022/2023 include:

1) Reach of YouthREX

YouthREX offerings and objectives reached more than **6,000** youth-serving professionals from organizations across a variety of service areas within the province. Much more, our reach is extended by way of online communications and social media platforms, including more than 100,000 unique visitors across the YouthREX website.

Although we reached youth sector stakeholders in every region in Ontario – including 209 (5.1%) in Northern Ontario – the reach of our Customized Evaluation Supports (the goal of which is to strengthen the use of evidence in the design and development of youth programs) is very weak outside of the Central Region, especially in Northern Ontario, where we are currently not supporting any organization with fee for service evaluations.

While the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this, we can (and will) do a better job of improving our outreach outside of Central Region in 2022/2023. As the province opens up again to in-person events, we will revisit plans from 2020 to expand our presence in more communities across Ontario by partnering with community organizations to offer in-person learning opportunities.

Examples are past workshops and Community of Practice events we offered in Serpent Lake River, First Nations; Sheguiandah, Manitoulin Island; Hamilton (Hamilton Community Foundation); and Thunder Bay (Northwest Tobacco Control Area Network). We will keep embracing partnerships to create synergy as well as efficiencies.

Action for 2022/2023

In Fall 2022, YouthREX has signed on to co-sponsor the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association's conference on empowering Indigenous youth, which is being held November 18-20th at the Water Tower Inn in Sault Ste. Marie. This will be an excellent opportunity for outreach to Northern communities.

We are also planning to hold a series of events in regions across Ontario. These events will provide an opportunity for youth programs to join us and learn about the possibilities — and challenges — of evaluation, and how YouthREX can make the work so much easier for their programs.

2) Knowledge and Skills

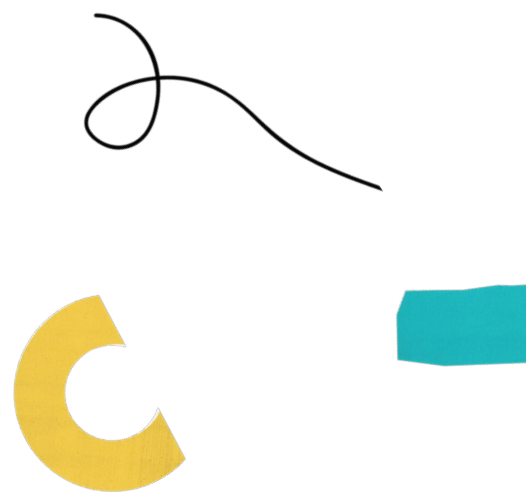
YouthREX offerings provide participants with the requisite tools and information needed to better support young people in a diverse range of roles and settings. Participants often spoke about the extent to which offerings provided critical knowledge and new perspectives, or helped “deepen [their] understandings” of strategies or practices to support their youth work. Many participants described being impressed by the depth of knowledge and evidence-based research across a variety of topics that were presented throughout the courses they took.

Mental health literacy should therefore be an integral part of their training, especially as research shows that mental health education increases knowledge, reduces stigma, and increases mental health literacy. We are scanning what free professional development opportunities on mental health are available to them in the sector and whether we should develop and launch an online certificate on *Supporting Youth Mental Health* that is similar to our other certificates.

Action for 2022/2023

Over 25% of our stakeholders are focused on supporting the mental health of Ontario’s youth. Emerging findings from our Ontario Youth Sector Compass research project indicate that mental health is an important issue both for youth and youth workers, and the pandemic has exacerbated mental health issues. Nearly 70% of youth reported that their mental health has become worse since the pandemic, and four in five youth workers reported that mental health was the top issue facing youth today.

We believe that community-based youth workers have an important role to play in supporting the mental health of Ontario’s youth. As resource navigators, and connectors to services and programs, youth workers are uniquely positioned to support and promote mental health for youth.



OUR VISION is an Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth!

OUR MISSION is to make research evidence and evaluation practices accessible and relevant to Ontario's grassroots youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building and evaluation leadership!

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