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Summative Evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program

Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive
Evaluation Services Directorate

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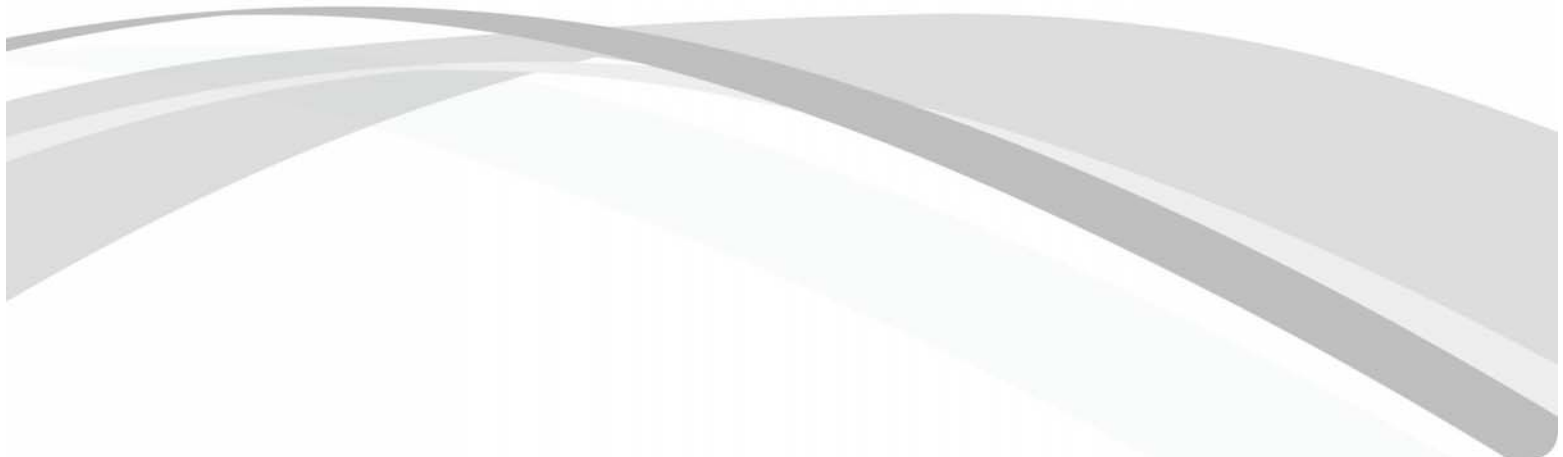
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List of Acronyms

ECP	Exchanges Canada Program
ESD	Evaluation Services Directorate
OCAEE	Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive
PAA	Program Activity Architecture
PCH	Department of Canadian Heritage
RMAF/RBAF	Integrated Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework and Risk-Based Audit Framework
SWSE	Summer Work / Student Exchange
YEC	Youth Exchanges Canada
YFC	Youth Forums Canada



Executive Summary

Program Description

On April 27, 2000, the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) launched the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP), a federal initiative that allows young Canadians from across the country to learn about Canada, create linkages with each other and better appreciate the diversity and common aspects of the Canadian reality. The ECP is a strategic investment in Canada's youth that enables them to experience Canada's diversity first-hand and forge ties between communities and Canadians. The ECP's overall objectives are:

- To contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of Canada among Canadian youth, by enabling them to learn first-hand about the history, geography, industry, institutions, cultures, communities, languages and other facets of their country;
- To help young Canadians connect to one another and create linkages, across the country and between groups, thereby helping to strengthen the fabric of Canadian society; and
- To develop Canadian identity and a sense of belonging to Canada among Canadian youth by enhancing their appreciation of both the diversity and the shared aspects of the Canadian experience.

There are two main components to the Program: Youth Exchanges Canada (YEC), which includes the Summer Work / Student Exchange (SWSE) sub-component; and Youth Forums Canada (YFC).

- **Youth Exchanges Canada:** YEC funds reciprocal exchanges for young Canadians generally between the ages of 12 and 17. Groups of 10 to 30 youth from various areas of the country are paired based on age and interests. Exchanges are normally between communities from different provinces or territories.
- **Summer Work / Student Exchange:** SWSE is a sub-component of YEC. These exchanges provide summer job opportunities for 16 and 17 year-olds. Participants work for six weeks in their second official language outside their home province or territory, while living with a host family.
- **Youth Forums Canada:** YFC enables young Canadians, generally between the ages of 14 and 25, to connect with one another through a variety of means, including national or international youth forums, post-secondary study sessions in another area of Canada and projects such as workshops, thematic exchanges of interest to young Canadians or other exchange-related activities that meet the objectives of the ECP.

The ECP works in conjunction with, and provides financial support to, non-profit delivery organizations in the voluntary and community sector across the country to make a wide range of exchange and forum opportunities available to youth.

The total transfer payments issued were \$96.6 million (2004-2005 to 2008-2009). YEC represented 47% of the ECP funding while the SWSE sub-component and the YFC represented 25% and 29% respectively. Approximately \$2 million per year (10%) is allocated to direct operating costs. Over the five year period reviewed just over 70,000 youth participated in ECP activities which were delivered by a total of 47 partner organizations.

Evaluation Objective and Methodology

The ECP is scheduled for renewal in March 2010 and, to inform the renewal process, this summative evaluation was conducted. This evaluation was conducted between April and December 2009 and covered the period between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2009. The evaluation was managed by the Evaluation Services Directorate (ESD), Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive (OCAEE), PCH, and carried out by EKOS Research Associates Inc. An Evaluation Working Group guided the conduct of the study.

The issues addressed in the evaluation include: relevance, design and delivery, performance measurement, success, and cost-effectiveness. A previous evaluation of the ECP was conducted in 2005¹. This current evaluation examines the recommendations stemming from the 2005 evaluation, and subsequent implementation of these recommendations.

The approach used to evaluate the ECP is based on a quasi-experimental design and multiple lines of evidence. That is, more than one method was used to measure each of the evaluation indicators, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings. To that end, six broad lines of inquiry (including qualitative and quantitative approaches) were selected:

- A review of Program documentation;
- A literature review;
- Key informant interviews (n=16);
- A review of feedback questionnaire data collected by the Program from 2005-2006 to 2007-2008;
- Eight focus groups (four with ECP participants and four with non-participants); and
- A survey of Canadian youth (n=358; providing a margin of error of +/- 5.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20).

¹ <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/CH4-123-2005E.pdf>

To the extent possible within the available budget and timeframe, the evaluation methodology incorporated multiple methods and data from different primary and secondary sources in order to ensure that the findings were valid and captured key points of view on the ECP. Whenever possible, the opinions and observations expressed by stakeholders were corroborated with evidence from Program documentation and data.

However, as with any evaluation study, there are a number of limitations associated with this evaluation, including:

- **Post-Program only with non-equivalent control group design:** The primary weakness of the evaluation is in the lack of a direct comparison group for ECP participants. With this type of design, the differences between pre- and post-participation attitudes or behaviours could possibly be attributed to an initial difference between the participants and non-participants and not necessarily a program impact. However, focus groups with participants and non-participants allowed us to have an adequate measure between the two groups.
- **Inability to ascertain reliability of feedback data from participants:** The accuracy of the data used for comparison purposes cannot be ascertained with certainty. Data was only available at an aggregate level and it is not known how responses varied by ECP component (i.e., YEC, YFC and SWSE).
- **Potential bias among interview respondents:** Another weakness of the evaluation is that interviews with key informants/stakeholders did not include any independent respondents with no stake in the Program.
- **Lack of available data:** Another weakness is the lack of available data on the costs and outcomes associated with similar or comparable programs reviewed, thereby severely limiting the cost-effectiveness analysis that could be done.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The ECP was created to allow young Canadians from across the country to learn about Canada, create linkages with each other, and to better appreciate the diversity and common aspects of the Canadian reality. Based on interviews and Program documentation, the ECP appears to be consistent with departmental, community and public needs and priorities, and linked to departmental outcomes. Furthermore, from a review of existing literature, exchange activities appear to be well grounded in theory as a means to experience diverse cultures, contribute to second-language acquisition, and to create linkages.

The relevance of the Program is also demonstrated by clear public support for exchange programs, a high level of interest in participating in exchange activities, and a high level of interest among non-participants in learning more about Canada and being exposed to its diversity. In fact, self-reported interest in participating in an exchange program is far higher than the proportion participating.

There is also clear support for federal involvement in this program area. In particular, Program staff and delivery partners interviewed agree that there is a need for a federal program such as ECP. There is a sense that federal involvement in this activity ensures broad access to exchanges; national participation; and involvement of isolated communities.

Design and Delivery

The current management and administrative processes (e.g., application processes, selection criteria, eligible expenses) for the Program appear sound, based on a review of documents, key informant interviews as well as a 2008 Internal Audit of the ECP. Furthermore, a majority of ECP organizers are satisfied with the delivery organizations they worked with.

Satisfaction with the application process and funding criteria is positive overall, with some exceptions. Delivery partners express some dissatisfaction with delays in approval, notification and receipt of ECP funding. Additionally, some employees believe that the application process could be improved by a common application deadline. Also, a key challenge experienced by the ECP continues to be staff turnover. This concern was noted in the 2008 audit and surfaced again in the current evaluation.

Special measures funding is perceived to play an important role in facilitating participation by under-represented groups.

Performance Measurement

The performance measurement strategy presented in the Integrated Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework and Risk-Based Audit Framework (2005) following the previous evaluation identifies performance indicators for each planned output and outcome of the Program corresponding to the logic model.

Key components of the strategy developed include: administrative data and reports received from delivery organizations; feedback data collected from participants, organizers and parents; and correspondence received from exchange participants, parents and organizers. The renewed strategy also describes the Program's intention to develop and analyze additional methodology options for determining the medium- and long-term impacts results. These included periodic focus groups or interviews, comparison of long-term outcomes for participants versus non-participants and the implementation of pre- and post-participation (long-term) questionnaires. The evaluation did not reveal any evidence to suggest that all of these proposed methods were implemented, although the pre- and post-participation (long-term) questionnaires have been developed. Furthermore, the majority of staff key informants stated that while long-term benefits of ECP funded programs exist, there needs to be a stronger effort to measure these outcomes.

The ECP has addressed the 2005 Evaluation recommendations by setting targets and by making the delivery partners report on their success in attaining these targets. The Program has revised the participants' and organizers' feedback questionnaires and developed and implemented an additional questionnaire for parents, although not all Program outcomes are captured in the current questionnaires (e.g., the link to official languages). While the Program has also implemented the optical scanning technology as it intended to organize, cross-tabulate and analyze the feedback questionnaire data, the evaluation did not see any evidence that in-depth statistical analysis is being performed.

There is continued potential to increase efforts to measure ECP outcomes to guide future Program development and delivery, and to increase the extent to which performance data is used to support decision-making.

Success

The evaluation explored the success of the ECP in achieving each of the outcomes identified for the Program, as well as any unanticipated impacts from the Program.

a. Diversity of Participants

Based on a comparison to 2006 Census data, ECP participation rates (for a total of about 70,000 youth) for target groups such as rural, low income and Aboriginal youth exceed their incidence in the general youth population. The proportion of participants with a disability or who are visible minorities is lower than their incidence within the general population, although participation from these two segments has undergone significant growth in the past five years. It is interesting to note that interest in exchanges was more muted among youth born outside Canada, suggesting that this may be a more difficult audience to engage².

In addition to a lower participation rate among visible minorities and youth with disabilities, male youth are significantly under-represented among ECP participants. Finally, the only province under-represented among ECP participants (based on 2006 Census data) is Ontario (which was also noted in the 2005 evaluation).

Consistent with these findings, some Program staff interviewed identify a potential to reach a greater cultural diversity of participants; possibly through additional outreach activities to reach new immigrants, urban youth and to ensure regional representation.

b. Link to Official Languages

The Terms and Conditions of the ECP state that the Program must ensure that a significant proportion of the exchanges (25 to 30%) relate to official languages (i.e., exchanges that encourage second-language use/exposure or allow official-language minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language).

² Caution: this is based on a small sample size of only 39 youth born outside Canada

Key informant interview respondents believe that there is complete success in ensuring second-language use and exposure through the SWSE component, and note that significant efforts are made to address this objective through YEC. It is considered more difficult to incorporate second-language use and exposure through YFC. Data on official languages is inconsistently captured in final reports submitted by delivery organizations, making it difficult to state the exact extent to which activities are linked to official languages.

Data on the extent to which ECP activities were officially related to official languages was not captured in feedback questionnaires utilized in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Feedback questionnaires do, however, collect data on the language profile of participants. Of the approximately 64,700 participants from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009 for whom linguistic data was available, 50% considered themselves to be bilingual.

Data collected from participants demonstrates that the ECP has had impacts on the interest in and acquisition of second-language. ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 experienced an increase in their interest in learning the other official language as a result of participation. Focus group participants also identify a number of positive impacts on second language learning as a result of participation, including practical experience in using this language; confidence in speaking their second language; and a renewed interest in continuing their efforts. Similarly, data from existing literature illustrates the potential for bilingual exchanges to have positive impacts on second-language acquisition.

c. Access to a Wide Variety and Number of Exchanges

While participation in the ECP has remained high over the period examined (with total participation exceeding 70,000), the number of participants declined by 15% from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. This decline has been more noticeable in the YEC and SWSE segments of the Program. The decrease in SWSE participation is attributed to a change in delivery organization, while the general decline in participation is attributed by staff and delivery organizations to rising gas and travel costs (increasing the travel expenses associated with each exchange).

A review of reports submitted by delivery organizations suggests that the Program has provided a broad diversity of exchanges and activities as a result of the variety of organizations engaged in the delivery; as well as in the range of activities, themes and approaches supported. In addition to the cultural, bilingual and thematic aspects of the youth exchanges funded, many exchanges included some element of community engagement such as volunteering, community enhancement projects or public awareness activities. Similarly, youth forum activities supported provide a broad diversity of activities including national and regional forums, seminars, youth summits, conferences, workshops and discussion sessions; many of which focused on educational themes as well as events that focused on Canadian history and culture.

d. ECP Information Provided to Canadians

Program documentation reveals that the ECP has used a variety of tools (including the ECP website, promotional videos, brochures and posters) to provide Canadians with information on exchange activities. As well, funded delivery organizations undertake their own promotional activities which may contribute to Program awareness.

e. Knowledge and Understanding of Canada

Six in ten ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 learned new things about Canada as a result of participation, while organizers and parents perceived an even greater impact on knowledge (compared to participants). Focus group participants provide further qualitative evidence of Program impact in this area, including impacts on their understanding of how Canadians in other parts of the country live; on their pride and sense of belonging; their understanding and respect for political institutions; and interest in travelling nationally.

Canadian youth demonstrate a strong interest in learning new things about Canada, and non-participants believe that learning new things about Canada would be among the top three benefits of participating in an exchange program. These findings suggest that the ECP is providing youth an opportunity to act on a pre-existing interest to learn more about their country.

f. Creation of Linkages and Connections

Over eight in ten ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 agreed that they created new ties with people from other communities as a result of participation. The creation of linkages is also seen as the primary potential benefit of participating in an exchange among non-participants. Furthermore, focus group findings and data from the 2005-2006 feedback questionnaires indicate that participants generally leave their ECP experience with the intention of remaining in touch with at least one person they met during their experience. There are seen to be long-term social and networking benefits to the ties created.

g. Appreciation of the Diversity and Shared Aspects of the Canadian Experience

Two-thirds of ECP participants (from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) learned about Canadian cultural communities other than their own; and over nine in ten YEC participants from 2005-2006 discovered different ways people live in other parts of Canada as a result of participation. Non-participants also expressed a high level of interest in discovering other parts of Canada and other cultural communities, and identified this last factor as one of the primary potential benefits of participating in an exchange. Similarly, focus group participants believed that they did gain knowledge of another culture through participation.

Feedback data available suggests that participation has an impact on the sense of shared experiences among youth: while only one in five Canadian youth indicate that they have

a lot in common with other Canadians, over half of YEC participants in 2005-06 believe that this sense (of having a lot in common) increased significantly as a result of participation, suggesting an impact (or pre-disposition among participants) in this area.

h. Other Impacts

Youth engagement in their own community appears to be modest generally, and findings suggest that this interest is not markedly increased as a result of participation for many ECP participants. Furthermore, non-participants are least likely to identify an increased involvement in their community as a potential benefit from participating in an exchange.

Evaluation findings do suggest, however, that participation has significant impacts on personal growth including impacts on self confidence, problem solving skills and the ability to manage different situations. As well, four in ten participants believe that they are significantly more likely to continue their education as a result of participation (and parents concur with this assessment).

Cost Effectiveness

Transfer payments issued to delivery organizations totalled \$96.6 million for the five year period of 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. The cost per participant varied from year to year and by Program component.

The cost per participant for ECP funded activities increased over the period, while the number of participants declined. This situation is attributed to the change in delivery partner for the SWSE sub-component, and to rising travel and gas costs more generally (increasing direct travel costs, which are an expense covered by the Program).

The ratio of transfer payments to direct operating costs was relatively constant for the five year period with about \$9 in transfer payments for every \$1 in direct operating costs. However, the lack of data on comparable programs limits the analysis that can be made of the efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation.

Program management and staff interviewed for the evaluation consider that resources dedicated to the ECP are being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results.

Evaluation findings indicate that delivery partners are attempting to diversify sources of funding for their ECP projects. In the majority of cases, supplemental funding, where it existed, was viewed as being complementary to ECP sources.

Program staff and delivery partners interviewed do not consider that there is duplication between ECP activities and those of other jurisdictions or other organizations. Furthermore, the literature review reveals that while there are a number of exchange programs available to youth in Canada offered by government, non-profit and the private

sector; relatively few focus on increasing an appreciation and understanding of Canada, its regional differences, and improving fluency of official languages.

The majority of interviewed Program staff and delivery partners do not consider that viable alternative approaches to the ECP exist. Findings from the literature review indicate that the non-profit sector often plays an important role in the delivery of existing exchange programs, while funding typically involves a mix of government, non-governmental and private sources. Programs that do not rely on government funding often have a limited scope.

Given the national scope of ECP objectives, interviewed delivery partners and Program staff were of the opinion that ECP could not be effectively transferred to either the provincial government or the private and non-profit sectors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the summative evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program, the following recommendations are made to the management of the Program:

Recommendation 1 – Design and Delivery

That management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) review data on funding process timelines to address recipients' concerns. Administrative data must be compiled on an aggregate level to determine the current time frame required for funding decisions and allocations at the program level. Appropriate adjustments must be made accordingly, considering that delays can have negative repercussions on the delivery of approved projects. Additional follow-up from the program with funding applicants could help manage expectations and avoid dissatisfaction in case of delays.

Recommendation 2 – Performance measurement

That the management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) improve the performance measurement system. While many changes have been made to the performance measurement process since 2005, there continues to be a need for improvement. Specifically, changes to be considered include:

2a) Improving Data

The Program should review the existing feedback questionnaires to ensure that all immediate and ultimate outcomes are accurately captured. The current questionnaires do not address whether the participants used their second official language as part of their exchange experience, and the extent to which their participation had an impact in this area (other than to ask whether participation increased their interest). There is potential for better alignment between data collected in the feedback questionnaires and data needed for performance measurement and evaluation.

2b) Measuring Impact

The Program should explore the feasibility of implementing longitudinal data collection and pre-participation measures. Additional post-participation data collection would make it possible to examine long-term impacts of participation. To do so, the program should explore the possibility of tracking and contacting participants over time. Implementing pre-participation questionnaires as planned could also provide a better assessment of impacts of participation.

Recommendation 3 – Reach

That the management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) continue to look at challenges underlying representation of different demographic segments among participants to ensure the diversity of participants. Participation by visible minorities continues to be low. As well, youth with disabilities are under-represented, females participate far more frequently than male youth, and Ontario youth are less well represented. The Program should explore potential reasons for under-representation among these groups. This would then allow the Program to better target its efforts at increasing participation among these groups.

Recommendation 4 – Financial information

That management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) complement existing financial information relating to participant costs. The program must analyse data on participant costs to determine what are the drivers and explain the variations over time. This will allow the program to better assess efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation.

1. Introduction and Context of the Evaluation

This document constitutes the final report on the summative evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP). The ECP is scheduled for renewal in March 2010 and, to inform the renewal process, a summative evaluation was conducted. This evaluation will also respond to the requirement for full evaluation coverage of all ongoing programs of grants and contributions, as per the Financial Administration Act and Treasury Board's 2009 Policy on Evaluation.

The report is divided into five sections, including this introduction which provides a summary description of the ECP and the context of the evaluation. Section 2 briefly describes the evaluation design and the methods used, including the methodological limitations and challenges encountered. Section 3 presents the main findings of the evaluation while sections 4 and 5 provide conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 The Exchanges Canada Program

1.1.1 Overview of the Program

On April 27, 2000, the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) launched the ECP, a federal initiative that allows young Canadians from across the country to learn about Canada, create linkages with each other and better appreciate the diversity and common aspects of the Canadian reality. The ECP is a strategic investment in Canada's youth that enables them to experience first-hand Canada's diversity and forge ties between communities and Canadians. The ECP's overall objectives are:

- to contribute to increased knowledge and understanding of Canada among Canadian youth, by enabling them to learn first-hand about the history, geography, industry, institutions, cultures, communities, languages and other facets of their country;
- to help young Canadians connect to one another and create linkages, across the country and between groups, thereby helping to strengthen the fabric of Canadian society; and
- to develop Canadian identity and a sense of belonging to Canada among Canadian youth by enhancing their appreciation of both the diversity and the shared aspects of the Canadian experience.

Within the Department's Citizenship and Heritage Sector, the ECP is managed by the Youth Participation Directorate, Citizen Participation Branch. The ECP works in conjunction with and provides financial support to delivery organizations in the voluntary and community sector across the country to offer Canadian youth a wide range of exchange and forum opportunities. Contribution agreements are signed with, and grants are awarded to, legally constituted non-profit organizations. There are two main components to the Program: Youth Exchanges Canada (YEC), which includes the

Summer Work / Student Exchange (SWSE) sub-component; and Youth Forums Canada (YFC).

- **Youth Exchanges Canada (YEC)** funds reciprocal exchanges for young Canadians, generally between the ages of 12 and 17. Groups of 10 to 30 youth from various areas of the country are paired based on age and interests. Participants take turns welcoming their twin (the person with whom they are paired) into their family, and play an active role in planning the exchange. Exchanges are normally between communities from different provinces or territories.
- **Summer Work / Student Exchange (SWSE)** is a sub-component of YEC. These exchanges provide summer job opportunities for 16 and 17 year-olds. Participants work for six weeks in their second official language outside their home province or territory, while living with a host family.
- **Youth Forums Canada (YFC)** enables young Canadians, generally between the ages of 14 and 25, to connect with one another through a variety of means, including national or international youth forums, post-secondary study sessions in another area of Canada and projects such as workshops, thematic exchanges of interest to young Canadians or other exchange-related activities that meet the objectives of the ECP.

1.1.2 Program Activities and Expected Results

A logic model illustrates how the activities of a policy, program or initiative are expected to lead to the achievement of the final outcomes. The logic model for the ECP reflects changes made following the 2005 evaluation. The logic model is taken from the Integrated Results Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and Risk Based Audit Framework (RBAF) for the ECP, released in August 2005. The ECP activities and outcomes identified in the logic model are described below and the logic model is provided in Appendix A.

Program activities:

- Providing targeted funding for youth exchange activities;
- Providing Canadians with information on exchanges and undertaking targeted promotion; and
- Developing strategic alliances³ with governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations to increase the variety and number of youth exchanges.

³ Exchanges Canada creates partnerships to increase the variety and number of youth exchanges. This work involves identifying potential partners who may be interested in funding and/or promoting youth exchanges and negotiating arrangements to achieve mutual objectives. Examples of strategic alliances undertaken by the ECP, between 2004-2005 and 2008-09, include Memorandums of Understanding with other programs, as well as a service contract with Via Rail.

Immediate and intermediate outcomes:

- Exchange participants reflect the diversity of the Canadian youth population;
- A significant proportion of exchanges are related to official languages (i.e. exchanges that encourage second-language use/exposure or allow official-language minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language);
- Canadians are provided with information on a wide range of exchange programs and activities in Canada and abroad; and
- Young people have access to a wider variety and an increased number of exchange experiences.

Ultimate outcomes:

- Young participants enhance their knowledge and understanding of Canada;
- Young participants connect and create linkages with one another; and
- Young participants enhance their appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience.

The logic model includes the following links between Program outcomes and the PCH strategic outcome:

- Young people have the desire and capacity to contribute to Canadian communities; and
- Canadians share a sense of civic pride and are engaged in Canada's communities and civic life.

The Program contributes to achieving the following PCH strategic outcome from the Program Activity Architecture (PAA)⁴:

- Canadians live in an inclusive society built on inter-cultural understanding and citizen participation.⁵

1.1.3 Program Resources

Authorized funding for the ECP was approximately \$20 million per year for a five year total of \$102 million including \$92 million for grants and contributions. However, total transfer payments issued were \$96.6 million. Actual funding has historically differed from authorized funding due to internal reallocations and partnership funding. YEC represented 47% of the ECP funding while the SWSE sub-component and the YFC represented 25% and 29% respectively. Approximately \$2 million per year is allocated to

⁴ The Program Activity Architecture presents an inventory of all Canadian Heritage programs and activities. The programs and activities are depicted in their logical relationship to each other and to the Strategic Outcomes to which they contribute.

⁵ In 2008-2009, the PAA was updated and the PCH strategic outcome was modified to "Canada is an inclusive society built on inter-cultural understanding and citizen participation".

direct operating costs. The ratio of transfer payments to direct operating costs was relatively constant for the five year period with about \$9 in transfer payments for every \$1 in direct operating costs (i.e. a ratio of about 9 to 1).

Program data for 2004-2005 to 2008-2009 indicate that, over the five year period reviewed, just over 70,000 youth participated in ECP activities which were delivered by a total of 47 partner organizations. YEC projects represented the largest Program component with 57% of all participants.

Table 1.1: Exchanges Canada Program: Actual Spending (2004-2005 to 2008-2009)

Actual	Annual Funding (\$)					Total (5 years) (\$)
	2004- 2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	
Youth Exchanges Canada						
- Contributions	9,075,200	7,820,000	10,314,393	9,130,000	8,696,600	45,036,193
Youth Forums Canada						
- Grants and Contributions	4,790,346	4,430,454	6,203,011	6,334,106	5,790,523	27,548,440
Summer Work/Student Exchange						
- Contributions	6,000,000	6,047,000	5,955,807	1,959,466	4,049,999	24,012,272
Total - Grants & Contributions (Vote 5)	\$19,865,546	\$18,297,454	\$22,473,211	\$17,423,572	\$18,537,122	96,596,905
Total – Direct Operating (Vote 1)	\$2,177,624	\$2,186,627	\$2,058,223	\$1,450,198	\$1,963,733	9,836,405
Total	\$22,043,170	\$20,484,081	\$24,531,434	\$18,873,770	\$20,500,855	106,433,310

Sources: Public Accounts for Vote 5, PCH Financial System for Vote 1

1.2 Evaluation Context, Objectives and Issues

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the ECP which was conducted between April and December 2009 and covered the period between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2009.

The evaluation was managed by the Evaluation Services Directorate (ESD), Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive (OCAEE), PCH and carried out by EKOS Research Associates Inc. An Evaluation Working Group guided the conduct of the study and was composed of representatives from the OCAEE, the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) and an individual representing stakeholders.

The purpose of this evaluation was to acquire information to help strengthen or improve the overall performance and outcomes of the ECP. The issues addressed in the evaluation include: relevance, design and delivery, performance measurements, success; and cost-effectiveness (see Table 1.2). A matrix identifying the questions addressed by the evaluation, with indicators and data sources/methods is presented in Appendix B.

A previous evaluation of the ECP was conducted in 2005⁶. This current evaluation examines the recommendations stemming from the 2005 evaluation, and subsequent implementation of these recommendations.

Table 1.2: Evaluation Issues and Questions

<p>RELEVANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the Program mandate, objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the ECP still relevant and consistent with departmental, community, and public needs and priorities?• Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this Program area or activity? <p>DESIGN AND DELIVERY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the Program logic model reflect current Terms and Conditions and the departmental PAA?• Are adequate management and administrative systems in place for effective Program delivery?• What, if any, challenges have emerged in recent years? What changes to the design and delivery of the Program are required to overcome these challenges?• Do any operational constraints exist that impinge on the ability of the Program to achieve its objectives and expected results? What changes to the design and delivery of the Program could be made to improve operational effectiveness? <p>PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is an adequate performance measurement mechanism and system in place to account for results?• What, if any, changes to performance measurement are required? Can any improvements be made? <p>SUCCESS</p> <p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent do ECP participants reflect the diversity of the Canadian youth population?• To what extent are exchanges related to official languages? To what extent do exchanges encourage second-language use/exposure or allow minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language?• To what extent have young people accessed a wider variety and an increased number of

⁶ <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/CH4-123-2005E.pdf>

exchanges?

Ultimate outcomes

- To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their knowledge and understanding of Canada?
- To what extent have targeted participants connected and created linkages with one another?
- To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience?
- Are there any other impacts and effects, either intended or not, resulting from this Program?

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

- Are the resources dedicated to this Program being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results?
- Is the ECP duplicating or complementing existing programs/initiatives?
- Could this Program be fully or partially transferred to provincial government, the private sector, or the voluntary sector?
- What is the proportion of costs spent on transfer payments as compared to operating costs? Is this reasonable? How does it compare with other programs?

2. Methodology

The approach used to evaluate the ECP is based on a quasi-experimental design and multiple lines of evidence. That is, more than one method was used to measure each of the evaluation indicators, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings. To that end, six lines of inquiry (including qualitative and quantitative approaches) were selected:

- a review of relevant documents,
- a literature review,
- a series of key informant interviews,
- a review of feedback questionnaire data gathered by the ECP,
- a survey of Canadian youth, and
- focus groups.

The evaluation design and each line of evidence proposed for the current assignment are described in the following sections. The potential strengths and weaknesses of each line of evidence are included. The section concludes with a brief description of the general limitations of the entire evaluation.

2.1 Evaluation Design

Since 2005-06, the ECP has implemented revised feedback questionnaires for participants and organizers, and has added new questionnaires for parents as part of its performance monitoring approach. Data gathered through these questionnaires provides insight on the impacts of the program on participants. However, this data alone does not provide sufficient evidence to measure the long-term changes in participants' attitudes and levels of knowledge and awareness as a result of participation in the ECP. In order to do so, an experimental design with a control group is necessary and requires important resources. Considering the budget, timelines and data available on the Program's participants, implementing a randomized or experimental design for the evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program was not feasible. This left the evaluator with either a quasi-experimental or an implicit (non-experimental) design approach.

Considerable efforts were made to improve the quality of the evaluation and to avoid some of the major weaknesses of a complete non-experimental approach⁷. Conducting a survey of Canadian youth (non-participants) and focus groups with participants and non-participants allowed the evaluation to move towards a quasi-experimental design (Post-program-only with Non-Equivalent Control Group). Nevertheless, the evaluator is aware that respondents to the feedback questionnaire (participants) estimated themselves the incremental effect of the Program and that no direct measure of impact was done (Post-

⁷ Conclusions about program results drawn from implicit designs require major assumptions about what would have happened without the program.

program-only with Difference Estimate Design). This type of measure is more complex and costly.

In this context, the approach taken provided improved evaluation results as it allowed for some measures of success of the ECP. For instance, the feedback data provided some quantitative measures of the effect on participants as the survey of Canadian youth served as a control group of non-participants, while the focus groups provided qualitative measures relative to participants and non-participants.

2.2 Document Review

A review of Program documentation served to develop a thorough understanding of the ECP and contributed to the design of other methodologies for this evaluation, including the refinement of the data collection instruments. As well, the information gathered provided useful context for interpreting, confirming and supplementing information gathered through the other methodologies.

A review of Program-based and other sources of information was also carried out to contribute to addressing evaluation issues related to relevance, achievement of outcomes, and design and delivery. Furthermore, the effectiveness of current management processes and monitoring practices was partially addressed through the document review. It is important to note that, because of time and budget constraints, the internal analyses of the individual project final reports were reviewed as opposed to the entire final reports submitted. These internal analyses extract all essential information from the final reports. A complete list of documentation reviewed is provided in Appendix C.

2.3 Literature Review

A review of recently published literature was undertaken in order to gather data to respond to evaluation questions such as Program relevance, lessons learned from previous experiences in delivering similar programs, both in Canada and abroad, overlap and duplication. This literature review examined the Canadian experience with exchange programs, as well as international literature on exchange programs to draw lessons learned in design and delivery and to identify any possible impacts on participants. Literature resources included public opinion/consultation research, and past evaluations and studies on other exchange programs. A list of reports reviewed as part of the literature review is provided in Appendix D.

2.4 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews provided data on the perceptions and opinions of individuals who have had a significant role or experience in the ECP, or who have a key stake in it (e.g., delivery partners). Interview guides were designed to address all of the evaluation issues (relevance, design and delivery, performance measurement, success and cost-effectiveness). A total of 16 key informant interviews were conducted with ECP

management and with ECP partners and delivery agents. Interviews were conducted by phone or in-person.

A list of potential interview respondents in the category of partners and delivery agents was carefully identified to try to reflect the entire population of ECP funding recipients. From 2004-2005 to 2008-2009, YFC funded 44⁸ organizations, while YEC had four delivery partners. The selection of interview respondents was based on three key criteria to ensure good coverage of partners and delivery agents:

- amount of funding provided to the organization;
- the language of activity, and
- the number of participants.

As well, the final selection of respondents tried to ensure good coverage of geographical regions and to include longstanding partners of the ECP.

2.5 Feedback Questionnaire

Another source of data comprised results obtained from feedback questionnaires completed by ECP participants in past years. This feedback data was used to respond to evaluation issues related to the success of the Program and to get the participants' profile information.

The data was collected for the period covered by the evaluation for each of the program components. However, following the recommendations of the previous evaluation, the participants' and organizers' feedback questionnaire underwent a significant revision between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. In addition to the participants' and organizers' questionnaires, the ECP started sending questionnaires to the parents of the participants in 2006-2007. The organizers' and parents' questionnaires deal mainly with the impacts of the funded project on participants and the organizer's satisfaction with the program's delivery process.

The participants' paper questionnaire was administered by funded organizations for the period covered by the evaluation. The parents and organizers' questionnaires were administered by the ECP. The data collection was completed right after participation and the data capture was done internally.

Table 2.1 provides information on the number of feedback questionnaires completed by participants, organizers and parents by year. Note that in 2005-2006, data was only reliable for YEC, while in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 data included responses from both program components. Results from each respondent group and year were provided to EKOS for analysis as part of the evaluation. Data was provided at an aggregate level in spreadsheets (i.e., total response to each question by each respondent group). Results from open-ended questions and the 2008-2009 data had been collected but was not ready

⁸ Certain organizations are funded through more than one component.

for analysis at the time of the evaluation, nor was the data by program component (i.e. YEC and YFC).

Table 2.1: Feedback Questionnaires Completed by Year and Respondent Group⁹

Respondent Group	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Participants	5,184 ¹⁰	9,795	8,559
Organizers	N/A	622	708
Parents	N/A	1,548	1,387

2.6 Survey of Canadian Youth

The methodology for this study involved a survey of Canadian youth between 16 and 25 years of age. The purpose of the survey was to compare non-participating youth to participating youth in terms of key attitudes and behaviours. This methodology focused on the evaluation issues of relevance and success. The questionnaire for this survey was designed based on the relevant evaluation issues in the evaluation matrix, and questions were designed based on questions already administered to ECP participants.

The survey of Canadian youth began with two questions aimed at identifying (and screening out) young Canadians who had already participated in an exchange program. Respondents who answered yes to either of these questions were asked about their exchange experience but were not asked the more focused questions about their personal abilities and interest in learning more about the country. The survey also asked if respondents had ever participated in an event for youth (e.g., forum, conference, etc.), however, these respondents were not screened out of the general set of questions. It is important to note, therefore, that 46% (n=163) of survey respondents who were considered “non-participants” in the Program had participated in some type of youth event (e.g. conference, forum, etc.) but not exchanges. This limits the comparison that can be made between survey results and participant feedback data given that feedback data provided at the time of the analysis was not broken down by component (YEC versus YFC).

The survey examined views on issues such as interest in learning more about the country and their own community, and their sense of belonging to Canada. The survey also included questions about their interest and experience in participating in youth forums and exchange programs. The survey questionnaire was designed to ask questions to non-participating youth which are very similar to those asked of ECP participants in feedback questionnaires completed following participation.

⁹ The total number of respondents in each group is based on the question with the highest response rate. Note that the number of respondents varies slightly by question asked (given a small number of non-respondents to each question)

¹⁰ YEC participants only.

Given that youth are a small component of the overall Canadian population, and are extremely difficult to reach by telephone, the survey of youth was conducted on-line and the EKOS hybrid Internet/telephone panel was used to recruit respondents to the survey. EKOS' panel offers complete coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (in other words, participants are recruited randomly, they do not opt themselves into the panel), and equal probability sampling, therefore generalizable to the broader population. A total of 358 young Canadians completed the survey¹¹.

The survey was conducted between August 13 and September 17, 2009. The response rate associated with this study¹² is as follows:

Table 2.2: Evaluation of Exchanges Canada, Survey of Canadian Youth – Response Rate

Formula Item	Sample
Total invitations (a)	1,541
Undeliverable/bounce (b)	103
Net usable invitations (c=a-b)	1,438
Total completes (d)	358
Qualified break-offs (e)	6
Disqualified (f)	10
Not responded (g)	1,044
Quota filled (h)	20
Response Rate (calc = (d+f+h)/c)	27.0%

The survey also included a number of demographic questions aimed at profiling respondents to the survey. The profile of youth surveyed does differ somewhat from the profile of ECP participants, on the fields where participant profile data is available. For example, ECP participants are more predominantly female (in 2007-2008, 41% of participants were male and 59% female). Furthermore, ECP participants include a higher proportion of Francophones (30% of ECP participants in 2007-2008 reported speaking predominantly French at home).

2.7 Focus Groups

A total of eight focus groups were conducted in four centres across Canada, including Toronto, Montreal, Red Deer and Vancouver. In each city, one group was held with Program participants and the other with non-participants. The focus group moderator's guide used in the research included some common questions for both groups of people as

¹¹ The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is +/- 5.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (i.e., at a 95% confidence interval).

¹² Using the response rate calculation formula suggested by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association.

well as some specific questions for each one. The discussions focused on the evaluation issue of success.

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each of the focus groups. All of the focus groups had an excellent turnout; each group included eight or nine youth. Overall, the groups had a very good mix of participants based on key demographic characteristics, including a 50% gender split, 25% Francophone participation and 7% visible minority participation. With respect to age, the groups with 15 to 18 year olds were evenly split across the four years. In the groups with 19 to 30 year olds, the entire range was represented though more than half of participants were under the age of 24 years. In addition, the four groups with program participants included a very good representation of program participation years (e.g., 2004/05 to 2007/08) and a good mix of YFC and YEC programs, as well as some representation from SWSE.

Program participants were recruited by EKOS from lists provided by the Program. The lists were constructed based on a sampling plan developed by EKOS, in consultation with departmental officials. Program participants were randomly selected from the lists by EKOS based on a number of recruitment criteria (i.e., location, program, year of participation, gender and age). Potential participants were recruited by telephone.

Non-participants were randomly recruited from EKOS's on-line panel of Canadian residents. The panel contains over 40,000 members from across Canada. The selection of these participants was based on criteria similar to that employed for the recruitment of participants (i.e., location, gender and age).

With the exception of Red Deer, where a hotel meeting room was used, all of the focus groups were held in dedicated focus group facilities. All of the groups were audio recorded and participants received \$75.00 for their involvement in the research.

2.8 Limits of the Evaluation

To the extent possible within the available budget and timeframe, the evaluation methodology incorporated multiple methods and data from different primary and secondary sources in order to ensure that the findings were valid and captured key points of view on the ECP. Whenever possible, the opinions and observations expressed by stakeholders were corroborated with evidence from Program documentation and data.

However, as with any evaluation study, there are a number of limitations associated with this evaluation. The reader is encouraged to take the following limitations into account when reviewing the findings from this report:

Post-Program Only With Non-Equivalent Control Group Design

With this type of design, the differences between pre- and post- participation attitudes or behaviours could possibly be attributed to an initial difference between the participants and non-participants and not necessarily a program impact.

The primary weakness of the evaluation is in the lack of a direct comparison group for ECP participants for which to carry out the Canadian youth survey. The extent to which threats to internal validity¹³ are a problem depends largely on the successful matching of the program's participants and control group. If the key variables of interest are identified and matched adequately, internal validity threats are minimized. Unfortunately, as in the case of this evaluation, it is often impossible to match all the variables of interest.

While the comparison of survey results from non-participants to data obtained from ECP participants through feedback questionnaires provides an interesting contrast, it is an indirect rather than direct comparison, in that the wording of questions posed to participants versus non-participants differs. It would have been far preferable to have conducted a direct comparison by surveying both participants and non-participants. This was not possible, given that consent for future contact was not obtained from participants in forms or feedback questionnaires.

However, it should be noted that the approach used to conduct focus groups with participants and non-participants, randomly selected on the basis of certain common criteria, allowed us to have an adequate measure between the two groups.

Feedback Data from Participants

The accuracy of the data used for comparison purposes (i.e., collected through feedback questionnaires) cannot be ascertained with certainty. The data used for evaluation purposes was at an aggregate level; and did not examine how responses varied by ECP component (i.e., YEC, YFC and SWSE). This further compromises the reliability of the comparison of participants to Canadian youth non-participants. Finally, there is a lack of consistent data over time to identify trends given the change in feedback questionnaires during the five year period reviewed for the evaluation. It is important to note that these changes were in response to the recommendation of the 2005 evaluation in order to improve the usability of the questionnaire data.

Interviews

Another weakness of the evaluation is that interviews with key informants/stakeholders did not include any independent respondents with no stake in the Program. There is a possibility, therefore, that interview respondents had a positive bias towards the Program. Roughly half the key informant interview respondents were Program staff and managers.

¹³ The ability to assert that a program has caused measured results (to a certain degree), in the face of plausible potential alternative explanations.

Literature and Document Review

Another weakness is the lack of available data on the costs and outcomes associated with similar or comparable programs reviewed, thereby severely limiting the cost-effectiveness analysis that could be done.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 *Relevance of the Program*

Evaluation Question 1: Are the Program mandate, objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the ECP still relevant and consistent with departmental, community, and public needs and priorities?

Evidence from Program documentation, the literature, interviews and focus groups all point to the ongoing relevance of the ECP. Youth engagement has been identified as a federal priority; the ECP is linked to **departmental priorities** during the period covered by the evaluation; there is **theoretical support** from the literature for exchanges as a means of pursuing these priorities; and there is clear **public support** for and interest in exchanges.

Departmental Priorities

Youth engagement has been underscored as a federal priority on several occasions. In the October 2004 Throne Speech, the Government of Canada invited Canadians to join forces to achieve a common goal and find local solutions to problems in their communities. The Government linked national priorities – the building of an economy for the twenty-first century and strengthening our social foundations – with citizen participation. Furthermore, as indicated in the 2006 Speech from the Throne, Canada's young people are "looking to carve out their place and be heard".

The ECP is identified as being a strategic investment in Canada's youth that enables them to experience first-hand Canada's diversity and forge ties between communities and Canadians. The logic model includes the following links between Program outcomes and the PCH strategic outcome:

- that young people have the desire and capacity to contribute to Canadian communities; and
- that Canadians share a sense of civic pride and are engaged in Canada's communities and civic life.

By fostering in youth the desire and capacity to contribute to their communities and their sense of civic pride, and by developing their understanding and appreciation of the diverse aspects of the Canadian experience, it is expected that youth exchanges will

contribute to the Department's strategic outcome: Canadians live in an inclusive society based on inter-cultural understanding and citizen participation.

Furthermore, key informant interview respondents concur that the Program is clearly consistent with departmental, community and public needs and priorities. Staff interview respondents note that the ECP provides youth a first hand experience of "what it means to be Canadian", and an opportunity "to learn more about Canada". A few staff respondents further note that the ECP helps contribute to social cohesion and national unity in that it reinforces belonging to Canada, and provides an excellent means of "establishing contact between communities and youth across the country". Delivery partner key informants similarly view the Program to be consistent with public and community needs, and identify a cohesive set of pressing needs that they are trying to address with ECP support which include youth engagement, youth skills and leadership development, appreciation for Canada's diversity, and second-language skills development.

Theoretical Support

Recently, two policy-oriented dialogue initiatives with Canadian youth further underscored support for regional exchanges. One of the key recommendations of Canada25¹⁴ in its report *Canadians & the Common Good: Building a Civic Nation through Civic Engagement (2007)* was to promote inter- and intra-regional encounters which would include development of regional immersion programs that would encompass the academic study of, and cultural immersion in, any region of Canada that is different from a person's own region. Similarly, in the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) dialogues with youth '*Building connections for a stronger Canada*' emerged as one of six cross-cutting themes¹⁵. CPRN noted that among the policy implications of this theme was increased support for pan-Canadian experiences.

Furthermore, literature review findings underscore that youth are an important target for exchanges because they can make important contributions to their communities and they are effective 'multipliers' in disseminating the knowledge and experiences acquired. As they move into professional and community positions they are able to transfer their experience/knowledge and influence the organizations in which they work and volunteer and the communities in which they live¹⁶.

Exchange programs in general have their origins in "contact theories," which suggest that positive contact with representatives of different nationalities, cultures, religions, or ethnic groups can lead to the development of favourable perceptions and reduce the likelihood of the construction of stereotypes¹⁷. Similarly for linguistic exchanges,

¹⁴ Canada25 is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the voices and ideas of Canadians aged 20 to 35 to our country's public policy discourse.

¹⁵ Canadian Policy Research Network, Connecting Young People, Policy and Active Citizenship Research Report, National Dialogue and Summit Engaging Young Canadians, May 2006

¹⁶ EU and Latin America European Voluntary Service Project on, "Participation of Young People", 2007.

¹⁷ Watson, Jennifer, Intercultural Understanding Through Personal Contact: A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Effects of Participation in the Multicultural Educational Programmes of a Volunteer Organization, *Interspectives* 46 Volume 19, 2003.

interaction with native speakers of a target language is widely believed to be a valuable way to maximize second-language acquisition. Beyond improving proficiency, bilingual exchanges have also been viewed as a means to sustain and revitalize second-language¹⁸.

Community and Public Needs and Priorities

Public opinion data available demonstrates broad public approval for and interest in exchange programs and federal involvement in this type of programming which is an indicator of public relevance. Past opinion polls of youth (Ipsos-Reid, 2002-2007, Decima, 2003) suggest that over 90% of Canadian youth agree that the federal government should invest in exchange programs as a way to encourage learning and understanding among young people. Past opinion polls also confirm broad agreement with the objectives of exchanges.

The survey of youth and focus groups conducted as part of this evaluation also confirm a clear interest among Canadian youth in exchanges. Two-thirds, or 67%, of non-participants surveyed as part of the evaluation express an interest in participating in an exchange program. Interest is higher among youth reporting English as their first language (73%), than among youth reporting French as their first language (60% reported an interest)¹⁹ and among youth born outside Canada (52%)²⁰. Generally, focus groups highlighted the high level of satisfaction among ECP participants and interest in the program by non-participants. The primary barriers to participation identified by non-participants who were uncertain they would participate in an exchange or forum, are perceptions of cost, possible scholastic achievement criteria and the arduousness of the delivery organizations' Program application process.

Finally, evaluation findings also indicate that self-reported interest in participating in an exchange program is far greater than the proportion of youth who do participate in an exchange. For example, the 2003 Decima poll found that while about 8% of youth had participated in a Canadian exchange program, 68% said they would have liked to have participated in an exchange program. In the survey of Canadian youth undertaken as part of this evaluation, only 5% of respondents had participated in some type of formal exchange activity, although two-thirds report an interest in doing so.

¹⁸ Mady, C. Evaluation of SEVEC'S Summer Youth Volunteer Program, October 2008.

¹⁹ Note that this is based on a small number of respondents (n=33)

²⁰ Note that this is based on a small number of respondents (n=39)

3.1.2 Need for federal Involvement

Evaluation Question 2: Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this Program area or activity?

Interviews with internal and external key informants demonstrated that, according to their view, there is a clear, legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this Program area or activity.

The consensus among staff key informants is that there is a necessary role for a federal program such as the ECP to assist youth in enhancing their knowledge and appreciation of Canada and its institutions, and in creating stronger ties with their own community. Staff key informants consider that the ECP helps “youth to have a voice”, “exposes them to (regions) outside their community”, and that support for the Program is illustrated by “the fact that demand exceeds supply for exchanges”.

Similarly, key informant interview respondents, both staff and delivery partners, agree that a program such as the ECP must be a national program. One respondent states that “assisting youth in enhancing their knowledge and appreciation of Canada is the role and responsibility of the national government”. There was a general sense among both staff and delivery partners interviewed that without federal support or involvement, youth exchanges would be limited or sporadic; and that while some inter-provincial exchanges would occur, access and participation would be far more limited. The ECP is seen as ensuring equity in participation for youth in all parts of Canada, and across all socio-demographic groups. In the words of one respondent “the program seems to level the playing field by allowing all to participate”. Interview respondents note that Canada is vast, and both difficult and expensive to explore. Similarly, there is a sense among staff interviewed that without federal involvement or support, youth exchanges that engage isolated groups would not occur.

3.2 Design and Delivery

A number of questions were explored through the evaluation under the issue of design and delivery. These include: the consistency of the ECP logic model with Program Terms and Conditions and the departmental PAA; the adequacy of existing ECP management and administrative systems, including the application process and funding criteria; the effectiveness of special measures funding; challenges and constraints experienced by the Program in recent years; and potential improvements to the ECP. Each of these is explored in turn below.

3.2.1 Logic Model

Evaluation Question 3: Does the Program logic model reflect current Terms and Conditions and the departmental PAA?

The 2005 RMAF/RBAF for the ECP provides a logic model for the Program which reflects and incorporates changes made following the 2005 evaluation, and illustrates links between Program outcomes and the PCH strategic outcome under the departmental PAA in effect until March 31, 2009. Based on the document review and key informant interviews conducted, the logic model does reflect the Program for the period under evaluation.

3.2.2 Adequacy of Management and Administrative Systems

Evaluation Question 4: Are adequate management and administrative systems in place for effective Program delivery?

A number of aspects of the management and administrative systems in place for the ECP were examined through the document review and interviews including the overall administration of the ECP and the satisfaction and effectiveness of the application process. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

ECP Management and Administration

Eligibility requirements for delivery organizations, selection criteria for projects, and eligible project expenses are clearly identified in the Terms and Conditions of the Program. Project budgets are reviewed and approved by departmental officials in accordance with the Department's delegated authority for grants and contributions. The *Internal Audit of Exchanges Canada Program* (2008) concluded that the Program had implemented good management controls in the areas of Program design, processes for grants and contributions, and tools to assist in Program tracking and monitoring.

ECP organizers (e.g. teachers, group leaders, etc.) were invited to comment on their level of satisfaction with the delivery organizations they worked with through feedback questionnaires completed in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Overall, the level of satisfaction with the exchange or forum process as a whole is quite high, at 90% in 2006-2007 and 89% in 2007-2008. Most organizers also report being satisfied with the staff of the delivery organizations they dealt with; including the competence of staff, courtesy of staff, and ease of access to staff. Over eight in ten organizers report being satisfied with the sources of information available on the Program. Over three-quarters of organizers completing the feedback questionnaire report being satisfied with procedures to submit an application; assistance received during preparation of the application; assistance

received during preparation for the exchange or forum; and assistance in dealing with any problems encountered.

Application Process

Results from key informant interviews conducted reveal that most Program staff and delivery partners interviewed are generally satisfied with the application process. Staff describe the process as being clear and with appropriate application criteria. Delivery partners interviewed consider the funding eligibility criteria to be relatively clear, and some note that ECP officers are available to assist or provide information on the interpretation of criteria, if needed.

In terms of potential changes or improvements to the process, some staff key informants mention that the application process should be more consistently applied, with greater transparency, and with a common deadline for applications (especially in the case of forums). At the present time, there is a risk that good projects will not be funded because they apply later in the fiscal year and there is no more funding available. In the view of these staff respondents, a single deadline for funding applicants would allow the program to assess all applications at the same time and select the best projects through a common ranking system.

Many delivery partner respondents indicate that the length of time between when the delivery partner submits the application and when they receive notification of funding is long, occasionally resulting in delivery challenges or experiencing cash flow problems during the time it takes to get a signed agreement. Administrative data on the funding process exist but have not been compiled on an aggregate level which would determine the current time frame required for funding decisions and allocations, although the application guide states that the decision-making process can be expected to span six months, and ECP staff did not express any concerns with the length of the process. Administrative data was not analyzed due to time and budget constraints and due to the complexity of the required analysis given that data had not been compiled.

3.2.3 Challenges and Constraints

Evaluation Question 5: What, if any, challenges have emerged in recent years? What changes to the design and delivery of the Program are required to overcome these challenges?

This evaluation question was mainly addressed by exploring the challenges encountered with special measures funding needed to facilitate the inclusion of a greater diversity of participants. A challenge faced by the ECP is in ensuring participation from under-represented or disadvantaged groups, which requires additional attention and occasionally funding to address.

Based on the document review, the ECP eligibility criteria state that, if it is determined that exchange-related expenses inhibit participation by youth from under-represented groups, then additional special measures funding may be allocated from ECP in order to facilitate participation. Additional expenses related to special measures are considered on a case-by-case basis, and may include: the rental of dormitories or rooms for young people from low-income families and the cost of meals served on the premises; basic travel expenses for those accompanying youth with disabilities; or the hiring of a sign-language interpreter for hearing-impaired youth.

The majority of staff key informants view special measures as being very important in accommodating youth who may not otherwise have been able to participate. Examples of special measures cited by staff include providing subsidies for youth from low-income families, accommodations for dietary restrictions, supports for youth with disabilities, and extra chaperones when needed. Most of them report that special measures funding had permitted ECP to broaden the diversity of participating youth among targeted populations such as youth with disabilities and youth from low-income families.

Most of the delivery partners interviewed have used the special measures procedures to allow for greater diversity among youth participants. Some state that these measures have been reasonable to implement and have resulted in greater inclusion, while other delivery respondents believe that criteria are too limited in what can be covered in the special measures process (specifically mentioning that ECP would not cover accommodation or supplement participants from low-income families). Overall, however, delivery partner key informants consider that the special measures are important and allow for greater flexibility in reaching diverse participants.

Moreover, when queried as to the adequacy of resources for facilitating inclusion of a greater diversity of participants, program staff identify three areas for which outreach activities continue to be a challenge: new immigrants, urban youth and regional representation.

Evaluation Question 6: Do any operational constraints exist that impinge on the ability of the Program to achieve its objectives and expected results? What changes to the design and delivery of the Program could be made to improve operational effectiveness?

The main constraint identified through the documentation review and key informant interviews concerns staff turnover within the Program in recent years. In the 2008 *Internal Audit of Exchanges Canada Program*, the audit team observed that recent departures of key Program personnel may have had an impact on the YFC component. The mitigation strategy implemented at that time by Program management was to prioritize activities according to the number of staff available. At the time of the audit, turnover in the Program was considered by management to be one of the Program's most significant risks.

Consistent with the finding of the audit, a challenge noted by a minority of delivery partner key informants is staff turnover at PCH. While delivery partners are satisfied overall with the services provided by ECP staff, high levels of staff turnover, especially among ECP officers, is perceived by a few respondents as having resulted in a loss of corporate memory within the Program area. For some delivery partners, this has led to increased uncertainty in terms of what is required from organizations seeking funding and to increased delays in notification of funding approval.

Also, some partner organizations reported in their annual project reports that they had experienced certain difficulties or challenges in implementing Program activities. These difficulties include: implementing contingency plans if confirmed exchange groups (twin groups) are withdrawn late in the process; recruitment of targeted groups (e.g., visible minorities, French-speaking delegates); excessive travel costs for youth in isolated communities; cost increases related to cross-country travel; insufficient lead time between funding approval and activity in order to take advantage of discounts for early flight bookings; and the need for enhanced marketing and media relations to ensure adequate outreach for events.

Delivery partners interviewed were asked to provide any suggestions they may have for modifications to the design or delivery of the Program, thus exploring potential improvements. The most common suggestions for improvement (stated by the majority of delivery partner key informants) have to do with funding, notably with the length of time to be notified of funding approval, and then with the length of time required to receive the funding following notification. Other, more specific improvements suggested by delivery partner key informants include: issuing payments within a reasonable and predetermined period after reporting; provisions to pay interest on loans incurred for expenses while waiting for ECP payments to arrive; and developing a template for final reports. These comments reiterate the desire among delivery organizations for a reduction in time required for funding decisions and subsequent allocations. As mentioned previously, administrative data indicating the actual length of time taken to provide decisions and funding was not amenable to analysis within the time-frame and budget of the evaluation.

3.3 Performance Measurement

3.3.1 Performance Measurement System

Evaluation Question 7: Is an adequate performance measurement mechanism and system in place to account for results?

The performance measurement strategy presented in the RMAF/RBAF (2005) identifies performance indicators for each planned output and outcome of the Program corresponding to the logic model.

The **current performance measurement system** includes the following key data sources:

- Administrative data and reports received from delivery organizations, which are required to meet reporting requirements identified in contribution agreements;
- Feedback data collected from participants, organizers and parents following participation in an ECP activity; and
- Ministerial correspondence received from exchange participants, organizers and parents.

In addition to these existing data sources, the **2005 renewed Performance measurement strategy** describes the Program's intention to develop and analyze different methodology options for determining the medium- and long-term impacts results from participation in the Program. There is no evidence to suggest that all of the proposed methods were implemented. Periodic focus groups or interviews, and comparison of long-term outcomes for participants versus non-participants were some of the proposed methods. Another proposed strategy was to develop and implement pre- and post-participation (long-term) questionnaires, meant to improve the Program's ability to determine the extent to which it is successful in meeting its stated objectives. Staff interview respondents note that although pre- and post-participation questionnaires have been developed, they have yet to be implemented.

As the current feedback questionnaires do not gather the respondent's contact information, it is currently impossible to conduct follow-up surveys with respondents. The performance measurement strategy states that delivery organizations are required to retain key information on participants that would enable ECP to reach participants at a later date but there is no evidence to suggest that this is being done.

Furthermore, there was consensus among the majority of staff key informants that while long-term benefits of ECP funded programs exist, there needs to be a stronger effort to measure these outcomes. Although the adequacy of performance measurement systems was not discussed in interviews with delivery partners, a small number of them did suggest a need for additional research on impacts to guide future Program development and delivery. Specifically, there is an interest in examining the long-term impacts of participation on youth following participation.

Decision Making Process

The data resulting from the current measurement system would prove very useful in assisting the decision-making process. Documents reviewed suggest that data from questionnaires administered to participants, parents and organizers is compiled and results are shared with Program staff and delivery organizations, as well as used to inform departmental reporting.

However, no evidence of reports or analysis of findings was available to the evaluation. Furthermore, 2008-2009 data and open-ended data were undergoing processing and were not available in time for the evaluation.

Staff interviewed indicate that performance data supports decision-making and departmental accountability requirements to a moderate extent. Interviewees state that data has been used to identify problems with respect to delivery organizations or gaps in the Program offerings, along with affirming accountability overall. Some Program staff key informants think that more could be done to gather and use performance data for decision-making.

2005 Evaluation Results

The 2005 evaluation made the following specific recommendations related to performance measurement:

- In order to improve reporting, the Program overall should have specific targets for each of the under-represented groups identified (i.e. Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities, visible minority youth, low-income households, and youth from rural or remote areas).
- The Program should consider centralizing the input of participants' feedback questionnaire results and storing this information in a computer-assisted survey database.
- The Program should review feedback questionnaires, to ensure that they include all information required to measure the achievement of results, including demographic profile questions, year of participation, and Program component.

The performance measurement system for the ECP was modified following the 2005 evaluation.

- **Implementation of Targets**
First, the Program set targets for representation by demographic segments of interest for the YEC and YFC, based on 2006 Census data. These include targets for youth from low-income families, Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities, visible minorities and youth from rural or remote areas, in addition to existing targets for official languages. Targets were also set to ensure representation from all provinces and territories. Delivery partners are expected to report on their success in attaining targets in their final reports to ECP.
- **Centralization of the Feedback Questionnaire Input**
Since the last evaluation, the Program started using optical scanning technology to capture feedback questionnaire data, which is stored using a database management system. This would enable the ECP to organize, cross-tabulate and analyze data according to any of the existing variables, thus addressing the recommendations of the 2005 evaluation. However, as mentioned, there is no evidence that this subsequent analysis is performed.
- **Revision of Feedback Questionnaires**
In order to enable the Program to measure results more accurately and adjust programming accordingly, the feedback questionnaire system was revised. The participants' and organizers' feedback questionnaires were modified significantly

from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007. Questions designed to collect perceptions on the impacts of participation in ECP activities were revised. As well, questions relating to gender, age, home province, mother tongue/official language, and target groups (except for low income) were added in order to provide a more useful and practical database. In addition to the participants' and organizers' questionnaires, an additional questionnaire was developed and implemented in order to collect feedback from parents of participants as of 2006-2007.

3.3.2 Suggested Improvement

Evaluation Question 8: What, if any, changes to performance measurement are required? Can any improvements be made?

In interviews, staff respondents were invited to provide suggestions for potential improvements to the current performance measurement system. Program staff respondents consider the development and refining of performance measurement activities as an on-going process. Proposed areas of improvement provided by Program staff include obtaining more longitudinal data to better demonstrate the benefits of the Program, enhancing follow-up with youth participants and encouraging delivery organizations to provide more detailed information on youth participants. A few Program respondents indicate that additional funding would probably be required to implement enhanced tracking of ECP results and impacts to reflect increases in data collection and reporting activities. As one staff interviewee notes, ECP does not fund the administrative costs of delivery organizations to collect data from participants on ECP performance or activities.

3.4 Success

This chapter examines evaluation evidence pertaining to the success of the ECP in achieving the immediate and ultimate outcomes identified in the Program Logic Model.

3.4.1 Diversity of Participants in Comparison to Youth Population

Evaluation Question 9: To what extent do ECP participants reflect the diversity of the Canadian youth population?

An immediate outcome of the ECP is that “exchange participants reflect the diversity of the Canadian youth population”²¹. The diversity of participants can be examined for a number of demographic variables. Below we compare the profile of ECP participants to target groups identified for the Program (i.e., rural, low income, Aboriginal, and visible minority youth), as well as the gender breakdown of participants and their overall regional participation.

²¹ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Table 3.1 provides a comparison of actual ECP participants to the Canadian youth population (based on 2006 Census data) for each of the targeted youth groups identified by the Program. When compared across all Program components, ECP participation rates were higher than the general youth population for rural, low income and Aboriginal youth (35%, 14% and 8% respectively). However, the percentage of participating youths with a disability (5%) as well as the percentage of youth that self-identified as belonging to a visible minority (10%) were lower than that of the national youth population.

The YEC is the most diversified component with averages of actual participants from rural areas (42%), low income families (22%), and Aboriginal youth (8%) that meet or exceed the national averages of 22%, 15% and 6% respectively. YFC reported participation rates were also higher than Canadian averages for rural and Aboriginal youth (23% and 10% compared to 18% and 5% respectively). Visible minority youth was the group the least represented for all the Program components.

Rural youth are well-represented among participants. However, it should be noted that differing interpretations of 'rural' may account for the difference between the average rural participation in the Program versus the general population. The Program has sought clarification regarding the use of a consistent definition. Statistics Canada notes that there are numerous definitions or "rural" available, and the choice of definition depends on the analysis being made. The Census definition of "rural area" is based on population size (those living outside places of 1,000 people or more) or on population density (those living outside places with densities of 400 or more people per square kilometre)²².

While disabled and visible minority youth are the population segments for which ECP participation rates compared the least favourably to the national averages, they also represent the segments that experienced the highest rate of growth over the five year period reviewed (Tables illustrating participation rates by target segments and by ECP component are presented in Appendix E). In 2004-2005, youth with disabilities accounted for 5% of YEC participants and 2% of both YFC and SWSE youth participants compared to 8%, 2% and 6%, respectively, in 2008-2009. The increase in participation among visible minority youth was even more significant over the five year period, from an 8% rate of participation in 2004-2005 for all Program components to 12% of YEC youth, 13% of YFC and 17% of SWSE participants in 2008-2009.

Program data indicates that participation by female youth exceeds that of male in all components of the Program. Table 3.2 provides an overview of ECP participation by gender. For all Program components females represented 62% of youth participants compared to 38% males. Averages were constant among the specific Program areas, with a somewhat higher percentage of females to males than the average in the SWSE sub-component (76% to 24% respectively).

²² Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin, Vol.3, No.3. Statistics Canada, 2001. ISSN 1481-0964

Table 3.1: Comparison of Youth Participants to General Population

Population Segments (multiple responses)	Targeted Youth Population Segments by Program Component (2004-2005 to 2008-2009)									
	ECP	Youth Exchanges Canada			Youth Forums Canada*			Summer Work / Student Exchange		
	(5 years)	YEC	Census ²³	Difference	YFC	Census	Difference	SWSE	Census	Difference
Rural	35%	42%	22%	+ 20%	23%	18%	+ 4%	20%	18%	2%
Low Income	14%	22%	15%	+ 7%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Aboriginal	8%	8%	6%	+ 2%	10%	5%	+ 5%	5%	5%	0%
Youth w/Disability	5%	7%	7%	0%	2%	8%	- 5%	3%	8%	- 5%
Visible Minority	10%	10%	18%	- 8%	10%	18%	- 8%	10%	18%	- 8%
Participants (5 years)	64,667²⁴	39,779			20,403			4,485		

* Data per population segment is unavailable for Encounters with Canada, under YFC, for 2006-2007 (2,279 participants) and 2007-2008 (2,129 participants).

Source: PCH Annual statistics - Exchanges Canada Program Participants by Group

²³ Census data varies by Program component (YEC, YFC and SWSE) due to the difference in age group targeted by each.

²⁴ Data differs from total number of ECP participants reported given that demographic data was not available for all participants.

Table 3.2: Youth Participants by Gender

Exchanges Canada Program	Youth Participants (2004-2005 to 2008-2009)			
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Youth Exchanges Canada	23,617	16,162	59%	41%
Youth Forums Canada	12,926	6,783	66%	34%
Summer Work / Student Exchange	3,378	1,054	76%	24%
Totals	39,921	23,999	62%	38%
	63,920²⁵		100%	

Source: PCH Annual statistics - Exchanges Canada Participants by Group

A comparison of ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 to 2006 Census data²⁶ reveals that most regions of the country are well represented or over-represented among ECP participants with the exception of Ontario. Ontario youth made up over one-third of the youth population in 2006, but represented fewer than 20% of participants for the two years reviewed.

Findings from key informant interviews largely reflect the findings obtained from this analysis of Program data. Based on key informant interviews, some ECP staff respondents think that more work can be done to reach a greater cultural diversity of participants. When queried as to the adequacy of resources for facilitating inclusion of a greater diversity of participants, ECP staff identify three areas for which outreach activities continue to be a challenge: new immigrants, urban youth and regional representation. The data provided above supports the idea that new immigrants (often visible minorities) are less well represented. Similarly, interest in exchanges was tempered among youth born outside Canada in the survey of Canadian youth conducted (although the reasons for this are not known).

3.4.2 Link to Official Languages

Evaluation Question 10: To what extent are exchanges related to official languages? To what extent do exchanges encourage second-language use/exposure or allow minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language?

²⁵ Data differs from total number of ECP participants reported given that demographic data was not available for all participants.

²⁶ Regional representation is not available from 2005-2006

A second immediate outcome of the ECP is that “a significant proportion of exchanges are related to official languages”²⁷. Through the document review and key informant interviews, the evaluation explored the extent to which exchanges related to official languages by looking at the language profile of participants; the interest in second-language acquisition among participants and non-participants; and impacts of participation on second-language acquisition.

The Terms and Conditions of the ECP state that the Program must ensure that a significant proportion of the exchanges (25 to 30%) relate to official languages (i.e., exchanges that encourage second-language use/exposure or allow official-language minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language).

Interview respondents confirm that second-language exposure and use is an important objective for the Program. As well, official language minority groups are another priority, giving these youth an opportunity to experience an environment where French is the “majority” language and not the “minority”.

Both delivery partners and ECP staff/management interviewed note that there is 100% success in ensuring second-language use or exposure through SWSE for which second-language use is a requirement. Furthermore, both Program staff and delivery organizations consider that the Program also does quite well in encouraging second-language use/exposure through YEC.

The extent to which YFC is believed to have been successful in encouraging second-language use/exposure is less certain among interview respondents. Several staff interviewed note that the success of forums in contributing to this objective is unknown, or that forums are not necessarily geared to official-language exchange/acquisition. They further observe that while all material and written communications are translated, simultaneous translation is very costly and only provided for very large forums and, even then, for portions only.

Some data on second-language use in YEC activities is captured in final reports submitted by delivery organizations. However, this is not done consistently across all delivery organizations. In reviewing YFC reports submitted by organizers, many reports do highlight how and where official languages were incorporated in the event, whether through making written documents available in both official languages, debates being made in either language, or use of simultaneous translation.

Data on the extent to which ECP activities were officially related to official languages, and the extent to which participants have second-language use and exposure during participation is not captured in the feedback questionnaire completed by participants. The feedback questionnaire only collects data on the language profile of participants.

²⁷ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Table 3.3 provides an overview of the official-language profile of ECP youth participants from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. Based on Program data for all components, 69% of participating youth indicated English as their first language, 25% of participants designated French and 5% considered themselves as belonging to an official-language minority group (OLMG). Of the approximately 64,700 youths for which linguistic data was available, 50% considered themselves to be bilingual.

Table 3.3: Linguistic Profile of Youth Participants

Official Languages (multiple responses)	Targeted Youth Population Segments by Program Component (2004-2005 to 2008-2009)							
	ECP		YEC		YFC		SWSE	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
English	44,335	69%	26,885	68%	14,961	73%	2,224	50%
French	16,222	25%	12,052	30%	2,186	11%	2,242	50%
Bilingual	32,516	50%	18,823	47%	11,374	56%	1,200	27%
OLMG (minority)	3,087	5%	2,716	7%	203	1%	168	4%
Participants (5 years)	64,667²⁸		39,779		20,403		4,485	

Source: PCH Annual statistics - Exchanges Canada Program Participants by Group

Interest in learning Canada's other official language was explored with non-participants in focus groups and the survey of youth, and with participants by examining Program data and in focus groups. Findings obtained suggest that the ECP is having an impact on participants in terms of interest in learning their second language and second-language acquisition.

Results from the survey of non-participants demonstrate that interest in learning Canada's second official language is fairly strong among Canadian youth: almost two-thirds of youth (64%) indicate that they are significantly or extremely interested in learning Canada's other official language.

In this context, six in ten participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 (60%) experienced **an increase in their interest in learning Canada's other official language** as a result of participation in the ECP. Similarly, six in ten parents completing a feedback questionnaire in 2006-2007 and 49% in 2007-2008 agreed that their child was significantly more interested in learning Canada's other official language as a result of participation. Organizers completing feedback questionnaires in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 perceived the impacts to be more moderate; less than half perceive a significant impact. Half the 2005-2006 YEC participants responding to feedback questionnaires strongly agreed that "I became more confident in using Canada's other official

²⁸ Data differs from total number of ECP participants reported given that demographic data was not available for all participants.

language”; and 41% strongly agreed that “I will spend more time learning about Canada’s other official language” as a result of participation.

In focus groups, interest in learning Canada’s other official language was greater among ECP participants than among non-participants, although this interest may be in part due to participation in ECP activities or to the fact that Program participants outside Quebec were more likely than non-participants to possess at least a working knowledge of French. Most Program participants indicated that their experience had a number of positive inter-related impacts in the area of second language.

- One impact mentioned is that they were able to **practice their French/English outside the classroom**. This was particularly significant for the Anglophone students: “Speaking French in class in Vancouver isn’t the same as actually speaking French with French people.” Most agreed that the opportunity they had to practise their French/English led to a noticeable improvement, particularly for those whose proficiency had been limited.
- **“Confidence”** is a word used by many ECP participants to describe the impact that their Program experience had on their knowledge of French/English. The confidence and satisfaction they gained from their experience with the ECP helped to convince them that they should “keep going”. In the words of one participant: “I was pretty shy before but I realized that my French isn’t bad. It really helped my confidence. Now I actually look for opportunities to speak French”.

Both Program participants and non-participants agreed that travelling to other parts of Canada and **staying with a family are good ways to obtain exposure** to one’s second language. There was agreement among both groups that the nature of a visit would have an influence on one’s exposure to a second language, and the opportunity one had to learn it: “Going as a tourist and staying in hotels isn’t the same as living with a family.” Similarly, they agree that **making friends** with people who speak English/French is a good way to learn to appreciate the other official language.

Finally, these evaluation findings are consistent with other research undertaken of exchange programs. Mady’s (2009) review of the literature²⁹ on the effects of short-term bilingual exchanges found that “Research has shown that national and international bilingual exchanges lasting as little as five days are enough to change student attitudes towards another cultural group (Rose & Bylander, 2007; Allameh, 2006), and that homestay experiences in particular can enhance the study abroad experience (Schmidt-Rinchart & Knight, 2004)”. Other somewhat more dated research showed impacts on decreasing anxiety/greater confidence speaking a second language, linguistic gains (particularly among those with lower language skills) and greater interest in learning a second language outside of the classroom context. These impacts were further confirmed in Mady’s evaluation of a SEVEC language exchange Program³⁰.

²⁹ Mady, C. Evaluation of SEVEC’S Summer Youth Volunteer Program, October 2008

³⁰ Mady, C. Evaluation of SEVEC’S Summer Youth Volunteer Program, October 2008

3.4.3 Access to a Wide Variety of Exchanges

Evaluation Question 13: To what extent have young people accessed a wider variety and an increased number of exchanges?

Another immediate outcome of the ECP is that “young people have access to a wider variety and an increased number of exchange experiences³¹”. Evidence available to the evaluation indicates that while a broad variety of exchange experiences are made available through the ECP, the total number of participants has declined over the period under evaluation.

Table 3.4 (see next page) provides an overview of the number of participants by Program component for the period of 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. Over the five year period, over 70,000 youths participated in an ECP activity. Youth exchanges were the most frequent type of activity with approximately 40,000 participants. Youth forums involved 26,000 participants, while 4,500 youths participated in the SWSE sub-component. An overall decline of 15% in the number of youth participants occurred over this five year period. While participation in the SWSE sub-component was constant for the first three years reviewed, a significant decline occurred in 2007-2008 which is attributed by Program staff to the mid-year transfer of SWSE activities to a new delivery organization. More generally, staff attribute the declining numbers of participants to fluctuating gas prices and rising travel costs (travel expenses being the key eligible expense covered by the Program). This last comment is reinforced by the difficulties reported by delivery organizations on cost increases related to cross-country travel.

Over the five year period reviewed, YEC activities were implemented by four delivery organizations. Similarly, between 17 and 21 delivery organizations were engaged in the delivery of YFC forums annually from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. Forums ranged dramatically in size; 27% had 50 participants or less, 60% had between 51 and 250 participants, and 13% had more than 250 participants.

Interview and document review findings from the evaluation both indicate that there is broad diversity in the types of exchanges funded through the Program. Program staff and management interviewed note that they believe that the Program has provided good access to a variety of exchanges due in part to the variety of organizations involved and the variety in models for exchanges (e.g., varying lengths, varying focus or topics on which the exchange is based).

³¹ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Table 3.4: Youth Participants by Program Component

Exchanges Canada Program	Youth Participants					2004-2005 to 2008-2009	
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	5 Year Total	Difference³²
Youth Exchanges Canada	8,764	8,331	8,036	7,236	7,412	39,779	- 15%
Youth Forums Canada	5,657	5,137	4,998	4,982	5,201	25,975	- 8%
Summer Work/Student Exchange	1,200	1,212	1,240	215	618	4,485	- 49%
Total	15,621	14,680	14,274	12,433	13,231	70,239	- 15%

Source: PCH Annual statistics - Exchanges Canada Participants by Group

A review of project reports indicates that, in addition to the cultural, bilingual and thematic aspects of the youth exchanges, many of the funded exchanges included some element of community engagement such as volunteering, community enhancement projects or public awareness activities. In addition to the actual exchange activities, many youth participants were directly involved with the planning and realization of the exchanges.

This review also indicates that youth forums provide a broad diversity of activities including national and regional forums, seminars, youth summits, conferences, workshops and discussion sessions. While some events highlight social and cultural exchanges, many focus on educational themes, notably in the areas of the environment, ecology and socio-political issues as well as events that focused on Canadian history and culture.

3.4.4 ECP Information Provided to Canadians

One of the expected results of the ECP is that Canadians are provided with information on a wide range of exchange programs and activities in Canada and abroad.

Even if this expected result has not specifically been explored in a separate evaluation question, the document review revealed that the ECP has been using a variety of tools to provide Canadians with information on exchange activities in Canada and abroad. These tools include the Exchanges Canada website³³ and promotional videos, brochures and posters. Occasional and targeted promotional activities (such as kiosks at various events) have also been used to promote and provide information about the Program. In 2008-2009, Exchanges Canada revamped both the design and content of its website; the new website was launched in April 2009.

³² Variance from 2004-05 to 2008-2009

³³ In 2008-2009, the Exchanges Canada website received 113,958 hits.

In addition to promotional activities undertaken by the Exchanges Canada Program, funded delivery organizations have also been carrying out their own promotional activities which could raise awareness about the Program. As noted previously (Section 3.1.1) the level of interest in exchange activities is higher than the level of participation.

3.4.5 Knowledge and Understanding of Canada

Evaluation Question 11: To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their knowledge and understanding of Canada?

An ultimate outcome of the ECP is that “young people enhance their knowledge and understanding of Canada³⁴”. Evidence of success of the ECP in enhancing knowledge and understanding of Canada among participants is available from data collected through feedback questionnaires as well as from focus groups with participants, while general interest of youth in learning more about Canada was explored in non-participant focus groups and the survey of Canadian youth. However, as specified in the evaluation limitations section, without any pre and post measurement, it is impossible to assess the net impact on participants.

Feedback questionnaire data and focus group findings provide evidence of Program impacts on the participant’s knowledge and understanding of Canada. Six in ten ECP participants (from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) indicated that they **learned new things about Canada** (significantly or extremely) as a result of their participation in the Program. Organizers and parents perceived the impact to be more significant with respectively 85% and 74% reporting that they perceived a significant or extreme impact in the 2007-2008 feedback questionnaires. Furthermore, eight in ten YEC participants (83%) completing a feedback questionnaire in 2005-2006 agreed (somewhat or strongly) with the statement “my exchange experience has developed my interest in learning more about Canada”; and over nine in ten agreed (somewhat or strongly) that “my exchange experience helped me to learn new things about Canada”.

Most ECP participants in focus groups agreed that the Program has had a significant impact on their appreciation of Canada and Canadians. Participants agreed that one of the main, lasting impacts of their Program experience was having **gained a more positive and realistic view of Canadians living in other parts of the country**. Many participants, for example, explained how the experience made them realize the extent to which people’s views of other Canadians is based on stereotypes, including quite a few very negative ones: “If you haven’t had the chance to meet many people from outside of your province or city you kind of think the typical things, like people from BC are hippies, people from Alberta are rednecks, people from Saskatchewan are hicks. But then you meet people from all over the place and you realize how much you have in common and how wrong these stereotypes can be.”

³⁴ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Other pertinent Program impacts identified by focus group participants in YEC, SWSE, and YFC relating to knowledge and understanding of Canada include the following:

- **Increased sense of pride and belonging to Canada:** For some, their Program experience allowed them to develop a greater sense of belonging to Canada, in the sense that the Canada that existed beyond their community became more real, and, therefore, easier to feel connected to. For example, some Quebec participants who had travelled to Ottawa or British Columbia spoke about how their perceptions of Quebec and its place in Canada had been somewhat challenged, both intellectually and emotionally: “To me my country was always Quebec. Canada was just there, but now I have to say that BC is my country too.”
- **A greater understanding and respect for Canada’s political institutions (for those who visited Ottawa):** Some of the students who participated in a youth forum in Ottawa spoke about how impressed they had been with their visit to Parliament and with the various politicians and civil servants they met. In the words of one participant: “you get a really different impression from what you see on TV. It’s easy to see politics as a joke, but there are pretty impressive people there”.
- **Increased interest in travelling within Canada, as well as internationally:** Quite a few ECP participants felt that their Program experience had whetted their appetite for travel, both within Canada and abroad.

Results of the Canadian youth survey (non-participants) indicate that the general level of interest among youth in learning more about their country is also high: roughly three in four (72%) say they are interested in learning new things about Canada. Furthermore, a large majority (83%) of youth interested in participating in an exchange (but who have not had the opportunity to do so) believe that learning new things about Canada would be one of the primary benefits of an exchange experience. These findings suggest that ECP is providing youth an opportunity to act on a pre-existing interest to learn more about their country.

3.4.6 Creation of Linkages and Connections

Evaluation Question 12: To what extent have targeted participants connected and created linkages with one another?

Another ultimate outcome of the ECP is that “young participants connect and create linkages with one another³⁵”. Evidence of the creation of linkages is provided by feedback questionnaire data as well as findings from focus groups, survey of non-participants and interviews.

³⁵ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Over eight in ten ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 agreed that they **created new ties with people from other communities** as a result of participation (84%). Furthermore, over eight in ten YEC participants responding to the 2005-2006 feedback questionnaire agreed (strongly or somewhat) that they would like to keep in touch with their twin; 89% agreed that they would like to keep in touch with someone they met on the exchange; and 84% agreed that they would like to visit their twin or someone met on the exchange. However, no longitudinal data exist to assess long-term impact.

In comparison, 63% of non-participants surveyed (Canadian youth) expressed an interest in having ties with people from other communities. This suggests that the Program has had an impact on young people's interest. Furthermore, a large majority (87%) of non-participants surveyed who expressed interest in participating in an exchange believe that creating new ties with people from other communities would be one of the three primary benefits of an exchange experience.

The vast majority of Program participants in focus groups had left their ECP experience with the intention of keeping in touch with at least one person they had met. While the intensity of these links has lessened over time (in terms of contact and the frequency of contact), most still maintain some tie to someone met during their Program experience.

The benefits of these long-distance friendships and linkages were also explored with them. Program participants in focus groups felt that long-distance friendships had two key benefits: having a place to stay when travelling; and the enrichment of one's "professional" network, which was most relevant to post-secondary education and employment.

Finally, a majority of delivery partner interview respondents consider that impacts on youth, both intended and unintended, have been diverse and include the development of ongoing friendships. Many note that youth often stay in contact with their exchange "twin", and develop lasting friendships through the exchange experience.

3.4.7 Appreciation of the Diversity and Shared Aspects of the Canadian Experience

Evaluation Question 14: To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience?

A final ultimate outcome of the ECP is that "young participants enhance their appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience³⁶". Evidence of impacts in this area is provided by feedback questionnaire data, results from focus groups and survey of non-participants.

³⁶ ECP Logic Model, Appendix A

Two-thirds of ECP participants (67% in 2006-2007, and 68% in 2007-2008) responding to feedback questionnaires indicated that **they learned about Canadian cultural communities other than their own** (significantly or extremely) as a result of participation. A slightly higher number of parents over the same period identified a significant or extreme impact in this area, as did close to nine in ten organizers.

Over nine in ten YEC participants responding to the 2005-2006 feedback questionnaire agreed (strongly or somewhat) that they **discovered different ways people live** in other parts of Canada as a result of participation. On a related note, 76% of YEC participants from 2005-2006 strongly agreed that they would like to discover other parts of Canada as a result of participation.

Results from the survey of non-participants indicate that young Canadians in general express interest in discovering other parts of Canada and cultural communities other than their own. Almost three in four (74%) non-participants surveyed agree that they would like to discover other parts of Canada; and 61% express a significant interest in learning about different cultural communities. As with the outcome relating to knowledge of Canada, these findings suggest that ECP is providing youth an opportunity to act on pre-existing interests. A large majority of the youth surveyed who are interested in participating in an exchange (86%) believe that learning new things about Canadian cultural communities other than their own would be one of the primary benefits of an exchange experience.

While interest in learning about other “cultures” was more limited among both Program participants and non-participants in focus groups, this was partly due to a lack of consensus over the meaning of “culture”. In focus groups, participants and non-participants did express an interest in learning about different cultures and “ways of life” including Aboriginal cultures, and farming and fishing. Furthermore, there was agreement (among both participants and non-participants) that activities such as youth exchanges and forums are good ways to develop an understanding of other cultures in Canada.

Furthermore, more than half of ECP participants in focus groups indicate that they learned a lot about another culture through their participation in ECP. For example, some Program participants from Quebec spoke of how the values of people they met in Western Canada seemed more conservative than their own. Similarly, they note how religion appeared to play a much more prominent role. For their part, some of the students from Vancouver who lived with a family in Quebec were struck at how much of Quebec’s popular culture was unknown to them; and a few ECP participants in the Montréal focus group made similar observations concerning their experience among non-Quebeckers. In the words of one western participant who had been on an exchange in Quebec: “they watch TV in French and listen to French music; I didn’t realize how important culture is to them”.

Feedback questionnaire results suggest that participation has an impact on the sense of shared experiences among youth: 55% of YEC participants (2005-2006) strongly agreed

that participation helped them to discover that they **have a lot in common with other Canadians** (and 35% agreed somewhat). In comparison, results of the survey of Canadian youth reveal that only one in five young Canadians (22%) strongly agree that they have a lot in common with other Canadians, and a further 56% somewhat agree with this idea. This finding suggests that the ECP exchange experience may contribute to an increased sense of the shared aspects of the Canadian experience among many participants (although it is also possible that participants were pre-disposed in this regard).

3.4.8 Other Impacts and Outcomes

Evaluation Question 15: Are there any other impacts and effects, either intended or not, resulting from this Program?

Impacts of participation on community engagement, self-confidence and personal skills were explored through participant feedback questionnaires, and were discussed in focus groups. As well, some relevant information in these areas was collected through the survey of Canadian youth.

Community Engagement

Evaluation findings suggest that youth engagement in their own community is modest generally, and that this interest is not markedly increased as a result of participation for many ECP participants. Only four in ten ECP participants (2006-2007 and 2007-2008) indicated that their Program participation resulted in a significant or extreme increase in their **interest in community involvement**. Organizers provided a similar assessment of impact, while fewer than four in ten parents responding to feedback questionnaires in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 identified a significant or extreme impact on community involvement. Similarly, relatively few 2005-2006 YEC participants expressed a strong interest in community engagement: 25% strongly agreed that they would like to “get involved in other activities in my community” after their exchange.

Results of the survey of non-participants suggest that despite their curiosity regarding other communities, young Canadians do not take as much interest in their own community. Only 45% of Canadian youth surveyed express a strong desire to get involved in the community where they live. As well, an increase in community involvement is least often identified as a potential benefit of participating in an exchange by non-participants surveyed.

Focus group findings also suggest that interest in community engagement is fairly limited, as are impacts from participation. Program participants and non-participants in focus groups had difficulty addressing the issue of community involvement, and most understood this to mean volunteering. Aside from the volunteer activities/hours that some students must complete as part of their high school curriculum, few focus group participants consider themselves to be very involved in their community or interested in becoming more involved. In the words of one participant: “I don’t know too many

students that are involved. We have school and work and a social life. I think it's something that people tend to do when they get older.”

Delivery partners engaged in key informant interviews as part of the evaluation did however note some impacts on community engagement from their experience. For example, one delivery respondent indicates that follow-up with past participants has revealed instances where participants have become actively engaged in their community, whether through working with non-profit organizations, developing their interest in politics or actively volunteering as a result of participating in an exchange. The above findings, taken together, suggest that impacts in this area do occur for individual participants but are not widespread.

Impacts Relating to Personal Skills

Findings from focus groups and feedback questionnaires indicate that participation can also have other impacts. Program participants in focus groups indicate that participation in an ECP activity had a profound impact on their individual self-confidence and personal growth. Almost every Program participant in focus groups spoke about how their Program experience boosted confidence in their ability to interact with other people and deal with challenging social situations. Other focus group participants spoke of how they learned to be more self-reliant and independent. In the words of one participant: “It was my first time away from home without my parents. I pretty much had to figure things out for myself. I proved to myself that I could do things.”

As well, over half the participants completing a feedback questionnaire (in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) agreed that the exchange or forum experience had a significant or extreme impact on their **ability to manage situations**, their **self-confidence** and **problem-solving**. About eight in ten organizers, and 65% of parents, agreed that participation had a significant or extreme impact on the youth's self-confidence. About 45% of participants and half the parents completing feedback questionnaires also agreed that there is a significant or extreme impact on the ability of participants to recognize their strengths and weaknesses as a result of participation.

Finally, over four in ten participants responding to feedback questionnaires (in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) believed that they are significantly more likely to **continue their education** as a result of participation. Similarly, about four in ten parents and half the organizers (responding to feedback questionnaires in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) believe that there is a significant impact on participants in this area.

Unintended Impacts

Limited unintended impacts were identified in key informant interviews. These include the identification by a delivery partner of positive impacts in terms of capacity building within their organization; and perceived impacts on the interest of participants in participating in other events (also identified by delivery partners). Unintended impacts identified by individual staff interview respondents include reaching a greater number of girls than boys. Also, positive impacts of exchanges were identified not only for the

participant involved, but for their family, peers and community (as a result of community activities).

3.5 Cost Effectiveness

This chapter presents evaluation findings relating to cost-effectiveness, including available data on the efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation; potential alternative approaches; overlap or duplication of the ECP with other programs; the potential to transfer the Program; and the proportion of costs allocated to operating costs versus transfer payments.

3.5.1 Effectiveness and Efficiency of Resource Allocation

Evaluation Question 16: Are the resources dedicated to this Program being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results?

Evaluation Question 19: What is the proportion of costs spent on transfer payments as compared to operating costs? Is this reasonable? How does it compare with other programs?

The issue of cost-effectiveness was addressed based on available Program documentation and on key informant interviews conducted. As noted previously, a lack of available data on costs and outcomes associated with similar or comparable programs limits the analysis of cost-effectiveness. Data available to the evaluation provides information on ECP allocations, the cost per participant, the proportion spent on transfer costs, and views on alternative delivery mechanisms; however, there is no detailed explanation documented for fluctuations over time in the cost per participant and no cost comparison to similar programs.

Resources dedicated to ECP

Transfer payments issued to delivery organizations totalled \$96.6 million for the five year period of 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. Program data for the same period indicates that over the five year period reviewed just over 70,000 youth participated in ECP activities which were delivered by a total of 47 partner organizations

The cost per participant varied from year to year, depending on the amount of ECP funding allocated for activities provided and the number of participants (Table 3.5). YEC activities ranged from an annual average cost of \$939 to \$1,284 per participant. Average participant costs for YFC events varied from \$847 to \$1,271 per youth. For the SWSE sub-component, the annual average cost per participant ranged from \$4,803 to \$9,114 (the cost for this component includes the participant's salary for the duration of the exchange). The cost per participant tended to increase over the period under evaluation.

The cost per participant has increased from 2002-2003 (based on the data available from the 2005 Summative Evaluation). The cost per participant for YEC has increased 21%,

the cost per participant for YFC has increased 34%, and the cost per participant for SWSE has increased 6% (note that the 2002-2003 figures have not been indexed for inflation).

The large fluctuations in cost for the SWSE component are attributed by Program staff to the change in delivery partner. Increases in costs more generally are attributed to rising travel and gas costs (increasing direct travel costs, which are an expense covered by the Program). While reported in interviews, these explanations are not fully documented nor supported by quantitative evidence.

Table 3.5: Cost per Participant (2004-2005 to 2008-2009) ³⁷

Program Component	Average Cost per Participant						Comparison: Cost per Participant in 2002-2003 ³⁸
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	Average over 5 Years	
YEC	\$1,036	\$939	\$1,284	\$1,262	\$1,173	\$1,132	\$ 896
YFC	\$847	\$862	\$1,241	\$1,271	\$1,113	\$1,061	\$ 697
SWSE	\$5,000	\$4,989	\$4,803	\$9,114	\$6,553	\$5,354	\$ 5,020
ECP Total	\$1,272	\$1,246	\$1,574	\$1,401	\$1,401	\$1,375	

Source: PCH Annual statistics – Exchanges Canada Participants by Group; ECP Actual Spending (table 1.1)

Operating Costs and Transfer Payments

An annual amount of approximately \$2 million is allocated for direct operating costs. This comprises salaries, employee benefits, research, training, audit and evaluation activities, travel for project monitoring, ongoing performance measurement, and communication products and activities.

The ratio of transfer payments to direct operating costs was relatively constant for the five years under evaluation with slightly more than \$9 in transfer payments for every \$1 in direct operating costs (a ratio of more than 9 to 1). At less than 10%, it is difficult to assess the appropriateness of the amount of resources allocated to administration, since, according to the evaluation, there is no comparable program in the Department to do so³⁹.

³⁷ Actuals for the Exchanges Canada Program have historically differed from authorized funding (table 1.1) due to internal reallocations and partnership funding.

³⁸ Taken from 2005 Summative Evaluation Report, unindexed

³⁹ The PCH Katimavik Program cannot be considered similar to ECP given important differences in program delivery, particularly the fact that the Katimavik Program is delivered solely by one third-party organization.

Program's operating cost has been justified as follows:

1. **The nature of the clientele.** The ECP deals with a vast diversity of organizations, some with strong administrative capacity (Historica Foundation of Canada⁴⁰, YMCA, SEVEC) and many others with limited administrative infrastructures. Those with more limited capacity require more hands-on support from staff to develop and deliver their projects. As such, the direct operating costs associated with project development, monitoring and client reporting are much higher than for similar projects delivered by higher capacity clients.
2. **The significant federal investments in some projects.** YEC, including the SWSE sub-component, is delivered for the federal government by third-party organizations. The high dollar amounts of agreements for these components, as well as some YFC projects (\$1M+), require close monitoring and a high degree of follow-up as per Treasury Board policy. Payments and reporting must be carried out on a monthly basis and project monitoring must be conducted on a regular basis, resulting in a significant increase in workload and travel requirements for program officers.
3. **The substantial investments in communications / promotion.** In contrast to programs that strictly deliver grants and contributions, ECP direct operating funds also support the provision of information on exchanges and targeted promotional activities, as per the Program's logic model. The development and maintenance of the ECP website, and production and distribution of promotional materials such as videos, posters and brochures place a substantial load on direct program operating expenses.

Perceptions of Cost-Effectiveness

Program management and staff interviewed for the evaluation consider that resources dedicated to the ECP are being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results. The results of the current evaluation demonstrate, to some extent, that the level of financial spending for the ECP enables expected results in several areas.

ECP is seen by staff respondents as being efficient in that funds are being used to support the objectives of the Program. There is, however, a shared perception among interviewed Program staff that funding was limited and increased resources would be required to meet the demands for ECP projects. As one ECP staff respondent indicated: "The big challenge is high demand and high travel costs, and there is little that we can do about these."

Alternative Delivery Mechanisms

The majority of Program staff and delivery partners interviewed do not consider that viable alternative approaches to the ECP exist. The current delivery framework is viewed

⁴⁰ The Historica Foundation of Canada is now the Historica-Dominion Institute.

by interviewed key informants as being versatile enough to accommodate different approaches for promoting awareness of Canada and its institutions among young people and for fostering stronger ties to their communities and host communities. Some key informants identify on-line interfaces and communications, traditional book-based learning, school-based activities, cultural activities and mass media as means for youth to increase their awareness of Canada. However, these individual activities are seen as being complementary in nature and are not believed to provide the same level of impact as the real life experiences gained through participating in exchange and forum activities.

Program staff interviewed believe that it would be difficult to identify a realistic alternative to the ECP. Although there was general agreement that there are other ways to promote awareness and to foster a stronger sense of community among Canada's youth, there was consensus among queried Program staff that the ECP represents the best approach to achieve the objectives identified for the Program.

The exchange programs that were examined during the course of the literature review feature four different delivery models: government-funded/delivered; government-funded/third-party delivered; non-profit/private sector delivered; and education institution-based delivered (Table 2 in Appendix F). As well, exchange programs may be founded on different modalities of delivery, such as individual exchanges (with homestay or other residential/camp-style arrangement); classroom to classroom or other group exchange; and even on-line exchanges.

The review of existing programs and delivery models indicates that the non-profit sector plays an important role in existing exchange programs – often in a delivery role. Funding typically involves a mix of government, non-governmental and private sources (e.g., fees paid by participants, sponsorships). It should be noted that programs that do not rely on government funding often have a limited scope in that they are offered to members or more narrowly defined target groups and interests. As well, many programs are heavily dependent on the volunteer interest and involvement of members and often require greater financial commitment or participation commitment (e.g., hosting an exchange student) on the part of the individual participant.

3.5.2 Duplication or Complementing Existing Programs

Evaluation Question 17: Is the ECP duplicating or complementing existing programs/initiatives?

The issue of overlap and duplication was explored in key informant interviews, while the literature review examined other similar programs in existence in Canada. The majority of interview respondents, both from the Program and delivery partner organizations, did not consider that there is duplication between ECP activities and those of other jurisdictions or other organizations. While other youth oriented programs are available, ECP funding is seen as being unique in that it has a national scope, funds travel expenses, and allows for diversity in the types of youth engagement activities funded.

The literature review revealed a number of exchange programs available to youth in Canada which are offered by government, non-profit and the private sector. However, while there are many programs with an international flavour, fewer focus on increasing an appreciation and understanding of Canada, its regional differences, and improving fluency of official languages. Programs which do are profiled in Appendix F. Katimavik and Interchange on Canadian Studies are two national programs which focus on increasing an appreciation and understanding of Canada; Activate Canada and Adventure in Citizenship focus on leadership development; while Destination Clic and Explore are examples of other exchange programs focusing on official languages.

Although, the ECP exchanges and Katimavik share certain common objectives and expected results (i.e. Young people have the desire and capacity to contribute to Canadian communities and Canadians share a sense of civic pride and are engaged in Canada's communities and civic life), the two programs differ in their program delivery approach. Katimavik is aimed at older youths (17 to 21 year olds) compared to YEC (12 to 17 year olds) and SWSE (16 and 17 year olds). Contrary to the one-on-one short-term exchanges of the ECP, Katimavik participants live together in groups of 11 participants for 39 weeks (or 24 weeks for the shorter, thematic version). Katimavik participants help organizations to carry out community projects. Youth work on average 35 hours per week on volunteer community-based projects in addition to participating in structured learning activities.

Among interviewed respondents some complementarity was observed with other federal programs such as official languages and heritage programs. Staff respondents note that the Program works in partnership with other federal partners, including other programs within PCH. Complementarity between ECP activities and other youth and educational programs funded at either the federal, provincial or municipal level is seen as being mutually beneficial in that the various jurisdictions tend to focus on funding youth needs and priorities that reflect their specific mandate.

Approximately half of the delivery partners interviewed indicate that other sources of funding were available to their organization to deliver youth forums or exchanges. In the majority of cases, supplemental funding, where it exists, is seen as being complementary to ECP resources. Identified alternative funding for ECP projects include other government sources (provincial and regional), participant fees, membership fund drives and corporate sponsors. Similarly, a review of annual project reports indicates that delivery partners are attempting to diversify sources of funding for their projects, with varying levels of success. Nearly all the exchanges and forums organizers collect a participation or membership fee; fund raising activities are generally taken on by youth groups as a part of their preparation for their exchange; and many larger, national forums identify supplemental funding sources that include other governmental departments, grants from foundations as well as corporate contributions.

3.5.3 Potential to Transfer Program

Evaluation Question 18: Could this Program be fully or partially transferred to provincial government, the private sector, or the voluntary sector?

Findings from interviews with ECP staff and delivery partners suggest that ECP activities could not be effectively transferred, fully or partially, to the provincial, private sector or non-profit sector. Delivery partners consider that there is a need for a uniquely Canadian or national viewpoint and not for multiple programs between provinces. There was general agreement among most interviewees (from both categories of respondents) that the voluntary sector does not have the financial capacity to offer ECP types of learning experiences. While non-governmental organizations were seen as being better positioned to deliver ECP projects, it was agreed that they required Program funding to do so.

Furthermore, the private sector model was seen as not ensuring universality of access by Canadian youth regardless of individual financial means, given the sector's traditional emphasis on profit. By and large, the perspective of interview respondents was that while the participation of other jurisdictions and economic sectors could possibly be enhanced, it was highly improbable that they would be either interested or capable of funding ECP activities.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Relevance

The ECP was created to allow young Canadians from across the country to learn about Canada, create linkages with each other, and to better appreciate the diversity and common aspects of the Canadian reality. Based on interviews and Program documentation, the ECP appears to be consistent with departmental, community and public needs and priorities, and linked to departmental outcomes. Furthermore, from a review of existing literature, exchange activities appear to be well grounded in theory as a means to experience diverse cultures, contribute to second-language acquisition, and to create linkages.

The relevance of the Program is also demonstrated by clear public support for exchange programs, a high level of interest in participating in exchange activities, and a high level of interest among non-participants in learning more about Canada and being exposed to its diversity. In fact, self-reported interest in participating in an exchange program is far higher than the proportion participating.

There is also clear support for federal involvement in this program area. In particular, Program staff and delivery partners interviewed agree that there is a need for a federal program such as ECP. There is a sense that federal involvement in this activity ensures broad access to exchanges; national participation; and involvement of isolated communities.

4.2 Design and Delivery

The current management and administrative processes (e.g., application processes, selection criteria, eligible expenses) for the Program appear sound, based on a review of documents, key informant interviews as well as a 2008 Internal Audit of the ECP. Furthermore, a majority of ECP organizers are satisfied with the delivery organizations they worked with.

Satisfaction with the application process and funding criteria is strong overall, with some exceptions. Delivery partners express some dissatisfaction with delays in approval, notification and receipt of ECP funding. Some staff believe that the application process could be improved by a common application deadline. Also, a key challenge experienced by the ECP continues to be staff turnover. This concern was noted in the 2008 audit and surfaced again in the current evaluation.

Special measures funding is perceived to play an important role in facilitating participation by under-represented groups.

4.3 Performance Measurement

The performance measurement strategy presented in the RMAF/RBAF (2005) following the previous evaluation identifies performance indicators for each planned output and outcome of the Program corresponding to the logic model.

Key components of the strategy developed include: administrative data and reports received from delivery organizations; feedback data collected from participants, organizers and parents; and correspondence received from exchange participants, parents and organizers. The renewed strategy also describes the Program's intention to develop and analyze additional methodology options for determining the medium- and long-term impacts results. These included periodic focus groups or interviews, comparison of long-term outcomes for participants versus non-participants and the implementation of pre- and post-participation (long-term) questionnaires. The evaluation did not reveal any evidence to suggest that all of these proposed methods were implemented, although the pre- and post-participation (long-term) questionnaires have been developed. Furthermore, the majority of staff key informants stated that while long-term benefits of ECP funded programs exist, there needs to be a stronger effort to measure these outcomes.

The ECP has addressed the 2005 Evaluation recommendations by setting targets and by making the delivery partners report on their success in attaining these targets. The Program has revised the participants and organizers' feedback questionnaires and developed and implemented an additional questionnaire for parents, although not all Program outcomes are captured in the current questionnaires (e.g., the link to official languages). While the Program has also implemented the optical scanning technology as it intended to organize, cross-tabulate and analyze the feedback questionnaire data, the evaluation did not see any evidence that in-depth statistical analysis is being performed.

There is continued potential to increase efforts to measure ECP outcomes to guide future Program development and delivery, and to increase the extent to which performance data is used to support decision-making.

4.4 Success

The evaluation explored the success of the ECP in achieving each of the outcomes identified for the Program, as well as any unanticipated impacts from the Program.

Diversity of Participants

As mentioned previously, the ECP identifies targets for participation (about 70,000 youth) from target groups such as rural, low income, Aboriginal, visible minority and disabled youth. Based on a comparison to 2006 Census data, ECP participation rates for rural, low income and Aboriginal youth exceed their incidence in the general youth population. The proportion of participants with a disability or who are visible minorities is lower than their incidence within the general population, although participation from these two segments has undergone significant growth in the past five years. It is

interesting to note that interest in exchanges was more muted among youth born outside Canada, suggesting that this may be a more difficult audience to engage⁴¹.

In addition to a lower participation rate among visible minorities and youth with disabilities, male youth are significantly under-represented among ECP participants. Finally, the only province under-represented among ECP participants (based on 2006 Census data) is Ontario (which was also noted in the 2005 evaluation).

Consistent with these findings, some Program staff interviewed identify a potential to reach a greater cultural diversity of participants; possibly through additional outreach activities to reach new immigrants, urban youth and to ensure regional representation.

Link to Official Languages

The Terms and Conditions of the ECP state that the Program must ensure that a significant proportion of the exchanges (25 to 30%) relate to official languages (i.e., exchanges that encourage second-language use/exposure or allow official-language minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language).

Key informant interview respondents believe that there is complete success in ensuring second-language use and exposure through the SWSE sub-component, and note that significant efforts are made to address this objective through YEC. It is considered more difficult to incorporate second-language use and exposure through YFC. Data on official languages is inconsistently captured in final reports submitted by delivery organizations, making it difficult to state the exact extent to which activities are linked to official languages.

Data on the extent to which ECP activities were officially related to official languages was not captured in feedback questionnaires utilized in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Feedback questionnaires do, however, collect data on the language profile of participants. Of the approximately 64,700 participants from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009 for whom linguistic data was available, 50% considered themselves to be bilingual.

Data collected from participants demonstrates that the ECP has had impacts on the interest in and acquisition of second language. ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 experienced an increase in their interest in learning the other official language as a result of participation. Focus group participants also identify a number of positive impacts on second language learning as a result of participation, including practical experience in using this language; confidence in speaking their second language; and a renewed interest in continuing their efforts. Similarly, data from existing literature illustrates the potential for bilingual exchanges to have positive impacts on second-language acquisition.

⁴¹ Caution: this is based on a small sample size of only 39 youth born outside Canada

Access to a Wide Variety and Number of Exchanges

While participation in ECP has remained high over the period examined (with total participation exceeding 70,000), the number of participants declined by 15% from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. This decline has been more noticeable in the YEC and SWSE segments of the Program. The decrease in SWSE participation is attributed to a change in delivery organization for the SWSE, while the general decline in participation is attributed by staff and delivery organizations to rising gas and travel costs (increasing the travel expenses associated with each exchange).

A review of reports submitted by delivery organizations suggest that the Program has provided a broad diversity of exchanges and activities as a result of the variety of organizations engaged in the delivery, as well as in the range of activities, themes and approaches supported. In addition to the cultural, bilingual and thematic aspects of the youth exchanges funded, many exchanges included some element of community engagement such as volunteering, community enhancement projects or public awareness activities. Similarly, youth forum activities supported provide a broad diversity of activities including national and regional forums, seminars, youth summits, conferences, workshops and discussion sessions; many of which focused on educational themes as well as events that focused on Canadian history and culture.

ECP Information Provided to Canadians

Program documentation reveals that ECP has used a variety of tools (including the ECP website, promotional videos, brochures and posters) to provide Canadians with information on exchange activities. As well, funded delivery organizations undertake their own promotional activities which may contribute to Program awareness.

Knowledge and Understanding of Canada

Six in ten ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 learned new things about Canada as a result of participation, while organizers and parents perceived an even greater impact on knowledge (compared to participants). Focus group participants provide further qualitative evidence of Program impact in this area, including impacts on their understanding of how Canadians in other parts of the country live; on their pride and sense of belonging; their understanding and respect for political institutions; and interest in travelling nationally.

Canadian youth demonstrate a strong interest in learning new things about Canada, and non-participants believe that learning new things about Canada would be among the top three benefits of participating in an exchange program. These findings suggest that ECP is providing youth an opportunity to act on a pre-existing interest to learn more about their country.

Creation of Linkages and Connections

Over eight in ten ECP participants from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 agreed that they created new ties with people from other communities as a result of participation. The creation of linkages is also seen as the primary potential benefit of participating in an exchange among non-participants. Furthermore, focus group findings and data from the 2005-2006 feedback questionnaires indicate that participants generally leave their ECP experience with the intention of remaining in touch with at least one person they met during their experience. There are seen to be long-term social and networking benefits to the ties created.

Appreciation of the Diversity and Shared Aspects of the Canadian Experience

Two-thirds of ECP participants (from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008) learned about Canadian cultural communities other than their own; and over nine in ten YEC participants from 2005-2006 discovered different ways people live in other parts of Canada as a result of participation. Non-participants also expressed a high level of interest in discovering other parts of Canada and other cultural communities, and identify this last factor as one of the primary potential benefits of participating in an exchange. Similarly, focus group participants believe that they did gain knowledge of another culture through participation.

Feedback data available suggests that participation has an impact on the sense of shared experiences among youth: while only one in five Canadian youth feel that they have a lot in common with other Canadians, over half of YEC participants in 2005-06 believe that this sense (of having a lot in common) increased significantly as a result of participation, suggesting an impact (or pre-disposition among participants) in this area.

Other Impacts

Youth engagement in their own community appears to be modest generally, and findings suggest that this interest is not markedly increased as a result of participation for many ECP participants. Furthermore, non-participants are least likely to identify an increased involvement in their community as a potential benefit from participating in an exchange.

Evaluation findings do suggest, however, that participation has significant impacts on personal growth including impacts on self confidence, problem solving skills and the ability to manage different situations. As well, four in ten participants believe that they are significantly more likely to continue their education as a result of participation (and parents concur with this assessment).

4.5 Cost Effectiveness

Transfer payments issued to delivery organizations totalled \$96.6 million for the five year period of 2004-2005 to 2008-2009. The cost per participant varied from year to year and by Program component.

The cost per participant for ECP funded activities increased over the period, while the number of participants declined. This situation is attributed to the change in delivery partner for the SWSE sub-component, and to rising travel and gas costs more generally (increasing direct travel costs, which are an expense covered by the Program).

The ratio of transfer payments to direct operating costs was relatively constant for the five year period with about \$9 in transfer payments for every \$1 in direct operating costs. However, the lack of data on comparable programs limits the analysis that can be made of the efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation.

Program management and staff interviewed for the evaluation consider that resources dedicated to the ECP are being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results.

Evaluation findings indicate that delivery partners are attempting to diversify sources of funding for their ECP projects. In the majority of cases, supplemental funding, where it existed, was viewed as being complementary to ECP sources.

Program staff and delivery partners interviewed do not consider that there is duplication between ECP activities and those of other jurisdictions or other organizations. Furthermore, the literature review reveals that while there are a number of exchange programs available to youth in Canada offered by government, non-profit and the private sector, relatively few focus on increasing an appreciation and understanding of Canada, its regional differences, and improving fluency of official languages.

The majority of interviewed Program and delivery partners do not consider that viable alternative approaches to the ECP exist. Findings from the literature review indicate that the non-profit sector often plays an important role in the delivery of existing exchange programs, while funding typically involves a mix of government, non-governmental and private sources. Programs that do not rely on government funding often have a limited scope.

Given the national scope of ECP objectives, interviewed delivery partners and Program staff were of the opinion that ECP could not be effectively transferred to either the provincial government or the private and non-profit sectors.

5. Recommendations and Management Response

Based on the findings of the summative evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program, the following recommendations are made to the management of the Program:

Recommendation 1 – Design and Delivery

That management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) review data on funding process timelines to address recipients' concerns. Administrative data must be compiled on an aggregate level to determine the current time frame required for funding decisions and allocations at the program level. Appropriate adjustments must be made accordingly, considering that delays can have negative repercussions on the delivery of approved projects. Additional follow-up from the program with funding applicants could help manage expectations and avoid dissatisfaction in case of delays.

Management Response – Accepted – Underway

- The ECP reviewed its Youth Forums Canada funding allocation decision process in summer 2009 in light of making the process more transparent and more predictable, and to establish a higher level of service for the client. This review was done after consultations with stakeholders.
- In October 2009, the ECP implemented a new cyclical six-month schedule for accepting Youth Forums funding applications. The first deadline of this new six-month cycle was October 30, 2009 for projects taking place at least six months after the application deadline. The Forums project assessment grid was developed to support the new process. (No changes were made to the Youth Exchanges component, as this program component is not typically affected by delays in project approvals.)
- As part of a PCH-wide project seeking to improve departmental service standards, the ECP has committed in writing to the following service standards for the processing of funding applications: 1.) to acknowledge receipt of funding applications within fifteen days; 2.) to provide funding decisions in writing within twenty four weeks after receiving a complete application; and 3.) to process payments within twenty eight days after the requirements outlined in contribution agreements or grant approval letters are met. The ECP will be publishing these service standards on its Web site in 2010-11.
- In addition, the PCH Grants and Contributions Information Management System (GCIMS) was upgraded in 2009 to allow for regular monitoring and reporting of services standards, including the ability to track the time required from the date an application is submitted to the funding decision and allocations at the program level on an aggregate basis. Regular reports on meeting of service standards will be available once the system is fully implemented.

- The ECP will review the GCIMS service standards reports on funding process timelines and make further changes, if necessary, to address recipients' concerns.

Implementation

- August 2009 – Consultation with stakeholders
- October 2009 – Implementation of a six-month cyclical schedule for Youth Forums application and first in-take process using revised assessment tools
- 2010-2011 and ongoing – Publication and implementation of Exchanges Canada service standards (as per the PCH-wide implementation timelines)
- 2010-11 (Q1) – Second Forums in-take according to new schedule (April 2010)
- 2010-11 (Q2) and ongoing – regular reporting on service standard commitments through GCIMS

Recommendation 2 – Performance measurement

That the management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) improve the performance measurement system. While many changes have been made to the performance measurement process since 2005, there continues to be a need for improvement. Specifically, changes to be considered include:

2a) Improving Data

The Program should review the existing feedback questionnaires to ensure that all immediate and ultimate outcomes are accurately captured. The current questionnaires do not address whether the participants used their second official language as part of their exchange experience, and the extent to which their participation had an impact in this area (other than to ask whether participation increased their interest). There is potential for better alignment between data collected in the feedback questionnaires and data needed for performance measurement and evaluation.

Management Response – Accepted

In collaboration with Evaluation Services, the ECP will undertake a review of existing questionnaires to ensure that they capture all of the outcomes outlined in the Program's Performance Measurement Strategy.

Implementation

- 2010-11 (Q1-Q2) – Review of questionnaire

2b) Measuring Impact

The Program should explore the feasibility of implementing longitudinal data collection and pre-participation measures. Additional post-participation data collection would make it possible to examine long-term impacts of participation. To do so, the program should explore the possibility of tracking and contacting participants over time. Implementing pre-participation questionnaires as planned could also provide a better assessment of impacts of participation.

Management Response – Not accepted

The collection of longitudinal data has been examined by ECP in the past, but has not been implemented because of significant additional cost and administrative burden. Constraints include:

- the administrative burden of obtaining consent to collect contact information from participants (and parental consent where the participant is under the age of majority);
- privacy issues related to the collection and storage of individual contact information;
- the challenge of ensuring confidentiality of questionnaire responses while collecting individual contact information;
- cost of administering and analyzing multiple questionnaires per participant;
- administrative burden placed on delivery organizations to cooperate with the ECP in administering a pre-participation questionnaire;
- the tremendous challenges the Program would face in maintaining up-to-date contact information on former youth participants for follow-up, given the high mobility of the age group.

These long-term follow-up challenges are similar to those faced by other youth programs, such as the Youth Employment Strategy (HRSDC). As such, the Program sees a greater cost-benefit in funding additional exchanges, rather than increasing administrative overhead by implementing a costly and resource-intensive system to facilitate the long-term tracking of participants.

Following the 2005 Evaluation, the Program took a number of steps to improve impact measurement, including the implementation of a new questionnaire for parents of participants and the revision of its organizer questionnaire to seek additional feedback on program outcomes for participants. Also, follow-up with past participants, through focus groups, is incorporated into the 5-year evaluation cycle.

Recommendation 3 – Reach

That the management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) continue to look at challenges underlying representation of different demographic segments among participants to ensure the diversity of participants. Participation by visible minorities continues to be low. As well, youth with disabilities are under-represented, females participate far more frequently than male youth, and Ontario youth are less well represented. The Program should explore potential reasons for under-representation among these groups. This would then allow the Program to better target its efforts at increasing participation among these groups.

Management Response – Accepted

- The ECP will continue its current practices of setting annual participation targets for the Program based on Census data by province and territory and by target population groups; it will also fix pertinent individual targets per organization in respective contribution agreements. Program officers will also continue to monitor projects and work with clients to ensure that targets are met on an ongoing basis.
- The Program will analyse questionnaire results in light of identifying trends and potential ways to increase participation among under-represented groups (boys vs. girls, visible-minority vs. general population, etc.)
- The Program will also further explore diversity of participants through meetings with clients to identify the difficulties and solutions available to ensure representative participation.
- Additional research may be undertaken in the next five years, depending on the results of an analysis of participation by under-represented groups and province and territory from 2006-07 to 2009-10.

Implementation

- Underway – Analysis of 2006-07/2009-10 participation and questionnaire results by under-represented groups and by province and territory
- 2010-11 (Q1) and ongoing on an annual basis – Preparation of annual program-wide and client-specific annual targets for under-represented youth and by province and territory
- 2010-11 (Q3) – Meetings with clients to discuss issues and solutions to ensure representative participation across all Exchanges Canada components

Recommendation 4 – Financial information

That management of the Exchanges Canada Program (ECP) complement existing financial information relating to participant costs. The program must analyse data on participant costs to determine what are the drivers and explain the variations over time. This will allow the program to better assess efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation.

Management Response – Accepted

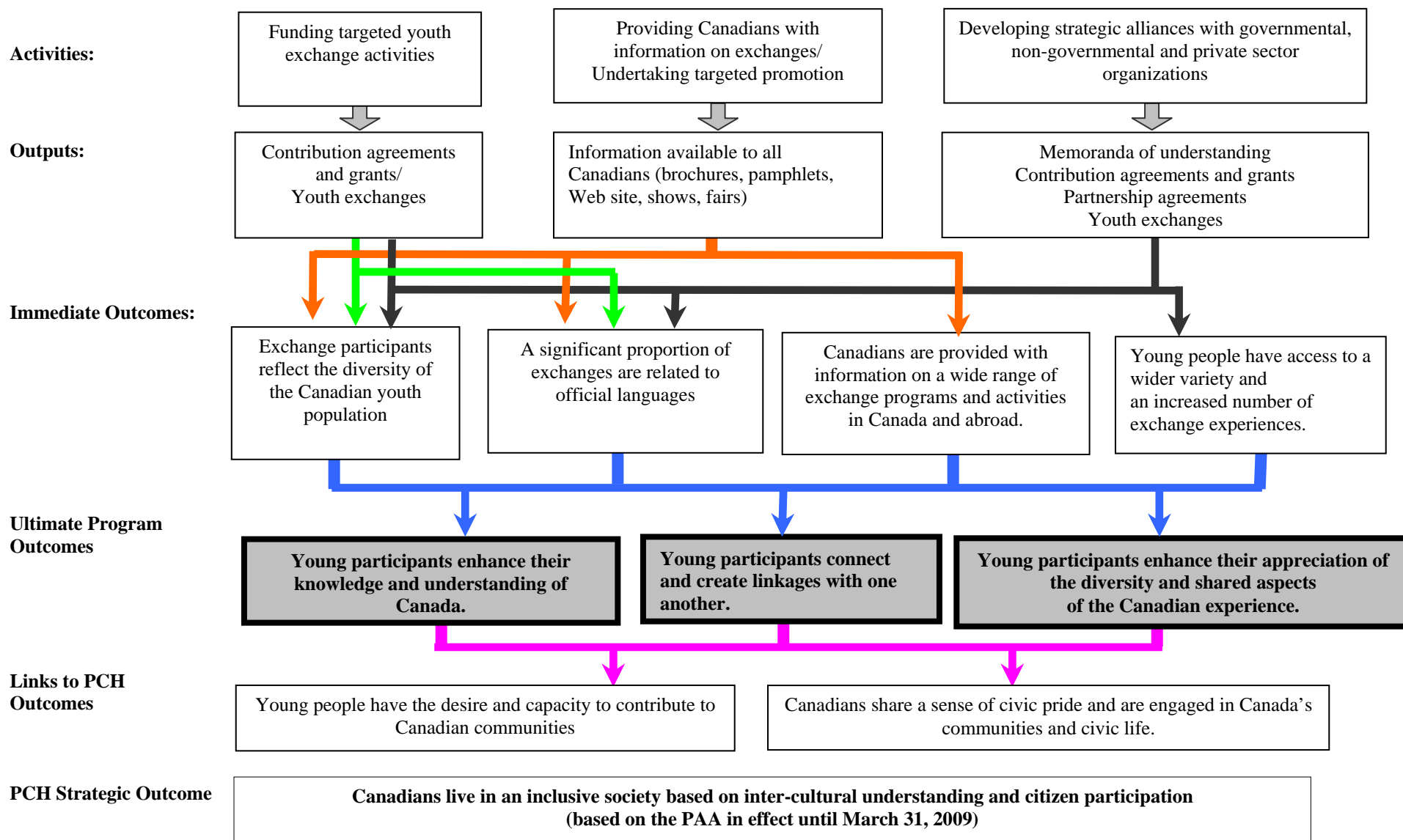
The Program will develop a new reporting tool to capture cost per participant information. The information will be compiled and analyzed annually to:

- identify and document any cost trends;
- to compare data by delivery organization and by program component; and
- to potentially inform decision-making.

Implementation

- 2010-2011 (Q1-Q2) – Development and implementation of a new reporting tool to capture cost per participant information.

Appendix A: Exchanges Canada Program Logic Model



Appendix B: Evaluation Matrix

Table 1.1: Evaluation Issues, Questions, Indicators and Data Collection Methods – Final

Evaluation Issue/Question	Indicator	Data Collection Methods
Relevance		
1. Are the program mandate, objective, activities, outputs and desired outcomes of the ECP still relevant and consistent with departmental, community, and public needs and priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The level of consistency between ECP objectives, activities, outputs and desired outcomes and departmental, public policy needs and priorities, as identified by available literature and statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Document review › Literature review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Views of Key informants regarding whether the ECP's objectives, activity areas, outputs and desired outcomes are consistent with needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Current and former Program managers/staff ▫ Delivery partners
2. Is there a legitimate and necessary role for the federal government in this program area or activity (e.g., role of initiator, or lever)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Views of Key informants regarding the legitimacy and necessity of the federal government's role in this program area or activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Current and former Program managers/staff ▫ Delivery partners
Design and Delivery		
3. Does the Program logic model reflect current Program Terms and Conditions and the departmental PAA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Program Terms and Conditions relative to the expected outcomes – need for modifications to the logic model/outcomes for the Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Document review
4. Are adequate management and administrative systems in place for effective program delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Extent to which the program is delivered effectively including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Satisfaction of delivery organizations with application process, funding decisions, administrative structures, selection criteria, etc. ▫ Views of key informants on the effectiveness (strengths, weaknesses) of application process, funding decisions, administrative structure, selection criteria, follow-up, communications, mechanisms through which information on the Program is provided, etc. ▫ Adequacy and appropriateness of selection criteria for delivery organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Document review › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Current and former Program managers/staff ▫ Delivery partners › Responses to questionnaires from organizers of exchanges

Evaluation Issue/Question	Indicator	Data Collection Methods
5. What, if any challenges have emerged in recent years? What changes to the design and delivery of the program are required to overcome these challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Opinions of Exchanges Canada officials/managers and delivery organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners › Document review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Description of special measures (i.e. what are they?) › Adequacy of special measures for reaching a diversity of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners
6. Do any operational constraints exist that impinge on the ability of the program to achieve its objectives and expected results? What changes to the design and delivery of the Program could be made to improve operational effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Opinions of Exchanges Canada officials/managers and delivery organizations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Operational constraints encountered ▣ Potential improvements to delivery process ▣ Evidence of other possible delivery mechanisms/ partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners › Document review › Literature review
Performance measurement		
7. Is an adequate performance measurement mechanism and system in place to account for results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Evidence of RMAF commitments and 2005 Summative Evaluation recommendations implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff › Document review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Adequacy of performance measurement mechanisms and system in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Extent to which the performance indicators accurately reflect outputs and results (Accuracy) ▣ Extent to which ECP data capture and reporting capacity (including external measurement project reporting) correspond to expectations outlined in the performance measurement framework (Accuracy) ▣ Extent to which the performance data being collected is accurate and complete (Quality) [NOTE: this overlaps with the first bullet/indicator] ▣ Extent to which information and data can be collected (Availability) ▣ Extent to which the performance data supports decision-making and departmental accountability requirements (Usefulness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff › Reviews of administrative systems and databases › Document review
8. What, if any, changes to performance measurement are required? Can any improvements be made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Program performance measurement possible improvements (based on opinions and analysis of documented evidence) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff › Document review

Evaluation Issue/Question	Indicator	Data Collection Methods
Success		
To what extent has the Exchanges Canada Program attained the expected immediate and intermediate outcomes?		
9. To what extent do Exchange participants reflect the diversity of the Canadian youth population?	› # and profile of actual participants in comparison to Canadian population	› Program database › Census data for specific age groups › Document review › Data from final reports from organizations › Participant responses to questionnaires
10. To what extent are exchanges related to official languages? To what extent do exchanges encourage second-language use/exposure or allow minority groups to meet youth from other regions of the country who speak their language?	› Participant profiles (official-language minority)	› Program database › Census data for specific age groups › Document review › Data from final reports from organizations › Participant responses to questionnaires
	› Number/proportion of exchanges related to official languages	› Program database › Final reports from organizations
	› Perceptions on the extent to which exchanges encourage second language use/exposure	› Key informant interviews ▫ Current and former Program managers/staff ▫ Delivery partners › Participant responses to questionnaires › Survey of non-participants (gen-pop survey of youth) › Focus groups with ECP participants and non-participants › Responses to questionnaires from organizers of exchanges › Parents' responses to questionnaires
11. To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their knowledge and understanding of Canada?	› Level and/or perception of participants (and non-participants) of their knowledge and understanding of Canada	› Survey of non-participants (gen-pop survey of youth) › Parents' responses to questionnaires › Responses to questionnaires from organizers of exchanges › Participants' answers to questionnaires › Focus groups with ECP participants and non-participants
12. To what extent have targeted participants connected and created linkages with one another?	› Perception of participants (and non-participants) on connections created (# of connections, level of, continuity, with whom)	› Anecdotal evidence from participants (quotes) › Participants' answers to questionnaires › Survey of non-participants (gen-pop survey of youth) › Focus groups with ECP participants and non-participants › Parents' responses to questionnaires

Evaluation Issue/Question	Indicator	Data Collection Methods
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Responses to questionnaires from organizers of exchanges
<p>13. To what extent have young people accessed a wider variety and an increased number of exchanges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of participants per year › Number and types of exchanges per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Program database › Document review › Program database › Data from final reports from organizations › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners
<p>14. To what extent have targeted participants enhanced their appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Level of appreciation of the diversity and shared aspects of the Canadian experience among participants (and non-participants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Participants' answers to questionnaires › Anecdotal evidence from participants (quotes) › Survey of non-participants (gen-pop survey of youth) › Focus groups with ECP participants and non-participants › Parents' responses to questionnaires
<p>15. Are there any other impacts and effects, either intended or not, resulting from this Program (life choices, personal development)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Views of participants (and non-participants) on other impacts (on themselves) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Participants' answers to questionnaires › Survey of non-participants (gen-pop survey of youth) › Anecdotal evidence from participants (quotes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Views of stakeholders on other impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners › Participants' answers to questionnaires › Parents' responses to questionnaires
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Views of partners and Exchanges Canada program managers on other impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Current and former Program managers/staff ▣ Delivery partners

Evaluation Issue/Question	Indicator	Data Collection Methods
Cost-Effectiveness		
16. Are the resources dedicated to this Program being used effectively and efficiently to maximize the achievement of results?	› Use/allocation of Program resources	› Document review › Program database
	› Opinions on cost-effectiveness of the ECP	› Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners
	› Comparison of use/allocation of Program resources with other, similar program (similar objectives, international programs) [Note: assumes comparable data will be available. PCH will need to identify/provide the data for this]	› Document review › Literature review
	› Identification of alternative mechanisms to deliver the ECP	› Document review › Literature review › Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners
17. Is the ECP duplicating or complementing existing programs/initiatives?	› Existence of other programs/initiatives that attempt to achieve the same as (overlap/duplication) or complementary objectives to the ECP	› Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners › Literature review
	› Evidence of efforts to diversify sources of funding for this program [on the part of delivery partners]	› Document review › Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners
18. Could this Program be fully or partially transferred to provincial government, the private sector, or the voluntary sector?	› Evidence of similar programs offered by provincial governments or other organizations › Strengths and weaknesses of these programs	› Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners › Literature review › Document review
	› Financial means/capacity of the voluntary and private sectors to offer these types of learning experiences	› Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners › Literature review
19. What is the proportion of costs spent on transfer payments as compared to operating costs? Is this reasonable? How does it %compare with other programs?	› Ratio of transfer payments to operating costs [Note: this assumes the data will be publicly available and comparable to Exchanges. It will be up to PCH to provide us with this data]	› Literature review › Program database
	› Views of Exchanges Canada management	› Key informant interviews ‣ Current and former Program managers/staff ‣ Delivery partners

Appendix C: List of Documents Reviewed

Bibliography- Document Review

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6. Canadian Heritage, Environmental Scan 2007-2008, Policy Research Group, Strategic Policy, Planning and Research Branch.
7. Canadian Heritage, Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate, Official languages Support Programs, 2006-2007.
8. Results based Report, Guidelines for Regional Offices or Branches, 2007-2008
9. Results Based Status Report, Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act, 2006-2007.
10. Annual Review on Official Languages, Department of Canadian Heritage, Citizen Participation Branch, 2004-2005.
11. Overview of Canadian Heritage Youth Programs (2006-2007)
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14. Appendix C, Terms and Conditions, Grants Class Entitled: Grants in Support of Innovative Youth Exchange Projects”, Exchanges Canada Program.
15. Internal Audit of Exchanges Canada Program, Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive, Assurance Services Directorate, Canadian Heritage, February 2008.
16. ECP Annual Statistics:

Exchanges Canada Participants by Group 2004-2005 (Final)
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Exchanges Canada Participants by Group 2006-2007 (Final)
Exchanges Canada Participants by Group 2007-2008 (Final)
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ECP Annual Contribution Agreement Commitments by Component
Exchanges Canada - Commitments 2004-2009 (07/10/09)

Literature Review. Summative Evaluation of the Exchanges Canada Program. Evaluation Services, Canadian Heritage. September 18, 2008.

Appendix D: Bibliography for the Literature Review

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2. Allameh, J. (1996). Interactive exchanges: American and international students at an IEP. Paper presented at Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Chicago, IL: 26-30.
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4. American Field Service (AFS) Long Term Impact Study Report 1: 20 to 25 years after the exchange experience, AFS alumni are compared with their peers Prepared by Bettina Hansel, Ph.D. Director of Intercultural Education and Research with Zhishun Chen, Research Assistant AFS International , April 2008
5. American Youth Policy Forum, Building an Effective Citizenry, Lessons Learned From Initiatives in Youth Engagement, 2003
6. Bennett, Milton J. Ph.D , Defining and Measuring Intercultural Learning in Study Abroad, State of the Art Research on Intercultural Learning in Study Abroad, and Best Practice for Intercultural Learning in International Educational Exchange., Intercultural Development Research Institute, International Educational Conference, "Moving beyond Mobility", October 13/14, 2008, Berlin.
7. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation Impact of International Exchange Programs in Iowa, 2005
8. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Outcome Assessment of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program Executive Summary June 2005
9. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Assessment of Selected Educational Exchange Programs in Turkey Executive Summary Overview May 2002
10. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of Policy and Evaluation Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program Evaluation, 1999 U.S. Department of State
11. Canada25, Canadians & the Common Good: Building a Civic Nation through Civic Engagement, 2007
12. Canada World Youth Impact Assessment, 2006

Appendix E: ECP Participant Rates by Target Group and by Year (2004-2005 to 2008-2009)

Table 1: Youth Exchanges Canada: Participants by Targeted Population Segment

Population Segments	Youth Exchanges Canada Participants										Totals (5 years)	
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		(n)	(%)
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)		
Leaders	1,088	12.4%	1,110	13.3%	1,025	12.8%	938	13.0%	974	13.1%	5,135	12.9%
Rural	3,977	45.4%	3,353	40.2%	3,505	43.6%	2,915	40.3%	2,900	39.1%	16,650	41.9%
Low Income	1,925	22.0%	1,812	21.8%	1,779	22.1%	1,762	24.4%	1,558	21.0%	8,836	22.2%
Aboriginal	619	7.1%	688	8.3%	626	7.8%	645	8.9%	560	7.6%	3,138	7.9%
Youth w/ Disability	420	4.8%	505	6.1%	602	7.5%	571	7.9%	557	7.5%	2,655	6.7%
Visible Minority	630	7.2%	800	9.6%	763	9.5%	927	12.8%	849	11.5%	3,969	10.0%
Totals - Youth Participants	8764		8331		8036		7236		7412		39,799	

Table 2: Youth Forums Canada: Participants by Targeted Population Segment

Population Segments	Youth Forums Canada Participants										Totals (5 years)	
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07*		2007-08*		2008-09		(n)	(%)
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)		
Leaders	378	6.7%	277	5.5%	144	6.3%	155	7.3%	321	6.2%	1,275	6.3%
Rural	1,363	24.1%	1,491	28.3%	520	22.8%	683	32.1%	565	10.9%	4,622	23.2%
Aboriginal	745	13.2%	582	11.1%	100	4.4%	147	6.9%	384	7.4%	1,958	9.8%
Youth w/ Disability	130	2.3%	120	2.3%	77	3.4%	21	1.0%	119	2.3%	467	2.2%
Visible Minority	409	7.2%	491	9.3%	251	11.0%	218	10.2%	688	13.2%	2,057	10.3%
Totals - Youth Participants	5657		5137		2279		2129		5201		20,403	

* Data per population segment is unavailable for Encounters with Canada for this year (FY2007 YFC = 2,279; FY2008 YFC = 2,129)

Table 3: Summer Work/Student Exchanges: Participants by Targeted Population Segment

Population Segments	Summer Work / Student Exchange										Totals (5 years)	
	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		(n)	(%)
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)		
Leaders	165	13.8%	165	13.6%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	330	7.4%
Rural	280	23.3%	210	17.3%	298	24.0%	16	7.4%	113	18.3%	917	20.4%
Aboriginal	6	0.5%	136	11.2%	45	3.6%	2	0.9%	23	3.7%	212	4.7%
Youth w/ Disability	28	2.3%	32	2.6%	35	2.8%	1	0.5%	39	6.3%	135	3.0%
Visible Minority	85	7.1%	117	9.7%	135	10.9%	29	13.5%	104	16.8%	470	10.5%
Totals - Youth Participants	1200		1212		1240		215		618		4,485	

Source: PCH Annual statistics - Exchanges Canada Participants by Group

Appendix F: Existing Exchange Programs in Canada and Alternative Delivery Models

Table 1: Existing Exchange Programs

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Program Type	Target Participants	Program Objectives	Program Duration	Delivery method
Katimavik	Communities across Canada	Service learning	Canadian citizens and landed immigrants aged 17 to 21 years	Contribute substantially to the personal, social and professional development of the participants; Promote community service; and Offer a diversified experience fostering a better understanding of the Canadian reality	39 weeks	Funded primarily by the federal government (PCH) (with additional funds through fundraising efforts) and delivered by a third-party non-government organization, Katimavik-OPCAN Inc.
Interchange on Canadian Studies	Canada	Annual forum Week long, reciprocal exchanges	Secondary school aged student living in Canada	To facilitate and further enrich our knowledge of Canada. To promote understanding on the part of young Canadians toward others. To promote understanding and appreciation for Canada's diverse heritage. To develop an understanding of, and an appreciation for, the regional aspect of Canada. To foster, in young Canadians, a greater commitment to participate in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of Canada.	2 weeks	Funded through grants from the federal and provincial/territorial governments, and some corporate and private donations. Student and adult participant fees are currently set at \$750

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Program Type	Target Participants	Program Objectives	Program Duration	Delivery method
Activate	National	Youth leadership training program Youth leadership conference	Canadians aged 16-22	Brings together a group of diverse young Canadians, Providing a non-threatening and supportive environment where they can realize their own leadership potential and their potential to make a significant contribution in their own communities.	5 day annual conference in Ottawa Ongoing leadership experiences	Funded by Motivate Canada and other sponsorships. Delivered as one of four unique programs from Motivate Canada.
Adventure in Citizenship	National	Youth leadership conference	High school students aged 16-19.	Designed to develop youth potential as leaders in their communities and in Canadian society	4 day conference in Ottawa	Funded by Canadian Rotary Clubs. Delivered by Rotary Club of Ottawa.
Destination Clic	National	Bursary program for intensive French language courses and cultural exchange.	Francophones aged 14-15 and 16+.	To make discoveries, enjoy new experiences, meet new people, and achieve real and useful goals, all this while exploring another region of Canada. Improving fluency in French.	3 to 5 week courses	The Department of Canadian Heritage provides funding for programs. The provinces and territories assume the costs of the program's decentralized administration. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada coordinates the program at the pan-Canadian level.
Explore	National	Bursary program for language training. Regional discovery.	Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Minimum of grade 11 to post-secondary students.	Explore offers five weeks of opportunities to make discoveries, meet new people, and exchange ideas in a stimulating setting for learning a second language. Experience something new. Participants explore their country and their personal capabilities.	5 weeks	The Department of Canadian Heritage provides funding for programs. The provinces and territories assume the costs of the program's decentralized administration. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Program Type	Target Participants	Program Objectives	Program Duration	Delivery method
						coordinates the program at the pan-Canadian level.
Ontario-Quebec Exchange Fellowship Program	Ontario	Fellowship program	Graduate students	allows students from Ontario to pursue full-time graduate studies at the master's or doctoral level at a university in Quebec. This program offers outstanding students from Ontario the opportunity to live and study in the cultural milieu of Quebec.	Varies. One semester +.	Sponsored by the Ontario-Quebec Commission for Co-operation in accordance with the interprovincial Agreement for Co-operation and Exchange in Educational and Cultural Matters.
Quebec-Alberta Students Employment Exchange Program	Alberta and Quebec	Employment Program Second language Regional experience	Post-secondary students	To provide a meaningful work experience related to the student's field of study; opportunity to enhance second-language skills; and opportunity to experience and learn about the culture of the other province	4 months/ summer	n/a
Shad Valley	National	Youth enrichment program	High school. Grade 10-12	an academically stimulating, mind expanding adventure for top well-rounded students. Students participate in recreational activities and explore local attractions.	4 weeks	Not-for-profit organization. Varied public and private support.

Table 2: Alternative Delivery Models

Delivery Models	Comments	Program examples
Government-funded, government delivered		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government-driven program parameters - Individual participants apply directly to government - Some costs shared by individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government organization may be a federal/national level, provincial or multijurisdictional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alberta Quebec Student Language Development Exchange Program
Government-funded, non-profit or third sector delivered		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government-driven program parameters, allowing for local variation - Applicants are non-profit organizations - Exchange participants recruited by non-profit with delivery by non-profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National level umbrella may be primary applicant with delivery conducted by locals - Deliverers may obtain funding from other sources (e.g., governmental or non-governmental grants, corporate sponsorship, individual fees, fundraising) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchanges Canada - AmeriCorps - US Department of State programs
Government-funded, education institution delivered		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government-driven program parameters - Education institutions are applicants for funding, responsible for recruiting, delivery, monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primarily for post-secondary student exchanges/study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian programs such as Endeavour Student Exchange Program, ERASMUS
Non-profit funded and delivered		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange opportunities offered to members or identified target group - Coordination provided by non-profit organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding obtained through membership (fees, fundraising, volunteer commitment) - Cost of exchange responsibility of individual, often involves hosting commitment - Often highly specialized or narrow objectives/target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotary Club