

February 9, 2019

YMCA of Greater Toronto
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RE: Evaluation of the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

To Whom It May Concern:

Bridge2Action would like to present the YMCA of Greater Toronto with our evaluation proposal for the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program (YCAP), as requested. We are proposing a combined process and outcome evaluation with a participatory approach to assessing the reach, uptake and effect of YCAP. We are pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with the YMCA of Greater Toronto in order to facilitate an evaluation of the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program, and hope our proposal fits your needs.

Please find attached our proposal, which includes the following:

- Brief overview of the YMCA of Greater Toronto and description of Youth Cannabis Awareness Program and its stakeholders;
- Understanding of evaluation need;
- Proposed program logic model and accompanying narrative;
- Recommended evaluation design (type, approach, and data collection methodology)
- Evaluation matrix with key evaluation questions;
- Table of anticipated challenges and proposed mitigation strategies;
- Description of Bridge2Action's demonstrated competencies of the Canadian evaluation practice.

Our team is composed of a diverse collective of skilled and passionate evaluators with experience in community engagement, mixed-methods research and evaluation theory. We take pride in offering a participatory approach to evaluation in order to ensure top-notch results for our clients. We are dedicated to providing comprehensive evaluation services and hope to work collaboratively with YMCA of Greater Toronto to ensure the success of Youth Cannabis Awareness Program evaluation.

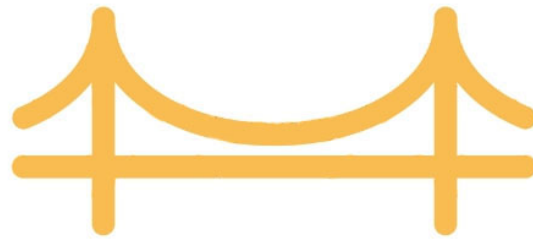
Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or clarifications. Our proposal is a living document that can be adapted to the needs of YMCA of Greater Toronto and relevant stakeholders to ensure utility and feasibility of the evaluation. We thank you for this opportunity and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Bridge2Action

Evaluation of the YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

Prepared by:



Bridge2Action

Prepared for:
The YMCA of the Greater Toronto



February 9, 2019

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1.0 Understanding of Requirement

1.1 Program Overview

YMCA Description

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is an organization based in Ontario that has been in operation for almost 160 years. YMCA offers over 60 different programs to 275 sites throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The YMCA encourages community involvement, healthy lifestyles, and value-based living through a variety of programs and services that are inclusive for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. A key vision of the YMCA is to enable the development of communities that are home to healthy children, teens and young adults. Findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) showed that cannabis use has become a widespread activity among youth, with increased use among the new legalization laws in Canada. In an attempt to address this, the YMCA of Greater Toronto proposed the new YCAP initiative, which also aligns with the 2010-2020 strategic plan – **Strong Start, Great Future**.

Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

The YCAP program's primary objective is to educate youth and adults on cannabis awareness, including healthy choices, potential risks, and informed and responsible decision making. Additionally, the aim of the program is to invest in and empower young people to join the conversation on cannabis within their communities, so that they may become more involved proponents for cannabis awareness. The three central components of the program are Awareness Raising Activities, Community Involvement Projects and Youth Engagement Projects. The Awareness Raising Activities involve age appropriate workshops (8-13, 14-18, 19-24, and parent/professional), specifically developed using a harm reduction approach. The goal of these workshops is to reduce the harms associated with cannabis use by improving knowledge of cannabis. The second component is the Community Involvement Projects, which utilise Youth Outreach Workers to build partnerships and collaborations with community organizations in the hope of planning and implementing awareness events centered around youth cannabis use. The final component is the Youth Engagement Projects, which empower youth to become involved in the planning and decision-making processes of cannabis issues related to young peoples.

1.2 Program Stakeholders

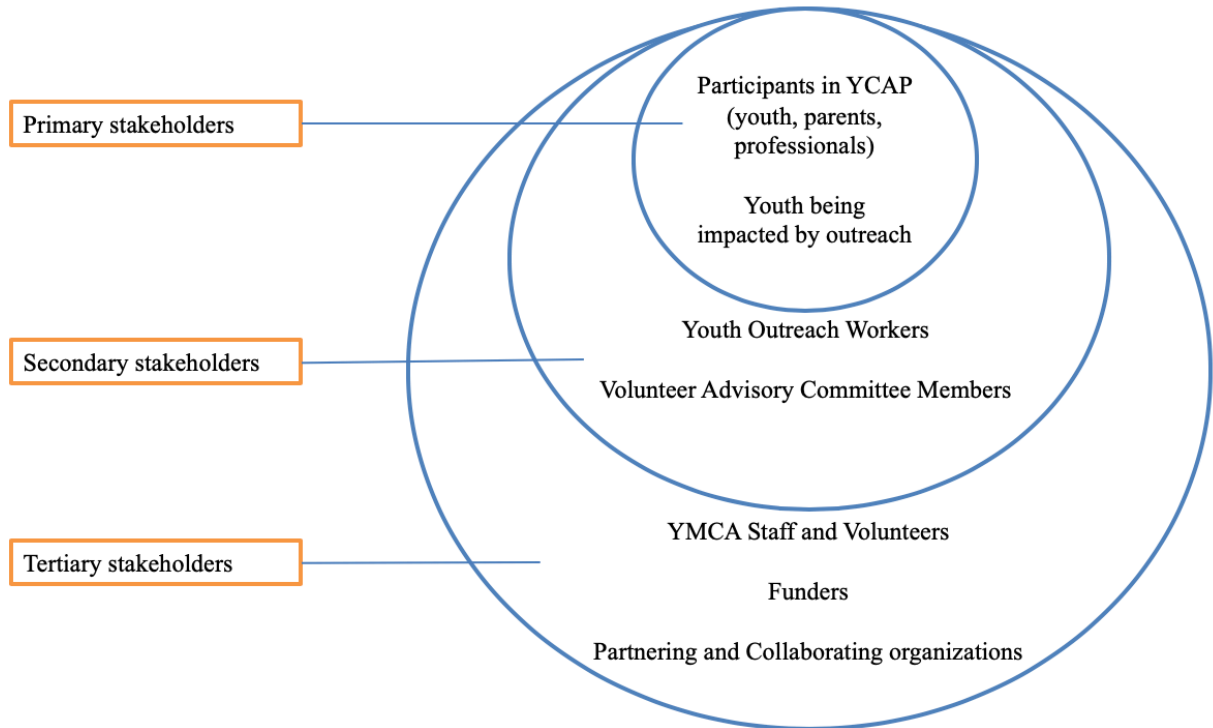
Our team has identified the key stakeholders for the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program based on information provided by the YMCA of Greater Toronto (see Figure 1.). Stakeholders are broken down into three categories:

1. Primary stakeholders: those who are directly impacted by the program
 - Participants in the YCAP (youth, parents, professionals)
 - Youth being impacted by outreach
2. Secondary stakeholders: those who are directly contributing to impact the program
 - Youth Outreach Workers
 - Volunteer Advisory Committee Members
3. Tertiary stakeholders: people/organizations that play a supporting role in the funding and implementation of the program



- YMCA Staff and Volunteers
- Funders
- Partnering and Collaborating organizations

Stakeholder Map



1.3 Evaluation Need

Evaluation Purpose

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the uptake and reach of the YCAP across the province, and the ongoing effects on its participants and the surrounding community
 - a. Includes assessing how YCAP has educated participants about resources and supports available, cultivating participant social competencies, and relaying knowledge about health risks and laws related to cannabis use.
2. Measure the effects of the awareness raising activities on youth and young adults
 - a. Gather feedback through youth and youth outreach worker surveys and focus groups
3. Assess the effects of the youth engagements and community involvement projects on promoting knowledge and awareness of cannabis use among youth and young adults
 - a. This will be done through youth and community partner surveys, focus groups, and photovoice



Evaluation Scope

YMCA's YCAP program will be the main focus for this evaluation and will not include any other programs. A logic model will be developed (see Appendix A) and further discussed with program stakeholders through a Youth Evaluation Advisory Group. The evaluation, as requested, will focus on short term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes but data collection will primarily be based on short and immediate outcomes using tools such as surveys, focus groups and photovoice that are appropriate for each age group. This evaluation will measure both the process and outcome of YCAP, to meet the needs requested by the YMCA of Greater Toronto. Finally, evaluation of the success of YCAP will be limited to youth and young adults.

2.0 Logic Model and Logic Model Narrative

2.1 Logic Model

Please see Appendix A for our team's proposed logic model.

2.2 Logic Model Narrative

Bridge2Action has created a program logic model (see Appendix A) for the YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program. Logic models visually demonstrate the links between how program resources and activities impact the overall results, or outcomes (1). The model also accounts for assumptions, risks, and external factors which influence the proposed casual linkages, represented by arrows.

The logic model is based on our understanding that the overall goal of this program is to increase cannabis awareness among youth and adults. The model is built under several assumptions. Primarily, that the harm reduction framework is the best practice to minimize the risks associated with cannabis use among youth. It also follows the assumption that breaking youth into three age groups to approach cannabis education is the most effective method. Our team sees potential risk to the YCAP in not having enough resources to successfully implement the program, as 17 Youth Outreach Program Workers implementing this program across Ontario may require more support. There is also the potential for the misconception among youth of the resources YCAP is providing. If not implemented properly, this program risks exposing youth to cannabis in a negative context. External factors which play a role in the logic model, include family support for youth engagement, funding continuity for this program, and cooperation of communities for this program, given the current stigma around cannabis use.

Overall, this model represents the theory of change of YCAP. Awareness raising, community involvement, and youth engagement activities are methods of providing accurate information about cannabis use to the community and to youth in a non-judgemental manner. This leads to outcomes in the logic model by encouraging community and youth sovereignty in making their own choices about cannabis use as a high-risk activity. Changes in youth practice of cannabis occurs as these decisions are made.

3.0 Proposed Evaluation Methodology

3.1 Evaluation Design

3.1.1 Evaluation Type: Process and Outcome

YMCA has created a new initiative called the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program and seeks to evaluate the reach and uptake of the program, the effects of the awareness raising activities on youth and young adults and the effects of the youth engagement and community involvement projects on promoting knowledge and awareness of cannabis use. Based on these evaluation needs, Bridge2Action is proposing a combined process and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation can be used to “measure the activities of the program, program quality and who it is reaching” (2). Outcome evaluation typically aims to gauge the immediate and intermediate effects of a program by measuring how the programs objectives have been achieved (2). Combining these two types of evaluations will allow us to not only to evaluate awareness and engagement levels between youth and community partners, but also measure the outcomes within each of the three youth groups and adult participants.

3.1.2 Evaluation Approach: Participatory

Bridge2Action proposes a participatory evaluation approach, which is youth informed as young people are at the heart of the program. To ensure that youth are engaged in all steps of the evaluation, we will develop a Youth Evaluation Advisory Group (YEAG) comprised of youth, young adults, youth outreach workers and volunteers from the Advisory Committee. The YEAG will draw from their lived experiences and expertise to guide the evaluators in validating the logic model and evaluation matrix, including feedback on the appropriateness and feasibility of the evaluation approach, as well as methods and data collection tools. Moreover, the youth will also be engaged during the data analysis and interpretation stage through the dot-mocracy method, and their feedback will be solicited to inform preliminary evaluation results (3).

Adapting a participatory approach will build evaluation capacity within the program and provide evaluation skills to interested youth and young adults. This approach will also help generate stakeholder buy-in for the evaluation and help youth and young adults build connections with each other. YEAG members would ideally be of differing ages, backgrounds and lived experiences. YEAG meetings will be accessible online and in-person to give opportunities for youth and young adults across Ontario to participate.

This framework has been designed in accordance with the evaluation standards put forth by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation and adopted by the Canadian Evaluation Society in 2002. Standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and accountability have been considered in the development of this document.



3.2 Data Collection Methods

In order to comprehensively assess the reach, uptake and effect of awareness raising activities, youth engagement and community involvement projects initiated by YCAP, Bridge2Action proposes the following data collection methods:

Method #1 Program Records Review

YCAP records would be reviewed primarily to assess the reach of the program. By reviewing workshops training materials, feedback forms, registration statistics, activity logs, attendance sheets and other relevant documents identified by the stakeholders, the evaluation will be able to answer characteristics of youth who are involved in the program and identify areas where reach could be enhanced.

Method #2 Survey (Youth, Outreach Worker, Local Advisory Committee and Community Partners)

We propose delivering a survey to youth 14-18 and 19-24 years of age. The survey would compose of a combination of closed and open-ended questions gaging their knowledge and skill around youth cannabis use, their level of enjoyment in youth-driven and community initiatives related to cannabis use and other indicators listed in the evaluation matrix in Appendix B.

A similar survey could be designed for each of the following groups: youth outreach workers, local advisory committee and community partners that would have unique insights to share about the effects of awareness raising activities, youth engagement and community involvement projects initiated by YCAP.

Method #3 Photovoice Activity

Photovoice is an arts-based qualitative research technique and participatory action research method that could be used in this evaluation to see how youth engagement and community collaboration around cannabis use looks like. Youth participants (all ages) will be able to use photos to capture how they are involved in their communities around cannabis use. They may be able to communicate YCAP effects that may otherwise not be communicated via other data collection methods.

Method #4 Focus Groups

Focus groups for each participants group, youth outreach workers and community partners could be used investigate wide range of perceptions around youth cannabis use, regulations, mental and physical risks among other indicators outlined in the evaluation matrix in appendix B. Focus group could be used after expand on important takeaways from the survey and allow participants to mention issue including unanticipated program outcomes (negative or positive) that may have been missed by other data collection methods. In addition, focus groups will have a parking lot board and anonymous comment box where participants can contribute insights that they may not have felt comfortable or safe to express in a group setting. All focus groups would include interactive activities to increase engagement such as dot-mocracy mentioned in the previous section an

Method #5 Diaries

This method involves youth participants record data over a period of time by journaling (words, pictures etc.) on what they think of cannabis use, what safe use looks like, how they about participating in and being heard about issues related to youth cannabis use. By journaling and recording data on a regular basis recall bias could be addressed. Moreover, this method may



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provide information on expressed in other methods as it is more persisted and private o participants.

4.0 Evaluation Matrix

Please see Appendix B for Evaluation Matrix including key evaluation questions, indicators, data sources and collection methods/tools.



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5.0 Anticipated Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenge	Proposed Mitigation Strategy
Availability and willingness of youth, children, and other stakeholders	Schedule youth meetings at a convenient time for youth (i.e., Embedded in school sessions or after school) Offer incentives (e.g. handcraft gifts, food); Establish relationships with youth so they feel welcome, included and willing to participate.
Ethical challenges in working with minors	Many Bridge2Action members have experience working with minors; Ensure that parents are informed and comfortable about the processes; Ask the Volunteer Advisory Committee for context-sensitive ethical guidance.
Social desirability bias may skew results as youth may feel invested in program and over-attribute their successes to the program. Staff and volunteers may hesitate to openly discuss their perceptions of the program.	Use trained interviewers from outside the program; triangulate methods and data sources; ask youth on advisory group to communicate need for honest reflection from their friends
Challenges in interpreting the art-based data collected	Triangulate with other data sources, especially diaries.
Low response rates for data collection	Offer incentives (e.g. gift cards) for participation; use social media and snowball sampling to recruit youth from diverse backgrounds and communities; build relationship with Youth Evaluation Advisory Group (YEAG) members to encourage them to recruit participants.

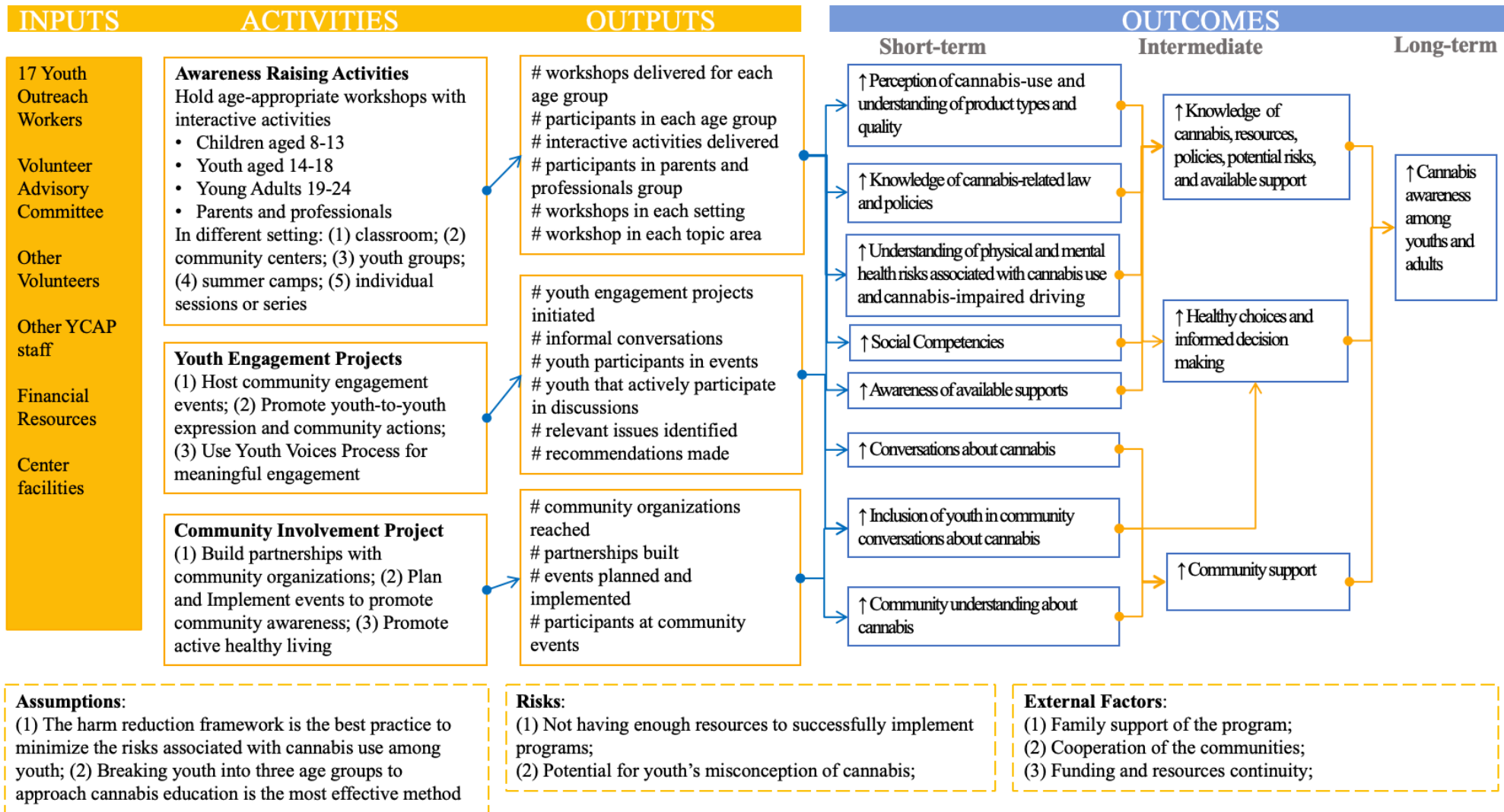


6.0 Demonstration of Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

Bridge2Action will follow the proper standards of practice, code of ethics and evaluation competencies outlined by the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) to conduct a process and outcome evaluation. To successfully evaluate the impact of the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program, the main competency which we implemented has been identified (CES, 2018).

CE Competency	Evidence in Proposal
3.2 Identifies stakeholder' needs and their capacity to participate, while recognizing, respecting, and responding to aspects of diversity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Encouraging community and youth sovereignty in making their own decisions pertaining to cannabis use and how it effects their communities (demonstrated in our proposed logic model in Appendix A).2) Ensuring age-appropriate data collection, based on needs and capacity of different age groups (demonstrated in the use of diaries, photovoice, surveys or interviews; depending on age-group)3) Is open to different ways of learning, recognizing knowledge, and conceptualizing evaluation. Evaluators are working alongside the youth in every step of this evaluation to ensure their voices are heard.4) Having a diverse representation on our YEAG.5) Chooses and applies different communication strategies, depending on the context, to create appropriate and effective communication with stakeholders. Youth Evaluation Advisory Group meetings begin with acknowledgement of territory; team building activities included to help participants learn about each other; diverse representation on YEAG, striving to be both equitable and inclusive.

Appendix 1: Logic Model



Appendix 2: Evaluation Matrix



Evaluation Question	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Method or Tool
1. What is the reach and uptake of the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program (YCAP)?			
a. What is YCAP's reach, the number of individuals from the target participant population and community partners who are involved with the program?	Reach = $\frac{\text{actual \# of participants involved in YCAP}}{\text{potential \# of participants involved in YCAP}}$	Program records Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey	Program record review
	Reach = $\frac{\text{actual \# of community partners involved in YCAP}}{\text{potential \# of community partners involved in YCAP}}$		
b. What are YCAP's participant characteristics? -Who are they? -Where are they based? -How did they get involved?	# of youth talking to their peers about YCAP	Program records	Program record review
	Demographic information (age, location, gender, primary language etc. of YCAP participants) # of people involved through awareness raising activities # of people involved through community involvement projects # of people involved through youth engagement projects		
c. What is YCAP's uptake at the organizational level? -What are the settings the program activities have taken place in? -Are there differences between the settings that participate and those that don't?	# of activities delivered in classrooms	Program records	Program record review
	# of activities delivered in community centers # of activities delivered in youth groups # of activities delivered in summer camps # of activities booked individually # of activities booked as a series # of settings community partnerships have been developed		
2. What are the effects of awareness raising activities on youth and young adults?			
a. To what extent have the workshops raised awareness in each of the topic areas? (IE: knowledge use on cannabis use, perceptions, impaired driving, the law, physical and mental health risks, product types and quality)	# of workshops delivered in each identified topic area # of youth attending the workshops # of youth actively engaged in the workshops # of youths engaging in discussions about cannabis use and its effects Self-reported shifts (if any) in cannabis use perceptions and knowledge by youth % of youth participants familiar with cannabis related laws and regulations including impaired driving	Youth Program records Youth Outreach Workers	Youth Survey Focus groups with interactive activities (dotmocracy...) Youth Outreach Worker Survey Diaries



	<p>% of youth participants aware of physical and mental health risks of cannabis use</p> <p>% of youth participants informed on cannabis product types and quality</p>		
<p>b. To what extent have youth's knowledge on support resources changed? (i.e. knowledge of where, when, and how to seek supports related to youth cannabis use)</p>	<p># of youth requesting additional support</p> <p># of email inquiries</p> <p>% of youth informed of common supports and resources available for cannabis use</p>	<p>Youth</p> <p>Program records</p> <p>YMCA volunteers</p> <p>Youth Outreach Workers</p>	<p>Youth Survey</p> <p>Focus groups with interactive activities (dotmocracy...)</p> <p>Youth Outreach Worker Survey Diaries</p>
<p>c. To what extent, have workshops contributed to developing the related social competencies? (i.e. problem solving, emotional regulation, goal setting, and risk resiliency/refusal skills training)</p>	<p># of youth practicing behaviors to reduce cannabis use</p> <p>Self reported confidence in executing cannabis related refusal skills</p> <p># of youth engaged in goal setting and emotional regulation</p>	<p>Youth</p>	<p>Youth Survey</p> <p>Focus groups with interactive activities (dotmocracy...)</p> <p>Diaries</p>
<p>d. Are the effects consistent across different groups (3 youth groups)?</p>	<p>Variance in knowledge retained from awareness raising activities across different youth groups (8-13,14-18,19-24)</p> <p>Variance in skills built from awareness raising activities across different youth groups (8-13,14-18,19-24)</p>	<p>Youth</p> <p>Program records</p> <p>Youth Outreach Workers</p> <p>YMCA Volunteers</p>	<p>Youth Survey</p> <p>Focus groups with interactive activities (dotmocracy...)</p> <p>Youth Outreach Worker Survey Diaries</p>
<p>3. What are the effects of the youth engagement and community involvement projects on promoting knowledge and awareness of cannabis use among youth and young adults?</p>			
<p>a. What has been the impact of building partnerships and collaborations on youth and young adults' knowledge and awareness of cannabis use?</p>	<p># of events initiated to promote community awareness and involvement related to youth cannabis use</p> <p># of initiatives developed by Youth Outreach Workers that reflect community needs and promote healthy active living, informed decision making and education related to youth cannabis use</p> <p># and quality of networks built to support YCAP activities</p> <p>Perceptions of community partners about youth cannabis use and harm reduction</p>	<p>Youth Outreach Workers</p> <p>Community Partners</p> <p>Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Youth Outreach Worker Survey</p> <p>Community Partner Survey</p> <p>Diaries</p>
<p>b. How have youth-driven initiatives contributed to promoting youth expression and community action related to youth cannabis use?</p>	<p>Insights of youth of their own involvement in the community related to cannabis use</p> <p>Youth's self-reported skills gained from being involved in planning and decision making processes of cannabis use issues</p> <p>Perception of youth on the impact of youth driven initiatives</p>	<p>Youth</p>	<p>Photovoice</p> <p>Community Partner Survey</p> <p>Youth Survey</p> <p>Focus Group</p> <p>Diaries</p>



Perceptions of youth on authentic and meaningful engagement

c.Are effects consistent across different youth groups?

Variance in influence of different youth groups on youth engagement and community involvement projects

Youth
Program records
Youth Outreach
Workers
YMCA Volunteers

Youth Survey
Focus groups with
interactive activities
(dotmocracy...)
Youth Outreach
Worker Survey
Community Partner
Survey
Diaries

References

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