

# Community Access Program Youth Initiative Summative Evaluation Study

## Management Response

May 2003

### Background:

This summative evaluation was undertaken by KPMG Consulting in order to obtain program results and identify program improvements of Industry Canada's Community Access Program Youth Initiative (CAP YI). The purpose of the evaluation was to address the following issues:

- \_ The extent to which there is a need for CAP YI.
- \_ The extent to which the CAP YI structure and delivery are appropriate.
- \_ The results (intended and unintended) that have been achieved by CAP YI.
- \_ The lessons learned and how CAP YI can be improved.

In order to address these issues, the consultant conducted the evaluation in four steps:

- \_ Completion of a student summary report;
- \_ Completion of a delivery agent summary report;
- \_ Development of interview guides; and
- \_ Completion of stakeholder interviews.

Management noted with satisfaction that the study's findings are very positive concerning the need for CAP YI and the results achieved by CAP YI, and recognizes that improvements are needed with regards to the appropriateness of CAP YI structure and delivery. Management also noted the suggested improvements for CAP YI and is committed to addressing each of the recommendations.

**Suggested improvement #1:** Timely process is required in the delivery of funds

**Management Response:** Agree

CAP YI projects were approved late in 2001-02 and 2002-03 primarily due to a lengthy timeframe to change the process of program delivery. The need for change was recognized in the fall of 2000, when a Management and Financial Audit of IHAB resulted in a series of remedial actions, including the review of financial instruments used for program delivery. Dixon Management Consulting was hired in 2001 to study the issue of financial instruments, and recommended that programs previously delivered through contracts be delivered through Contribution Agreements in order to comply with Government of Canada regulations.

2001-02 Fiscal Year

Although this recommendation was adopted, IHAB programs could not commence with program delivery through Contribution Agreements until model agreements were developed. Given the length of the process to negotiate changes in this area, implementation of IHAB programs were in jeopardy. As a result, the DM approved a transition plan which permitted IHAB Youth programs and GrassRoots to continue using contracts for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. Since the final decision on the continuation of using service contracts for 2001-2002 was not approved until June 2001, it was impossible for CAP YI to get all the contracts signed by delivery agents before the end of August 2001.

2002-03 Fiscal Year

CAP YI and other Information Highway Application Branch (IHAB) programs went through the process of revising their delivery method so that Contribution Agreements rather than contracts could be used in the 2002-03 fiscal year. Although CAP was the first in line to develop a new agreement, many unexpected barriers resulted in delays of the program launch.

*First*, many IHAB programs had to develop contribution agreements under the supervision of PSB, Legal Services, the Comptroller's Branch and the Audit and Evaluation Branch, overloading the system.

*Second*, PSB had ruled that CAP YI did not have program authority, and discussions continued with Treasury Board Secretariat and the Comptroller's branch took place to resolve this problem. The program authority issue was finally resolved in July 2002, when a letter the Minister confirming program authority was signed by the Minister.

*Third*, CAP YI was deemed a low priority within the IHAB group of programs.

*Fourth*, the development of our model agreement was delayed due to a change in legal council.

*Fifth*, the approval process took longer than expected, leaving the delivery agents little more than the last quarter of the fiscal year to implement their projects

For 2003-2004, delays were encountered due to the renewal of HRDC Youth Employment Strategy. Due to these changes, all YES participating programs were required to submit revised terms and conditions to the Treasury Board of Canada for approval under the new YES program description and objectives. All CAP YI contribution agreements are expected to be signed by all parties by the end of June.

**Follow-up action:** Now that the model contribution agreements have been developed, CAP YI should be rolled-out in a more acceptable timeframe in upcoming years. CAP YI management was able to minimize the delays in 2003-2004 due to the experience gained in the past years by CAP YI staff and the delivery agents.

**Timeframe:** On-going

**Suggested improvement #2:** Delivery agents should meet to share lessons learned or best practices.

**Management Response:** Agree

**Follow-up:** A CAP YI meeting was held August 2002, where all delivery agents were invited to participate. Industry Canada representatives coordinated the event and CAP YI management gave an information session on the latest developments. Delivery agents shared their experiences and expertise and were able to address their concerns and questions directly to CAP YI representatives. The event was appreciated by all parties and will become a regular practice.

**Timeframe:** On-going

**Suggested improvement #3:** More communication from Industry Canada to delivery agents.

**Management Response:** Agree with reservation

Management notes that communication can be improved and realize that transparency is one of the key elements, especially when it comes to the status of the program and related issues. Suggestions from delivery agents have always been considered and sometimes their inputs have been incorporated into the program. Because CAP YI is part of HRDC YES, some of the policies and program structures cannot be negotiated. Also, CAP YI is a national program and some of the feedback that comes from our delivery agents are specific to their province/territory and cannot be applied to the rest of Canada. Moreover, the delivery criteria and practices must be applied consistently to ensure an equitable approach across Canada.

**Follow-up:** CAP YI will engage in increasing communication with the delivery agents by participating in the national CAP YI meetings (see suggested improvement #2) and will continue to consider all observations, inputs and comments from delivery agents. Updates on the status of the program will be provided to delivery agents and regional staff through email and regional conference calls. CAP YI staff will attend CAP conferences in the regions to obtain feedback.

A Communications Plan developed for CAP YI is under discussion with MINO.

**Timeframe:** On-going

**Suggested improvement #4:** Youth and Delivery Agent reports need to be reviewed.

**Management Response:** Agree

**Follow-up:** Due to the renewal of the YES program, all reports have to be reviewed and questionnaires will be re-evaluated to ensure that the information obtained will be relevant and usable. Also, the CAP YI virtual office will be up-dated and the system should be fully operational very soon.

**Timeframe:** On-going, beginning in 2003-2004.

**Suggested improvement #5:** Option of longer work terms – 6 months rather than 12 weeks.

**Management Response:** Noted

This issue was raised in past years and CAP YI management analysed the impact that longer internships would have on the program. Longer work terms would drastically diminish the number of youth that current funding can support which would have a major impact on the number of CAP Sites that would be have the support of a youth worker.

**Follow-up:** Management came to the conclusion that in the interest of the CAP sites and the youth, there should not be any changes in the duration of internship in the near future.

**Timeframe:**

**Management Accountability:**

CAP YI management is not solely responsible for the implementation of these recommendations. However, CAP YI will raise the issues with the appropriate parties to ensure that program improvements will be considered and that action will be taken in a timely and effective manner.