CYC Summary Report
Activity # 18

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Directions des programmes autochtones
Aboriginal Youth Programs Directorate

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Government Gouvernement
of Canada   du Canada

Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this activity was to engage Canadian Youth to discuss and comment on three areas regarding Canada Youth Connection (CYC) which are as follows:

- Duration and level of effort regarding posted activities;
- Improve the marketing of the CYC; and,
- Viewpoint on Group Activities.

This report compiles the results of participant submissions regarding "Questions to help shape the Canadian Youth Connection Team". In total, we received 27 responses that can be broken down into the following demographics:

Gender: Male [13]; Female [14]

Region: BC [4]; AB [2]; SK [3]; MB [1]   – Western Canada [10]
             ON [10]; QC [4]   – Central Canada [14]
             NB [1]; NS [2]; PE [0]; NL [0]   – Eastern Canada [3]
             NU [0]; NT [0]; YT [0]   – Northern Canada [0]

Language: French [2]; English [25]

To date, this has been the highest level of participation from registered members of the Message Board. Summarized comments and recommendations to the three identified areas are as follows:

Duration and level of effort regarding posted activity

- Shorter activities should be used
- Longer projects should be subdivided into smaller ones with a maximum overall duration of three months
- There should be a mix of easier and harder activities scattered throughout the year
- Average time to complete activities was between 30 and 90 minutes

Improve the visibility of the CYC

- Most people found out about the CYC while searching for other information
- Definition of youth, i.e. age groups, needs to be clearly defined
- A "Refer A Friend" initiative should be implemented
- Advertising the youth website logo on other government websites and search engines
- Engaging youth at educational institutions via low cost advertising
- Importance must be placed on identifying the mission of CYC to get people involved
- Select a slogan (multiple suggestions were submitted)

Viewpoint on Group Activities

- Groups should be defined as between 4 to 6 participants

Based upon the responses this assignment can be deemed to be successful as its objectives were achieved.

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

1   SCOPE OF ACTIVITY

The goal of this activity was to engage Canadian Youth to discuss and comment on three areas regarding Canada Youth Connection (CYC) which are as follows:

- Duration and level of effort regarding posted activities;
- Improve the marketing of the CYC; and,
- Viewpoint on Group Activities.

2   QUESTIONS

2.1   QUESTION ONE

Right now, you work on assignments that deal with short-term actionable items where most results are visible within four months. Is this fine with you? Which assignments did you enjoy and which assignments turned you off?

2.1.1   Purpose of Question - Part I

The first part of this question was to gage the preference of the activity length with the youth, for example, did they prefer short-term activities with visible results (within 4 months) or longer term ones.

2.1.2   Synopsis of Participant Responses

Sixteen participants, out of a total of twenty-seven (59%), identified that they preferred shorter-term activities. Some reasons provided included wanting to see quicker results from their participation (in other words, wanting to see the changes put in place) and limitations on time to complete activities due to other obligations such as school, work, etc.

Five respondents did not answer the question and three reported that there was no preference for short or long term activities.

Three youths identified that they preferred the longer-term activities the reason being that they felt their work was for a "bigger picture" and were willing to wait for the "visible results".

Five members did suggest that longer activities, as part of a series, would be manageable and interesting if broken up into phases. One youth wrote: "After all, life is exactly that, a long term project that we have to face and enjoy step by step as we work on each small project that leads us to the big one".

2.1.3   Purpose of Question - Part II

The second part of the question sought youth's opinions regarding which activity(ies) they preferred working on versus those they did not.

2.1.4 Synopsis of Participant Responses

In summary, the results were: (i) seven didn't answer the question; (ii) four identified as new members and thus couldn't offer comments; and, (iii) two offered no preference.

The activity enjoyed most, as identified by four youths, was the health recipes. One explanation offered for selecting this activity was that the participants were able to see their input displayed on the web site for all to see and felt good knowing that the public may benefit.

Another enjoyable activity for three of the participants was the "service vision for youth" as they felt they were actively contributing to something larger.

Two enjoyed the environmental activities but offered no explanation as to why.

Other interesting activities were identified as: website design; those regarding government programs; ones which allowed the participant to relate their personal life experiences (such as the activity on drugs); ones that required 'more thinking'; and, activities which resulted in learning something new. Lastly, someone identified the photo contest as enjoyable even though it is not one of the activities.

The following activities were identified by one participant as not being enjoyable:

- the "Equalizer" activity, reason being it was a little complex;
- the activity on drugs as they felt the question asked was not well developed;
- the recipe activity as they preferred doing work related to the government such as doing brochures;
- the one-tonne challenge as the website didn't contain a lot of information that pertained to them;
- international youth programs as they had little to offer on the subject; and,
- researching information/ navigating on the website.

2.1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the participants answers it is recommended to continue providing activities that are 'short-term', i.e. stand-alone, in order to maximize as many youths participation in our pursuit to gather information. Projects which will require more time and effort on the participants' part should be sub-divided and made into a series for a maximum time frame of 2 months.

Secondly, maintenance of an equal balance of simple and complex activities should be kept in mind. Scattering more "fun" activities throughout the year will assist in maintaining member's interest and active participation in the CYC program.

2.2 QUESTION TWO

Would you be more interested in working on long term projects that take place over a series of assignments? What do you define as long-term?

2.2.1   Purpose of Question

This question dealt with finding out the interest of youth doing longer term projects and related activities and how they defined "long term".

2.2.2   Synopsis of Participant Responses

Sixteen youths were interested in participating in longer projects and suggested the following:

- repetition of activities should be avoided as it can be tedious;
- only interested in participating in long term activities if the results are implemented as they feel they would be contributing more;
- activities should have a purpose and goal with the intent of putting into action the results; and,
- participants would like to be made aware of the changes and suggestions that they put forward were being addressed as this would allow them to know that they are making a difference.

Five clearly identified a disinterest in long term activities. One reason given was that if activities were in a series and related, it would be harder to catch up on the next activity if they had to miss one due to other commitments.

Three offered no preference and another three individuals did not answer the question.

"Long term" was defined as:

- Under 3 months (6 activities or less): 10 responses;
- 3 – 6 months (7-12 activities): 5 responses;
- 6- 12 months: 3 responses;
- 1 year (+) : 2 responses; and,
- over 2 years : 2 responses

2.2.3   Conclusions and Recommendations

It is recommended that when planning a long term activity it should be divided into phases. However, when developing this kind of linked (related) activity, we should keep in mind that new members are constantly joining in as such activities should allow for newcomers to participate without having completed the preceding phases.

The majority identified that long term activities are defined as one that had many phases spanning less than 3 months or one that had a total of 6 sub-activities or less.

2.3   QUESTION THREE

Our preference is to grow the size of the Canadian Youth Connection (CYC) to reflect the opinions of Canadian Youth accurately. Do you feel the current Canadian Youth Connection team accurately reflects your opinion? How would you grow the CYC team? Specify any strategy or steps you think we should take to recruit more members.

2.3.1 Purpose of Question – Part I

The first part of this question was to determine if the current CYC team's views accurately reflected their opinion.

2.3.2 Synopsis of Participant Responses

Over half of the participants feel that their views are accurately represented; however, many did note that members of the CYC had to be 'computer-literate' and live in similar economic situations, i.e. they own a computer at home. Nevertheless, they recognize that this was not the case with all the youth across Canada.

Seven participants identified that CYC was not reflective of their views due to the fact that it is not a diverse group representing the different member backgrounds. In addition, one person commented that most of the members were from Ontario and as a result there was the perspective was more "central" as opposed to a "national".

Another point brought forward is that the youth involved in CYC are generally more involved in their respective communities and schools, which is not representative of all youth across Canada.

Lastly, one member identified that when participation on activities is low it cannot be assumed that the results accurately reflect Canadian youth opinion as the sample size was not large enough.

2.3.3 Purpose of Question – Part II

The second part of the question asked how they would grow the CYC team.

2.3.4 Synopsis of Participant Responses

Nine responded that more advertising through posters or presentations at locations such as schools, colleges, universities, job fairs, community centres, employment centres and HRSDC offices would be beneficial in increasing the numbers of the CYC team.

Numerous others suggested a small recruitment campaign, even as an activity whereby each member was responsible to recruit one other person such as a 'refer a friend' program or initiative would increase membership especially if incentives were provided. Others felt that word of mouth could be another means to recruit more members as well.

Other types of benefits for being involved in CYC would the possibility of summer employment opportunities and/or a certificate of participation that could be used for resume purposes.

Additional recruiting campaigns could be via radio, television, magazine, newspaper ads (local, community or school), billboards, public transportation, libraries, and informing school councils to "spread the word".

Initiate contests open to a wide audience such as the photo contest, which is in progress at this time.

Post the CYC logo and/or youth.gc.ca website hyperlink on other government web sites, especially the HRSDC website main splash page < http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml >.

Clearly identify what is the definition of "youth" given that the general the public considers youth to mean people aged 13-18, however, for our purposes, HRSDC provides programs for youth aged 15-30.

Lastly, if prizes for winning activities were better, this may be an incentive for more people to get involved and maintain participation.

2.3.5   Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the feedback of the youth, it is suggested to implement a 'refer a friend' initiative, however, steps would need to be taken so as to ensure newly recruited members would in fact be 'active' on CYC. This "check and balance" step is especially important should it be decided to 'reward' the recruiters, as we wouldn't want to encourage false numbers.

First promote the placement of the youth website logo on the HRSDC website and in the future other government websites. Posting the logo, and hyperlink, would promote the message that 'youth are important' to government.

Other less expensive ways of advertising such as mail-outs to secondary schools, colleges and universities guidance or employment department could also be put into place.

2.4   QUESTION FOUR

If we are to introduce / promote the Canadian Youth Connection team to the public, what would you like them to know about us and the work we do? Can you suggest a slogan?

2.4.1   Purpose of Question- Part I

To survey how they would like to be introduced to newcomers and how they represent themselves.

2.4.2   Synopsis of Participant Responses

The youths who responded emphasized the importance of the letting the public know what exactly the CYC does. The message they want to get across is that youth's opinions do matter to the government and that they can make a positive difference.

CYC compromises of youth from a diversified background all across Canada that collaborate together to work on various projects and provide feedback on government services for youth. This nation-wide group of youth are all volunteers who participate because they care about the future and hope that their actions will make a difference for other youth in their country. Not only do they provide recommendations, the CYC is a place to meet people interested in youth issues where they can talk to one another about a variety of subjects and can express their opinions freely.

2.4.3   Purpose of Question – Part II

To survey possible slogans that could be used in recruiting new members to the CYC.

2.4.4 Synopsis of Participant Responses

The following is a list of suggested slogans that could be used to encourage other youths to come on board the CYC:

- ✓ Youth, share your voice and be heard
- ✓ The voice of youth, let your opinion count
- ✓ Giving youth a voice
- ✓ Youth to the Rescue
- ✓ For youth, by youth, about youth
- ✓ CYC- strategies this!
- ✓ CYC- Shaping the future
- ✓ Think Smart. Think CYC
- ✓ Be Active. Participate. Join the Canadian Youth Connection
- ✓ Youth: Have fun and make a difference at the same time!
- ✓ Canadian Youth Working for a better Canada
- ✓ Canadian Youth Connection Team: Young Canadians making the difference

- ✓ CYC- Be All You Can Be
- ✓ Canadian Youth, Making a difference
- ✓ CYC- Connect, Engage, Build
- ✓ Join us today for your tomorrow
- ✓ Giving the Youth of Canada a voice
- ✓ Une équipe dynamique qui vous représentante
- ✓ CYC: Canadian Youth Making a Difference
- ✓ Do something
- ✓ We are youth for youth. Youth speaking out and being heard
- ✓ Canadian Youth Connection: Making a difference in our country
- ✓ Canadian Youth Connection Team: Youths making the difference in Canada
- ✓ Canadian Youth Connection Team: Youth Canadians connected to make the difference

2.5 QUESTION FIVE

How did you find out about the CYC?

2.5.1 Purpose of Question

To determine how they found out about the program.

2.5.2 Synopsis of Participant Responses

A total of twelve of participants found out about the CYC through the youth.gc.ca website and/or via other government website portals.

Another five stumbled across the information while surfing on the web. Some were doing job searches while others looking for volunteer opportunities.

Attending government type programs also was successful in recruiting new members particularly YouthPath, Town Youth Participation Strategy- TYPS, Health Canada project and workshops.

Two members were referred to the site by their friends, and one was informed of the site through their employment agency.

2.5.3   Conclusions and Recommendations

It would appear that most are stumbling across the information while doing searches for other programs. It is suggested in order to make the CYC easier to find the logo should be placed on the HRSDC website's main splash page.

2.6   QUESTION SIX

What is the ideal size of a work group you would be comfortable working in? Would you like to be grouped geographically in your own community to exchange thoughts and work on assignments together?

2.6.1   Purpose of Question

The purpose of this question was to poll whether or not youth were interested in doing 'group work' and if so, their preference for groupings whether it be locally or nationally.

2.6.2   Synopsis of Participant Responses

The responses to this question received had a common theme throughout. Youth are open to working in groups although they suggested smaller groups as they feel it is more efficient and would avoid someone's opinion getting 'lost in the crowd'. For the most part, they suggested that a group of five would be ideal.

Regarding geographical groupings, almost everyone wanted to work with people in their community (or close by) so that it would allow them to meet on occasion, however; they recognize that this type of group would not provide diverse and representative "national" answers. Nevertheless, many did express an interest in working with other people from different parts of Canada.

Participants responded that when they worked on group activities, not related to their involvement with the CYC, problems were encountered such as: not every member of the team contributed equally; and, difficulty in scheduling times to work together which resulted in incomplete submissions.

2.6.3   Conclusions and Recommendations

When doing group work it is recommended to keep groups between 4 and 6. A possible team composition of four could be two individuals in a close geographical area with another two in another part of the country. This type of team would allow partners to meet if they wished to do so but also would allow them to connect with other youth across Canada.

When developing group work it is also recommended to factor in what the end goal of the activity is in order to determine group composition. For example, if the goal is to analyse regional opinions then the groups should be regionalized, i.e. all group members come from the same geographical area.

2.7   QUESTION SEVEN

On average, did it take you more than 2 hours to complete your past assignments?

2.7.1   Purpose of Question

The goal of this question was to collect some data regarding the level of effort by participants in working on posted activities.

2.7.2   Synopsis of Participant Responses

For this question, answers were really divided equally amongst the respondents. Seven responded that activities took less than an hour. Some specified as little as ten minutes while others between 30-40 minutes.

Another seven individuals responded that it required over one hour but not exceeding 2 hours to complete the activity.

Five others were at the two-hour mark while one identified that they'd spent over 2 hours completing an activity, 2.5 hours to be precise.

A total of three felt that they could not answer this question due to the fact that they were new members on board and that this was their first activity.

2.7.3   Conclusions and Recommendations

It would appear that the average time spent on activities is between 30 to 90 minutes. It is recommended limiting activity length to be no greater than 90 minutes due to other commitments they may have. If an activity requires too much time, we risk losing participation.

Appendix 1

Response Statistics

Gender

Legend
Male
Female

48%
52%

Language

Legend
French
English

7%
93%

Region

Legend
BC
AB
SK
MB
ON
QC
NB
NS
PEI
NF
NT
NWT
YK

7% 0% 15%
4%
7%
15%
11%
37% 4%