



Teen Healthy Relationship Programming National Learning Strategy

The National Learning Strategy and Event has been funded by:



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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to share the outcomes and lessons learned from the Canadian Women's Foundation's National Learning Strategy on Teen Healthy Relationships. The National Learning Strategy (2011-2013) is a 18-month initiative aimed to advance the field of practice around teen healthy relationship programming, provide capacity building support to enable organizations to strengthen their programs, and to build a case for how these programs are part of a wider strategy for prevention of violence against women across Canada.

Funded through Status of Women Canada, the National Learning Strategy included the following key components:

- A three-day National Skills Institute held in Toronto from February 22-25, 2012
- The development and distribution of a Learning Guide entitled Healthy Relationships 101: An overview of school-based healthy relationship programs
- A series of e-learning activities after the National Skills Institute to guide and support youth and adult leaders to continue to build capacity in their work

This final evaluation report is a "living document" of all the proud moments, new relationships and actions that transpired as a result of the National Learning Strategy – all the with the intention of nourishing and strengthening the field of practice of Teen Healthy Relationship programming for the future. The report also intends to help the Canadian Women's Foundation answer a series of important internal capacity questions that will help them take stock of this experience and prioritize how to take next steps for their future role in this work.

Organization of this Report

Section 1 provides background to the National Learning Strategy and the Broader Social Context of Teen Relationships in Canada.

Section 2 briefly explains the evaluation framework that guided the overall evaluation of the National Learning Strategy and shows the distinction between the evaluation data and questions described in the mid-term Report (May 2012) and the Final Report (March 2013).

Section 3 provides a detailed update on the data collected throughout the evaluation process, specifically highlighting the new methods employed to collect data since the mid-term report in May 2012.

Section 4 presents a series of four (4) Learning Studies from The National Learning Strategy. These Learning Studies aim to surface the main outcomes that occurred over the past two years, through a lens of what Canadian Women's Foundation can learn from them. These studies are deeply rooted in evaluative data, but also raise follow-up questions and considerations aimed to guide Canadian Women's Foundation in its future work.

Section 5 presents broad conclusions, proposed strategies and specific considerations resulting from the data analysis, mid-term evaluation and final evaluation reports.

Questions addressed in this Report

Youth Engagement

How can the Canadian Women's Foundation play a catalytic role in developing a youth capacity within the field of practice? How can this be achieved in the long term?

How can the Canadian Women's Foundation maximize their relationships with their broader grantee pool of organizations to strengthen youth engagement strategies within the field of practice? What strategies are most effective to achieve this?

Networks, partnerships & collaborations

How did these learning events encourage, influence or create opportunities for new relationships to flourish across this field of practice?

Internal organizational change

How did the National Learning Strategy learning events create programmatic/policy change within the Canadian Women's Foundation and grantee organizations?

Intersectionality, diversity, and gender

What can the field of practice learn regarding intersectionality, diversity and gender as a result of the implementation of the activities of the National Learning Strategy?

Social media

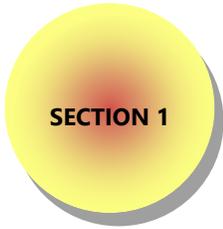
How effective is social media as a tool for knowledge transfer, skills building, and awareness raising about teen healthy relationship and violence prevention initiatives?

Systemic context

To what extent can we imagine further scaling-up of teen healthy relationships programming? What are some of the possibilities for scaling this work? The challenges? How can the outcomes of the National Learning Strategy build a case for increased support?

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the incredible energy and dedication of the National Learning Strategy project team for their support in completing this two-year evaluation process. Led by Anuradha Dugal, we have greatly benefitted from an open and constructive approach to both designing and administering the data collection tools, reviewing the draft reports and findings and shaping this final report. Additional thanks to Samantha Cochrane for all her leadership and support during the National Skills Institute and Youth Advisory Committee consultations, Diane Hill for her comments on the report format, and Maureen Adams for her vision of how to capture the gems and make this a foundational document for both the Canadian Women's Foundation and the future of Teen Healthy Relationship programming in Canada.



Background to the National Learning Strategy for Teen Healthy Relationships Programming in Canada

1.1 The National Field of Practice: Context of Violence Prevention and Teen Healthy Relationship Programming

Defining the field of practice in the case of the Canadian Women's Foundation and teen healthy relationships

The term 'field of practice' originates from the discourse of social work; describing the organizations, institutions and individuals providing frontline social or educational services targeting a particular issue.

The teen healthy relationships field of practice of this evaluative study and the documentation of the Foundation are considered to be multidisciplinary. The field of practice is comprised of volunteer-based, nongovernmental, or community-based organizations and institutions predominantly from the fields of social work, education, and psychology focused on youth and healthy relationships. The Foundation's documentation describes participants of the National Learning Study as key actors within this field of practice; providing programs focused on the promotion of teen healthy relationships among youth, with a particular focus on young women and girls.

With the financial and coaching support of the Canadian Women's Foundation Violence Prevention Program, members of their teen healthy relationships' network implemented educational, capacity building and recreational activities through collaborations and partnerships. These are meant to be inclusive and to value intersectionality; crosscutting demographic¹, socioeconomic and social barriers. Through such programming a main goal is to transform values, attitudes and beliefs leading to changes in behaviour among youth with a view towards improved teen well-being and health, interpersonal relations, and violence prevention against women and girls.

Growing the field of practice with the National Learning Strategy

The National Learning Strategy was developed in response to a six-year evidence-based exploration of the field of practice focused on teen healthy relationship programming and violence prevention against women and girls.

With the support of Status of Women Canada, the Canadian Women's Foundation was able to launch a 'pilot' 18-month strategy encompassing a series of learning activities and opportunities to develop collaborative strategies across the field of practice through the National Learning Strategy network. These events included two e-bulletins, two webinars, two e-chats, and a three-day face-to-face learning event - the National Skills Institute held in February 2012.

The goal was to secure proportionate, geographic representation from across Canada based on province-by-province population density. A formula was developed to ensure that each province and territory was adequately represented by both adult and youth participants.

The highest levels of youth participation were from three main provinces: British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia. This was primarily because these provinces hosted three of the four Canadian Women's Foundation funded teen healthy relationships programs (Respectful Relationships -SWOVA, The Fourth R, Making Waves/Vague par Vague) and were therefore able to mobilize significant youth from these programs to participate in both the Youth Advisory Committee and the National Skills Institute itself.

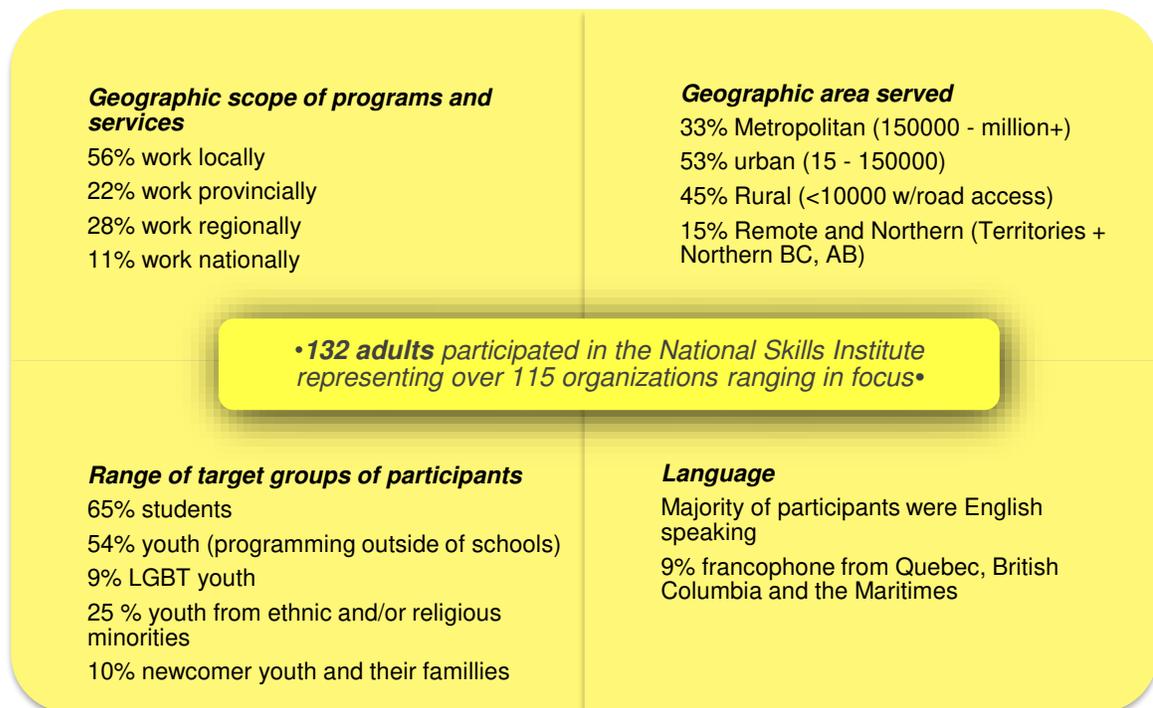
The following tables present the breakdown of the National Learning Strategy network organizations' geographic range and scope of their constituents.

¹ Demographic can be considered here to mean gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, knowledge of languages, disabilities, mobility, home ownership, employment status, and even location

Table 1: National Learning Strategy Network members by province/territory

Province/Territory	Organizations	Adult	Youth
British Columbia	15	17	6
Alberta	9	9	1
Saskatchewan	5	6	1
Manitoba	6	6	2
Ontario	36	41	17
Quebec	15	16	4
New Brunswick	2	4	3
Nova Scotia	6	8	5
Prince Edward Island	2	3	1
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	2	2
Yukon	2	2	1
Nunavut	2	1	1
Northwest Territories	3	3	3
National programs	n/a	14	1
TOTAL	105	132	48

Table 2: National Learning Strategy Network members by geographic scope, language, and target audiences



Key target audiences of teen healthy relationship and violence prevention initiatives offered by participating organizations of the National Learning Strategy

According to the preliminary data gathered from the surveys completed by the network members of the National Learning Strategies largest learning event – the National Skills Institute, youth is identified as the most significant target audience of their programs. Most prominently, 76% of the programming targets young women and girls; identifying them as the main intended recipients according to the data collected from the Pre-National Skills Institute online survey. Students and youth outside the formal educational structures came second (65%) and third (54%) respectively among those categories identified on the list.

The following table illustrates the target youth groups and the percentage selected by the respondents as the three main groups their organizations serve. The least significant recipients are formal educational stakeholders (i.e., administration and board)

Table 3: Main target audiences of participant organizations' violence prevention and teen healthy relationship initiatives

Main Target Audiences	%
Young women and girls	76
Students	62
Youth (programming outside of school)	54
Youth from ethnic and/or religious minorities	24
Youth living in poverty	22
Teachers	16
New-comer youth and their families	10
LGBT youth	9
Youth with disabilities	9
School administrators	5
School board	3

During the National Skills Institute, a total of 48 youth participated; 44 Anglophone and 4 Francophone. Youth leaders played an integral role in the National Skills Institute. The youth stream of programming was developed and facilitated by a Youth Advisory Committee of 14 representatives, from five (NB – 3; NS – 2; ON – 3; QC - 1; BC – 2) different provinces across Canada. Nine (9) of those representatives came from one of the four “lead” teen healthy relationships programs while the rest came from other organizations.

1.2 Systemic Factors Influence Teen Healthy Relationships in Canada

Systemic political, social, cultural and economic factors

Systemic political, social, economic and cultural factors have considerable influence on the choices facing teenagers across Canada. Understanding the relationship between such factors and their impact on the lives of teenagers is fundamental to the successful implementation of ground-level healthy relationship programs.

The objectives of the National Learning Strategy focused on:

- Strengthening the field of practice around teen healthy relationships;
- Providing capacity building support to organizations maximizing their ability to initiate these types of programs; and,
- Building a case for how healthy relationships programs are part of a wider strategy for violence prevention again women and girls.

The National Learning Strategy is evidence that the Canadian Women’s Foundation is invested in developing ‘scaling-up’ models for prevention that encourage a healthy funding environment; enabling strong partnerships and collaborations among key stakeholders nationally, provincially, regionally and at the community level.

The results of the evaluative study shows that participating organizations in the National Learning Strategy see the Canadian Women’s Foundation as leading significant growth and expansion of the field of practice in the past few years.

During a focus group conducted in December 2012 with some key organizations across Canada one respondent captured this point:

“I think Canadian Women’s Foundation is leading the country in terms of supporting and developing a body of knowledge around teen healthy relationships education and prevention. I’m grateful for that. To put out a call for funding for healthy relationship education programs is unprecedented in this country. It’s unfortunate that our government is not taking the lead.” (Follow Up Focus Group Participant, December 2012)

Systemic Political, Social, Cultural and Economic Factors & Teen Healthy Relationship Issues

To gather evidence of the correlation between systemic factors and their influence on teen healthy relationships, National Learning Strategy participants were continuously surveyed throughout the past 18-months. In the Pre-National Skills Institute evaluation surveys, National Learning Strategy participants were asked to identify and explain the long-standing and newly emerging political, social, cultural and economic problems that were contributing to teen health issues in their communities.

The following is a sample list of the main systemic factors identified by those respondents as having considerable influence on the lives of teens in their communities. The systemic factors are grouped according to the resulting affects they are considered to have on youth in communities in Canada (e.g., isolation/marginalization results in violence and abuse). It is based on a collection of data from the pre-National Skills Institute survey completed by the adult participants. Having a clear picture of the following systemic issues also helps when establishing policies to support a long-term national prevention strategy, as articulated by members of the field of practice themselves.

- Gender inequality/inequity; geographic and virtual isolation (specifically affects Northern and rural communities); isolation/marginalization; historical collective trauma (i.e. residential schools, political violence); intergenerational violence; high cost of living (i.e. unable to access low-income housing); substance abuse, physical and mental abuse; sexual abuse; low self-esteem; homophobia/heteronormative social perceptions; negative media stereotypes.

Resulting in violence/abuse

- Poverty/low income households; no healthy role models; high cost of living

Resulting in substance abuse/addiction

- Geographic isolation; segregation/marginalization, intergenerational violence/trauma; poverty/low income/absentee parents; no positive influences/lack of role models

Resulting in family breakdown, domestic violence, sexual violence, unsafe households

- Diminishing infrastructure in rural communities (i.e., transportation, confidentiality), lack of social services, limited access to designated youth spaces; youth cultural norms regarding communication patterns.

Resulting in high usage/dependence on social media for social interactions and access to pop culture

- High drop out rates; lack of integration/marginalization; discrimination against newcomers/immigrants and visible minorities

Resulting in lack of employment/unemployment

- Economic instability; sexual exploitation of young women; power dynamics and gender inequalities (issue for both girls and boys); low-level pimping/prostitution; negative media stereotypes targeting youth culture; youth population.

Resulting in low self-esteem, poor self-image, lack of confidence

- Substance abuse, addiction; mental instability; low-self-esteem; perceptions connected to gender; sexual exploitation; incest (abuse by older men); lack of positive role models

Resulting in violence against women and girls

- Social, cultural and religious traditions, strong ties; social isolation; increase in monetary resources and power; substance abuse; physical and mental abuse; lack of education, self awareness and consent/coercion dynamics; normalization of violence/abuse/domination; easy access to technology, social and interactive digital media, Internet; low self esteem, lack of confidence; early relationship labels (i.e. boyfriend/girlfriend)

Resulting in negative behaviours and attitudes, discrimination and early sexualization (hyper-, homo-)

1.3 Canadian Women’s Foundation Role in Strengthening the Field of Practice

The leadership role that Canadian Women’s Foundation has established is supported and encouraged within the field of practice

Through granting programs over the last 10 years, Canadian Women’s Foundation has played a pivotal role in strengthening teen healthy relationship programming across the country. Growing from a multi-year granting strategy and rigorous evaluation and research process, Canadian Women’s Foundation harnessed their strong position within this field of practice to launch the National Learning Strategy in 2011 as a response to systemic trends across Canada. In doing so, a main goal of the National Learning Strategy was to ‘imagine’ what types of possibilities lay ahead for Canadian Women’s Foundation to play a role in ‘scaling up’ this work; address the challenges and build increased support for teen healthy programming.

By launching this 18-month strategy across the country, Canadian Women’s Foundation has had a wider influence within the field of practice as a liaison between individuals, organizations, and institutions working towards the promotion of the health and well being of teen relationships, and the prevention of violence against young women and girls.

In the Follow Up to the National Skills Institute survey, **youth and adult participants of the National Learning Strategy were asked to explain what role(s) they thought the Canadian Women’s Foundation could play to strengthen the field of practice for teen healthy relationships.** Participants of the National Learning Strategy responded by identifying a number of ways in which the Canadian Women’s Foundation is and continues to be leaders. (Table 4 provides quantitative insights to support analysis.) The following list reflects how respondents prioritized how they felt that the field of practice would be strengthened if Canadian Women’s Foundation continued to:

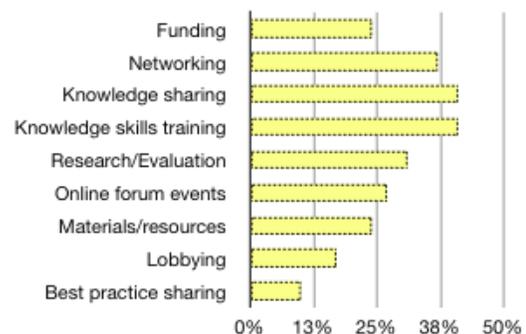
- Share knowledge and best practices
- Build capacity through continued training like the National Skills Institute
- Strengthen the field of practice through partnership and relationship development activities nationally and regionally

- Share best practices from research and evaluation of programming
- Provide funding and support to grassroots non-profits, in particular in more rural areas
- Develop and share learning materials, handbooks, and other resources/tools
- Host online events such as webinars, and share resources through e-bulletins
- Identify approaches and practices; and, establish/launch advocacy initiatives for the participating organizations to be involved in

The following response is reflective the overall perspective of the network members.

"The Canadian Women’s Foundation is doing a wonderful job of strengthening and supporting work done around teen healthy relationships and we believe they are unique in doing so. This support, whether in the form of funding, resources, networking, conferences, and individual conversation has helped us all make progress towards accomplishing our goals of helping youth find voice, leadership and skills to have healthy relationships. We see the Canadian Women’s Foundation as a major reason for all the successes we have achieved in the past few years." (Follow Up to the National Skills Institute Survey respondent)

Table 4: National Learning Strategy participants identified the following areas that the Canadian Women’s Foundation could take the lead on to continue strengthening the field of practice.

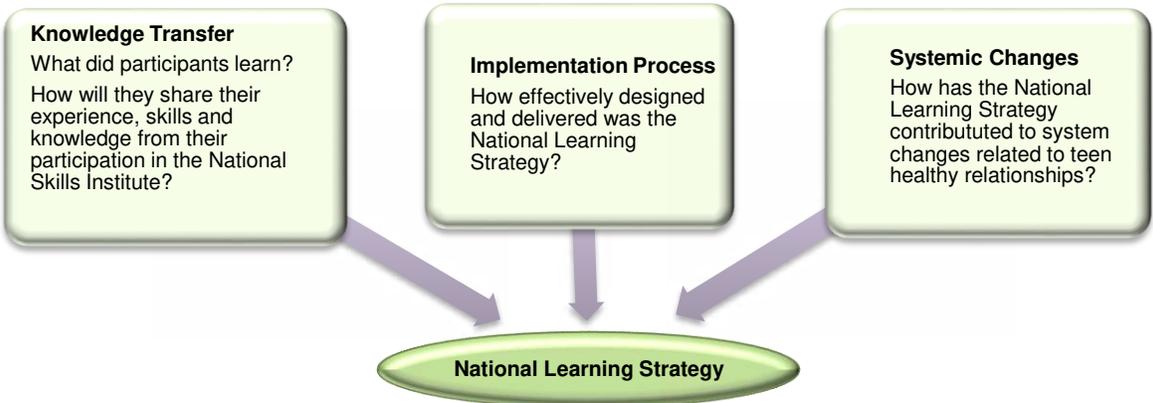


SECTION 2

Evaluation of the National Learning Strategy and National Skills Institute: the evaluation continuum

There were three main areas explored within the **Evaluation Framework for the National Learning Strategy**: Knowledge Transfer, Implementation Process and Systemic Changes.

Table 5: Three main areas of the Evaluation Framework of the National Learning Strategy. (See the Evaluation Framework)

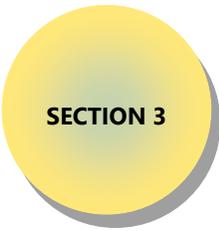


Bridging the Mid-Term and Final Evaluations

The mid-term Report (May 2012) presented a preliminary analysis of the key findings and outcomes from the National Learning Strategy at the mid-way point. It focused specifically on knowledge, content and capacity transfer, strengths and the challenges of the implementation of the National Learning Strategy, with a focus on highlighting areas for adjustment and improvement for the second phase of the National Learning Strategy implementation. This Final Evaluation report will look at the outcomes that resulted in the year following the National Skills Institute and National Learning Strategy, with the objective of better understanding the long-term outcomes of the National Skills Institute and National Learning Strategy on the Canadian Women’s Foundation and the broader field of practice of teen healthy relationships. The following table aims to show the focus of the mid-term report as compared to this final report.

Table 6: Breakdown of areas of concentration for evaluation reporting

Mid-term Evaluation	Final Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Transfer • Capacity and Skills Transfer • Effectiveness of National Skills Institute/National Learning Strategy Program design and Activities • Defining the Field of Practice (who participated, where, scope and depth, participant diversity) • Adjustments to the National Learning Strategy and e-learning agenda for the final phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reported social, cultural and economic context for teen healthy relationships in Canada • Alliances, partnerships and network building • Youth engagement strategy and individual youth learning outcomes • Dissemination of National Learning Strategy program materials • Systemic Context: Policy and Funding • Future Considerations and Directions • Internal organisational change at Canadian Women’s Foundation



SECTION 3

Methodology: How Did We Carry Out the Evaluation?

Participatory Program Evaluation Approach

Canadian Women's Foundation is committed to using evaluation to improve and change the way it designs and delivers programs. This evaluation used a formative and developmental approach to ensure that relevant data was collected and analyzed in keeping with the ongoing rhythm of program implementation.

Providing staff regular opportunities for reflection through real-time sharing of qualitative and quantitative data ensured that they were constantly learning from experience. The opportunity to adjust activities within the strategy based on this interface with the data meant the strategy was constantly improving its' potential for impact.

National Skills Institute evaluation approach

The approach used specifically to evaluate the knowledge and content transfer at the National Skills Institute was based on a model of continuous education evaluation. This approach surveyed participants before they participated in the learning event to assess expectations and previous knowledge levels. They were then included on a continuing basis to assess how they acquired new knowledge and skills, and then how they transferred it into their organizations and the greater community.

We also placed great emphasis on providing real-time feedback to the Canadian Women's Foundation Management team to ensure they were continually reflecting on the outcomes of the National Learning Strategy, making adjustments when necessary. We introduced reflective journals for key National Learning Strategy staff, debrief meetings to review preliminary data analyses and coordinated an in-depth feedback process around the mid-term report to help Canadian Women's Foundation staff "hone in" on certain programming pieces that required attention for the final phase of the National Learning Strategy.

The methodology for this report was based on four (4) main phases of both qualitative and quantitative data collection using the following methods: online surveys, written questionnaires, face-to-face interviews,

telephone interviews, reflection journals and focus groups.

Before the National Skills Institute: January 2012

- Distributed an on-line survey to 88 adult participants registered in the National Skills Institute (80 Anglophone registrants, 8 Francophone registrants). **Sixty (60)** registrants (75%) filled out the survey in English. Seven (7) completed the survey in French.
- Distributed an on-line survey to 26 youth participants registered to attend the National Skills Institute. A total of **24 youth** registrants filled out the survey.

During the National Skills Institute: February 2012

Face-to-face interviews with ten (10) key stakeholders of the teen healthy relationships programs. Stakeholders included Canadian Women's Foundation Board members, representatives of four "featured" teen healthy relationships programs, youth participants, and Francophone participants.

- **One focus group** with representative sample of seven (7) **National Skills Institute participants** from across Canada.
- End of National Skills Institute written questionnaires filled out in writing on last day, 25 February. Of a total of 147 adult participants, **69 adults filled out the final survey**. Of a total of 58 youth participants, **29 filled out the final survey**. Some participants had left early and therefore did not fill out a survey and some were from PREVNET and did not attend sessions on the last day of the National Skills Institute when the evaluation was distributed.
- Note: The Foundation distributed **Daily Session Questionnaires** during the National Skills Institute for their own purposes.

Directly After the National Skills Institute: April 2012

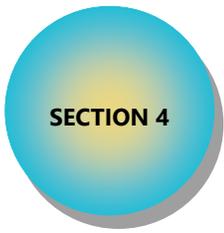
- **Reflection journals** filled out by key managers of the National Skills Institute program: Anuradha Dugal and Samantha Cochrane.

**One-year after the National Skills Institute :
January 2013**

- Distributed an on-line survey to 88 adult participants registered in the National Skills Institute. **Fifty four (54) registrants** (61%) filled out the survey.
- Distributed an on-line survey to 26 youth participants registered to attend the National Skills Institute. A total of **four youth registrants** filled out the survey. It is difficult to qualify reasons for why we had such a low response rate; however, it can be assumed more generally, that it is difficult to track a youth population given their high rate of mobility.
- Distributed an on-line survey to 13 members of the Youth Advisory Committee. A total of **8 youth** filled out the survey.
- Distributed a one-page Youth Leading Change survey to **fourteen (14) of the National Learning Strategy grantees**, who then administered the surveys to the youth in their violence prevention programs. The survey aimed to assess to what extent there was an increase in the understanding of the value of teen healthy relationships. The Canadian Women’s Foundation was able to collect an impressive **509 responses from eight (8) of the grantee groups**.
- Facilitated a teleconference Focus Group with **six (6) key stakeholders** of the National Learning Strategy: Participants were representative of both geographic and programmatic diversity and included: AVALON Sexual Assault Centre (Halifax, Nova Scotia), SWOVA Community Development and Research Society (Salt Spring Island, BC), Partners for Youth (Fredericton, NB), Project Respect (Victoria, BC) and The Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre (Antigonish, NS). A representative from the London Sexual Assault Centre (London, ON) participated with written e-mail responses to the focus group questions.
- Close Reading of the **Pre-Survey Questionnaires** considering the focus of the Final Report.

Table 7: Evaluation Tools used throughout the evaluation of the National Learning Strategy

Evaluation tool	Total n= of responses collected
Adult pre-National Skills Institute survey conducted online	80
Youth pre-National Skills Institute survey conducted online	26
Adult end of National Skills Institute written questionnaire	69
Youth end of National Skills Institute written questionnaire	29
Face-to-face interviews	8 in total (6 adults, 2 youth)
Focus group	7 in total (no youth)
Reflective Journaling	2 Canadian Women’s Foundation staff on National Skills Institute project team
Adult follow up survey conducted online	54
Youth follow up survey conducted online	4
Youth Advisory Committee follow up survey conducted online	8
Youth Leading Change Survey conducted in group	509
Follow up Focus Group conducted via teleconference	8



Learning Studies

Learning Study 1: How youth in communities across Canada see themselves in relationships



This Learning Study examines the types of changes youth themselves identify as a direct result from this participation in the grantee organizations' violence prevention initiatives.

This Learning Study aims to address the following questions:

- How have youth changed their attitudes, knowledge and behaviours regarding teen healthy relationships as a result of activities of the National Learning Strategy?
- To what extent have the learning outcomes contributed to more engaged youth involvement?
- How can the Canadian Women's Foundation play a catalytic role in developing a youth capacity within the field of practice? How can this be achieved in the long term?

Over 500 youth in communities across Canada are more knowledgeable; critically reflecting about what is a healthy attitude; and, questioning their ability to change their behaviour to be able to have and encourage healthy interpersonal relationships

To respond to Status of Women Canada's request to measure results of the National Learning Strategy, Canadian Women's Foundation collaborated with fourteen (14) of their National Learning Strategy grantees to assess how youth across Canada are transforming their knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs towards healthy teen relationships as a result of their participation in community-based violence prevention initiatives following the National Learning Strategy.

Six months following the National Skills Institute, the collaborating organizations were asked to survey youth benefitting from their violence prevention initiative focused on teen healthy relationships. This method was important for understanding whether a transfer of knowledge and skills from the National Learning Strategy activities occurred at a significant level; affecting how these organizations implemented violence prevention initiatives with youth in their communities.

A one-page survey was used to gather data. It was distributed to the 14 grantee organizations with the goal to evaluate 1000 participating youth. Canadian Women's Foundation was able to collect an impressive 509 responses from eight of the grantee groups. The data from these surveys were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to interpret whether there was an increase in the respondents understanding of the value of teen healthy relationships.

Of the 509 youth respondents, the average response indicates that they have a significantly better understanding (89%) of the value of teen healthy relationships than before they became involved with the community organization's violence prevention initiatives. Youth participation in these violence prevention initiatives can plausibly lead to augmented healthy behaviours among youth in their relationships.

Although the youth respondents were more confident overall to implement this new knowledge into practice, they identified areas they thought require further improvement to make change. These relate to how they can communicate with their friends, family and educators about the issues associated with teen healthy relationships. In addition, they indicated difficulties in understanding how to resolve conflicts with their significant other in a healthy manner or to speak with

KNOWLEDGE

An average of 89% youth learned how to have a healthy relationship (i.e., how they want to behave and how they want to be treated).

For example:

- 95% learned how to see the signs of an unhealthy relationship
- 94% learned how they want to be treated in a relationship
- 85% learned how to get out of an unhealthy relationship
- 87% learned that youth leadership is important to the success of these types of programs

their friends about dating violence. Further, the respondents identified a limited understanding about how to spread the word through social media (Please see Learning Study 5 for further details). Removing themselves from an unhealthy relationship and understanding how dating violence affects everyone (both boys and girls) were other areas that proved challenging for these young people (Please see the box in right hand column).

A very high percentage of youth respondents now actively understand that violence prevention initiatives are essential for preventing violence against women

SKILLS

Ninety-three (93%) of the youth respondents thought they are better able to make decisions about how to behave in a healthy relationship

Programs need to consider what work is being done in these three skill areas since 78% on average did not think they had made any gains with them after this program:

- Communicate with friends and family about issues of and involvement in unhealthy relationships
- Resolve conflicts with their significant other
- Use social media to raise awareness about the importance of a healthy relationship

and girls (91%), and positively changing how people in their community treat each other (89%). In spite of the significant shift in their thinking, only 64% believed that they themselves had a significant leadership role to play, either as a peer mentor, youth leader or youth facilitator.

As a result of their learning from this Program youth are interested in taking action through social media, their school context, their social networks and creative public alternatives

Of the 509 youth respondents, just over half responded to the question of how to turn knowledge from this program into action by identifying three actions they are taking, or want to take in the future. The table below shows the four most significant actions mentioned by the respondents.

Table 8: Top 4 actions youth would take to raise awareness about violence prevention and teen healthy relationships.

Action	%
Facebook: campaign, group	52%
School: assembly, presentation	36%
Friends: share/communicate about issues and program, help them, encourage them to get involved	20%
Flash mob: would be fun, educational, raise awareness, creative	18%

There are significant changes in youth knowledge and ability to recognize and remove themselves from unhealthy relationships

When current data was compared to previous evaluation results of the earlier teen healthy relationship programming supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation, the differentiation² shows that there has been:

- A **12% increase** in the number of youth participants that are able to recognize signs of an unhealthy relationship (i.e., mental, emotional, and/or physical violence).
- A **25% increase** in the number of teens using their new skills to leave unhealthy relationships.

Considerations

Overall, the data shows that the majority of youth have successfully gained new knowledge and applied some of their skills to recognizing and removing themselves from unhealthy relationships. A significant portion of the young people that participated in this study had not yet applied their skills and capacity as leaders, facilitators, or mentors; therefore, not surprising that half of the respondents did not respond to the question regarding their own engagement in promoting teen healthy relationships and violence prevention against young women and girls.

Teen healthy relationships and violence prevention initiatives are highly successful in transferring knowledge about the issues and what is considered to be 'healthy' behaviour. The creation of new healthy relationship projects focusing on self-esteem, confidence building, leadership and communication could considerably influence the way youth are engaged in, promoting, and living healthy relationships.

² In the 2010 evaluation the focus was on measuring long-term (post-program) behavioural change among youth.

Learning Study 2: Engaging youth at the centre of our work



This Learning Study explores youth engagement strategies employed by the organizations participating in the National Learning Strategy as well as the internal experience of the Canadian Women's Foundation resulting from the implementation of the National Learning Strategy. Discussions with key adult and youth representatives through focus groups, reflection journals from staff and gathering data through online surveys were invaluable to understanding where learning outcomes from the National Learning Strategy are leading the field of practice on youth engagement strategies.

This Learning Study aims to address the following questions:

- How can the Canadian Women's Foundation maximize their relationships with their broader grantee pool of organizations to strengthen youth engagement strategies within the field of practice?
- What learning outcomes from the National Learning Strategy activities have contributed to more engaged youth involvement?
- What steps have been taken by organizations to further include youth in community-based collaboration efforts to develop and implement violence prevention and healthy relationship initiatives?
- What is the capacity within the field of practice? How can this capacity be strengthened in the long term?

Sharing knowledge and best practices for developing strategies for youth engagement are important ways for Canadian Women's Foundation to maximize their relationships with the broader network

The National Skills Institute was a particularly successful component of the National Learning Strategy with regard to developing youth engagement strategic capacities. **Ninety-five percent (95%)** of adult respondents of the follow up survey indicated that they have integrated new knowledge in this area into their teen healthy relationships and violence prevention against young women and girls initiatives.

"... since being involved in the National Skills Institute we have been able to focus more specifically on youth engagement, and have begun to get more strategic about how to formalize and make our programs more sustainable. We are moving towards strategies for lobbying to make healthy relationship programs part of school based curriculums. (Adult Respondent to the Follow Up to the National Skills Institute Survey)

Ninety-five (95%) of organizations have integrated their new knowledge regarding youth engagement strategies from their participation in the National Skills Institute into their work.

An average of 86% of adult respondents also indicated that they are specifically integrating new knowledge and approaches regarding youth leadership and youth-led processes and practices into their teen healthy relationships and violence prevention initiatives.

Organizations are adopting more inclusive attitudes towards youth involved in their violence prevention and teen healthy relationship initiatives

As a result of their participation in the National Learning Strategy activities, in particular the National Skills Institute, perceptions are changing within organizations regarding the role and capabilities of youth involved in their programs and towards youth in Canada.

"The level of expectation from our youth has increased since being involved in the National Skills Institute where we saw not only our youth but other youth playing a major role in taking on big responsibilities and excelling. It has changed the potential we see for youth in terms of involvement in this work. [i.e. violence prevention and teen healthy relationships initiatives]. (Follow Up Focus Group Participant, December 2012)

Other National Learning Strategy participants have indicated that their experience in the National Skills Institute enabled more strategic thinking and creativity in how they are working with youth and the types of programs they are offering; realizing that to make existing programs "more effective and sustainable" they need to engage youth in a more meaningful way.

"Since participation in the National Skills Institute I do find that I am more active in seeking the expertise of the youth that volunteer with my organization as well as the youth that I work with in an education capacity, before finishing any program work that I develop or deliver. I allow for more opportunities for the youth to provide input into the programming they receive. I also am more flexible with the youth who volunteer in allowing them more space to explore their own learning styles and to take the lead in the education work that our organization does in the community.

(Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

Further, some participants of the National Learning Strategy have stated that they are engaging youth in the development of curriculum and grant writing. Other participants (such as those below) have started new initiatives for girls that are including young women in the planning and as leaders or mentors as a way of ensuring that youth programs are addressing youth needs and concerns.

"On the one hand, we are inspired by the program models presented at the [National Skills Institute] concerning youth leadership. We are training young women (20 yrs. old) as youth leaders for workshops that are centred on girls' issues. In this sense, we have also established a position called Assistant Program Facilitator for girls 15 to 18 years. Several aspects need to be adapted, but we find that girls are more open to learn from other girls a little older because they identify with them. On the other hand, we have begun to strengthen our ties especially with schools and youth organizations. Our involvement with regional roundtables is significant..." [translation] (Adult Francophone respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

"I have given much more responsibility to the youth. The workshops are better when we include young people in the process. We continue our project on healthy relationships that worked very well. We are also planning for a committee of young feminists...[as a part of their youth engagement strategy]" [translation] (Adult Francophone respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

Flexible approaches to program development and design that involves youth is considered essential for more effective and sustainable youth engagement

Among the data collected, staff from the Canadian Women's Foundation shared their reflections regarding the flexible processes and practices used to engage with youth in the development, design and implementation of the National Learning Strategy. It was clear that flexibility was an essential part of encouraging the leadership demonstrated by the members of the Youth Advisory Committee. This was reflected in their feedback and decision-making regarding the program design. Their involvement can be seen as a definite asset to the success of the program.

"...the program design certainly guided the overall development leading to the event and the activities to follow. The content was shaped based on what the community highlighted as important. In our initial scan of the sector, we developed the dominant learning themes and formats that were emphasized by the community groups attending our event. ...the flexibility allowed us to adapt a youth specific stream of learning based on

the feedback from our youth advisory committee." (Canadian Women's Foundation Staff reflection, March 2012)

National Learning Strategy participants also stressed this point in their open-ended responses in the Follow Up to the National Skills Institute survey regarding the knowledge and skills they integrated into their own work following their involvement in the National Skills Institute. They explained that to encourage youth engagement more effectively it is necessary to *seek their expertise and then include the youth perspective in programming*. Respondents identified a number of effective ways of doing this, echoing the attitude of the Canadian Women's Foundation staff members.

They suggested a **more flexible approach** by:

- Including youth in **decision-making**
- Giving youth more authority and power to make decisions by **exploring their own "learning styles and to taking the lead in education work** being done in the community"
- Encouraging more **youth to participate in advisory positions, program design and leadership capacities** within the organization and the greater community

By engaging youth in these various ways, it was suggested that these processes and practices lead to empowerment of youth and builds their self-confidence to achieve in other areas of their lives such as school, work, and friendships by practicing interpersonal skills.

"Since the National Skills Institute, we have had youth participate as youth leaders in some other initiatives that we are doing separate from the [violence prevention and healthy teen relationship] programs. We had them in leadership roles to support what they are learning in this program and [facilitate knowledge sharing of those leadership skills] to other youth". (Follow Up Focus Group Participant, December 2012)

Youth Advisory Committee members exemplified youth leadership throughout the National Learning Strategy, believing strongly in the approach used by the Canadian Women's Foundation to engage youth in teen healthy relationships programming

When members of the Youth Advisory Committee were surveyed 6-months following their involvement in the implementation of the National Skills Institute, 100% indicated that they would like to continue working with Canadian Women's Foundation on programs that target youth.

Again, 100% responded that they intend to 'stay in touch' with the work of Canadian Women's Foundation through social media.

The National Learning Strategy demonstrates a high-level of experience with youth engagement strategies and approaches. Canadian Women's Foundation can build on their experience by sharing this knowledge and experience with stakeholders within the field of practice for teen healthy relationships. When reflecting back on their experience as Youth Advisory Committee members, 100% strongly agreed that the Canadian Women's Foundation:

- Is innovative, respectful and youth-friendly
- Let them take the lead and make decisions about the design and delivery of the youth stream of the National Skills Institute

Respondents to the Youth Advisory Committee Follow Up survey shared these comments:

"This youth advisory committee has been such a great opportunity in which I have benefited so much! I would absolutely love to continue working with Canadian Women's Foundation in any way I can!"

"I would love to continue to work with the Canadian Women's Foundation [in] any capacity! I'm passionate about these youth programs and I think their work is amazing!"

Considerations

Overall, results show that many of the National Learning Strategy participants identify youth engagement as a priority for improving the quality of teen healthy relationship and violence prevention initiatives. Youth engagement through youth-led processes is a key component of both quality programs and establishing youth leadership within communities. For many respondents youth leadership development is a fundamental response to the systemic issues youth in their communities are faced with.

Whether in rural, northern or urban contexts, participants in the National Learning Strategy indicated that they could strengthen their existing programming if Canadian Women's Foundation was able to further provide:

- Support with resources
- Opportunities for youth leadership training
- Knowledge sharing regarding youth engagement practices
- Opportunities for sharing more best practices to help them improve understanding within the

network for strategic youth engagement approaches

For instance, one respondent says this could be achieved:

"By researching and providing concrete information on best practices for engaging young people (both male and female) in the prevention of violence against women and oppression." (Adult respondent to Follow Up to the National Skills Institute Survey)

Given the Youth Advisory Committee members experience was so positive and encouraging, Canadian Women's Foundation needs to consider how valuable this engagement was and how much potential there is for learning if this youth engagement experience expanded across the organization in the future. When Youth Advisory Committee members were asked what Canadian Women's Foundation needs to do to keep youth actively involved in their teen healthy relationships and violence prevention initiatives, they suggested the following:

Create a "youth advisory council for Canadian Women's Foundation as a whole"

Ensure young women are represented in the Canadian Women's Foundation staff enabling them to "share their input and perspective as the younger generation"

"Encourage peer lead workshop in programs"

"Have liaisons within the organization to work with youth that are half as wonderful as Samantha!"

"Share information nationally in a more youth-centred way"

Learning Study 3: Building a field of practice - networks, partnerships and relationships



This Learning study looks specifically at what elements of the National Learning Strategy led to strengthened relationships, partnerships, and increased networking within the teen healthy relationships field of practice. This learning study aims to answer the following questions:

- How has the 'field of practice' used National Learning Strategy content to improve, initiate and/or share their programs and services related to teen healthy relationships?
- How has the National Learning Strategy strengthened the learning culture of this community? Where and how are members excited to continue growing?
- To what extent has knowledge generated through the National Learning Strategy been transferred into the broader Canadian (national and regional) contexts? What inter or intra-organizational forms did it take?

Improved content, materials and resources on teen healthy relationships leads to broader cross-sectoral programming, reach, and impact

The high quality resources and materials accessed through participation in both the National Skills Institute and the National Learning Strategy e-learning activities, helped organizations strengthen the content and focus of their existing teen healthy relationships program materials, as well as to create new materials. One respondent shares:

"We have just written three new tool kit chapters on violence against Aboriginal women, members of the LGBTQ community and immigrant women. These chapters were written with the help of (and revised by) new contacts made at the National Skills Institute." (Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

A ripple effect also took place in terms of the number of organizations, service providers and contexts these new materials and program models were tested by, and adopted in. Over 65% of National Skills Institute participants stated they are more effective integrating new program delivery models into their work, with 61% of participants specifically more able to integrate a 'gendered and youth-focused' approach to their teen healthy relationships programming.

Knowledge transfer 'across sectors', was also significant, resulting in some strong cross-pollination, as illustrated in the following comment:

"A new initiative underway in our Teen Talk Program is the development of new training sessions designed for individuals working with youth in a variety of sectors (e.g. health, education, recreation, social services) across our province. Our goal is to share our strengthened curriculum on teen healthy relationships [coming out of the National Skills Institute] and to support them in integrating it into their work with youth." (Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

Informal support networks coming out of the National Skills Institute help service providers go deeper in their work and create more value

Many 'informal' support networks also grew out of the National Learning Strategy. These inter-organizational relationships aimed to mutually support personnel in teen healthy relationships programs, to surface and exchange best practices and to continue advancing their collective work. For example, one National Skills Institute participant describes how out of the National Skills Institute, his organization created an Anti-Violence Program Staff network that meets monthly to discuss how to address challenges in their work.

Collective confidence in teen healthy relationships program models helps to expand partnerships and networks

Improved teen healthy relationships materials and program exposure leads to increased ability and confidence to connect with other organizations and sectors. Participating in the National Skills Institute and its follow-up learning activities validated the experience of many organizations and inspired them to use their new knowledge to improve and create new programming models. It also strengthened their capacity to focus their networking activities and further "consolidate their linkages."

Examples of the different forms of partnerships and networking that emerged after the National Skills Institute include:

- a) Increased ability to make service referrals
- b) Development of more collaborative work/*des projets rassembler*
- c) Redefining the lens through which communities develop programming for youth
- d) Considering more cross-sectoral approaches to teen healthy relationships work

Respondents shared widely when asked if they developed new relationships and partnerships post-National Skills Institute:

"Nous sommes inspirées des modèles de programme présentés lors du National Skills Institute et nous avons entrepris de consolider nos liens en particulier avec les écoles et les organismes jeunesse."(Adult francophone respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

"More people know about our prevention program since we have been promoting its new content with confidence now. We have received lots of inquiries."(Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

Improved strategic clarity and capacity for how to work with political and educational institutions

The National Learning Strategy has helped the field of practice imagine new and improved ways to link government and education institutions to the teen healthy relationships curriculum and programming. Organizations have increased their capacity to reevaluate strategies for working in school systems and government; specifically, which levers to pull to strengthen existing relationships and where to strategically develop new relationships. This has been an important priority, given the particularly challenging climate for engaging in school-community partnerships. One participant shared the example of how their Sexual Assault Centre's healthy relationship program had been "kicked out" of their local school board as a result of the boards' new policies around who is allowed to work in the schools, how much time students must be in class and school boards' definitions of evidenced-based practice.

Some of the strategies that were shared for consideration include: a) improving access to provincial policies for outside professionals coming into schools to support programming, and b) the identifying capacity gaps that need to be filled in order to ensure successful implementation of teen healthy relationships curriculum in schools (e.g. staff training, teacher involvement).

Many National Skills Institute participants gave examples of their intention to connect existing teen healthy relationships programs more closely to the school curriculum and to solicit increased funding for these programs in schools:

"I have been working with teachers, Child and Youth Workers and other York Region School Board administration personnel to further connect the Schools for Change program to the curriculum. We are working through the new provincial policy for outside professionals to come into schools to work with students

in a more organized way."(Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

"A new phenomenon is happening for our Centre. We have been invited by the City of London and by our public health unit to work with them on separate initiative related to healthy relationships. These are new partnerships for our Centre and important ones especially as our city redesigns how it approaches work in neighbourhoods."(Adult respondent to the National Skills Institute Follow Up Survey)

The National Learning Strategy created a "mushrooming effect" on the evolution of the field of practice for the future

One of the main goals of the National Learning Strategy was to further build the field of practice around teen healthy relationships programming. Given Canadian Women's Foundation's history as both a funder and catalyst for strategic development of programming in this area, the National Skills Institute was a critical event for bringing a wider group of partners together to learn from their experiences and to think about where to build the field for the future.

The post-National Skills Institute evaluations spoke highly of the value of connecting with organizations beyond their usual networks and gaining a deeper national and regional perspective on the key actors and issues. The face-to-face connection and the follow-up E-learning exchanges across provinces, regions, different types of organizations, and language was an extremely valuable way to consider the shared challenges for teen healthy relationships at a national level and to build shared ownership for finding long-term solutions. Respondent testimonials include:

"I could see the wide range of people/job titles/research expertise; on the national level it is very diverse. It helps motivate, inspire and ease feelings of isolation." (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

"I think there is a movement that has grown out of the National Skills Institute. I have really benefited from the webinars, emails and e-chats." (Respondent to the Follow Up Focus Group)

"Keep that networking alive so that we are aware of what is happening in other provinces." (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

This increased level of connecting led to improved confidence and ability to develop a longer-term vision for where new partnerships could grow, particularly through scaling-up at the provincial level. Examples of this improved confidence and partnering across organizations include:

"I have been energized to work at building stronger alliances, partnerships and networks. I found that we were working in silos

and that many community stakeholders were unaware of what was happening within our community.”(Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

“We have applied for funding through the Department of Community Services to fund out Dating Violence/Sexual Harassment presentations within our schools.”(Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

“We have expanded a partnership with our local Alberta Mental Health Services to build and develop a Healthy Relationships program for our local high schools, using the Learning Guide 101 as a resource for developing this program.”(Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

“I am happy to report that a network is being established in Calgary specifically addressing healthy youth relationships programming. Funder interest is there to help facilitate a coordinated response to healthy youth relationships as part of a violence prevention strategy.”(Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

Developing a vision for systems change

Bringing together such a broad group of organizations in the field of practice to share openly and critically helped groups see the value of moving beyond a program-by-program approach, to making a case, through increased partnerships and sharing of resources, for larger scale initiatives with wider system-level affect. As stated above, the National Learning Strategy also gave organizations increased confidence to share their programs more publicly and to “make the case” for longer-term support of their teen healthy relationships work. As one respondent shares, “*the National Skills Institute helped us better make our case, streamline our goals and outcomes for programs to have a larger potential impact.*”

A lesson learned was the importance of continuing to prove that both gendered and intersectional approaches to violence prevention work are critical to long-term system change. Investment and focus must therefore be made on both evaluating and validating best practices in the field from these perspectives, as well as to communicating these successes with a broader network of stakeholders.

Considerations

Given the challenges of engaging the government in an open policy dialogue around the need for a coordinated strategy for teen healthy relationships; specifically, how it fits into the educational curriculum, organizations on the ground are more than ever ‘hungry’ for coordinated responses to help strengthen their work. The National Skills Institute evaluation surfaced the need to include all communities in the growing field of practice,

particularly those underserved or diverse, where program models do not always fit.

Many cite the value that Canadian Women’s Foundation plays in its bridging role; connecting government, community and educational institutions so they can continue to learn from each other and leverage each other’s experiences. Many stakeholders in the field of practice link the potential to create more dynamic partnerships between government, community and schools with the leadership role the Foundation has played and continues to play in moving them forward.

National Skills Institute participants frequently cite the need for consistent and multi-year funding to ensure ongoing evaluation, improvement and scaling of their programs; with emphasis on communicating the evidence-based research and practice emerging from teen healthy relationships programming. The field of practice sees Canadian Women’s Foundation playing a leadership role in demonstrating the collective impact the network is having, and how that impact is aligned with the outcomes that other organizations are trying to achieve. (For ex: government departments – health, recreation, or social services)

Learning Study 4: Diversity within the National Learning Strategy



This Learning Study aims to explore the main lessons learned and areas for future exploration related to how gender and diversity were integrated into the activities of the National Learning Strategy.

It explores the following questions:

- To what extent is a gendered analysis of violence prevention taking place by organizations in the field of practice? Where are the gaps in knowledge and practice?
- What is the nature of the organizations and programs that Canadian Women's Foundation engaged in the National Learning Strategy on teen healthy relationships? Is it representative of the social, economic, cultural context of Canada? Have they addressed the field of practice intersectionally? To what degree?

The teen healthy relationships field of practice identifies multiple systemic barriers and issues facing teenagers in Canada today. Many of the challenges relate directly to gender based violence and racism

When asked what are the main problems affecting teen healthy relationships in their community, many responses could be linked to the multiplicity of issues that face girls and young women who experience violence. National Skills Institute participants highlighted the following issues affecting their communities:

- Objectification of women
- Violence against women and young girls (dating violence)
- Gender stereotyping
- Lack of positive role models of healthy relationships for young girls coupled with the early sexualization of girls brought on by low self-esteem and limited social skills
- Hyper-sexualization of girls in the media and the role of technology and social media in promoting these negative images

Another significant problem cited relates to the role that intersectionality plays in the lives of youth, more specifically how the intersections of discrimination based on sex, race, sexual orientation, ability and economic standing work to create vulnerabilities to violence. Some participants spoke to the pressures that heteronormative discourse places on transsexual, bisexual, queer relationships and the lack of healthy relationship models.

Connections were also made between immigrant youth, integration and settlement issues (e.g. literacy, language, access to education), racism, colonization of Indigenous communities and discrimination. The following quote illustrates the many intersections that characterize how violence is manifested in the lives of youth, particularly girls and young women.

"Visible minorities are ostracized from Canadian culture and society, their levels of education are insufficient which leads to a cycle of low academic achievement, lower wages and poverty as well as other culture barriers that preclude healthy integration into society for their children, particularly their girls." (Adult respondent to the Pre-Survey of the National Skills Institute).

Organizations in the field of practice place significant value on reframing the lens through which teen healthy relationship programs are developed so that they adopt strong gendered analysis and connections between violence prevention work for girls and young women

The National Learning Strategy aimed to build a case for how teen healthy relationship programs are part of a wider strategy for prevention of violence against women. Specifically, the National Skills Institute aimed to build capacity of organizations to further develop a gendered approach to their work. The pre-National Learning Strategy survey data confirms that 61% of participants at the National Skills Institute increased their knowledge of gender-based program processes and practices (e.g. gender analyses, gender stereotypes) and are integrating them into their work. 61% of participants state that they are more effective at implementing gender analysis frameworks into their programs and services.

The following are examples of how organizations in the field of practice have adopted new skills and knowledge related to gender analysis and diversity issues:

- Increased youth-focused involvement in planning, implementation and decision making processes
- Increased support for gender specific groups, particularly the 'girls-only' groups which have a special and important place in the support and

development of femaleness and self esteem of young women

- Enhanced ability to engage in gender analyses within organizational program design and revisions

For example:

"The National Skills Institute has helped us solidify the importance of using a gender analysis framework in our programs and has encouraged us to deepen and expand our analysis to include an even broader scope on gender, sexuality and identity." (Adult respondent to Follow-up survey of the National Skills Institute).

Despite significant increased knowledge about gendered approaches to violence prevention, there is still a need to adopt more of a diverse and intersectional approach in the field of practice

To date, Canadian Women's Foundation has used a women-centred lens to encourage both empathy and critical analysis, reflection and a commitment to social justice, in a way that leaves the discussions open enough that they expose the different ways that youth experience violence, discrimination and oppression. Using a broader, more positive approach that includes young men as allies, while still have a gender-based analysis encourages wider participation and understanding.

That said, comments collected from National Skills Institute participants suggested that the lens through which the best practices and materials were presented could have been more intersectional.

To ensure a field of practice that is truly representative of the challenges facing youth related to violence prevention, there must be a higher level of intersectional analysis of issues related to frameworks of oppression, diversity and violence prevention. The analysis of the issues facing teen relationships across Canada, from the perspective of the organizations in the field of practice, would also suggest that this analysis is critical to understand when designing programmatic responses. (See previous page).

Considerations

National Skills Institute participants would like to see more explicit examples of materials, events, communications (e-learning) and models that recognized and supported diversity in terms of social, economic, sexual and cultural identity.

This would look like:

Awareness-raising: Deepening and making more explicit the links between an anti-oppression/anti-racism framework and how teen healthy relationship programming connects to the underlying causes of violence against girls and women.

Strategically widening the field of practice: To ensure it includes organizations and individuals (both adults and youth) who represent a wider range of cultural, ethnic, sexual orientations and particularly so that it includes communities that work with marginalized girls and boys (including rural and economically deprived communities).

Developing targeted Canadian Women's Foundation strategies, programs and educational materials (resources and e-learning): That are highly relevant and responsive to the issues/root causes identified by the field of practice and grounded in the baseline data collected through the pre-National Skills Institute survey for example.

Investing in evidence-based practices and a gendered approach to evaluation: To ensure Canadian Women's Foundation makes a solid case for why healthy relationship programming helps get at the multiple systemic barriers facing youth, particularly those facing girls and young women.

Continue to invest in communicating the outcomes: To ensure a more diverse and targeted audience through a gendered approach.

Learning Study 5: Social media and E-learning



This Learning Study illuminates the main lessons learned and areas for future exploration regarding the use of social media and e-learning opportunities within this field of practice.

This Learning Study aims to explore the following questions:

- How have the social media and e-learning components of the National Learning Strategy contributed to knowledge sharing and capacity building?
- How do National Learning Strategy participants value what they learned regarding social media when working with youth in their own communities?
- How have the e-learning components from the National Learning Strategy been embraced by the network?
- How are youth themselves engaging with social media and e-learning tools as a way to share knowledge with their peers and in their own communities?

Knowledge gained during the National Skills Institute focused on social media and youth, as well as the use of e-learning opportunities demonstrated since the National Skills Institute have been put into practice by participants

Since their participation in the National Skills Institute, 80% of respondents to the adult Follow Up to the National Skills Institute survey indicate that they are “using information and communications technology (e.g., internet, web site, social media, digital video)” more effectively.

“Our social media presence has greatly increased and we have published a number of topical posts on our BLOG post on violence prevention. We have lobbied government on a variety of issues related to violence against women.” (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

The focus on social media throughout the National Learning Strategy learning events was invaluable to participating organizations. They have revised and created new resources and tools to include more information about concerns and challenges that youth face when engaging with social media. As shown in the

following examples from respondents to the Follow Up to the National Skills Institute survey:

“We have revamped many of our presentations and workshops for the schools, adding in a section on Social Media and it’s effects.” (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

In fact, 92% adult participants of the National Skills Institute indicated that they were integrating new knowledge of emerging challenges with social media within the context of teen healthy relationships (e.g., within school culture and/or the community).

“Through our work we have written lesson plans that focus on the role of the media as well as emerging challenges with social media. In addition, we have conducted a webinar on the role of media that we have shared with other stakeholder groups. We have provided training sessions for youth leaders at the high school level and mentoring sessions for elementary students. In addition, we have offered workshops to teachers on a number of the topics mentioned above.” (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

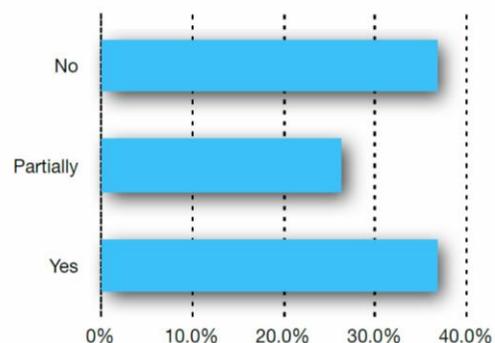
“We’re trying to address challenges re social media by trying to include an aspect of social media into every workshop.” (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

One participant “updated/revised grade 6 and 8 workshops to include more information on social media and the challenges for developing healthy relationships.” (Adult respondent to the Follow Up survey to the National Skills Institute).

The context of e-learning components from the National Learning Strategy, such as webinars and e-bulletins can be explored further by Canadian Women’s Foundation in the future

Based on the results of the data collected from the National Learning Strategy participants, only 37% are taking part in webinars, or using the e-resources offered by Canadian Women’s Foundation. The table below shows the quantitative results.

Table 7: Organizations’ use of the e-learning materials being produced by the Canadian Women’s Foundation as follow up to the National Skills Institute



According to their responses, those that were participating / using the e-resources produced by the Canadian Women's Foundation were using them in the following ways:

- Incorporating them into their organizations' workshop materials / programs
- Using them for presentations with their stakeholders
- Reviewing content with staff as a way of sharing resources

Mainly, there were three (4) reasons provided why respondents were not participating/using e-learning resources:

- Representatives from organizations were not available at the time the webinars were scheduled
- Organizations did not find the resources applicable to their particular programs
- They were completely unaware that these e-learning events / resources were available to them
- Challenged with introducing new tools (especially technology) to staff (e.g., mainly volunteers made up of retirees)

National Learning Strategy youth are using / planning to use social media as a means to promoting the value of teen healthy relationship programs with their peers and community

In the Youth Leading Change survey, designing a Facebook campaign or group was the most popular action identified by youth as a way of sharing knowledge and promoting the importance of healthy relationships among teens.

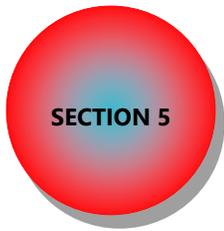
According to the responses from both the Youth Advisory Committee Follow Up to the National Skills Institute Survey and the Youth Leading Change surveys, 62% of youth are better able to use social media to promote the importance of teen healthy relationships as a result of their participation in the National Learning Strategy.

Considerations

Given that awareness regarding social media use among teens is considered such a vital component of teen healthy relationships programming by organizations working with teens in communities, it would be useful to consider how Canadian Women's Foundation can further engage the field of practice through social media or e-learning resources.

The qualitative data collected during this evaluative study reflects that adult National Learning Strategy participants perceive social network tools to be a primary means for youth to share with their peers; however, there is a difference between this perception and an actual understanding of how youth are actually utilizing it to promote teen healthy relationships with their peers. Further evidence-based research is required to understand how the Foundation can better support the actual value of social media to engage young people in programs and to prevent violence against girls and young women.

Canadian Women's Foundation is in a good position within this field of practice to lead evaluative research on how organizations are valuing social media in their work. Supporting knowledge sharing and training for the organizations within this network could raise awareness about the challenges youth face in light of online social media and youth social culture, in particular examining the challenges of how social media is affecting teen healthy relationships.



Contributions to the Field of Practice on Teen Healthy Relationships and Violence Against Young Women in Canada: Conclusion and Future Considerations

5.1 Conclusions from the Learning Studies

The National Learning Strategy was a very important extension of the Canadian Women's Foundation's success in supporting Healthy Relationship programs across Canada. Not only did it push the Foundation's internal capacity forward to aggregate five years of best practice and knowledge around teen healthy relationship programming (2006-2011), but it also coordinated and inspired an external "mushrooming effect" on the field of practice across Canada.

The outcomes of this 18-month strategy are very encouraging:

Youth Engagement: More organizations in the field of practice have experienced, through the National Skills Institute, the power of integrating a youth voice and leadership into their teen healthy relationship programming. They are already experimenting with new ways to involve youth in their programs through starting a youth committee or implementing participatory mechanisms to increase youth perspectives. Youth themselves identify their experience with this program as 'life-changing' realizing that their "voice matters" in the future development of Canadian youth culture. Both youth and adults thought that it was very important that they came together in a respectful, participatory and inclusive process. This shared participation permitted youth positively develop a strong attitude towards youth and adults working together. It allowed them to see how adult support "makes improvements [in] the lives of youth in [their] communities" as well as "crucial" for youth to understand that their experience extends beyond just their community, recognizing the field of practice is working to improve their lives.

Networks, partnerships & collaborations: More people, organizations and sectors are connected and motivated to deepen the impact of their healthy relationship programs. They have increased capacity to

deliver gender-based programming to promote teen healthy relationships. They are inspired to be more strategic about how they engage in partnerships, to use evidence-based practices to build the case for the value of teen healthy relationship programming. They are considering new approaches for scaling-up initiatives at the provincial level and with school boards.

Systemic context: The field of practice is hungry for more coordinated responses, long-term strategies, and policy/advocacy frameworks to help coordinate and strengthen the reach and impact of their collective work. Canadian Women's Foundation is 'looked-up' to as a key actor and influencer in leading these efforts.

Intersectionality, diversity, and gender: The field of practice has increased their understanding of how and why violence prevention work with youth is highly gendered. They see the value of developing and evaluating their teen healthy relationships programs through a gendered lens. There is however, an expressed need by the field of practice to see a higher level of intersectional analysis of issues related to frameworks of oppression, racism, sexual diversity in subsequent collaborations within the field. There is also a demand for widening the field of practice to include a more representative sample of communities who experience multi dimensional violence and oppression.

Knowledge Transfer through Social Media: There is huge value placed on the role that social media plays in facilitating knowledge transfer between both youth and organizations around teen healthy relationships programming, from both content and process perspectives. Social media use among teens is considered a vital component of teen healthy relationships programming in particular in rural and northern communities. Youth culture is considered to be so reliant on online social network tools, yet disparity exists between this perception and actual understanding of youth engagement with it in the capacity of promoting teen health and well being with their peers. Stakeholders within this field of practice would embrace and participate in further evidence-based research and evaluation in this area to better understand the value of social media in the promotion of teen healthy relationships and the prevention of violence against young women and girls.

5.2 Future Considerations

The following section presents a series of suggested strategies and challenges for Canadian Women's Foundation to consider as a way to use the results from this evaluation of the National Learning Strategy to pave the way forward.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Main questions to consider

- How can the Canadian Women's Foundation play a catalytic role in developing a youth capacity within the field of practice? How can this be achieved in the long term?
- How can the Canadian Women's Foundation maximize their relationships with their broader grantee pool of organizations to strengthen youth engagement strategies within the field of practice? What strategies are most effective to achieve this?

Strategies to consider

Consider formalizing/developing a mechanism for youth engagement, cutting across all Foundation funding areas thereby mainstreaming through all future grant making. This could take many different shapes and forms. For example, a permanent Youth Advisory Board, a panel of experts, a cross cutting strategy with youth engagement indicators mainstreamed throughout all Foundation programs.

Consider funding and support for youth programs geared towards social/ interpersonal, communications skills development, building capacity, self-esteem and leadership skills among youth. All capacity areas were identified through the national learning strategy as requiring more training.

Consider creating a training or policy document building on the experience of running the youth advisory committee at the Foundation that can be applied as a strategy across the organizations program development and implementation.

Challenges to consider

All Canadian Women's Foundation grant making processes (structure for distributing funds, grant-evaluation criteria, modes of funding) would have to be reviewed in light of any new youth engagement strategic guidelines created. This requires cross-foundation commitment of time and resources.

Youth are a transient group that tend to be more difficult to keep involved over the long term. Strategies for involving youth in longer-term decision making bodies of the Canadian Women's Foundation must be chosen carefully. Best practices of what this might look like should be sought out and considered. E.g., Laidlaw Foundation *Youth on Board program*.

NETWORK, PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Main question to consider

- How did these learning events encourage, influence or create opportunities for new relationships to flourish across this field of practice?

Strategies to consider

Continue funding and coordinating learning events, both face to face and e-learning, to connect the field of practice and encourage ongoing collaboration

Consider taking the lead in bridging shared agendas of strategic partners (e.g., play linking role between Status of Women, community-level field of practice and government departments)

Consider devoting more resources and support to improve networking capacity of the field of practice organizations and to reinforce the value of partnership in strengthening the field of practice (e.g., fund regional gatherings, fund regional collaborative projects etc.)

Continue building capacity of community stakeholders other than youth. For example, teachers, community workers, school administrators, municipal youth care workers (e.g., summer camp counselors)

Challenges to consider

The climate for policy and advocacy work is very challenging, particularly in the education sector.

To consider deeper partnering with cross-related sectors such as health and recreation.

To consider implications of more consistent and deliberate strategy around advocacy in this area and approaches to leverage more government funding for teen healthy relationships. Is this a role the Foundation wants to engage in at a deeper level with more consistent use of influence?

INTERSECTIONALITY, GENDER & DIVERSITY

Main question to consider

- What can the field of practice learn regarding intersectionality, diversity and gender as a result of the implementation of learning events of the National Learning Strategy?

Strategies to consider

Consider developing a learning strategy with specific outreach goals to remote and underserved communities where teen healthy relationships program models do not always fit.

Continue promoting and communicating their intersectional and gendered approach. This approach should be clearly messaged throughout all work in violence prevention programming for women and girls.

Consider finding a balance between highlighting existing teen healthy relationships programs and best practices (which may seem homogeneous) versus bringing emerging programs that represent more diverse communities to the forefront (e.g., Francophone, Aboriginal, immigrant, LBGTQ2S).

Challenges to consider

The field of practice needs a lead body to collectively help promote their work through a gender/intersectionality lens.

The Foundation can play a key role in speaking a language that other institutions (e.g., government, school boards) can hear without compromising the women and girls-centred, intersectional analysis that is required to make programs effective on the ground.

Canadian Women's Foundation must make an important decision about calibrating resources and programming support. Is the timing right to reach out and support the harder to reach communities; those that may require more resources?

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND E-LEARNING

Knowledge Transfer through Social media and E-learning

- How effective is social media as a tool for knowledge transfer, skills building, and awareness-raising about teen healthy relationship and violence prevention initiatives?

Strategies to consider

Consider developing and managing an Online National Baseline Database focused on knowledge areas related to teen healthy relationships and current technological trends affecting youth culture in Canada. A wealth of data has been collected during this program evaluation from across Canada. This data serves not only to respond to the assumptions and questions raised during this particular evaluative study, but also can be directed towards further developing the field of practice and implementing future initiatives. This database would further contribute to evidence-based research, program development and policy dialogues for the future.

Continue developing knowledge sharing opportunities and capacity building for and with youth to ensure responsible choices regarding usage of social media and digital media.

Challenges to consider

Further research and evaluation is required to better understand the value of social media in the promotion of teen healthy relationships and the prevention of violence against young women and girls.

The Foundation is well positioned within this field of practice to lead evaluative research on how organizations are valuing social media in their work. Supporting knowledge sharing and training for the organizations within this network could raise awareness about the challenges youth face in light of the interplay between online social media and youth social culture, in particular examining the challenges of how social media is affecting teen healthy relationships.

With cross-fertilization between programs, the Foundation can consider evidence-based research, evaluation and sharing best practices among stakeholders within this field of practice regarding how boys and girls experience the affects of social media differently. This gender-based approach to social media can result in a variety of 'scaling-up' initiatives that may also develop into peer-to-peer programming.

SYSTEMIC CONTEXT

Main question to consider

- To what extent can we imagine further scaling-up of teen healthy relationships programming? What are some of the possibilities for scaling this work? The challenges? How can the outcomes of the National Learning Strategy build a case for increased support?

Strategies to consider

Continue devoting resources that ensure consistent funding to teen healthy relationships programs with strong gender analysis.

Consider investing in building capacity of grantees to create evidence-based support on the success of these programs, thereby leading to increased case for support.

Consider taking the lead in developing a coordinated, national strategy for teen healthy relationships promotion in the school curriculum.

Consider introducing its own policy ideas through convening policy makers or orchestrating advocacy efforts within the field of practice.

Challenges to consider

Climate for policy and advocacy work is very challenging, particularly in the education sector.

Funding climate is very challenging and will affect abilities to scale up work and support longer-term investments in these programs.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Main Questions for consider

- How did the National Learning Strategy activities create programmatic / policy change within the Canadian Women's Foundation?

Strategies to consider

Consider formalizing / developing a strategy for youth engagement that cuts across all Canadian Women's Foundation funding streams and can be mainstreamed through all future grant making.

Consider developing a funding stream that focuses entirely on building capacity within the teen healthy relationships field of practice, particularly in areas of youth-adult relations, strategic planning, evidence-based research & evaluation and network strengthening.

Consider increasing its capacity to act as a knowledge and content resource / expert on teen healthy relationships and gendered approaches, for professionals in multiple fields. This could include increasing their role in both reviewing and assisting with program development through coaching mechanisms designed as embedded into funding process.

Continue strengthening and communicating good stories / success stories of the benefits of teen healthy relationships programming (through PSAs, e-learning strategies, webinars, website).

Consider leading/facilitating a 'secure' online community of practice for the National Learning Strategy network. This online community can support the continued National Learning Strategies in the future.

Challenges to consider

Canadian Women's Foundation investment in developing leadership at local and regional levels of continuing to build and strengthen the field of practice towards the larger goal of systems change.

Consider its position as a Foundation that is both strategic and proactive, and the balance between working on larger national issues related to violence against women and initiating and seeding projects on the ground.

Consider the distribution of resources for this program to respond to the identified needs of the field of practice and as a leading organization in this field.