

# Program Evaluation - Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summits Implementation Projects

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*Executive Summary and Recommendations 2014*

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	iii
Executive Summary .....	1
Findings on Relevance .....	1
Findings on Influences .....	2
Findings on Impact .....	2
Conclusions.....	2
Recommendations.....	2
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	3
Recommendations.....	4
Appendix 1 – Logic Model.....	6
Appendix 2 – Evaluation Matrix.....	10

## Executive Summary

The Government of Yukon's Women's Directorate is committed to continuous quality improvement and improving the effectiveness of programming. The organization has thus commissioned an end-of-program evaluation for the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit Implementation Projects.

The Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit Implementation Projects program, which received support from the Northern Strategy Trust, funded six projects over a three-year period. The projects were as follows:

Project Title	Duration	Time Period
Aboriginal Women's Groups Expansion Project	18 months	2012-2013
Aboriginal Women's Mentorship Training and Role Model Program	18 months	2010-2011
Culturally-Relevant Gender-Balanced Analysis	24 months	2011-2013
Elder-Youth Land-Based Camp	18 months	2011-2013
Yukon Sisters in Spirit Project	36 months	2010-2013
Youth Violence Prevention and Healthy Relationships Project	18 months	2011-2012

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess challenges and progress of the program and its outcomes, as well as to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Using a combination of stakeholder interviews and literature review, three dimensions were examined: relevance, influences, and impact.

### Findings on Relevance

The following table summarizes the respondents' perceptions of which YAWS priorities their projects supported. The table shows that every one of the objectives was perceived to be addressed by at least one project.

	AWGEP	AWMTRMP	CRGBA	EYLBC	YSIS	YVPHRP
Take action	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reclaim cultural traditions and identity through teaching and celebrating	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Need for counselling and healing for the whole family		✓	?	✓	✓	✓
Address and eliminate racism	?	✓	✓		✓	?
Encourage and support Aboriginal women to take on decision-making and political leadership roles	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Use the wisdom of Elders as teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Respect Youth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wellness and it's connection to education and leadership		✓	✓	✓	?	?
Find more ways for First Nation people to be developing and presenting programming in schools	?		?			✓
School curriculum to engage First Nation children and youth			?			✓
Support youth to become leaders	✓	?			?	✓
Address systemic disrespect and racism against those in financial need		?	?	✓	✓	?

Each project had its own specific objectives. Overall, most respondents felt that the projects they participated in met the stated objectives, although all three respondents for AWGEP felt unsure objectives were met for that project.

Overall respondents felt the objectives of their projects are still important issues that should be supported. In many cases, however, they felt that there will not be progress made without specific attention and financial resources.

### **Findings on Influences**

Most respondents felt the Women's Directorate did a good job of monitoring performance, supporting project objectives, and facilitating their work. Some noted that it was difficult to get support in the communities outside of regular business hours. In general, they felt their projects contributed to the mandate of the Women's Directorate. Financial resources were mostly considered adequate. Staffing was a problem for some. Flexibility and the ability to adapt was a key success factor for several projects.

### **Findings on Impact**

Overall, respondents felt that YAWSI projects had a positive impact in communities and in raising the profile of Aboriginal women in decision-making spaces. Some of the changes the projects created include:

- More awareness of women's issues and increased excitement to help create change
- Increased awareness of WAWC and YAWC activities and mandate
- More confidence and pride among program participants
- Increased awareness for the need to improve safety for people in the communities
- Improved working relationship between YAWC and the RCMP
- More awareness by stakeholders of the purpose and value of Aboriginal women's participation and leadership
- Strengthened relationships with partner organizations

### **Conclusions**

Overall, the YAWSI program successfully developed projects that contributed to the advancement of all 12 of the YAWS key messages. Some objectives had more support than others; this is unsurprising, since some objectives were quite broad and some were very specific.

Most of the projects appeared to be successful in the eyes of the organizers and many of the individual project goals were met.

### **Recommendations**

1. Maintain flexibility
2. Develop program evaluation parameters first
3. Evaluate impact along the way
4. Evaluate each project as part of final reporting
5. Ensure organizations have the ability to manage staff and volunteer transition
6. Financially empower organizations

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit Implementation Projects program successfully developed projects that contributed to the advancement of all 12 of the YAWS objectives. Some objectives had more support than others; this is unsurprising, since some objectives were quite broad and some were very specific.

Most of the projects appeared to be successful in the eyes of the organizers and many of the individual project goals were met. As this was the first time any of these projects had been attempted, there were learning curves for each of them. It seems likely that new projects could be created to carry on the work that was begun, and that the learning from past projects would contribute to the success of subsequent ones. The more time passes, the weaker this building effect, as knowledge is lost through staff attrition and simply forgetting the details. There is no evidence (based on the material provided) that any follow-up projects or programs have been created.

In most cases, financial resources were deemed to be sufficient for the implementation of the projects, although many respondents said more could have been done with more resources. The key takeaway here is that financial resources were well-matched with planned project goals.

On the other hand, all respondents noted that the project activities stopped once specific funding ran out. Although some projects produced learning materials or physical collateral that can be used in future, all activities ceased once the funding ended; none so far have found alternative sources.

Staff resources were more problematic. Turnover, project activities mismatched with staff, and board fatigue were all factors that contributed to the challenges in some YAWSI projects, particularly with AWGEP. While project funding has been available, it would appear that limited operational funding has been affecting staff and volunteer retention for most women's organizations, resulting in issues pertaining to corporate memory and initiative continuity.

**Flexibility** was a key success factor for several projects. For example, several projects required amendments to their contribution agreements because of schedule changes. The AWMTRM project adjusted its model of implementation when it became clear that actually matching up specific mentors with mentees was not feasible.

The project that appeared to suffer the most from external causes was the AWGEP project, which stalled when YAWC's key staff person left the organization. This corroborates concerns about staff/volunteer retention and issues regarding corporate memory.

Measuring the impact of each project is not possible without feedback from beneficiaries. The YSIS project had a very well-done final report completed by Tipping Point Strategies, which included consideration of the impact on beneficiaries (i.e. the Yukon public). Clear evaluations of individual projects, or, at the very least, requirements to

complete pre-determined beneficiary surveys is necessary to thoroughly evaluate the overall program.

The survey developed to evaluate the overall success of YAWSI project came a long time after the end of the projects and included some very detailed and difficult questions. Having thorough evaluations of individual projects completed as part of the project reporting requirements would help both in assessing overall program success, as well as helping project managers to remember details and lessons learned.

## Recommendations

1. **Maintain flexibility.** The ability to amend contribution agreements, implementation models, reallocate budget items, or reassign work to new staff are key success factors.
2. **Develop program evaluation parameters first.** If the overall program is deemed successful based on “contributions of the project at the community level with respect to advancing the gender equality of Aboriginal women and girls”, for example, project developers should know this in advance so that they can develop their program and reporting accordingly.
3. **Evaluate impact along the way.** Project beneficiaries need to give feedback on how the project affected them. This can be done immediately following the relevant interactions, if applicable (e.g. right after a workshop or course), and a summary of the responses should be a component of the project reporting. Beneficiaries should be able to respond honestly about the project, which may mean giving them the opportunity to evaluate anonymously. This should be a mandatory component for each project that involves immediate beneficiaries.
4. **Evaluate each project as part of final reporting.** Reporting and evaluation requirements should be developed prior to project initiation. In some cases, the reporting and evaluation tools can be developed in partnership with the funder (ex. mutually-agreed-upon beneficiary surveys). Consideration can also be given to using third parties to evaluate the success of each project, including its impact on beneficiaries, when deemed appropriate. In addition, a third-party assessment avoids the conflict of interest inherent in having project organizers self-evaluate.
5. **Ensure organizations have the ability to manage staff and volunteer transition.** With staff, board members, and volunteers dividing time among different projects, the projects that will get the most attention are they ones people feel passionate about. Recognizing how a project supports the organization’s mandate and vision, and how it supports the individual’s values, is vital to project success. Discussing how the applicants will manage the loss of key staff or volunteers may help to mitigate some of the difficulties that arise from these transitions. The support provided by the Women’s Directorate to help ensure project continuity has been effective and should continue.

6. **Financially empower organizations.** Women’s organizations and the projects they deliver appear to be affected by a lack of operational funding. In the longer term, to help address this issue, the women’s organizations involved in this project should consider ways to create their own revenue streams to lessen their financial dependence on government grants and contributions. Activities that generate revenues while meeting organizational objectives are ideal. The CRGBA workshops, for example, could have charged a participation fee to enhance or expand the reach of the project.

For example, social enterprise (which might involve traditional skills like sewing, beading, tanning hides, etc.) could support the organizations in multiple ways:

- By financially empowering individuals through employment
- By building capacity in entrepreneurship, management, technical knowledge, as well as the skills used in providing the product or service
- By developing long-term revenue stream to support the organization’s other activities
- By developing confidence and leadership skills among the target beneficiary population
- Through deep community engagement for both women’s organizations and their beneficiaries

An example of a social enterprise could be a cooperative sewing “Yukon parkas”. This is a demand that no one is currently filling. The enterprise would require women developing skills in sewing, sales, marketing, inventory management, order fulfillment, and others. Revenue would support individuals as well as the supporting organization.



## Appendix 1 – Logic Model

The logic model outlines the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes that are key to creating successes and achievements for the YAWSI Projects.

INPUT	SPECIFIC PROJECTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	PROJECT / IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
Northern Strategy Trust Funds  Partners From: •Women's Directorate •First Nations •Aboriginal Women's Groups • Yukon Government	<b>Aboriginal Women's Mentorship Training and Role Model Program</b>	Develop and/or update curriculum for a pilot training project on mentorship	Number of aboriginal women who have participated in a professional mentorship program	Encourage Elder/grandparent mentorship for youth  Demonstrate the positive contributions Aboriginal women have made to Yukon communities  Celebrate how Aboriginal women have been positive role models to all members of their communities, and other communities	Encourage engagement and participation of professional Aboriginal women and youth  Stakeholders more aware of the purpose and value of aboriginal women's participation and leadership  Work with grassroots to diminish levels of lateral violence in Yukon communities	Enhance honour and reclamation of culture, and traditional roles, particularly of and Aboriginal Women  Strengthen the voices and leadership of women at all levels
		Develop an Aboriginal women's professional mentorship program, including formalized support to professional Aboriginal women, and particularly youth  Include variety of new people, as well as the "unsung" heroes of Yukon on a nomination basis from all walks of life				
Materials and Equipment	<b>Yukon Sisters in Spirit Project</b>	Research the circumstances and events surrounding missing and murdered Aboriginal women from the Yukon  Profile missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Yukon as part of the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit Project  Talk to and involve families of the women	Number of individuals who have been profiled as part of the Sister's in Spirit project  Number of cases in which progress was made toward solution	Raise awareness about violence and crime against Aboriginal women	Improve quality of life for First Nation families and communities  Inspire youth to become actively involved in our community's social fabric, governance and infrastructure	Uphold strong partnerships between Women's Directorate, First Nations, and Aboriginal Women's Organizations

INPUT	SPECIFIC PROJECTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	PROJECT / IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
	<b>Youth Violence Prevention and Healthy Relationships Project</b>	Engage youth in the creation of alternative media projects to transmit their own key messages about violence in Yukon communities, healthy relationships and families, and the past, present and future effects of Residential schools  Engage youth in the creation of a series of workshops that will discuss, in a meaningful and honest way key issues youth are facing.	Number of youth involved in creating media projects  Number of youth engaged in the creation of workshops	Create a discussion with youth on the impacts of violence, healthy relationships and healthy families	Focus on the inclusion of all community members, youth, women, and men in creating gender balance and respect in our communities  Create and enhance a model for YG, First Nations, and Aboriginal women's organizations to increase women's equality in Yukon	Change community or individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours
	<b>Culturally-relevant Gender-Balanced Analysis</b>	Develop culturally-relevant gender-based analysis course curriculum  Deliver course materials to First Nations communities/governments, not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations-profits and others in all Yukon communities	Number of participants in analysis course  Number of courses held across Yukon	Create awareness and discussion about gender and cultural balance in modern and traditional society	Decrease the current Whitehorse-centralization of resources for all Aboriginal women, and create a community-based focus for projects  High level of project ownership by community members and partners and a high level of involvement of aboriginal women in project	

INPUT	SPECIFIC PROJECTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	PROJECT / IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
	<p><b>Aboriginal Women's Groups Expansion Project</b></p>	<p>Organization of Aboriginal women's groups in each community, as affiliates/grandchildren of Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council</p> <p>Create, where possible, alcohol-free spaces, which may include youth drop-ins, mom and tot play spaces, or open microphone nights</p> <p>Obtain representation from all communities on the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council</p> <p>Research funding opportunities, and assist Aboriginal women's community-based groups in apply for funding</p> <p>Research and apply for funding to continue the long-standing work of the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council</p>	<p>Number of Aboriginal Women's groups organized</p> <p>Number of aboriginal women's spaces and events organized as part of project</p>	<p>Increase meaningful engagement/participation of Elders, youth and women in community dialogues</p> <p>Formalization of Aboriginal women's community groups into societies as affiliates of Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council</p> <p>Increased technical knowledge, skill, and organizational capacity of community partners</p>	<p>decision making</p> <p>Supported demonstration of pride in culture, and reclamation of traditional roles</p>	

INPUT	SPECIFIC PROJECTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	PROJECT / IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
	<b>Elder-Youth Land-Based Camp</b>	<p>Create a land-based camp, where Elders, women and youth exchange traditional and modern life-skills and educational practices</p> <p>Examine traditional cultural rights of passage and women's roles in Yukon First Nations communities</p> <p>Develop a template/handbook as a guide to assist other communities and organizations plan, develop and implement land-based camps and curriculum in their own communities</p>	<p>Number of participants in land-based camp</p> <p>Number of land-based camps initiated with help of the handbook</p>	<p>Sharing and transfer of traditional knowledge, teachings, and care-giving roles</p> <p>Reclamation of, and respect for Elder's wisdom, values, and women's roles within communities</p>		

## Appendix 2 – Evaluation Matrix

Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Collection method
Relevance	<b>In which ways have project actions related to the YAWS recommendations? Did the results meet immediate outcomes/ project objectives?</b>	Number and types of notable relations between project activities and YAWSI recommendations.  Number of people who perceive each outcome/objective met.	Document Review Stakeholder Interview Beneficiary Survey
	<b>To what extent are the specific objectives of the projects still valid or ongoing?</b>	Number of Beneficiaries who perceive the objectives still valid or ongoing.  Number of stakeholders who perceive the objectives still valid and ongoing.	Beneficiary Survey Stakeholder Interview
	<b>Are there plans to continue with some or all of the project's activities?</b>	Number and type of plans documented for project continuation.	Document Review Stakeholder Interview
	<b>If so, how will the project be sustained following the conclusion of the YAWS Implementation funding?</b>	Number and type of funding methods as noted for future use.	Document Review Stakeholder Interview
	<b>Were selected approaches and strategies appropriate to address the identified needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries?</b>	Number and type of strategies and approaches perceived to appropriately address stakeholder needs.  Number and type of strategies and approaches perceived to appropriately address beneficiaries needs.	Stakeholder Interview Beneficiary Survey
Influences	<b>How effectively has Women's Directorate monitored performance and results and supported project delivery?</b>	Number and type of effective monitoring practices in place.  Number of stakeholders who perceive that the Women's Directorate has monitored performance and results and supported project delivery.	Document Review Stakeholder Interview
	<b>Did Women's Directorate provide relevant and timely technical support to community partners?</b>	Number of stakeholders who perceive that the directorate provided relevant, timely support to community partners.	Stakeholder Interview
	<b>To what extent has Women's Directorate facilitated (or hindered) effective implementation and delivery of results?</b>	Number of stakeholders who perceive that the directorate has facilitated the effective implementation and delivery of results, and to what extent.	Stakeholder Interview

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Collection method</b>
	<b>Did the project contribute positively to the work of Women's Directorate and its mission, vision and mandate?</b>	Number and types of documents supporting the correlation between program results and the Women's Directorate mission, vision, mandate.  Number of stakeholder who perceive that the project contributed positively to the work of the Directorate.	Document Review  Stakeholder Interview
	<b>What influence have contextual factors (political, social, economic, and other) had on the effectiveness of the project?</b>	Number and type of factors indicated by Beneficiaries to influence the effectiveness of the project.  Number and type of factors indicated by stakeholders to influence the effectiveness of the project.  Number and type of factors indicated in documents to have influence the effectiveness of the project.	Beneficiary Survey  Stakeholder Interview  Document Review
	<b>How have the projects adapted (when necessary) to changing external conditions to ensure benefits for target groups?</b>	Number and type of ways in which the projects are documented to have positively adapted due to changing environment for the benefit of target groups.  Number and type of adaptations as noted by stakeholders.  Number and type of adaptations as noted by Beneficiaries.	Document Review  Stakeholder Interview  Beneficiary Survey
	<b>Were programme resources (financial, human, technical) sufficient and appropriately distributed to deliver results and contribute to project outcomes?</b>	Number and ways in which resources were properly/improperly distributed as noted by programme documents.  Number of stakeholders who perceive that programme resources were appropriately distributed.	Document Review  Stakeholder Survey
Impact	<b>What documented or measurable changes have occurred, since the start of the projects?</b>	Number and type of measurable changes documented as a result of project.	Document Review
	<b>Have these changes increased the ability of Aboriginal women's groups to engage and participate in community processes?</b>	Number and type of changes perceived to have increased the ability of Aboriginal women's groups to engage and participate in community processes by stakeholders.  Number and type perceived by Beneficiaries.	Stakeholder Interview  Beneficiary Survey

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Collection method</b>
	<b>Do these changes illustrate a positive, negative or neutral shift in the integration of gender equality and cultural considerations?</b>	Number of stakeholders who perceive these changes to illustrate a positive, negative, or neutral shift in the integration of gender equality and cultural considerations.  Number of beneficiaries who perceive these changes to illustrate a positive, negative, or neutral shift in the integration of gender equality and cultural considerations.	Stakeholder Interview  Beneficiary Survey
	<b>Are stakeholders, particularly Yukon Government, First Nations, Aboriginal women's organizations and other policymakers, more aware of the purpose and value of Aboriginal women's participation and leadership?</b>	Number of stakeholders who are more aware of the purpose and value of Aboriginal women's participation and leadership as a result of the projects.	Stakeholder Interview
	<b>To what extent have community partners increased their technical knowledge and skills as well as organizational capacity for developing and delivering projects, plans and actions?</b>	Number of community partners who perceive an increase in their technical knowledge and skills as well as organizational capacity for developing and delivering projects, plans and actions.	Stakeholder Interview
	<b>Is there a defined strategy for sustaining the capacity of Aboriginal women's organizations to work with other community partners in integrating culture and gender in policies, programmes, plans, and budgets?</b>	Number and types of strategies documented for sustaining the capacity of Aboriginal women's organizations to work with other community partners.  Number and types of strategies acknowledged by stakeholders	Document Review  Stakeholder Interview
	<b>How, and in what way, did the project build relationships with or complement other similar initiatives or community-based projects and organizations?</b>	Number and type of relationships built with other similar initiatives or community-based projects and organizations as noted in programme documents.  Number and type of relationships built with other similar initiatives or community-based projects and organizations as perceived by stakeholder (or those involved in other initiatives).	Document Review  Stakeholder Interview
	<b>To what extent has the project contributed to strengthened partnerships in responses between government, community partners, and Aboriginal women in Yukon?</b>	Number of stakeholders who perceive that the projects have contributed to strengthened partnerships in responses between government, community partners, and Aboriginal women in Yukon and to what extent.	Stakeholder Interview
	<b>What have been the contributions of the project at the community level with respect to advancing the gender equality of Aboriginal women and girls?</b>	Number and types of contributions of the project at the community level with respect to advancing the gender equality of Aboriginal women and girls as noted in program documents.  Number and types of these contributions perceived by stakeholders and by beneficiaries.	Document Review  Stakeholder Interview  Beneficiary Survey

Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Collection method
	<p><b>What is the level of project ownership by community members and partners, and to what extent have Aboriginal women been actively involved in the project's decision-making?</b></p>	<p>Number of beneficiaries who perceive a level of project ownership by community members and partners.</p> <p>Number of stakeholders who perceive a level of project ownership by community members and partners.</p> <p>Number and types of active involvement of Aboriginal women in project decision-making as noted in program documents.</p> <p>Number of stakeholders and number of beneficiaries who can perceive examples of active involvement of Aboriginal women in project decision-making.</p>	<p>Beneficiary Survey</p> <p>Stakeholder Interview</p> <p>Document Review</p>
	<p><b>How, and through what mechanisms, did the project increase the participation of Aboriginal women in decision making spaces?</b></p>	<p>Number and types of mechanisms through which did the project increase the participation of Aboriginal women in decision making spaces as perceived by stakeholders.</p> <p>Number and types of mechanisms through which the project increased the participation of Aboriginal women in decision making spaces as noted in program documents</p>	<p>Stakeholder Interview</p> <p>Document Review</p>
	<p><b>How have the experiences and lessons of community partners been integrated into project, advocacy, or policy efforts?</b></p>	<p>Number and ways in which experiences and lessons of community partners have been integrated into project, advocacy, or policy efforts as noted in program documents.</p> <p>Number and ways in which experiences and lessons of community partners have been integrated into project, advocacy, or policy efforts as perceived by stakeholders.</p>	<p>Document Review</p> <p>Stakeholder Interview</p>
	<p><b>Are there mechanisms in place to sustain the engagement of Aboriginal women (with or without an active project) beyond the end of the YAWS Implementation?</b></p>	<p>Number and kinds of mechanisms in place as noted in program documents to sustain the engagement of Aboriginal women (with or without an active project) beyond the end of the YAWS Implementation.</p> <p>Number and kinds of mechanisms in place as perceived by stakeholders to sustain the engagement of Aboriginal women (with or without an active project) beyond the end of the YAWS Implementation.</p>	<p>Document Review</p> <p>Stakeholder Interview</p>