



# **YELL Program Evaluation Final Report January 2011**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Description

**YELL** -- an acronym for **Y**outh **E**ngage, **L**earn, **L**ead – is a MoreSports’ endeavour that evolved in 2006 out of the program’s initial more ad hoc approach to coach training.



MoreSports is a collaborative initiative that provides sustainable sport and physical activity opportunities for children and families, with a special focus on people who typically do not participate in sports. MoreSports builds on existing community resources to deliver programs and events in partnership with schools, local government, community groups, private businesses and non-profits. YELL is a coordinated system of training that occurs in 17 Vancouver neighbourhoods within the existing MoreSports partnership model, utilizing existing community resources to train and develop youth volunteers and leadership in neighbourhoods and communities with few sports, physical recreation, arts and cultural programs for children -- particularly low-income neighbourhoods. The initial focus of YELL was on youth involved in secondary schools, community programs, personal planning, and leadership programs (Grades 10 to 12). The program has since expanded into two components – YELL and Y2 - to include younger age groups. Youth are assigned as leaders to existing MoreSports programs in participating Vancouver neighbourhoods.

In this regard the YELL initiative was a deliberate strategy to build on the momentum of previous system change begun with MoreSports and to bring together the potential of community youth with this new organizational capacity. The youth who are the focus of the YELL program may lack confidence, leadership skills and may not be seen as role models or as valuable assets by the community in which they live. This potential was seen to include systematic incorporation of youth leadership, utilizing the field of sport and recreation as the medium to create a virtual cycle of involvement in physical activity and community leadership. This cycle begins with finding ways to get non-active kids to play. As those children grow to be youth, the model provides opportunities for them to train to be leaders of the same youth programs in which they played, to be mentors to other youth trainees, and eventually to become engaged adults or community parents. Recognizing that youth respond to and engage in a wide variety of pursuits, YELL has also developed a community stream which engages and trains youth leaders who are not first engaged in sports or recreation activities.

## 1.2 Indicators of Success

YELL is unique. No other program in North America has been found which utilizes the same collaborative community-based approach to developing the leadership capacity of young adults, youth and children. It is also very successful, reaching in less than three years more than three times the number of youth originally targeted.

As of January, 2011, there were 3,498 youth trained and/or registered for training for at least one course (and often more), for a total of 178 courses completed to date. The program has 2,228 registered participants, who have 27,311 hours of volunteer time logged. 693 of that total (with 8,453 hours logged to them) are now over 19. Of the 1,535 youth who are currently under 19, 1,066 are female (with 12,702 hours) and 539 are male (with 6,054 hours), for a total of 18,858 volunteer hours logged. It is notable that there are twice as many female youth as male youth involved. These overall figures include youth in the community stream (19 females with 272 hours and 37 males with 105 hours); of that total, 4 of the females (87 hours) and 12 of the males (105 hours) are still under 19. It should be noted that the data is currently sorted by the youth's age at the point of analysis, which can give a slightly misleading picture. For example, one young man who turned 19 this year volunteered 191 hours by himself, most of them when he was under 19; as of his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, all his volunteer time shows as being done as an adult. YELL staff is aware of this glitch as is assessing how to change the monitoring system to more accurately reflect youths' volunteer history with the program.

As early as 2007, the YELL program demonstrated success in supporting youth development among its targeted populations. In subsequent years, despite significant changes in the scope of the program, evidence related to some of the early and medium term projected outcomes continued to build with youth participants demonstrating increased confidence and skills development. Youth in focus groups reported learning practical skills in YELL that they went on to use in their volunteer placements, in outside work experience and job placements, in other activities, and which they included in their resumes. These verbal reports were supported by survey results. YELL placement officers also noted the use of practical skills among the youth leaders. During spring 2010, roughly half of the youth who participated in coaching, refereeing, mentoring or supervising recreation reported they would not have done so without the YELL program.

In focus groups, youth from each school emphasized their improved communication skills, leadership skills, and confidence when asked what they had learned from YELL. YELL placement officers highlighted improved confidence among the changes they'd witnessed in youth. Both youth and YELL placement officers identified that youth experienced/exhibited changes in empathy and understanding of others.

As a rule, youth recognize the importance of volunteering with the YELL program and are generally satisfied with the placements. Youth offered ideas on ways to improve the volunteer placements, including increased mentorship opportunities, a greater number of interactive training sessions, a greater variety of training, open training to younger grades, – essentially, more of what YELL is providing. A number of youth went on to express satisfaction with YELL when asked for improvements. Youth from all four focus groups reported the placements were fun and enriching. The challenge of working with children was offered as both a positive and negative aspect of the placements. For some, the placements were harder than expected, while others noted interactions with children as the most satisfying.

### **1.3 The Evaluation Team**

The Final Evaluation report has been preceded by two Interim reports, both of which concentrated primarily on providing an overview of program activities and short-term outcomes. This Final Evaluation is intended to provide an overall assessment of the YELL program, including data on a number of medium-term outcomes.

The primary gathering of information for the YELL evaluation process was undertaken by members of the MoreSports/YELL Advisory Committee, in collaboration with Lisa O'Reilly, a Management and Evaluation consultant. The Final Evaluation report has been organized and written by Judy McGuire, in collaboration with the MoreSports/YELL Advisory Committee.

## **2. Methodology**

The primary evaluation tool developed by the committee and the evaluator was a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) [see Appendix], which is based on the original YELL logic model. The PMF specified six key sets of activities through which MoreSports/YELL would seek to realize eight main outcomes or changes: such as promoting more opportunities for youth to gain skills to successfully participate in meaningful leadership within their community; developing networks and experiences that assist youth in their education and employment goals, while contributing skilled program leadership to the community, a key factor in building a recreation system that is more responsive and inclusive of low-income and vulnerable community sectors.

The PMF also included indicators that were devised as a means of assessing the progress of the project in completing its activities and achieving its outcomes. The indicators comprised

a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures that provided a guide for classifying data determining its relevance to particular outcomes, and understanding whether and how each outcome was realized.

A significant amount of data on early outcomes was identified and included in interim reports. Evidence of all but one of the activities /outputs was available as of January 2009. YELL placement coordinators were subsequently asked to confirm the number of placements within each MoreSports hub elementary school in time for the final evaluation and data collection continued during this period as per the YELL evaluation framework.

A series of interviews were conducted prior to the two interim reports. Interview respondents have included:

- Advisory Committee members;
- Hub Developers;
- Parent volunteers;
- Youth Leaders
- Partner agency representatives.

Most interviews were conducted with individuals from the listed groups, although a focus group of parent volunteers took place in preparation for the first interim report. During spring 2009, a series of focus groups was hosted with participating youth and their leaders to gather more detailed data on their experiences and thoughts about YELL, as per the data collection tool. All participants were very forthcoming in assessing program strengths, weaknesses and results. Youth in particular provided a number of anecdotal observations that added substance to aggregate data analysis.

A key tool for program evaluation and indeed for ongoing program design proved to be a participant database through which individual youth leaders have their participation and accomplishments tracked. Analysis of cumulative data allows program staff to analyze participant demographics, locales, schools, choice of programs, volunteer activities, and hours of participation. Specialized analysis can also be done for many subsets of data, giving staff and the planning committee extremely accurate information to be used for ongoing program assessment and planning. Participant youth are also able to print out or email copies of their own records – a very valuable resource to support obtaining future volunteer opportunities and/or employment.

The evaluator also reviewed documents related to YELL, including:

- Meeting minutes;
- Activity reports;
- Planning documents;

- Proposals and reports to funders; and
- Program statistics.

A detailed final breakdown of 2010 data for the program is not yet available as some data entry was delayed due to demands related to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, followed by an unexpected budget crunch and program data is typically not entered until the well after the conclusion of a season so fall 2010 data are incomplete at the time of writing. This data will be submitted in an updated report later in 2011.

### 3. Overview of Project Activities

Over the course of the evaluation, YELL engaged in six key sets of activities as identified in the Performance Measurement Framework. There has been a fair bit of interaction and overlap in how the various activity areas have evolved, with findings in one area informing changes to another – particularly to Training. For ease in reading, duplication in reporting has been avoided wherever possible.

#### 3.1 Training:

The top activity delineated for YELL was *“to develop and provide training as part of program group sessions and individual skill development planning with each youth”*. A formal training schedule was developed and updated with each participating high school and secondary students were recruited from each MoreSports hub. The recruited youth were trained, and then were assigned a practicum in a supervised MoreSports or school setting where they helped to deliver inclusive community-level sport and physical recreation for elementary and pre-school aged children.



Training included but was not limited to:

- Leadership skills such as group dynamics, such as the BCRPA High Five training clinic, working with children, dealing with conflicts, motivating of children etc.
- Attending special clinics such as NCCP Coach certification courses, or special courses such as Bruce Langford’s Simon Fraser University women’s camp for teams.
- Mentorship with existing qualified leaders, learning how to develop and run a sports practice, and to observe and help with behavioural and group dynamics situations that arise. Level one and two certified coaches also learn the basics of team leadership.

- Organizational and practical training in setting up activities such as tournament operations, scheduling promotion, and doing activity scheduling and planning.
- Officiating courses
- Learning the skills necessary to, and then receiving the opportunity to take responsibility for researching, planning, and running a program or project activity -- such as 'skills and thrills' or 'play day for fun camp' -- with a specific age group, such as grade 4/5 girls in the under 9 age group.
- Ethics and Standards of Conduct training, including Community Coaching philosophy, fairness, inclusion, code of conduct and safety.
- Practical experience in organizational administration -- club and sport program management and organization -- including participating in club meetings.

Organizational learnings over the program's first two years plus unforeseen financial pressures led YELL to alter the types and numbers of courses offered to students in Year 3. For example, it became clear that enrolment in courses in years one and two had not correlated highly with subsequent volunteer involvement -- at least not highly enough to justify an emphasis on running the many courses being offered. Instead, good standing relationships between youth and YELL Placement Officers offered much better means to raise the level of youth leader volunteer engagement in programs. By the end of Year 2, data indicated that only about 50% of the youth involved in leadership training subsequently volunteered in the sport program for which they had received training. The other half had volunteered their time elsewhere if they volunteered at all.

In retrospect, it was determined that youth tended to volunteer for activities in their areas of interest prior to joining their school's leadership development program. Although the school's leadership development program offered exposure to areas not of previous interest to the youth, it still did not correlate into related volunteering. In other words, if a youth didn't like basketball coming in, they were not likely to want to lead a basketball program.

It also became clear that the investment made in running all day or all weekend courses did not translate into significant volunteer hours from course participants. This was found partially through the collection of statistics, and more importantly from reports by Placement officers. A sport course for 30 kids could result in only five to ten volunteering to coach the sport, with the others volunteering for other activities. Officers also reported that as youth became more familiar with YELL, they were increasingly resistant to participating in courses that took eight hours or longer.

In Year 3, YELL responded by offering shorter three-hour courses, focused on learning to coach, sports delivery, practice planning, and similar topics. These were created and delivered by local sport experts who normally taught the longer NCCP versions. At the

same time, YELL was offering fewer courses overall, due to the subsidy cuts by government funders. Initial observation indicated that the participants in the shorter training sessions ultimately engaged with the program for a longer period of time and volunteered for more hours in the sport for which they had received the training. Timing was fortuitous, as the changed structure greatly reduced per youth training expenses, helping to facilitate more opportunities for participation despite budget restraint. The one drawback of the shorter course structure was that many students initially felt less confident about their teaching skills. YELL placement officers were able to address their concerns by ensuring the leaders were placed with other leaders/mentors who could support their continued learning.

In summary, YELL course delivery and student focus has changed in tandem with the changed understanding of how youth utilize leadership training. To stretch a metaphor, initially YELL training viewed the students as empty buckets which needed to be filled with extensive course work and work experience; they are now viewed as matches that need lighting. One of the consequences of this change in perception is that rather than delivering a more expensive and longer 8-16 hour NCCP course with low transition to volunteer hours and engagement, YELL now begins by offering three hour introductory courses which work much better to move youth to begin to volunteer. Once they have had some kind of meaningful placement, have gained a little confidence in their abilities, and have developed relationships with peers and mentors, subsequent course can add to their knowledge base and expand their horizons into other areas.

One of the key messages now incorporated into YELL is that leadership and skills are developed in an iterative process over an extended period of time. For this iterative process to be successful, the Yell Placement Officer role (mentor/organizer/leader) is critical.

### **3.1.1 YELL for Younger Youth Program (Y2)**

In 2009, YELL began developing a leadership development program for younger youth, building on the phenomenal youth leadership being demonstrated by YELL grads and providing a more formal next level leadership experience being requested by more seasoned YELL grads. Using current pre-teen leadership models of the BC ACTION Schools' and the Equitas Play it Right leadership program, these experienced YELL grads are further trained as facilitators and then assigned to work with elementary aged children.

In this strategy, four YELL facilitators initially work as a team with 30 children. They are then each assigned specific responsibility for 10 children (1- 10 ratio) in terms of small volunteer placements and feedback/monitoring. YELL facilitators also work with an adult mentor. The materials used as curriculum for the training and ongoing facilitation were set and tested by both Action Schools and Equitas prior to being adopted by YELL. YELL Grad

Facilitators have been taught how to deliver this material to Y2 Grade 6 and 7 trainees, and then how to mentor them as they begin their volunteer leadership roles working with Grades K-3 children in school and community programs. Y2 leadership includes activities such as leading and helping to organize playground games for peers during school breaks.

The Killarney Community Team and Inner City YELL piloted the YELL for Younger Youth (Y2) Program in 2009. The pilots were organized in MS East Fraserview Hub with the Killarney Community School Team and three elementary schools and at two elementary schools in the Inner City Hub with the Britannia Community School Team hub. The initial five pilot sites were very successful. Not only did the Y2 program engage the Grade 11 and 12 youth by expanding their roles into teaching and mentoring, but YELL gained a new pool of future YELL leaders as Y2 trainees enthusiastically embraced the program. The Y2 initiative also radically expanded the reach of the MoreSports by introducing physical activity to almost the entire elementary population in the pilot schools. The Grade 6 and 7 training attracted youth who had never been involved in MoreSports Afterschool activities (which are considerably easier to enter than other more traditional sports systems), increasing the likelihood of continued involvement over time in after-school activity. With the financial support of the Jumpstart Foundation, the Y2 program was expanded in 2010 to 13 sites (six in the Killarney Community Schools, five in the Britannia Community Schools, two in the Vancouver Technical Community Schools).

### **3.2 Placement:**

The purpose of Placement is defined as *“develop and maintain placement system with business, professional mentors, government and organizations for program youth based on capacity and individual goals of each youth”*.

YELL emphasizes both youth development and youth delivery of services and programs for younger peers. Youth emerging from training need to practice leadership skills, pro-social behavior and experience their abilities to make a difference. Each participant is assigned a practicum placement as part of the training package. They are also given the opportunity to sign up for other volunteer and leadership assignments within the MoreSports, School, and Parks and Recreation systems. Youth Leaders are supervised by paid staff or adult mentors from MoreSports or from a participating partner organization. YELL arranges for regular feedback and technical support and ensures that each youth has the opportunity to improve capacity and skill levels through upgrading and technical clinics put on by experts.

The Placement strategy has faced some challenges as it has developed, mainly due to the rapid success of the YELL initiative. The original plan was simply to provide placements for youth in local MoreSports programs. However youth were completing training, doing

placements and then demanding more opportunities and the infra-structure had not developed fast enough to accommodate all the YELL leaders' demands for safe and quality placements. It also became apparent that the more meaningful the placement to the specific youth being placed, the more encouraged they became in their leadership and in their own growth, and the more likely they were to continue to be engaged in the process.

A third trend noted was that as some YELL leaders experienced their ability to make a difference, they began to want more autonomy and to have more ideas and places they wished to engage as leaders. For instance a group of three YELL leaders coaching a soccer team determined that the inner city kids they were coaching were getting into trouble and not doing well in school. The YELL leaders met and pushed to be given the autonomy and support by relevant partners to set up an after school homework and test study group for these children.

### **3.3 Planning:**

The purpose outlined for the Planning activity is to "*determine resources needed for new program including focus area, working with 2010 and MoreSports design implementation and program content*".

The majority of work in this area was done prior to the inception of the YELL initiative and was integrated with planning undertaken for ongoing delivery of the MoreSports program. Planning continues to be overseen by the MoreSports Planning and Operations Committee, which is responsible for logistical issues within MoreSports' program delivery and activities, as well as a coordinating inter-HUB activities and events and MoreSports-wide festivals. The Committee includes representatives from each HUB, usually including the HUB Developer and YELL Placement Officer.

For YELL and to some extent for MoreSports, ongoing planning activities have proven to be more of a challenge than originally anticipated. During YELL's initial three years of activity, the program operated within a rollercoaster funding environment, necessitating unexpected changes in organizational structure and some program restructuring to support maximum implementation. For example, in 2009/10 the BC government redirected significant funding from the non-profit community to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games -- a stark contrast to the significant ramp up of funds dispersed in the areas of sport and social services from 2004-2009 leading up to the games. This unexpected cutback was compounded by a drop-off in charitable dollars available due to the global recession. In total YELL lost \$61,500 in funding, including subsidies which directly funded core courses being offered through YELL. Post-Olympics funding has been difficult to predict, and has ultimately decreased over prior years.

YELL's immediate success in its first year had vastly accelerated the Community School Team involvement from what was originally planned. This had been done with the expectation that more could be learned much faster as more sites began operating and offering wider variety of implementation plans than first envisioned. With that goal in mind, each site which applied had received organizational support. Program expectations were then revised based on the differing levels of success among YELL's Year One sites. Overall, the process provided a tremendous learning opportunity on how to deliver leadership courses and programs in participating schools. However half way through year three (2009), the Province of BC unexpectedly and radically cut the program's grant from the Gaming Funding<sup>1</sup>, forcing both MoreSports and YELL to undertake significant organizational restructuring.

This change in YELL's funding landscape meant it could no longer support both the YELL Coordinator and Hub Developer in the Inner City Hub as full time positions. Added to the dilemma was the fact that the Inner City Hub Developer was a major project priority and an obligation to another funder, (the Inner City Inclusivity Fund; a VANOC commitment). The decision was made to reduce the full time YELL Coordinator position from 1.0 down to 0.25 paid time in Year Three. Additional YELL responsibilities were given to other staff, adding to their existing MoreSports duties. These organizational changes, along with reduced support for direct coordination time and reduced funding for core courses and general operations, forced the program to rapidly meet the challenge becoming more efficient with fewer resources while responding to increasing demands for participation.

### **3.4 Coordination/Response:**

YELL Activities are delivered "*utilizing infrastructure and coordination body of the MoreSports Hub deliver the YELL leadership program to 17 neighbourhoods in the City of Vancouver*". YELL is very much an augmentation of the MoreSports model. By design, it has grown out of and exists within the MoreSports infrastructure.

### **Local planning, local implementation, local information**

YELL is delivered through the MoreSports HUB model where there is connection to the local neighborhoods, issues, needs and priorities supported within the context of a larger strategy. This is important as it permits the local youth leadership and adult partners to

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<sup>1</sup> Gaming Funding is the term used to describe revenue from gambling and lottery proceeds in the province. Traditionally, these funds were shared between the provincial general revenue accounts, not-profit organizations and municipal governments. In 2009, the Province of British Columbia significantly altered the formula by which these funds were dispersed.

reflect local needs, have relevant information, and be more aware of resources and local capacity when developing and implementing their plans/programs.

The core idea behind the HUB model is that MoreSports/YELL activities are locally driven and centrally supported. Each HUB represents a network of community centres, elementary and high schools, neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood associations, social service agencies, day and after school care facilities and business improvement agencies. Each MoreSports hub is loosely based on City of Vancouver planning district areas. Each HUB is responsible for its own operations and program delivery and decision-making power related to programming and delivery methods rests with each HUB. Central Coordination is responsible for maintaining **Vision** - Core Values & Operating Principles; **Funding** - Security, Administer & Account for Resources; **Collaboration** - Key Partner Agreements, Information Clearinghouse; **Programming** - Monitoring, Support.

Organizing around hubs allows MoreSports greater penetration into each neighbourhood and builds relationships with partners for more efficient delivery of MoreSports programs and events. The YELL system and database tools are also increasingly being offered to outside (non-school or community centre) local community partners. In 2010, the Grandview Elementary Schools Visions 180 Program, Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA) - Aboriginal Youth First Program (AYF), and Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center Society (VAFSC) recreation programs all began using the YELL program to train volunteers, track hours, and help place YELL students in their programs. First indicators of the success of this expansion are positive.

Youth leaders do not parachute into a local area without any context. Most youth leaders already reside in the areas in which they volunteer; residence and neighbourhood familiarity are key issues considered in determining appropriate placements. Youth leaders are also working increasingly closely with the Hub developers and YELL placement coordinators and taking on more responsibility and autonomy for various program areas. This development, as noted previously, will require a more focused articulation of youth leaders' levels of autonomy, extending responsibility of youth to all aspects of the program both locally and as part of the partnership consortium. This piece of work has the potential to significantly reduce the load on the current adult and staff working groups.

### **3.5 Recruitment of Youth/training sites/placement:**

Utilizing the MoreSports HUB model and infrastructure as noted above, the final major activity planned for YELL was to "*set up community based and school based training in locations in the inner city and Vancouver area to operate yearly*".



Recognizing that all youth may be attracted to leadership opportunities through different venues, the program has developed two main recruitment streams:

### **3.5.1 Community-Based Stream**

The first stream is based in community centres and is primarily focused in the MoreSports Inner City Hub. This component reaches out to and engages youth who would not traditionally be selected for leadership development or actively engage in leadership development training -- aboriginal and minority youth and those in disadvantaged circumstances -- tailoring the training and development offered to the individual needs of the identified youth. Youth are recruited both from the schools system and through Neighbourhood Houses, Community Association Youth Workers and other agencies. This stream is sensitive to cultural, environmental and social issues and the special responses they require. This stream addresses the more complex needs and provides a greater degree of in-depth support for a smaller number of youth. It is very much a longer term relationship based system and hence has a higher cost per participant than the other stream. It is also a stream in which changes in individual youth involved are more clearly evident to the mentors as they simply spend more time with the youth than in the broader based stream.

### **3.5.2 Secondary School-Based Stream**

The second stream is centred within schools and targets large numbers of students across a multitude of sites. The school-based stream is active during the regular school season initially for Grades 10 to 12 students, evolving in Year 3 to include grades 8 to 12. Youth in this stream are recruited from participating secondary schools with the cooperation of the Vancouver School Board Community School Teams and are trained in the schools as part of their leadership curriculum. Trainings occur on and off of timetable depending on the site and sometimes in conjunction with other leadership activities at the site.

### 3.5.3 Targeted Youth and Community Partners Participation

YELL has been very successful in engaging various youth in leadership training, particularly girls which is not the norm. In direct volunteering hours tracked, females (63%) lead over males (37%) - 1405F to 823M. While the program does not track ethnicity, participant financial information, or other at risk factors, an overall picture can be developed by correlating course delivery and volunteer hours to participant postal code information, and further correlating the postal code to Statistics Canada data. Note: it is not a requirement to provide a postal code for YELL participation, so there is an 'others' category not included in the table below:

Figure 1: YELL Volunteerism via Postal Codes

<b>Top 10 Registered Participant Profiles by Postal Code</b>						
Number Part	Volunteer Hours	Courses Taken	Postal Code	Median Income	ESL % Pop	Aboriginal % Pop
218	1875.8	229	V6A3T1	\$25,397	45%: 2215/4905	4.8%: 235/4900
106	67.1	13	V5L4N8	\$42,069	29%: 1495/5165	7.8%: 405/5165
68	1589	15	V5Z3S1	\$62,293	42%: 935/2230	0%: 0/2225
44	6	91	V6R3C9	\$100,223	13%: 575/4355	0.6%: 30/4355
42	2126.3	11	V5W1P3	\$58,690	37%: 2895/7790	1.0%: 80/7785
34	88	35	V6P3P7	\$59,146	54%: 2475/4615	0.5%: 25/4615
31	37	27	V6M4M2	\$61,726	34%: 2550/7470	0.7%: 50/7420
28	159.9	45	V5N4Z2	\$52,626	44%: 2835/6485	0.8%: 55/6485
27	122.5	25	V5L4X4	\$59,943	9%: 395/4320	0.9%: 340/3985
25	29	21	V5S4M8	\$58,591	34%: 2055/6085	0.7%: 45/6085
673	7144	682	No Postal Code Given			

\*Median Income, ESL Pop % (Language Spoken Most at Home Non-Official/Total), Aboriginal Pop % (Aboriginal Identity Population/Total) from: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-597/index.cfm?Lang=E>

As noted above in discussing the development of Y2, it became apparent over time that targeting youth in Grades 10-12 often proved too late to change their attitudes about volunteering. This recognition was one of the primary factors that led YELL to

systematically begin to target youth at younger ages, extending the program informally to youth in Grades 8 and 9 during the later part of Year 1 and formally as of Year 2, and further extending training with Y2 pilots to youth in Grades 5-7 during Year 3.

### **3.5.4 Communication**

The YELL website has also proven to be a very valuable tool in recruiting and retaining youth leaders. The Passports and other interactive abilities (similar to face book etc.) available on the site are supporting youth to interact with each other, volunteers, parents and others to receive updated information through alerts; to print information or personal passports; and to download pictures. The youth leader profiles are an interesting and exciting addition, representing a diverse mix of leaders -- from an Aboriginal youth in the inner city, to the Student President of an Eastside High School, and a newly-arrived immigrant youth with English as a second language.

### **3.6 Promotional work: Identifying opportunities to present the YELL program to the community in a wide range of means**

YELL has done a very good job of promoting the program to potential student leaders and to targeted HUB partners. Much of this 'marketing' has occurred concurrent with MoreSports promotions and events. Pamphlets and posters have been developed and distributed. Multi-HUB events have served to challenge and teach MoreSports and YELL participants alike, while also publicizing both initiatives. MoreSports and YELL each have their own website, both of which include cross-promotions and cross-linkages. Powerpoint presentations designed to present an overview of both programs continue to be updated and used where appropriate. Perhaps the best promotion comes through word-of-mouth enthusiastic endorsements from current and past participants in both programs.

To date, YELL and MoreSports have been less successful in capturing the attention of either private sector funders or the general public. In the past, YELL has developed very short term partnerships with Rogers Sugar and with small local businesses such as Drive Organics as part of a strategy to attract funding from new and alternative revenue sources. Unfortunately these partnerships did not translate into longer term stable relationships.

One notable success/learning experience occurred when the TELUS Community Board provided support for YELL in Year 2 with a major infusion of cash (\$50k) on the basis that the project expand geographical scope to at least 4 new school sites. This expansion occurred, expectations were raised in a number of places; however in Year 3, Telus cut their commitment back to \$15k and it has not been renewed since. This short term cash infusion vastly complicated the program and its disappearance has led to major

disappointments in the sites where temporary expansion occurred. Lessons were learned by the core staff about the implications of undertaking short term expansion to meet the wishes of a short term funder.

An analysis of the situation led to a determination to develop a more targeted business approach. To that end, MoreSports/YELL contracted a local marketing and sponsorship expert to rework earlier presentations and materials into a more 'compatible' and more directed style, one that would be more appealing to the business sector.

This development of targeted materials is beginning to bear fruit. The first major success is the evolving relationship with Canadian Tire's Jumpstart Foundation. In 2010 they made an initial funding commitment of \$19,000 to support expansion of Y2 into 10 elementary schools. Jumpstart has also expressed interest in becoming long term funding partners, and are now working with the Advisory Board to develop a program tentatively called "Jumpstart to Soccer powered by MoreSports" which will build on MoreSports' existing sport program and the YELL youth leadership base. Inspired at least in part by this success, the Advisory Committee will continue to consider and where possible incorporate marketing and potential sponsorship opportunities as valuable components of ongoing and future initiatives.

#### **4. Outcomes**

In evaluating program outcomes, it is worth noting again that YELL has been significantly challenged over the past three years in responding to evolving and unexpected circumstances. For example as noted above, the initial training model was only partially successful in involving graduates in continuing to embrace volunteer opportunities, particularly sports coaching. The success inherent in this example arose when YELL programmers were sufficiently astute and open to respond to feedback from YELL participants, redesigning the training structure and curriculum and significantly expanding volunteer leadership opportunities. The difference between the early expectations and the concrete outcomes in some ways measures the difficulty of the task that YELL has set for itself at the same time that it marks the flexibility of YELL as a model-in-process that is able to adapt to shifting circumstances and move in directions that are required to achieve its overall objectives. This is exactly the reaction one would wish to find in a responsive community program and should count as a major achievement in program development.

The erratic funding environment has proven to be more of an ongoing trial. YELL and MoreSports have particularly suffered from the lack of core funding support from otherwise committed partners such as the City of Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver School

Board. Although beyond the scope of this evaluation, it is worth noting that Park Board has recently indicated willingness to provide core funding to the organization. MoreSports/YELL has also recently received extremely positive indications of interest in broad-based support from Canadian Tire's Jumpstart program. 2011 is looking distinctly more promising for MoreSports/YELL stability.

The Performance Measurement Framework that has been used to guide the evaluation considered a number of outcomes over early, medium/midterm, and long term time frames. Some outcomes have been relatively easy to track through the YELL participatory web-accessible database and through regularly collected course and HUB specific statistics. Others have provided challenges to tracking hard numbers, although anecdotal and focus group feedback have given clear indicators of success.

YELL has demonstrated particular strengths in achieving the following Outcomes:

- Defined overall visions, goals, areas of focus and community need are shared by many partners (Comprehensive).
- Youth have numerous opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills; create positive change.
- Broad support is evident from school and recreation communities, including administrators faculty, staff, parents, other community leaders, and organizations.
- YELL activities have consistent, committed adult leadership.
- YELL has successfully developed an integrated deliberate process: training (understanding issues), practice, mentorship, teamwork, accomplishing common goals.
- Increasingly, youth-led programs and activities are developing; as you learn they establish their own goals and activities for delivery of peer projects in the community.
- YELL provides numerous opportunities for reflection, celebration and recognition, ongoing evaluation of efforts-e.g. process for sharing, and feedback.

From a purely statistical point of view, many measurable outcomes were achieved very early in the three year program. The number of courses, course participants, youth volunteers and volunteers' hours exceeded original expectations many times over.

Figure 2: Number of YELL Participants X Volunteer Hours X Course Participants

Year	Number of YELL Participants		Total Volunteer Hours		Total Course Participants	
	Fiscal Year	School Year	Fiscal Year	School Year	Fiscal Year	School Year
2006			355.9	256		
2007	525	745	6,725.2	3,693.8	140	288
2008	958	917	10,046.6	10,400.6	1,141	1,446
2009	762	783	9,588.2	9982.7	1,556	1,311
2010	378	178	503.5	2886.3	460	252
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,623 YELL participants</b>		<b>27,219.4 Volunteer Hours</b>		<b>3,297 Course Participants</b>	

(Note minor differences in totals in charts and text are due to the dates at which data was extracted from the on-line database – data continues to be entered on an ongoing basis and some charts were extracted earlier than others and the numbers in the text)

Virtually all early outcomes and most midterm outcomes have been achieved. There are also indications of progress towards realizing many of the projected long term outcomes (mostly measured by anecdotal evidence as these are difficult to quantify). It is too early to suggest that YELL has achieved permanent and lasting change. There are good indicators that the potential to do so but a longer cycle of operations will be necessary to ensure all goals have been reached.

#### 4.1 Youth have resumes that include YELL experiences

#### 4.2 Youth develop networks and experiences that help them access scholarship, employment and postsecondary opportunities

There is evidence that youth are including YELL volunteer history on their resumes as some have been hired by partners in the program as summer staff. Some relationships youth have built through YELL have led them into job opportunities with community stakeholders. One aboriginal youth who was part of the community stream out of Ray-Cam did volunteer work with another agency as part of YELL and now works for that agency as a leader/coach in after school programs. They liked him, his work ethic and ability to relate to their youth and he is now on their payroll.

The best case to date is that a number of Community Centers Parks and Community School Teams have employed YELL leaders in their summer day camps. Many youth received this

opportunity because YELL Placement Officers and MoreSports Hub Developers are directly employed by the CST and Vancouver Parks, so YELL leaders have a personal link within the network that can introduce them to potential jobs, encourage them to apply and /or provide references for them.

### 4.3 Youth participate in volunteer placements

YELL uses two primary means to determine success of placements: verbal volunteer feedback directly to YELL Placement Officers and to other coaches in the MoreSports system, and through surveys and database statistics which track the percentages of youth doing courses who ultimately volunteered, to what degree, and in what kinds of activities.

The overwhelming and primary volunteer feedback from the students has been that placements need to be meaningful (something that they like to do or want to do) and they have to be challenging. It was abundantly clear that even in Year 1 that YELL volunteers did not just coach MoreSports activities; they also volunteered for Drama, Arts and Crafts, Cooking, Buddy Reading, and many more activities both in the schools and in other non-school programs. Responding to the interests of the youth leaders, YELL expectations changed as of Year 2 to targeting that only 50% of the YELL youth volunteers at any site would need to be involved in coaching MoreSports programs.

<b>STUDENT YEARS IN YELL PROGRAM VS. VOLUNTEER HOURS</b>			
<b>Number Years</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Hours/Student</b>
3 Years	15	2044.2	136.3
2 Years	139	7357	52.9
1 Year	947	17827.2	18.8

<b>BASIC COURSE REGISTRATION DATA &amp; VOLUNTEERS NUMBERS BY CALENDAR YEAR</b>				
<b>Calendar YEAR</b>	<b># Courses completed</b>	<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Volunteer Numbers</b>	<b>Hours Logged</b>
2007*	24	560	117	1506
2008	61	1047	612	7955
2009	64	1233	818	9756
2010**	21	497	562	5718
2011***				

\*data entry began ½ way through year  
 \*\* data entry incomplete  
 \*\*\* no data yet

<b>STUDENT COURSE VOLUNTEER HOUR RATIOS:</b>			
<b>Courses</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Hours/Student</b>
9 or More Courses	5	370.5	74.1
5 to 8 Courses	106	2996.2	28.3
3 to 4 Courses	216	2743.9	12.7
2 Courses	344	2821.9	8.2
1 Course	1224	10707.5	8.7
0 Course	729	7588.4	10.4

<b>STUDENT PLACEMENT VS VOLUNTEER HOUR RATIOS:</b>			
<b>Number Placements</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Hours/Student</b>
9 or More Placements	3	281.5	93.8
5 to 8 Placements	83	6268.1	75.5
3 to 4 Placements	169	6787.7	40.2
2 Placements	219	5399.1	24.7
1 Placement	627	8492	13.5

As the program evolved and broadened, the YELL database system was similarly changed to track as much as possible this non-sport related volunteerism in a more detailed and precise manner. Non-school and community centre activities has continued to prove difficult to track and it will require further significant change in the data base to allow tacking of post-program data with other community partners. As noted, early pilots with UNYA and Grandview Vision 180 are underway in this area.

Program staff also responded by creating terminology and a hierarchy which systematically identified different levels through which YELL leaders progress. All references to coaching and coach development were dropped as this has proven to set up a particular and sometimes less than positive mindset in the adults and youth potentially involved; it often had the effect of 'turning kids off' as sport often has a poor perception among the general public due to the influence of professional TV sports and its implicit message that sports is only about winning. YELL participants are now described in the following terms:

**Learner:** Grade 5-7 – play games with younger K to 4 kids, help with school activities at noon hours, after school and/or prior to school. (Y2 Youth who work under the direction of leaders and are supervised at the elementary school site by a mentor of paid staff)

**Assistant Leader:** Grade 8-10 – help instruct kids, help organize school activities, referees score keeps, works with a leader(s) and or under a mentor(s) mostly after school or Saturdays mostly at schools or community centers and is often an event volunteer as well

**Leader:** Grade 10-12 – leads programs, organize activities, works with Y2 youth and often has a bit of a mentor role with their assistant leader(s).

**Mentor:** Grade 11-Adult – mentor and instruct Learners, Asst. Leaders, and in some cases leaders.

This improved tracking system and hierarchy assists the program to provide more accurate and concise descriptions of YELL & Y2 to a wide variety of audiences, funders, partners and potential new partners, current participants and potential new participants, teachers, principals and other agencies in the local hubs. It also provides better parameters to determine how best to use limited dollars more effectively by targeting courses that engage youth at the appropriate stage of leader development, focus on skills the youth find useful and need, and place youth in activities at a level that will be challenging but will not overload them.

**4.4 There are greater numbers of affordable activities and programs in sport, recreation available for children in the community and greater numbers of children are included.**

**4.5 Community volunteer organizations have trained skilled leaders to help with program delivery (e.g. minor sport groups, schools)**

With the advent of YELL, one of the more significant barriers to participation in MoreSports activities was reduced in a systematic fashion. MoreSports programs work on a 1 to 10 ratio of leaders to participants; a smaller ratio is even better for the Grade K-1 and 2-3 age groups. Most MoreSports programs are offered between 3:00 and 6:00 pm, directly after school at the school venues themselves or in nearby Community Centers to reduce the barriers of transport and venue costs. The only group in our society who are freely available at this time of day are high school students, many of whom have the requirement to volunteer in order to graduate from school, and are looking for leadership development as part of their overall maturation.

Prior to YELL's inception, MoreSports programs typically had sufficient space and participants but not enough leaders. By working with up to 1,000 youth a year, YELL has filled this gap. MoreSports participation statistics have exploded since YELL was founded;

as of the 2010 spring session, the program was on track to involve more than 9,000 kids and in the range 900 to 1,000 coach/leaders.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total participants</b>	<b>Coaches</b>	<b># of Sports offered</b>	<b>Hubs</b>
2005-2006	3032	136	3 sports	6
2006-2007	3460	334	5 sports	6
2007-2008	3633	426	13 sports	7
2008-2009	4732	677	20 sports	7
2009-2010	7806	877	25 sports in 237 programs	7
2010-2011	4804 (1 season of 3 to date)	307	15 sports in 80 programs	7

There is no question that as a result of MoreSports, increasing numbers of young people, not only in East Vancouver but also in other parts of the city, have access to organized sports both as players and as volunteers. This success was well documented by Brenda Tang in her 2009 MBA thesis "A Strategic Analysis of the Not-For-Profit Entity Moresports". To quote Ms. Tang:

*"Within the last year, MoreSports has promoted sport to approximately 20,000 elementary school children through the School Days program and registered 4,732 children (the majority aged 6 to 12) in physical activities<sup>27</sup>; many of these children would not otherwise be participating in sport for a variety of reasons. The consolidated statistics recorded by the hubs show an increase in participation over the past four years..... By introducing sport at the school level and then following that up with easy-to-access noncompetitive programming, MoreSports has attracted many participants new to sport and encouraged others more comfortable with fun, recreation-based activities to register in MoreSports programs."*

*Participant statistics from 2005-2008*

<b>Type of Participant</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>
<b>School Days Promotions</b>	<b>4,469</b>	<b>3,387</b>	<b>13,187</b>	<b>19,588</b>
<b>Various Sports Programs</b>	<b>2,181</b>	<b>3,460</b>	<b>3,633</b>	<b>4,732</b>
<b>Volunteer Coaches</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>677</b>

Ms. Tang goes on to note that “since the beginning of the YELL program approximately 1,800 VSB students have participated and provided over 30,000 hours of volunteer service to communities within Vancouver, many of whom would not have otherwise been involved in volunteerism.”

Due in large part to the participation of youth leaders trained through YELL, MoreSports has facilitated a proliferation of sports/recreation activities through multiple delivery methods that maximize the opportunities available to children and families. A key element in this process has been the flexibility that is provided to MoreSports by its network structure. This facilitates the mobilization of multiple constituencies – students at both elementary and secondary levels, personnel from different institutional and community agencies, and parents – in varying combinations. Thus, overarching programs like mini-soccer and Fastbreak are centrally coordinated but locally organized while other programs like futsal, flag football, floor hockey, and the Inner City Sports Academy are both coordinated and organized on a local (ie, HUB) basis.

Further analysis of the YELL database shows increases in volunteer hours for most HUBS over the past three years. Incomplete data can be attributed to: unclear descriptions as to what constitutes volunteerism to our partners, what data should be tracked by partners, high staff turnover. The primary relationship of the youth is to the Placement Officer. Experience indicates that when Placement Officers are effective at their jobs, volunteer numbers grow very quickly; when they are less effective and particularly when there is high staff turnover, volunteer hours drop. This correlation indicates the critical importance for youth in maintaining long term relationships and building on previous results.



Figure 3: Volunteer Hours by HUB

Volunteer Hours by School Year			Volunteer Hours by School Year		
HUB	School Year	Total Hours	HUB	School Year	Total Hours
East Central	2007	1386.8	Inner City	2007	149.9
East Central	2008	1945.4	Inner City	2008	471
East Central	2009	489.5	Inner City	2009	1352.8
East Fraserview	2007	629.5	Middle Fraserview	2007	2358
East Fraserview	2008	520	Middle Fraserview	2008	2556.8
East Fraserview	2009	1150.8	Middle Fraserview	2009	538.9
English Bay	2008	945.8	Midtown	2007	2117.5
English Bay	2009	16	Midtown	2008	3107.6
Hastings	2007	50	Midtown	2009	3091.7
Hastings	2008	393	MoreSports	2008	107
Hastings	2009	1513.5	MoreSports	2009	59
			Southeast	2009	1376

It is well worth noting that the YELL model is becoming the 'best practice' for organizations currently involved in the program, including the Vancouver Park Board, some Neighbourhood Associations, Vancouver City Council, and most Vancouver School Board Community School Teams. YELL's reputation for success is also garnering interest from other organizations, such as the United Way, Canadian Tire's Jumpstart Foundation, the Province of BC, and other school districts, many of which are potential sources of funding and growth for YELL. The MoreSports/YELL program is also now being cited by some academic stakeholders researching the early childhood and middle childhood years as a great practical model for increasing physical activity in the out of school care hours.

**4.6 Youth see themselves and act as community builders and citizens (e.g. are on community boards, etc.)**

There is significant survey and anecdotal evidence attesting to opportunities that were presented to youth as a result of their involvement in the YELL program. Anecdotal observations, which tended to come from individuals who had been in the MoreSports and

YELL system for some time, were overwhelmingly positive. These individual stories have been documented in detail as 'Profiles of the Month' on the MoreSports/YELL website.

Some of the opportunities afforded to YELL leaders have included:

20 YELL students from various areas of East Vancouver participated in the Olympic Torch Relay Team as part of the North Vancouver leg (February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010) in partnership with the Sogo Active Program.



- Two youth leader recognition events hosted in 2010 providing the opportunity for each site to recognize two of its outstanding volunteers of the year with their peers
- A variety of public events including:
  - Interviews on national TV during the Olympics,
  - Public commentary with City of Vancouver City Council,
  - Participation in United Way's Forum on Youth Leadership alongside 250 members of the business community;
  - Public forum hosted with the University of British Columbia's Sociology Department, discussing their perceptions on their involvement in MoreSports and YELL program,
  - Consultation on a local sport court construction; and,
  - Participation in the media launch of Coca Cola's and Vancouver Parks and Recreation's joint partnership in the development of an Inner City sport court.

These and many other community involvements have provided Inner City YELL student leaders the opportunity to enhance their personal skill sets, including the self-confidence that comes with receiving significant support and recognition from their teachers, staff, and event organizers.

#### **4.7 YELL alumni recognize many options open to them and recognize that they have the tools and skills to take advantage of these options**

Feedback from youth surveys and through the website give clear indications that the youth recognize their achievements and how YELL is adding to their skill levels. Youth report that they have learned:

- How to manage a large group of people
- Having to contribute with others and communicating with them as well
- Being patient and learning to cope with children
- Cooperation and preparation
- I have learnt how to run activities, ways to motivate and get people involved in activities
- I think YELL has covered everything I wanted to learn and seem important in my point of view.
- importance of responsibility & dependability
- Independent skills - being able to perform leadership skills among a group of people with you as the leader.
- I think i have improved on my public speaking
- I have learnt the skills to be a leader, which means that you need to take charge of what you do, be organized and be fair.
- We've learned how to work in group situations and how to react to various situations, specifically with kids.
- Other skills that I have learnt that I think are important are to be open-minded with confronted situations, being in a professional manner, being clear and concise with vocal speech, and be able to adapt to multiple meeting times.

Much of this evidence is self-reported, which in and of itself indicates success in achieving this outcome. However a full statistical analysis is not easily realized. Student leaders are not specifically tracked after high school graduation, except for volunteer hours if they continue within MoreSports and YELL. Employment and educational data is not tracked. Some individual examples exist of YELL student leaders receiving multiple employment opportunities (primarily through Vancouver Parks, Community Schools Teams, local Partnerships such as VAFCS and UNYA) and obtaining further education at local colleges. Nonetheless, indicators are strongly positive and evidence of self-awareness among the youth is strong and continues to grow.

#### **4.8 Youth Act as Role Models**

The demand for and immediate success of the Y2 program gives clear indication that YELL youth leaders serve as role models to younger children. One reason for this is YELL participants live in the same neighbourhoods as their younger charges and understand

their issues. They have realistic expectations of the children, while by their very presence demonstrating that self-direction is possible and supports exist.

YELL youth leaders also demonstrate that they see themselves as role models. It has been observed that the older YELL youth typically will not engage in poor behaviour (listening to their iPods during activities, swearing, fighting) if they have an audience of younger children who look up to them. Often the most important reason for youth showing up on time and committing all the way through an 8-week program is that they do not want to disappoint the children involved by being late or not showing up at all. This has been particularly evident in the Inner City hub, where the Y2 was created partially to take advantage of this phenomenon.

During the Inner City pilot of Y2 program, the high school leadership Mentors 'grew' the quickest when teaching the elementary learners. This phenomenon was observed by teachers, as well as being communicated directly by the students, many of whom indicated that it was their favourite portion of leadership class during the year. The elementary Learners indicated they enjoyed learning best from the high school Mentors. Further, elementary teachers and principals indicated that the learners were best at integrating new students at the K-3 Grade levels into the school.

#### **4.9 Residents have a higher level of awareness of excluded youths in Vancouver**

The success of this outcome can only be indicated by inference. That said, proof of accomplishment can be tied to the continuing growth and public awareness of MoreSports. As noted above, the profile of the MoreSports initiative is gaining increasingly wide public acknowledgement – among current and potential working partners, among program participants, among funders, and with the public at large. Two clear examples indicate this success. The first is the very public involvement of MoreSports/YELL youth with various events related to the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. The second is the relatively new relationship with Canadian Tire's Jumpstart Foundation, which has indicated a strong interest in raising awareness of the programs and initial funding support for expanding these initiatives.

### **5. Themes**

#### **5.1 Leadership as a Way of Life**



YELL's original goals in training youth leaders were essentially twofold: to develop coaching and organizational skills in interested youth as a means to increase the available pool of coaches for MoreSports activities; and to teach the youth themselves lifeskills that would enhance their self-esteem, provide them with volunteer placements, and potentially lead to employment opportunities.

What happened was much more interesting and profound.

To repeat an earlier metaphor, YELL found that youth were matches just needing to be lit. YELL did not so much teach capacity as it tapped into the existing capacities of youth leaders, providing some needed impetus and structures through which they could exercise their skills. Given the opportunity, many stretched themselves and reached out to set new directions and establish new goals – truly becoming young leaders within not just MoreSports but also within their larger communities.

There have been numerous examples of this phenomenon, not the least of which was the overwhelming involvement of YELL youth leaders in various community aspects of Vancouver's 2010 Winter Olympics. Four other examples well illustrate how clearly youth have embraced their roles and self-identified as leaders.

The first sign that embracing leadership would include adopting independent thinking and taking personal responsibility became evident early on, when newly trained youth leaders made it clear, mainly through their actions, that they wanted choice in where and how they acted as leaders. While many were interested in remain sports coaches, others were not and brought their new-found skills to areas reflecting their individual passions. It is to the credit of YELL and MoreSports that the programs demonstrated the flexibility to evolve to meet the interests of their trainees. This flexibility has led to a substantial increase in the types and numbers of activities offered through the program, benefitting not only the leaders but also many other community young people seeking opportunities to participate in activities.

A second sign was a small one, but one that was telling in what it demonstrated about youth engagement as leaders. That example was the small group of soccer coaches who, realizing that the children they were leading needed help in more than just soccer, took it upon themselves to develop a homework/study support program for team members, soliciting the necessary help and support through MoreSports/YELL personnel. Leaders indeed.

The type of initiative evidenced by the youth leaders coaching the soccer group was also demonstrated in the summer of 2010 by a different group of YELL leaders. These youth began noticing that some children in their dangerous inner-city neighbourhood were regularly hanging out and making noise until 2am or later. The youth leaders, being from

the neighbourhood themselves, quickly realized that one major reason for the behaviour was that the late gatherers were largely bored, with no engaging or interesting way to spend their time. Taking the initiative, the youth leaders began meeting with neighbourhood parents, Ray-Cam youth workers, and other support partners to develop activities which would engage the young people while providing supervision, connection, and new skills. The result was that the youth leaders began working with the parents to provide organized activities three times a week – activities that required the young people to come into a structured environment and encouraged them to go home and parents require them in the house by 10pm each evening. Youth leaders also took it upon themselves to work with some of the young people on a more ad hoc basis, perhaps taking them to the local park on the weekend to play soccer. All in all, this group of young leaders took responsibility and initiative to make last summer safer and much more enjoyable for other young people in their neighbourhood.

The final example, brought into being very much because of the capacities and ambitions evidenced by youth leaders, was the evolution of YELL to include Y2 – bringing MoreSports and YELL programming into the elementary school system. Certainly this program was not developed solely by the youth themselves; it clearly needed the full MoreSports/YELL infrastructure and funding supports to come into being. However it is important to acknowledge that the impetus for this expansion was much inspired by the leadership skills of the YELL graduates. These young leaders have also risen to meet the challenge of supporting the children involved in Y2, inspiring in turn new groups of young leaders.

## 5.2 The Value of Building on Existing Infrastructure

Much has been made in this Evaluation of the integrated, symbiotic relationship between the YELL and MoreSports programs. While they could exist as discrete entities, there is no question that the two initiatives work much more effectively as an integrated system, with YELL providing leaders and coaches for MoreSports activities and MoreSports providing training, mentoring, and leadership opportunities to YELL participants. While there is no way to statistically compare involvement levels between the separate and integrated models of program delivery, the change in MoreSports participation figures after the 2006 inception of the YELL program are telling:

Type of Participant	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
School Days Promotions	4,469	3,387	13,187	19,588
Various Sports Programs	2,181	3,460	3,633	4,732
Volunteer Coaches	136	334	426	677

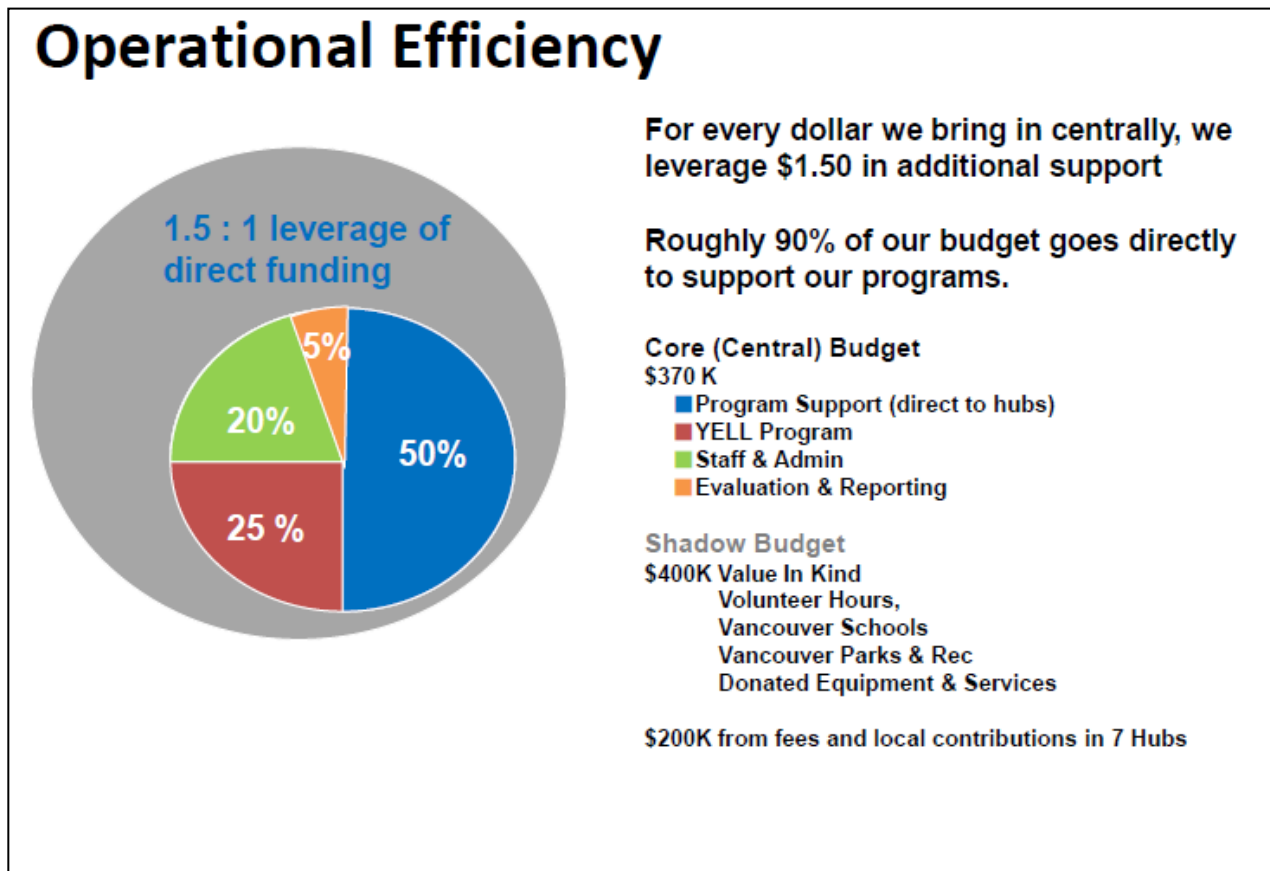
The significant increase in the involvement of participants and coaches, while not proof of the success of the model, certainly leads to the observation that the programs work better as an integrated unit than either would alone.

Beyond the clear benefit of the YELL and MoreSports programs working as a unit, is the even stronger benefit that arises from both programs working with and within existing community structures, rather than as a stand-alone entity. The overall model has been described in an earlier part of this Evaluation. To use a rather hackneyed phrase, MoreSports said no need to reinvent the wheel by setting up a parallel system, with all the attendant political and financial issues involved. Utilizing and working within the existing schools/community centres infrastructure ensured that the needs of all parties were met while maximizing access to and involvement of MoreSports/YELL participants. The growth in program involvement over a decade paints a telling picture:

MoreSports Element	1999	2009
'School Days' Participants	Less than 2000	20,000 +
'Hub" Sport Participants	About 200	6,994
YELL Volunteer Youth Leaders	0	782
Volunteer Coaching Hours	Less than 300	10,000+
Hub Sport Programs	2	99
Sports Offered	1	28
Vancouver East side Neighbourhoods served	3	17
Neighbourhood 'Hubs"	1	7



The integrated community/program planning and delivery model also delivers clear economic benefits, maximizing program activities and outcomes per dollar invested:



Graphic representation of MoreSports/YELL budget from Fiscal 2009/10

The current coordinated system is not perfect. There are still distinct challenges, as was noted by Ray-Cam Coordinator Carole Brown in 2009:

*“Incorporating capacity building into how staff/organizations work is the ground work for the real shift that needs to happen, particularly in low-income and challenged neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods it is staff operating service delivery models that control and often (in exclusion of community people) make decisions on resources, priorities and even what should be provided,. To create and successfully develop internal community strength, these staff must more successfully give and share access to these functions and be prepared to relinquish some of the power and authority to emerging community leaders; as well as making a commitment to work as part of a larger comprehensive approach to address community /neighborhood challenges. The YELL project is no exception and many of what should be shared decisions, are in fact kept in the realm of staff networks. Most meetings where such actions and decision are made are*

*at times when volunteers/youth are otherwise engaged at school or work themselves. This issue has been flagged and strategies and changes are being planned.”*

However the challenges faced by this new model do not take away from its success. The integrated approach taken to planning and delivery can be said to be one major reason for all the successes noted in this Evaluation.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Although not without challenges, there is no question that the YELL initiative is successful. The program has been overwhelmingly embraced by participants and HUB partners. Statistics show increasing growth in all areas. The development and immediate embracing of Y2 adds depth and penetration to the program. Leadership training is changing not only the youth themselves but also how they work and live within their neighbourhoods.

### **Recommendation 1: Provide ongoing core funding to the MoreSports/YELL programs.**

Challenges faced by the program were to a great extent external to the program itself. For example, the overwhelming role played by erratic and unpredictable funding cannot be understated. There are indications that this may be changing, as the City of Vancouver Park Board appears poised to guarantee ongoing core support. The MoreSports/YELL mandates and Park Board priorities for City youth nicely intertwine, so this would be a fitting and timely development.

### **Recommendation 2: Develop a more comprehensive tracking system**

It became clear while preparing this evaluation that there was no system in place to track much of the volunteer work being done by YELL youth leaders. While MoreSports involvement was easily accounted for, other outside involvements were not always reported in any kind of formal manner. Equally, once youth leaders left the secondary school/community centre system, records of ongoing involvements and/or benefits of training to further education and employment did not formally exist.

It is therefore recommended that YELL develop a formal, comprehensive, coordinated and system wide (multi-neighbourhood) method to record the involvement of each youth in training and volunteer work, one that can be accessed for statistical purposes and evaluation/modification and can be made available to each individual youth (through encrypted password) that provides personal records of accomplishments such as

community work, usable for high school passport/graduation requirements, scholarships, and post-secondary entry requirements.

### **Recommendation 3: Share the model and expand the program**

The overall goal of YELL has been to develop youth leadership within a coordinated, integrated, community and school based system. The success in meeting this goal has been demonstrated virtually from the beginning of the initiative. Providing training where youth are already involved, with support and volunteer opportunities that fit with their interests and current involvements, in a manner that gives them the scope to exercise independence and leadership skills, works. The City, the province of BC, and indeed the country should embrace this model for not only involving youth in sports and other activities but also in harnessing and developing their incipient leadership skills.

The incipient partnership of MoreSports/YELL with Jumpstart has the potential to foster wider awareness of the success of this model and to help extend the program's reach to other communities. MoreSports/YELL should look to use this publicity to develop guidelines and partnerships with other communities and potential HUB partners in the interest of widening the geographic reach of the programs. This is not about ownership of resources. Indeed, each HUB fully maintains its own resource base with MoreSports/YELL coordinating support and ensuring coherence of vision and program delivery.

"It is also important to recognize that changing institutional behaviour is not a short-term process, particularly at senior decision making tables, even though results/outcomes, widespread participation, and overwhelming support would dictate adoption of the model/approach. The fear of risk taking, moving into new areas, and/or doing things differently, or the inability to realign resources and financial priorities when truly innovative successful initiatives are introduced, places at risk the ongoing accomplishment of goals, to say nothing of the existence of the initiative/strategy. This is true of MoreSports/YELL. The 3-year core funding provided by non government sources is winding down and is not being replaced at the same ratio by the municipal system, despite proof that it is greatly benefiting from the initiative and model.

Governments are looking for effective ways to develop the capacities of our young people, particularly to encourage them to become more physically active. There is no better to achieve these goals than by bringing awareness to and fostering acceptance of the MoreSports/Yell model.



Vincent L. Chan 2010

