



**RURAL YOUTH  
EDUCATION PROJECT**

**FINAL  
INTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

Prepared by:

Peggy Mahon B.A. M.Ad.Ed.  
Internal Evaluation Consultant

November 2006

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Submitted to

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*Peggy Mahon, Internal Evaluation Consultant*



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## EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

This is the final evaluation report of the In-House Evaluation of the Rural Youth Education Project (RYEP). The RYEP was a four and a half year project which included four school years from 2002-03 to 2005-06. The RYEP was offered in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties and delivered by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. The project was funded by Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada through the Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF) of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

The RYEP implemented a gender-based, violence prevention model intended to provide youth with the knowledge and skills to build and maintain healthy relationships. The core curriculum, consisting of 12 lessons, was delivered to students in Personal Development and Relationship (PDR) classes in Grades 7, 8, 9 and in Career Life Management (CLM) 11 classes. The two project schools are East Antigonish Education Centre in Antigonish County and Chedabucto Place in Guysborough. Adult Facilitators worked collaboratively with classroom teachers to deliver the curriculum. The program involved a team of Youth Facilitators from high school who assisted with the delivery of the classroom sessions.

The RYEP was approved by the Strait Regional School Board and supported by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. The curriculum was originally developed by the Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA) Community Development and Research Society in British Columbia and was adapted for use in rural Nova Scotia. The project incorporated adaptations to enhance the SWOVA curriculum particularly in the area of diversity with the assistance of a Diversity Consultant. The student population in the two project schools is diverse, with a significant percentage of students coming from the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre has been responsible for administration and coordination of the program. The project was carried out with ongoing consultation with SWOVA and in partnership with the East Antigonish Education Centre and Chedabucto Place. An Advisory Committee to the project was made up of administrators from the two schools and the Women's Resource Centre, representatives from the African Nova Scotian organizations, the Paq'tnek First Nation, and key community-based organizations.

The internal evaluation was intended to enhance the external evaluation being conducted by Auguste Solutions and Associates Inc. (ASA). Internal evaluation participants included students taking the program, Youth Facilitators, Adult Facilitators, teachers and school administrators, and Advisory Committee members.

This internal evaluation report covers the four school years of the RYEP program, 2002-03 to 2005-06. It reports on the evaluation findings in the following areas: (1) feminist understanding of violence and abuse; (2) a focus on gender and diversity; (3) strategies to enable people in rural and remote areas to access violence prevention programs; (4) safety strategies that enable women and girls to access services and give them options; (5) multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention; and (6) impact on youth participants.

The following are highlights of the evaluation findings and recommendations.

## **1. STUDENT AND YOUTH FACILITATOR PARTICIPATION**

- ◆ Sixty (60) classes with a total of 1277 students have received the 12 classroom sessions in the four school years that the RYEP program has been offered. This included 19 Grade 7 classes, 18 Grade 8 classes, 19 Grade 9 classes and 4 CLM 11 classes.
- ◆ There were 19 Youth Facilitators each year with for a total of 76 Youth Facilitators.

## **2. FEMINIST UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE:**

- ◆ Strategies that worked well to address gender stereotypes involved: various classroom strategies; showing by example or role modelling by Youth and Adult Facilitators; delivery by a community-based organization with knowledge and experience in dealing with stereotypes; and policies and programs in the schools that support changes related to gender stereotypes.
- ◆ Challenges faced by Youth and Adult Facilitators in working toward changing attitudes about gender stereotypes fell into five general categories: it is a long and slow process; community factors; students' sense of control over gender stereotypes; resistance to new concepts and to change; and use of the term feminism.
- ◆ The long list of gender stereotypes identified by students taking the program and Youth Facilitators is a clear indicator that they recognize the stereotypes for both boys and girls. Similarly, students indicated that there is racism and homophobia and identified stereotypes related to race and sexual orientation.
- ◆ Students identified individual challenges they face at school or in their community related to gender stereotyping, racism, and homophobia. They named personal forms of violence that can occur against individuals as well as systemic forms of violence and why these forms of violence exist. This indicates their understanding of the complexities associated with creating change related to stereotypes and to addressing associated violence and abuse.
- ◆ Some students readily identified strategies they use for acting differently with respect to stereotypes as a result of the RYEP.

## **3. A FOCUS ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY**

- ◆ Two key elements used to address diversity are the principle that diversity must be visible and program leaders need to recognize that diversity is both challenging and complex.
- ◆ Three key strategies for addressing diversity have been: program leadership, resources and training; modelling gender and diversity; and appropriate curriculum content and delivery.
- ◆ By the start of the third year of the program, males, females, African Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq were well represented on the youth team. In the fourth year there was a shift in composition with no representation from the African Nova Scotian community in one school and with twice as many females than males in the other school.
- ◆ Gender diversity was maintained on the adult team each year. There were difficulties in retaining Adult Facilitators from the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities and to keep adult male facilitators for more than one year. Some reasons for these

difficulties have been identified. The Women's Centre recognized these difficulties and suggested that these issues would need to be looked at when structuring staff positions in future projects in order to more consistently engage diverse communities and male facilitators.

#### **4. STRATEGIES TO ENABLE PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS TO ACCESS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

- ♦ Delivering as in in-school program meant that each student had the opportunity to participate and, therefore, no-one was left out due to transportation and other barriers they might face by living in a rural community.
- ♦ Strategies that enabled buy-in and trust to deliver the program were: overall management and coordination by a skilled Coordinator; positive working relationships between Adult Facilitators, teachers and administrators; the role of the Adult Facilitator as open, approachable, and not in an authority position; and the role of the Youth Facilitator as a role model for other students.
- ♦ Parents indicated that providing information to them about the program was important. They found regular articles in school newspapers the most useful way to learn about the program. Access to program contact information was important if further information was required.
- ♦ To ensure the Youth Facilitator position was accessible, the RYEP developed and used an open, transparent recruitment and selection process; provided opportunities for youth input into what would make the position accessible; and, made changes based on their suggestions.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators' suggestions to make the position more accessible affected the following: (a) the timing of youth team meetings; (b) recruiting and hiring sooner with more advertising; (c) finding the right forum for students to learn about the position; (d) being more proactive in recruitment of young men, youth from different cultural backgrounds and with different experiences; (e) opening the position to Grade 10 (RYEP started with Grades 11 and 12); and (f) hiring previous facilitators to provide consistency and support to new recruits.
- ♦ The RYEP considered realities of the rural communities served by the two schools by adjusting the curriculum to include elements of cultural diversity and by considering costs of time and distance to travel for facilitators and program coordination, as well as for getting people together for meetings and other program activities. It has been an ongoing challenge to bring people together for training, meetings and informal networking.
- ♦ An ongoing reality of the program has been to be sensitive to the fact that the program challenges attitudes and beliefs that may be held by some community members. This sensitivity was required in the classroom setting and in the support of Youth Facilitators who may have faced additional pressures in their role in the school, at home, or in the community.
- ♦ Two kinds of relationships were helpful in supporting the program, the formal partnerships with the schools and the school board and the strengthened relationships

with communities, community organizations, the Youth Health Centre and the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Centre.

- ♦ The Advisory Committee played an effective advocacy and support role at critical points in the program's development, provided input and feedback on various reports and documents, assisted with recruitment and hiring of Adult and Youth Facilitators, and shared information within their organizations and communities.

## **5. SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

- ♦ Evidence indicates that various mechanisms and support procedures were effective in ensuring safety and confidentiality. Any issues related to confidentiality or disclosures were handled appropriately.
- ♦ Teachers and Adult Facilitators pointed to several classroom techniques that promoted safety such as developing community standards, opportunities to ask questions anonymously, addressing inappropriate comments directly, and using an open, horseshoe or circle format for discussion.
- ♦ The relationship between the students and facilitators, who are not authority figures, and separate gender sessions were important to enabling boys and girls to open up and talk more comfortably about issues. In addition, the separate gender sessions enabled better sharing in the mixed group. After the separate gender sessions, both boys and girls were more willing to share their ideas in the larger, mixed group.
- ♦ There was some indication that boys and girls might behave differently when feeling safe and that boys may initially tend to be aggressive when they are starting to feel safe, with the suggestion that, if followed through effectively, it could be turned into a positive learning experience.
- ♦ A number of students taking the program and Youth Facilitators were able to identify the need for self care and when to seek help.

## **6. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL, INTERACTIVE APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION**

- ♦ The program curriculum was assessed and approved by the Nova Scotia Department of Education to be a fit with the PDR curriculum for Grades 7, 8, and 9.
- ♦ The majority of students in all grade in 2004-05 said the interactive techniques such as gender sessions, small groups, discussion and video were useful or very useful. For the most part students found role plays were less useful than the techniques just mentioned, but more useful than handouts and workbooks.
- ♦ When compared by gender (in 2004-05 and 2005-06), over 80% of the female students found separate gender sessions useful to very useful compared to about 65% of male students.
- ♦ The ideas that were hardest for students to accept were related to sexuality, dating violence, gender stereotypes, racism, bigger picture analysis, and that the small things you say (e.g. jokes, etc.) can affect people.
- ♦ Both the Youth and Adult Facilitators identified three key elements of the program that help to overcome resistance to change: (a) the Adult Facilitators putting the issues out there, willing to discuss the tough issues or raising awareness through videos; (b) a safe environment where students can say what they need to say; and (c) interactive

techniques, particularly the separate gender groups, sharing stories, and information and support about where to get help.

- ◆ The Youth Facilitators and Advisory Committee members identified community and school factors that can support and that can challenge the curriculum.
- ◆ Strategies for an effective adult team include strong facilitation skills, understanding and comfort with the program content, teambuilding and cooperation, and working effectively with the youth team.
- ◆ The Adult Facilitators found working with the youth team to be both rewarding and challenging. They were continually working to strengthen the Youth Facilitator's role in the classroom and to improve the focus of youth team meetings.
- ◆ Youth involvement is an important dimension of the program and it has grown over the four years with Youth Facilitators taking a more active role in the classroom.
- ◆ An important lesson learned about youth engagement is, first, to give them a legitimate role in the program; and, secondly, to provide a variety of opportunities for students to have their voice heard in relation to their role. This has been demonstrated throughout the life of the project. Over the four years, the Youth Facilitators offered recommendations to improve their role in the classroom, training programs, and youth team meetings.
- ◆ Teachers and Advisory Committee members commented on the importance of having the youth team component to the program and its value to the students and to the leadership development of the youth themselves.
- ◆ The Youth Facilitators appreciated what they learned through working as a team. Most said that working in a team was a positive activity, although some pointed out that teamwork was not always easy.
- ◆ What works well in the Youth Facilitator recruitment process is using multiple strategies for recruitment; considering incentives for application; using work undertaken by youth as concrete examples of what being a Youth Facilitator involves; and having a well organized application and interview process.

## **7. IMPACT ON YOUTH PARTICIPANTS**

### ***Impact on Youth Facilitators***

In the two years that the Appreciative Inquiry process (2003-04 and 2005-06) was used to gather information from the Youth Facilitators, there were similarities in what Youth Facilitators said they gained with respect to knowledge, skills and attitudes. Because these represent ½ of all the Youth Facilitators over the four years, it can be concluded that these findings represent what most Youth Facilitators would have experienced through this program.

- ◆ The Youth Facilitators expanded their knowledge and increased their confidence and skills, particularly public speaking and communication skills.
- ◆ The Youth Facilitators are more open to difference and diversity through understanding difference, accepting others, valuing and respecting difference, and being more respectful of others.

- ♦ They are more open to talking about personal experiences, with some being able to address their own healing through this avenue.
- ♦ The Youth Facilitators have benefited from working with and meeting new people.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators found teaching and being looked up to as a role model to be a positive experience. They appreciated working together on creative projects for presentation to the classroom.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators reported changing their behaviour and making conscious choices to act differently; for example, decreasing violent behaviour or ‘thinking before they act or speak.’
- ♦ Youth Facilitators reported helping to influence change outside the classroom.
- ♦ Having a positive impact on the students overall made them feel positive about their role in the program.
- ♦ They identified and appreciated the positive support from the Adult Facilitators.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators learned about and appreciated working in a team and acknowledged both the positive aspects and the need to work through challenges associated with teamwork.

### ***Impact on the Students Taking the Program***

The program has had a positive impact on the majority of students judging from their responses to the survey and their participation in student focus groups (2005-06).

- ♦ When asked what they appreciated most, from 2003-04 to 2005-06 between 81% and 83% offered positive comments about the program.
- ♦ Of those who offered positive comments, between 70% and 81% over the four years said they appreciated the course content, interactive activities and separate gender groups.
- ♦ In the last two years a few students mentioned they appreciated the process – opportunities to talk about what is important to them – and the outcomes – increased understanding and respect for each other.
- ♦ Although there were some variations from grade to grade and between genders, it is evident that students generally found learning about stereotypes, understanding differences, conflict resolution/problem solving and communication skills to be helpful. Girls tended to find the topics slightly more helpful to them than the boys.
- ♦ Students said what they learned about how African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq communities contribute to diversity less helpful than the other topics, although still generally helpful. This fits with the Adult Facilitator’s comments that, while there is one session that focuses on diversity, another session that focuses on ‘culture’ and specifically different local cultures would be an asset to the program.
- ♦ When asked what they had learned about violence, ¾ or 75% of the students in 2005-06 and 2004-05 offered positive comments about what they had learned. This is a small increase over the response in 2003-04 which was 68%.
- ♦ Of those who they had learned more about violence an increasing number of students said they were learning to prevent violence or were learning strategies to deal with violence (from 20% in 2003-04 to 35% in 2005-06).

- ♦ The majority of students in all grades said that things “stayed the same” with respect to differences in their self esteem, their relationships, and in the school. The percentage of students indicating things stayed the same tended to increase as the grades went up from Grade 7 to CLM11.
- ♦ When compared to other grades, the Grade 7 students reported the largest increase in self esteem (just under 40%), in positive change in their relationships (about 30%), and that things had changed for the better at school (between 22% and 33.8%).
- ♦ An average of 57% of the students over the four years said the program was helpful, fun or interesting overall. When looking at individual years, the percentages were fairly consistent ranging from 52% and 53% in 2003-04 and 2005-06 respectively to 62% and 61% in 2002-03 and 2004-05 respectively.
- ♦ It is evident from the student focus groups (2005-06) that students had developed knowledge and skills in areas directly related to the curriculum topics such as understanding difference, stereotypes, abuse and violence, sexual harassment, relationships, boundaries, assertiveness, communication skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, it is evident that students were acting on what they had learned by transferring it to their everyday experiences in their relationships at school and at home.
- ♦ In the focus groups, the students self reported that they had more consideration for others, particularly more respect for others, thinking more before they speak or act, treating others better, and getting along better with others. Some said they were helping others with their problems or were challenging others if they were treating others badly, hurting others or hurting themselves.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are the recommendations for future healthy relationships programs based on the experience and lessons learned from the RYEP program.

### ***Best Practices and Ongoing Challenges***

Ideally, future programs would incorporate the best practices from the RYEP program and would be prepared for the ongoing challenges related to delivering a curriculum that ensures diversity in all aspects of the program and is sensitive to realities of rural communities.

Future programs would consider the best practices and challenges in five areas: (1) feminist understanding of violence and abuse; (2) a focus on gender and diversity; (3) strategies to enable people in rural and remote areas to access violence prevention programs; (4) safety strategies that enable women and girls to access services and give them options; (5) multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention.

### ***Overall Program Approach***

To be most effective, future programs must include these components:

- ♦ A community-based organization with experience and knowledge with these issues should deliver the program and/or provide ongoing coordination, training, and consultation in the delivery of the program. This will ensure consistency in curriculum

delivery and will enable the trust that is required for students to fully participate in this program.

- ♦ The composition of the adult and youth teams should reflect the diversity of the communities that the school serves.
- ♦ Adult Facilitator teams should be female and male teams, preferably from diverse cultural backgrounds and external to the schools. Adult Facilitators must have an excellent knowledge of the topics and comfort level with delivering all aspects of the curriculum.
- ♦ The adult team works with a Youth Facilitator team in each school to deliver the curriculum. The youth team should have a designated role in curriculum delivery and should participate in developing interactive techniques to deliver their portion of the curriculum. This can be accomplished during training and youth team meetings.

### ***Adult Facilitator Team***

- ♦ The Adult Facilitators should work as a team to model curriculum messages with respect to gender and diversity.
- ♦ The Adult Facilitator team should develop positive relationships with the respective classroom teachers and school administration.
- ♦ Ideally, the Adult Facilitators should have a designated space in the schools, preferably with computer and telephone access, where they can work together and with Youth Facilitators to prepare for and provide follow-up to classes. This space or another designated space could be used for youth team meetings.
- ♦ If future programs include male staff working out of the Women's Centre, the Women's Centre should find ways to be more proactive in supporting and including male staff. This could include providing meeting space, office space, and resources that can be accessed freely by male staff which would not infringe on Women's Centre direct service space and would respect policies and procedures that support direct services to women.

### ***Youth Involvement***

- ♦ An important component of youth involvement is the youth role in the classroom and in other activities that can help to promote and reinforce the curriculum messages, such as youth health fairs, Mi'kmaq Heritage month, Black History month, and December 6 remembrance of the Montreal Massacre.
- ♦ Ensure opportunities for the Youth Facilitators to all meet together regularly, to continue to develop their knowledge and skills related to curriculum topics and program delivery.
- ♦ Ensure accessibility of youth to the Youth Facilitator position through similar strategies used for this program; and, most importantly, by consulting with youth and acting on their recommendations for ensuring access.

### ***Training Programs***

Adult and Youth Facilitator training programs should include:

- ♦ At least one annual training event that strengthens and supports the adult and youth facilitator teams.
- ♦ Discussion and analysis of critical issues such as feminism, racism, and men's role in helping gender roles become more balanced; diversity training, curriculum topics, facilitation skills, strategies in handling different aspects of resistance to change, and teambuilding.

### ***Interactive Teaching Techniques***

- ♦ The program must incorporate interactive techniques that engage the students and interest them in the topics.
- ♦ The program should incorporate separate gender sessions where girls and boys can open up to discussion of important issues, and then share their insights with each other.
- ♦ The program should incorporate strategies that enable students to overcome resistance to new ideas and change through the three components identified in this project: Adult Facilitators putting the issues out for discussion; provision of a safe environment to enable students to express their opinions and ideas; and interactive techniques to facilitate active involvement by students.



## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

This is the final evaluation report of the In-House Evaluation of the Rural Youth Education Project (RYEP). The RYEP was a four and a half year project which included four school years from 2002-03 to 2005-06. The RYEP was offered in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties and delivered by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. The project was funded by Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada through the Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF) of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

The RYEP implemented a gender-based, violence prevention model intended to provide youth with the knowledge and skills to build and maintain healthy relationships. The core curriculum, consisting of 12 lessons, was delivered to students in Personal Development and Relationship (PDR) classes in Grades 7, 8, 9 and in Career Life Management (CLM) 11 classes. The two project schools are East Antigonish Education Centre in Antigonish County and Chedabucto Place in Guysborough. Adult Facilitators worked collaboratively with classroom teachers to deliver the curriculum. The program involved a team of Youth Facilitators from high school who assisted with the delivery of the classroom sessions.

The RYEP was approved by the Strait Regional School Board and supported by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. The curriculum was originally developed by the Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA) Community Development and Research Society in British Columbia and was adapted for use in rural Nova Scotia. The project incorporated adaptations to enhance the SWOVA curriculum particularly in the area of diversity with the assistance of a Diversity Consultant. The student population in the two project schools is diverse, with a significant percentage of students coming from the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities.

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The RYEP is being evaluated by an independent external evaluator, Auguste Solutions and Associates Inc. (ASA). The external evaluation utilizes the Theory of Change Model which describes the general hypothesis of behavioural changes that the project expects to occur including the constraints and external drivers, beliefs, assumptions, theories and values; inputs; outputs; and expected outcomes. The objective of the external evaluation is to test the general hypothesis (theory of change model) that the RYEP program, delivered to Grades 7, 8, & 9 students with a follow-up year in Grade 11, will result in the desired behavioural changes in the targeted population. The theory of change model identifies early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

Once the scope and timeline of the external evaluation was determined, the RYEP decided to enhance the external evaluation with internal evaluation processes. The purpose of the internal evaluation was fourfold: (a) to provide information required for project management; (b) to

contribute to knowledge of Best Practices in violence prevention; (c) to promote the CPIF mandate; and (d) to complement the external evaluation process.

Throughout the four years of school delivery the internal evaluation participants included students taking the program, Youth Facilitators, Adult Facilitators, teachers, school administrators, parents, and Advisory Committee members. The information was gathered from the students at the end of the 12 week program and from other participants toward end of the second year of the school cycle between May and June 2005.

Over the four years, the information gathered from various participants was analyzed to assess the progress on the six themes as follows: (1) feminist understanding of violence and abuse; (2) a focus on gender and diversity; (3) strategies to enable people in rural and remote areas to access violence prevention programs; (4) safety strategies that enable women and girls to access services and give them options; (5) multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention; and (6) impact on youth participants.

This evaluation report details the results of this assessment and any changes that occurred over the four year period. This includes quantitative evidence gathered through the student surveys each year as well as qualitative evidence gathered from student participants, Youth and Adult Facilitators, teachers and school administrators, parents, and Advisory Committee members. It is organized into four sections followed by references and appendices, as follows:

- ◆ Section 1, this section, introduces the project and evaluation methodology.
- ◆ Section 2: Implementing the RYEP Program provides an overview of what has happened in the key aspects of the project from the school year 2002-03 to 2005-06.
- ◆ Section 3: Progress on Best Practices in Violence Prevention and Impact on Youth, offers a summary of the reflection over the four years by evaluation participants on the evaluation themes.
- ◆ Section 4, Conclusions and Suggested Next Steps summarizes the results and suggests next steps.

## **EVALUATION PLANNING AND METHODOLOGY**

In August 2003 the In-House Evaluation Framework was developed by Nancy Peters, Consultant, and by Jean Crosby, RYEP Project Coordinator. This framework detailed the purpose and approach to the evaluation, the evaluation themes and data collection processes. The overall approach to the evaluation proposed to use the following processes and elements:

- ◆ Qualitative approach to data gathering and analysis;
- ◆ Use of questions to help to analyze and code data;
- ◆ Use of open ended questions to uncover factors that shape Best Practices;
- ◆ Use of participatory processes with staff and Advisory Committee members playing a lead role in collecting, analyzing and reporting data on an ongoing basis;
- ◆ Opportunities for reflection by staff and partners on issues of particular interest to themselves;
- ◆ In-house evaluation management committee composed of staff, partners and project stakeholders will support monitoring and evaluation processes.

One constraint for the evaluation has been that there was no provision for an in-house evaluation and, therefore, there were limited funds for it. This, in turn, limited the scope of the in-house evaluation. To initiate the in-house evaluation, RYEP staff worked cooperatively with the regional staff of the National Crime Prevention Strategy and the external evaluators to identify overlapping areas such as teacher support and to ensure students, parents or teachers are not approached twice to provide similar kinds of information. RYEP staff and the Internal Evaluation Consultant, have met with Jim Coflin of Auguste Solutions to discuss cooperation between the external and internal evaluation.

Peggy Mahon was contracted as the Internal Evaluation Consultant in March 2004 to continue with internal evaluation planning and implementation. The Evaluation Framework was updated with input from the members of the Internal Evaluation Steering Group who provided advice to the planning and implementation of the evaluation. Appendix A includes the list of the Internal Evaluation Steering Group members. Appendix B shows the Evaluation themes, anticipated outcomes and methods used to gather information for this evaluation report.

The methods for gathering information over the four years were:

- ♦ *Student surveys* were administered each year by teachers to student participants and were completed by the following students: 99 students in 2002-03; 120 students in 2003-04; 234 in 2004-05; and 229 in 2005-06. The completed surveys were coded and entered into a data base by RYEP staff. The student survey was revised in 2004-05 to improve the information gathered from the students.
- ♦ *Student Focus Groups*. In January and May 2006, student focus groups were held at Chedabucto and East Antigonish respectively. In each school, four focus groups were held, one focus group per grade. Each focus group discussed the same set of questions and also worked in separate gender groups for some sessions as well as completed some individual exercises. Each focus group had eight participants for a total of 64 participants.
- ♦ *Youth and Adult Facilitator Evaluation Forms and Lesson's Learned*. Youth Facilitator and Adult Facilitator classroom evaluation forms were completed at the end of/during each session. These forms assisted in assessing and revising curriculum. At their team meetings the Youth Facilitators reflected on "lessons learned," which were documented in the Adult Facilitators' monthly reports.
- ♦ *A Youth Involvement survey* was conducted with Youth Facilitators in May 2003.
- ♦ *Appreciative Inquiry (AI) interviews* were conducted with Youth Facilitators in April 2004 and May 2006. The AI process gathered stories that highlighted positive experiences in the RYEP program. *Focus Groups* were conducted with Youth Facilitators in June 2005.
- ♦ *AI interviews* were conducted with the Adult Facilitators in April 2004 followed by a focus group in June 2004. Individual interviews were conducted with the Adult Facilitators in June 2005 and a focus group was conducted in June 2006.
- ♦ *Focus Groups with Teachers and School Administrators* at Chedabucto Place and East Antigonish were conducted in 2004 and 2006.

- ♦ *Focus Groups* were conducted with parents from Chedabucto Place and East Antigonish June 2005 and June 2006.
- ♦ *Interviews with Advisory Committee members* were conducted in June 2004 and June 2006.

In order to ensure confidentiality, all surveys were anonymous. Interviews and focus groups were taped with permission of participants and transcribed. All tapes will be destroyed at the end of the evaluation. No names have been used in the report. Titles (e.g. Youth Facilitator, Adult Facilitator, Students) have been used to provide clarity with respect to various perspectives. In 2006, to choose the participants for the youth focus groups all names from each grade were drawn randomly from an envelope. To achieve gender balance the names of boys and girls for each grade were put into different envelopes and an equal number of names were drawn from each envelope.

The Internal Evaluation Consultant reviewed the transcripts, reports, and survey information, summarized key points, and organized them under each evaluation theme. Based on this summary analysis, the interim evaluation report was drafted. As mentioned in the introduction, this is a summative evaluation report for 2002-2006 and is intended to provide insights into the progress related to the evaluation themes. The next section of this report provides information on what happened related to various RYEP components during the four year period.

## **SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTING THE RYEP PROGRAM 2002-06**

This section provides an overview of the RYEP program implementation. It offers an overview of *what happened* over four school years from 2002-03 to 2005-06 in the following areas:

- 2.1 An Inclusive Educational Approach
- 2.2 School Based Violence Prevention Programming
- 2.3 Curriculum Development
- 2.4 Diversity Component
- 2.5 Counselling Support
- 2.6 Adult Facilitators
- 2.7 Youth Involvement
- 2.8 Community-Based and Collaborative
- 2.9 Community Involvement and Promoting RYEP
- 2.10 Evaluation

### **2.1 AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH**

The RYEP used a gender-based, violence prevention approach for working collaboratively with teachers to deliver a curriculum of 12 lessons to students in grades 7, 8, and 9. While a program objective has been to offer curriculum in the CLM 11 class, this has only been possible for two of the four years (see Table 1, next page).

The intent of an inclusive educational approach was to positively influence attitudes and values, and to increase knowledge, and skills required to build and maintain healthy relationships, as outlined in the project objectives (see Appendix C).

One aspect of the inclusive approach was to promote inclusion through increasing students' understanding of racial and cultural diversity, specifically related to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. Within Antigonish and Guysborough Counties, there is significant cultural and racial diversity with both First Nations and African Nova Scotian youth attending the schools. The project enhanced the existing SWOVA curriculum in the area of diversity through adaptation of the curriculum and through working towards a diverse team of Youth and Adult Facilitators. Some of the activities, examples, and choice of representation were grounded in racial and cultural diversity; for example, the WADE IN model for addressing conflict and expanding examples related to communications styles. A second aspect of this approach was the use of interactive techniques in the classroom such as games, role plays, small group discussion, and the use of separate gender sessions which enabled girls and boys to discuss issues that particularly affect them as girls or boys.

Another aspect of this inclusive approach was having a male/female team of Adult Facilitators deliver and facilitate the classroom sessions. The Adult Facilitators were also responsible for providing leadership, information, and support to a team of up to ten Youth Facilitators in each school. The Youth Facilitators assisted with the delivery of the classroom sessions, and played a role in mentoring and peer support with other students both inside and outside the classroom. The team of adults was intended to role-model healthy adult

male/female relationships. The model of adults and youth working together was intended to role-model cooperative adult/youth relationships.

## 2.2 SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

Sixty (60) classes with a total of 1,277 students have received the 12 classroom sessions in the four school years that the RYEP program has been offered. Table 1 shows student participation for each school for the school years 2002-03 to 2005-06.

The RYEP sessions were scheduled within the existing PDR class times in Grades 7, 8, and 9. The program was offered to approximately the same number of classes in each school each year (between 2 and 3 classes per grade), with the exception of 2005-06 at Chedabucto Place when there was one Grade 7, one Grade 8 and one 7/8 split class. The program has been offered only two years in the CLM 11 class time - in Chedabucto Place in 2003-04 and in Chedabucto Place and East Antigonish in 2005-06. Therefore, while the program has been offered consistently from Grade 7 to 9 for four years, there has not been a similar opportunity to consistently offer the program to Grade 11 students during the four-year period.

**Table 1: Student Participation 2002-2006**

<b>Year</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Grade 7 (#’s)</b>	<b>Grade 8 (#’s)</b>	<b>Grade 9 (#’s)</b>	<b>CLM 11 (#’s)</b>	<b>Total Each School (#’s)</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>2002-03</b>	Chedabucto Place	2 classes (48)	2 classes (45)	2 classes (45)	Not offered	6 classes (138)	<b>320</b>
	East Antigonish	3 classes (56)	3 classes (62)	2 classes (64)	Not offered	8 classes (182)	
<b>2003-04</b>	Chedabucto Place	2 classes (41)	2 classes (48)	2 classes (47)	2 classes (52)	8 classes (188)	<b>377</b>
	East Antigonish	3 classes (66)	3 classes (58)	3 classes (65)	Not offered	9 classes (189)	
<b>2004-05</b>	Chedabucto Place	2 classes (35)	2 classes (41)	2 classes (48)	Not offered	6 classes (124)	<b>296</b>
	East Antigonish	3 classes (47)	3 classes (61)	3 classes (64)	Not offered	9 classes (172)	
<b>2005-06</b>	Chedabucto Place	2 classes (1 7/8 split) (39)	1 class (22)	2 classes (35)	1 class (11)	6 classes (107)	<b>284</b>
	East Antigonish	2 classes (50)	2 classes (47)	3 classes (66)	1 class (14)	8 classes (177)	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>19 classes (382)</b>	<b>18 classes (384)</b>	<b>19 classes (434)</b>	<b>4 classes (77)</b>	<b>60 classes (1,277)</b>	<b>1,277</b>

## 2.3 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

One of the first activities of the project was to hire a Diversity Consultant to advise on the enhancement of the SWOVA curriculum to include the diversity component, and to assess the fit with the Nova Scotia Department of Education Personal Development and Relationship (PDR) and Career Life Management (CLM) 11 curriculum. Sylvia Parris of SV Parris Consulting has acted as the Diversity Consultant throughout the four years and she has worked closely with the project with the following objectives for her work:

- ♦ To develop supplemental resource materials for the curriculum which will: address diversity issues relevant to a rural student population; address cultural diversity issues relevant to African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq students; be age appropriate for students in grades 7,8,9 & Grade 11.
- ♦ To develop and deliver educational material to support diversity awareness leading to competency for project and school staff.

Each year the curriculum was reviewed by the RYEP Coordinator and Adult Facilitators resulting in recommendations for revision. These recommendations became the basis for discussion with SWOVA staff each year. This was followed by curriculum adjustments for the next school year.

In addition to curriculum adjustments, student workbooks and resources for teachers and parents were developed to support and enhance the curriculum. In 2004-05, the Parent/Guardian Guide for each grade level was developed and distributed to all students to take home. The purpose of the guide was to provide parents/guardians with information about what their child was learning through the program and to promote an understanding of the overall approach and curriculum content. Based on recommendations from parents in the 2004-05 evaluation, information for parents was condensed and provided through school newsletters during the school year 2005-06.

## 2.4 DIVERSITY

A fundamental principle of the program has been to “reflect and make visible the racial/cultural diversity of the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities in Antigonish and Guysborough” (Rural Youth Education Project, 2004). As reported by Jean Crosby, Project Coordinator in the Report to the Working Committee of the Strait Regional School Board (2004),

“this has become a process which brings critical attention to all aspects of the project, particularly those related to: the curriculum and student workbooks; the delivery of the curriculum; all phases of the hiring process for the Adult and Youth Facilitators; staff education; and Advisory Committee membership.”

In addition to inclusion of diversity in the curriculum discussed in the above section, this section focuses on incorporating diversity into the other aspects of the project which include: the hiring process for Adult Facilitators; striving for a diverse youth team; training for adult and youth teams and school staff; and the Advisory Committee.

Initially, the focus of hiring for the Adult Facilitators was to maintain two men and two women with at least two of those individuals being either Mi'kmaq or African Nova Scotian. While this goal was initially achieved, the program has been unable to maintain representation by an African Nova Scotian since January 2003. The Adult Facilitator from Paq'tnek First Nation was with the project for two years and left the position during the 2004-05 school year. During that same year, additional staffing changes resulted in continuing with two Adult Facilitators, a male and female, rather than four positions and racial diversity was not maintained. In the final year of the project, the decision was made to continue with two Adult Facilitators, male and female. Similarly to the previous year, racial diversity was not achieved.

Another goal has been to strive for a balance of male and female and inclusion of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian youth on the Youth Facilitator teams. Table 2 shows the composition of the Youth Facilitator teams from 2002-03 to 2005-06. Each year there have been 19 Youth Facilitators for a total of 76 for the four years. The table shows that, at both schools, the gender and diversity component of the youth team became reasonably balanced by 2004-05. In 2005-06, however, there was a shift in composition. At Chedabucto Place the gender component remained balanced, but there was no representation from the African Nova Scotian community; and at East Antigonish the diversity component remained, but the gender component became unbalanced with twice as many females than males.

Diversity training was a mandatory component of staff development for the Adult Facilitators and the RYEP Coordinator. In 2002-03 seven staff took the Diversity Education Certificate Program offered through Henson College, Dalhousie University. Each year thereafter, diversity training and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Awareness and Education was a component of the Adult Facilitator education sessions prior to each school year. Diversity training was also delivered to school staff in 2003-04. In October 2004, the Diversity Consultant, conducted a one-day workshop with PDR staff from both schools on "Advancing Diversity," with a focus on connections to the project curriculum.

**Table 2: Composition of Youth Facilitator Teams 2002-2006**

<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>
Chedabucto Place: (10) 3 males/ 7 females 3 African Nova Scotian students	Chedabucto Place:(10) 3 males/7 females 2 African Nova Scotian students	Chedabucto Place (9) 5 males/4 females 3 African Nova Scotian students	Chedabucto Place (9) 5 males/4 females no representation from African Nova Scotian community
East Antigonish: (9) no males/ 9 females 2 Mi'kmaq students	East Antigonish: (9) 2 males/ 7 females 3 Mi'kmaq students	East Antigonish: (10) 5 males/5 females 3 Mi'kmaq students	East Antigonish: (10) 3 males/7 females 2 Mi'kmaq students

Advisory Committee members reflected the diversity in both school areas and included the Diversity Consultant; the Race-Relations Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinator for the Strait Regional School Board; and representation from the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Centre, Black Educator's Association of Nova Scotia, the Antigonish/Guysborough Black Development Association, and the Paq'tnkek First Nation.

## **2.5 COUNSELLING SUPPORT**

An important component of the RYEP was counselling support offered to students and their families as well as the Adult and Youth Facilitators to address any issues that may have arisen as a result of the RYEP sessions. Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, a non-profit counselling service provided this support, as required, according to a contract agreement and an established protocol. Specific protocols were in place to support students who disclosed violent or abusive experiences. The RYEP educated project staff regarding their duty to report child abuse to the Child Protection Services, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. Students also received a "where to get help" contact list.

## **2.6 ADULT FACILITATORS**

The Adult Facilitators were hired by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre. They were responsible for the delivery of the curriculum in the schools. This role required ongoing coordination and communication with all school staff including administration, teachers, and support staff. They were also responsible for maintaining the team of Youth Facilitators.

Each year, the Adult Facilitators participated in an orientation and training program prior to the delivery of the program in the schools. While the number of training days varied from year to year, each training program included: orientation to RYEP, curriculum review, diversity education/awareness, LGBT education/awareness, and preparation for youth training. Depending on their specific needs, they attended other training events which included: conflict resolution; facilitation skills; role of men as co-facilitators in mixed gender teams; sensitivity training; non-violent crisis intervention training; and "Positive Space Program Train the Trainer," sponsored by the LGBT Community Safety Initiative. Weekly staff meetings with the Project Coordinator provided opportunities for check-in and debriefing, as well as to workshop new content for classroom sessions.

The Adult Facilitators worked as a two-person team in the classroom. In 2002-03 and 03-04, two teams worked on the project, with one team working in each school. In 2004-05, due to staffing changes in the first two months of the school year, one team jointly delivered the curriculum in Chedabucto Place and one member of the same team primarily delivered the curriculum in East Antigonish. In 2005-06, the project continued with one Adult Facilitator team; however the schedule was adjusted so that the curriculum was delivered in Chedabucto School in the first semester and in East Antigonish in the second semester.

Working with the youth team involved working with the youth in the classroom, holding regular debrief meetings with students who are working in the classroom, and facilitating the youth team meetings and school community projects. Initially, each adult team worked with each youth team in the classroom throughout the year, depending on when the PDR/CLM 11

class was scheduled in the school calendar. Integrated with this was the school community project work. Because the timing of the classroom sessions varied with each grade, the outcome was that not all youth team members were in the classroom over the same timeframe. The change in the timing of curriculum delivery in 2005-06 changed the way of working with the youth team. In the first semester the work with the youth team at Chedabucto focused on delivering curriculum in the classroom and work with the youth team at East Antigonish focused on school community projects. In the second semester, the pattern reversed. This resulted in all youth team members in one school facilitating in the classroom at the same time and enabled more focus on each aspect of the youth team work.

## **2.7 YOUTH INVOLVEMENT**

The role of the Youth Facilitator was to assist the Adult Facilitators in the classroom and to attend regular meetings and education sessions. The Youth Facilitators received a monthly honorarium based on their level of participation. Recruiting for these positions required students to submit their resume and to be interviewed for the position.

There could be up to ten Youth Facilitators in each school with the objective of achieving a gender balance as well as racial and cultural diversity. At first students were recruited from Grades 11 and 12; however, this was expanded to include students from Grade 10 in 2004-05. Including Grade 10 students was intended to broaden the age range of the Youth Facilitators, and Grade 10 students have more flexibility in their schedules than Grade 11 and 12 students. This also increased the potential for Youth Facilitators to participate for more than one year.

Each year, all Youth Facilitators participated in a 4-day training program (4.5 days in 2002) which alternated between the two schools. Over the four-year period the training became more focused on youth involvement as the youth continued to indicate an interest in more involvement in facilitating parts of the curriculum in the classroom. To illustrate, in 2002-03, the training included theatre as a tool, peer education, and discussion on curriculum topics. By contrast, in 2005-06, the training included: group standards, key elements of the RYEP model, teambuilding, facilitation skills, self care, diversity awareness/education, stereotyping, LGBT awareness/education, folktale creation/presentation, sexual violence, and school mapping.

In addition to the training prior to each school year, youth team members had opportunities to be involved in other events. Some of these included: teambuilding (2004); facilitation and teambuilding by Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development (2005); participation in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA) Symposium on Youth Health (2005); and a presentation on problem solving in relationships (2005). In 2005, youth team members presented to a youth health seminar at Dalbrae Academy in Mabou. The seminar included a video the students created on dating violence, bullying and LGBT awareness and role plays.

Youth team meetings were held weekly with the adult team in each school. These meetings were held after school to allow for a one-hour meeting, in order to effectively provide

ongoing support and learning, to organize classroom schedules, and to address any issues that may arise from classroom work.

In addition to classroom assistance, the youth team became involved in other activities which were often related to the curriculum topics. This included activities to strengthen their own understanding of particular topics, as well as planning school community projects intended to raise awareness of topics in the broader school community. Activities also included recruitment of new Youth Facilitators. The types of activities varied from year to year depending on the interests of youth team members and the issues that were present in the school community. What follows is a brief description of these activities for 2003-04 to 2005-06.

In 2003-04 some additional youth team activities included: video and discussion; cross-cultural experience of students; developing a presentation for a Youth Health Fair; recruitment of new Youth Facilitators; internal evaluation reflection on “lessons learned” and the Appreciative Inquiry process interviews and workshops; and end of year pizza party. The death of a student and the impact on the community was also addressed in the youth team meetings.

In 2004-05 some additional activities included: creating and delivering a folktale skit to the Grade 9 classes as part of the RYEP sessions; carrying out a fundraiser for the Naomi Society in support of December 6<sup>th</sup> activities (East Antigonish team); having a pre-Christmas pizza party; attending a presentation for Black History Month (February); developing posters for March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racism; planning workshop presentations for youth events in April and May; developing a series of skits to be videotaped on dating violence; bullying and LGBT awareness; and recruitment of new Youth Facilitators.

In 2005-06, additional activities included: planning and participating in a PowWow for Mi’kmaq history month; participating in the Purple Ribbon Campaign; viewing and discussing ‘After the Montreal Massacre’ video; developing and presenting “Snow White and the Seven Single Men” as part of the folktale work in Grade 9 curriculum; working on a gambling addiction project; viewing and discussing “Tough Guise” video; and holding a pizza party.

## **2.8 COMMUNITY-BASED AND COLLABORATIVE**

The RYEP has been administered and coordinated by the Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre, and was carried out with ongoing consultation with SWOVA and in partnership with the East Antigonish Education Centre and Chedabucto Place.

The Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre, a non-profit community-based organization, is the sponsoring organization for the RYEP Program. The Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre has a twenty year history of offering programs for women and adolescent girls in Antigonish. In youth oriented programs, the Women’s Centre has worked positively with local school authorities and in collaboration with other service providers and community organizations.

Some initiatives that have specifically focused on youth have been as follows:

- ♦ Adolescent Health Project (1990-91). Responding to growing concern around inadequate understanding of and response to health needs of teenagers in the community, this project completed a community based needs assessment on adolescent health in Antigonish. A need for increased opportunities for youth to discuss and learn about three key areas emerged; substance abuse, mental health and relationships.
- ♦ Teens Take Action (1997-present). A peer education approach to dating violence and sexual assault initiated in 1997, Teens Take Action has continued as an annual program. Each year, a group of Grade 11 & 12 students participate in training which prepares them to deliver in-class sessions to Grade 8 students. Through skits and discussion issues are presented relating to recognizing and responding to dating violence and sexual assault.
- ♦ Young Women: Exploring Our Lives Together (1999-2003). An after-school program for high school girls who want to talk about the world they live in and issues they face in their lives.
- ♦ Adolescents Coming Together For Change (ACT For Change) (1999). The AWRC was instrumental in setting up the ACT For Change Program and Youth Center in 1999.
- ♦ Students Against Social Injustice (2000-2002). A group of youth who met regularly to identify, discuss and plan action on social issues.
- ♦ Students Acting Against Sexual Harassment (2001). A project that produced an educational resource kit on peer sexual harassment for use by adult and peer educators.
- ♦ Inspire (2001-2006). An ongoing program designed for adolescent girls who face challenges. This supportive group format allows exploration of personal and social issues and emphasizes self-care and healthy decision making.
- ♦ Assessing Youth Homelessness in Antigonish (2002). A project which gathered information about the issues faced by youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. A community forum was held to discuss the findings and to develop a community report.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre was responsible for overall management and coordination of the project. The RYEP Project Coordinator, Jean Crosby, was hired by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, and was responsible for planning, implementation and evaluation of the program. Other project staff included an Office Administrator, two Adult Facilitators, the Diversity Consultant, and the Evaluation Consultant.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre worked collaboratively with SWOVA to replicate the model and curriculum developed by SWOVA. This relationship was ongoing and facilitated by annual June visits by SWOVA staff to Antigonish.

The RYEP program received the full support and cooperation of the Strait Regional School Board, and was carried out in partnership with the East Antigonish Education Centre and

Chedabucto Place. The RYEP Project Coordinator worked closely with the administration of the two schools with respect to scheduling and implementation of the program in the schools. The RYEP Coordinator and Adult Facilitators worked closely with school staff to deliver the program. Each year, all PDR teachers involved with the RYEP sessions attended orientation meetings. These provided an opportunity for teachers and RYEP staff to get to know each other and for teachers to become familiar with the program model and delivery method. Throughout the year, there was ongoing communication with teachers and other school staff. Teachers were present during the RYEP classes and provided a supportive, observer role, as well as support with respect to discipline if the Adult Facilitator requested assistance.

A full copy of the curriculum workbooks were made available in the school libraries for reference by teachers and Youth Facilitators. In addition, each teacher and Youth Facilitator received a copy of the material for their grade level.

The RYEP Advisory Committee provided ongoing support and advice to the work of the project. The Committee meets regularly through the school year. The meeting location is rotated between Antigonish, East Antigonish School and Chedabucto Place in order to facilitate attendance. Committee membership is intended to represent the diverse communities and services that can provide consultation to the project. Members include: principals and teachers from the partner schools; African Nova Scotian organizations; representation from Paq'tnekek First Nation; an intervention program for abusive men; a program for victims of family violence; and representatives from justice, mental health and the community health board. Appendix D is the cumulative list of Advisory Committee members.

## **2.9 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTING RYEP**

Another component of the RYEP has been to raise awareness about the project in the community. This was accomplished through displays at conferences, articles in local newspapers and the Women's Centre newsletter, school newsletters, a web site, presentations to various community agencies, and an annual presentation to the Strait Regional School Board. Information about the project was distributed to school staff, school advisory councils, parents and students.

Throughout the four years RYEP staff attended conferences and workshops to strengthen their connections to local, provincial and regional groups who are involved in youth development activities. The RYEP Coordinator is a member of the Steering Committee for the PRISM Project sponsored by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research. The purpose of the PRISM project is to identify and enhance conditions and resources that will help rural women and girls to live in relationships free from violence. Also, the RYEP supported student placements from Canada World Youth, St. Francis Xavier University, and the Strait Area Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College.

Throughout the project meetings have been held with the staff of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, the Nova Scotia Department of Education, the Strait Regional School Board, and local M.L.A, Honourable Angus MacIsaac.

## **2.10 EVALUATION**

As referred to in the Introduction to this report there are two evaluation components to the RYEP. The first is an independent external evaluation component which is being implemented by Auguste Solutions & Associates Inc (ASA). The second has been an internal evaluation process. In 2004, an internal evaluation was implemented for the first two years of the project, 2002-2004 and an Interim Evaluation Report was completed in February 2005. A second internal evaluation report was completed for the school year 2004-05 in September 2005 with the intent of informing changes or improvements for the school year 2005-06. This report reflects evaluation findings for 2005-06 school year as well as a summation of the progress during the four years of the project.

## SECTION 3: PROGRESS ON EVALUATION THEMES

This section reports on the progress on the six evaluation themes which include the five Best Practices lens and the impact on youth participants. These themes are:

- 3.1 Feminist understanding of violence and abuse;
- 3.2 A focus on gender and diversity;
- 3.3 Strategies to enable people in rural areas to access violence prevention programs;
- 3.4 Safety and confidentiality;
- 3.5 Multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention;
- 3.6 Impact on Youth Participants.

This section provides a summation of the progress on the evaluation themes over the four-year period from the school year 2002-03 to 2005-06. This section specifically reports on lessons learned, what strategies have worked well, and what the key challenges are to addressing each theme. The information includes perspectives of student participants, Youth Facilitators, Adult Facilitators, teachers, school administrators, parents, and Advisory Committee members, some of whom were also parents of students in the program.

### 3.1 FEMINIST UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

This theme was explored through the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) analysis with the Youth Facilitators in 2004 and through student focus groups in 2006. Within this theme, one component of a feminist understanding of violence and abuse is the ability to name gender stereotypes for boys and girls and other forms of systemic violence and to make the links between them. The evaluation also examined what strategies worked well and some challenges with respect to facilitating these topics.

#### 3.1.1 Strategies and Challenges to Addressing Gender Stereotypes

In 2004, through the Appreciative Inquiry process, the Youth and Adult Facilitators identified what strategies work well in facilitating discussion of gender stereotypes. Because these were identified as important, the RYEP continued to use these strategies for the duration of the program. The facilitators also identified a number of distinct challenges in addressing traditional attitudes and values. These strategies and challenges are outlined next.

##### Strategies that Worked Well in Addressing Gender Stereotypes

What has worked well in addressing gender stereotypes focused on four areas:

- ♦ Classroom strategies;
- ♦ Showing by example;
- ♦ How the program is delivered overall;
- ♦ Strategies within the broader school environment.

A number of *classroom strategies* worked well to address gender stereotypes. One of these was creating space for girls and boys to be able to talk about the issues, to recognize that there are gender stereotypes, and to be aware how they feel when they encounter those

stereotypes. Another was putting forward the understanding that stereotypes exist for both boys and girls; that boys need to know it is all right to talk about them; and that they don't have to be a "stereotypical man." Helping youth to develop a sense of respect for their bodies and other peoples' bodies, as well as how to set their boundaries and to feel justified in defending their own boundaries also worked well. Some specific program activities that supported these strategies were: having separate gender sessions where boys "take down their guard" and girls "open up more;" and making it fun for the students so they don't feel awkward about identifying boundaries.

A second area was *showing by example*. Youth Facilitators identified that, by being role models, they show others that it is possible to change, to be interactive with people outside a particular race or gender, and that everyone deserves respect. This is described by this Youth Facilitator:

*Youth Facilitator*

"We're just trying to show by example, like when we take the skills that we learn in class and we are trying to go out there and show people that it is possible to change and it is possible to be interactive with people outside your race or outside your gender and just be comfortable and not have to feel that sexual pressure or racial pressure."

The third area is related to *how the program is delivered overall*. Youth Facilitators and Adult Facilitators mentioned the importance of having a community-based organization, with the knowledge and the experience in dealing with gender stereotypes and abuse, delivering the program in the school. They also noted the importance of teaching grades where students are at an age where they are picking things up as described by this Youth Facilitator:

*Youth Facilitator*

"We are getting to the younger grades and teaching them about like accepting everyone...we are teaching them these valuable lessons: be assertive; don't be a bully; don't be aggressive. All these things that make (them) more able to come together and speak. We're opening up the floor for them to talk with each other about their personal feelings so maybe when we are not there they have the open floor for themselves to talk amongst each other...I find that we softened up the young grades. If they keep this at heart then maybe when they go through high school and they remember it, it will come through."

The last area was the *broader school environment*. Adult and Youth Facilitators said it is important to keep the school aware of issues that arise and be aware of policies and programs in the school system that can help to support changes related to gender stereotypes. Youth mentioned activities in the school that support and strengthen different roles for boys, such as drama, help to support changing gender stereotypes.

### Challenges in Changing Attitudes and Values

Challenges faced by Adult and Youth Facilitators in working toward changing attitudes and values about gender stereotypes fell into five general categories: it is long and slow process; community factors; students' sense of control over gender stereotypes; resistance to new concepts and to change; and use of the term feminism.

With respect to this being a long, slow process, Adult and Youth Facilitators mentioned that it is hard to change people's ideas and that many people are "stuck" in their thinking, that it is difficult to challenge the traditional ways that people live their everyday experience and gender stereotypes are very pervasive in our culture.

Related to community factors, facilitators noted that it is harder to change ideas when people are older, when people live in a small community with traditional values, or when people simply don't want to change. They said that if the students don't get reinforcement at home or in the community related to what is being taught in the school, then what is learned might not have as much impact on them. Related to this is another challenge. Facilitators said that it is hard for students to feel they have control over doing something about gender stereotypes when it conflicts with the attitudes and values that they experience at home or in the community.

Resistance to new ideas or concepts and to changing attitudes were identified as an ongoing challenge. The discussion of resistance and strategies to overcome resistance is discussed further in relation to the fifth theme, multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention.

Facilitators noted that, for the most part, students agreed with the approach until the word feminism was introduced into the discussion. They said it is a big leap to make the connection to the word feminism because there are too many stereotypes associated with the word. They noted that students had no problem with thinking that there should be more female lawyers; however, to connect it to a different way of thinking about relationships and to a more just society is a challenge.

### **3.1.2 The Ability to Name Stereotypes**

In 2004, the Youth Facilitators named gender stereotypes that exist, generating a list of about 14 stereotypes. In 2006, during the student focus group sessions (4 focus groups in each school; one for each grade level for a total of 8 focus groups), each student was asked to write on a sticky note the challenges related to gender stereotypes, race and sexual orientation. They were asked to identify challenges for them individually, in their school, in their community, and in the country. Through this process, the students identified the following gender stereotypes, which were similar to the gender stereotypes identified in 2004 by the Youth Facilitators, as follows:

- ◆ People will refuse girls on sports teams because girls are "supposedly" not good at sports;
- ◆ That I am able to cook even though I can't (girl);
- ◆ Girls can't play sports;
- ◆ Guys are supposed to be more tough and can't cry or show emotions;
- ◆ Girls are not as strong as boys; girls are weak;
- ◆ Girls are smarter than boys;
- ◆ She's blonde and she's stupid;
- ◆ Guys are supposed to be strong, fearless etc;

- ◆ Girls are all emotional;
- ◆ Guys are supposed to like every sport plus played (them) and be strong;
- ◆ Girls are the ones that are supposed to cook and clean;
- ◆ You're a woman; you can't run our country;
- ◆ If girls hook up with more than one person, they usually get called names, but if a guy does it he's considered as "cool."

With respect to race and sexual orientation, most students indicated that there is racism and homophobia and they identified stereotypes related to race and sexual orientation as noted by these students:

- ◆ "You are dumb because you are Native;"
- ◆ "You are stupid because you are Black;"
- ◆ "If you (are a girl and) dress like a boy you are gay;"
- ◆ "People think you are from a different country just because of your appearance;"
- ◆ "Being stereotyped by some that all Natives are the same;"
- ◆ "Being called 'Nazi' because you are German."

### **3.1.3 The Ability to Name Forms of Personal and Systemic Violence and to Make Links between/among Forms of Violence**

Students identified some of the individual challenges they face at school or in their community related to gender stereotyping, racism, and homophobia. They named personal forms of violence that can occur against individuals as well as systemic forms of violence and why these forms of violence exist.

Some of these challenges were forms of individual violence among youth such as: name calling, teasing; bullying; rude comments, making fun of people; racist jokes, fights; and judging someone before you even meet them. Related to this, some students noted that a challenge is the peer pressure they face with their friends as follows:

*Student*

"Racist friends make fun of people of different cultures which makes it difficult not to laugh at their jokes." (Grade 7)

Students also named what happens to themselves and other students who may experience this violence: feeling judged; not feeling safe in some situations; not feeling cool; some people make it on sports teams while others don't; and it can affect how individuals are included or not included in groups. They said this can result in some students not interacting or sticking to themselves.

A number of students mentioned challenges related to family or community issues such as: parents disapproving of friends; being told to "act like a girl, not a boy;" and being expected to do "certain stuff" because you are a boy or a girl. Some noted that people don't get out enough in their community to see different races or cultures that are involved in the community. One student felt a challenge was younger students hearing comments by older students as follows:

*Student*

“At our school, some challenges for me are when you’re on a bus or in the hall ways, when older people are talking about racist things, the younger kids are there taking it all in and growing up listening to that. I think that is a major problem.” (Grade 8)

Students identified challenges related to systemic forms of violence such as: some people not being able to get jobs or not being able to do something because of their race or gender; some people being seen as wrong, “bad,” or experiencing incidents because of their race or sexual orientation; jokes or judgements made about different cultures; assuming everyone thinks a certain way because a government and/or individuals behave a certain way; expectations that women should look a certain way. The following are some of the students’ comments:

*Students*

“In our country, there are many things that happen everyday like not letting someone do something because of the colour of their skin.” (Grade 7)

“If you were to move from a different country, such as Africa, it would be hard to adjust to the new circumstances and you may have to deal with some racial incidents.”(Grade 7)

“Some people can’t get jobs or do certain things because of their race/colour.” (Grade 8)

“A large issue these days is terrorism. So a lot of racists might see an East Indian man and automatically say that he is a terrorist and that is a large problem.” (Grade 8)

“Politics and people being judgemental towards other culture and religion and how certain groups of people get treated differently and how they say stuff in magazines that may hurt someone inside even though they don’t realize.” (Grade 8)

“Native rights - many people agree and many people disagree with the fact that the natives don’t pay taxes and everybody else does, but some people agree.” (Grade 8)

“In our country people are stereotyped by their race and gender. People (media) implies that girls should be thin and they get stereotyped if they are or not.” (Grade 9)

“Just because your are American doesn’t mean you hate Iraqis.” (Grade 9)

“In our country, gay people are looked upon as wrong to some people.” (CLM 11)

“Jokes about different cultures and there was never a Prime Minister of a different culture/colour, e.g. black/native.” (CLM 11)

When asked why this happens students identified a number of reasons, an indicator that they have some understanding of why these attitudes exist:

- ♦ Upbringing; learned from family;
- ♦ Cultural or religious influences;
- ♦ Want to be cool; peer pressure;
- ♦ Media (TV; internet; commercials; music; advertising)
- ♦ Jealousy of others;
- ♦ Insecurity; making fun of others so they don’t make fun of you;

- ♦ Lack of understanding of another culture;
- ♦ Younger kids influenced by older kids;

Some students in the focus groups readily identified strategies they use for acting differently as a result of the RYEP. The following represents some of their comments:

“Think before you speak;”

“Watch what you say or how you act around younger kids or others;”

“Try to interact with other cultures more often;”

“Learn another language to interact with other cultures;”

“Help others learn that racism is bad;”

“Don’t fall for everything you hear on TV.”

## **3.2 A FOCUS ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY**

Throughout the internal evaluation process, evaluation participants have discussed how they saw gender and diversity being addressed. Their responses have revealed some key principles and strategies that have worked well for addressing diversity in the RYEP, although these have not been without challenges. A particular challenge has been the recruitment and retention of Adult Facilitators. This section discusses how well these strategies and challenges have been addressed.

### **3.2.1 How Diversity is Addressed**

This section reflects on two key elements and three key strategies that the project has used to address diversity. The first of the two key elements is the principle that diversity must be visible; and the second is that program leaders need to recognize that diversity is both challenging and complex. The three key strategies for addressing diversity are: program leadership, resources and training; modelling gender and diversity; and appropriate curriculum content and delivery.

#### The Principle that Diversity Be Visible

It has been evident that, since its inception, the RYEP program has been making a conscious effort at every level to follow the principle that diversity needs to be visible as noted by these two evaluation participants:

*Advisory Committee member*

“I think the efforts that have been made to include Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian students in the youth facilitator groups has been done very well.....certainly moving from the first year to include male Youth Facilitators as well as female Youth Facilitators has been very successful.”

*Teacher/Administrator*

“Something that happened really early in the program at the school was that they saw that there were no racially visible students as student leaders and they actually hired more students to address that so they themselves actually model what they would expect in terms of inclusive approach so I thought that was very good.”

Diversity is Complex and Challenging

The evaluation has revealed the importance of being open to and continually re-thinking diversity and of understanding that it is complex and challenging illustrated through these comments by one Adult Facilitator:

*Adult Facilitator*

“I am amazed at the effort that has been put into the diversity component. I am continually re-thinking all the different variations of how to include people and how to give attention or to value the experience of different groups...it is a very complicated thing...it is a huge challenge.”

One example of re-thinking diversity is that, while at first most viewed diversity related to Youth Facilitators as working toward achieving a gender balance and cultural diversity; it became evident that there were other forms of diversity among Youth Facilitators. These included different ages among the youth team and different perspectives that represent different groups in the school such as “jocks, student union people and others”. Over the life of the project it was important to consider these forms of diversity when building the youth teams. Ensuring this diversity of the youth team had an impact on the learning of the youth team members. Both in 2004 and 2006, in the AI interviews with youth team members, they mentioned meeting with and working with others on the youth team that they normally wouldn’t socialize with was a very positive experience for them.

Some respondents referred to what was being taught in the classroom. For example, the teachers noted that diversity was more than racial and gender diversity and included a range of topics such as learning about respect and relationships.

Program Leadership, Resources and Training

Evaluation respondents noted the degree of “conscious effort” put into addressing diversity under the leadership of the Project Coordinator, who ensured there were appropriate resources and training related to diversity. These included:

- ♦ Having a diversity consultant to ensure diversity is included in the program content;
- ♦ Having diversity training opportunities each year that emphasized sensitizing facilitators and teachers on diversity as it relates to gender, race, culture, and sexual orientation.
- ♦ Providing other educational opportunities; for example, a Canada World Youth Workshop with the youth teams helped them to realize that differences are much broader than within the school setting. It broadened it out to a global scale.

### Modelling Gender and Diversity

How the Adult Facilitators modelled their relationship affected students' perspectives around gender and diversity. They stated that, in their role, the ability to disagree with each other and yet still get along was a way of role modelling respecting differences in viewpoints, perspectives, and opinions. Also, having some facilitators from the community and some "from away" added to this aspect. These different backgrounds enabled the opportunity to discuss very different examples and experiences.

#### *Adult Facilitator*

"The fact that we come from different places and have different opinions that worked really, really well, because people were always surprised by, you know, what she said compared to what I said and how we could have a debate, but always (be) still laughing at the end."

#### *Teacher/Administrator*

"The strength of the program is the individuals that we have had as facilitators and how they modelled their relationship within the school."

### Appropriate Curriculum and Delivery & Strategies for Teachable Moments

Some respondents pointed to the importance of appropriate curriculum that reflects diversity of race, culture and sexual orientation. The RYEP staff noted that over the four years, as the curriculum was updated, they used opportunities to integrate examples from Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian culture and history of the local communities. The Adult Facilitators indicated that more could be done, particularly related to having one session focusing on cultural diversity and heritage; however, this would mean adding sessions to the current curriculum.

While content is crucial, the RYEP staff indicated the skill and comfort level of the facilitator in delivering the content and in promoting discussion on various topics are equally important. They said that a skilled facilitator can reinforce the curriculum by pointing to issues within the school culture or by taking advantage of "teachable moments," using various methods. For example, they learned that a lot of students hadn't been asked to think about their own culture or history and it was almost a new concept to encourage students to think about this. In the following example, the facilitators used a story telling method to engage the students and provide a learning experience for all students.

#### *RYEP staff*

"The adult team were having trouble engaging the youth in talking about getting in touch with their own backgrounds. So they did a round and asked each student to tell a story from when they were young ... They said that was the best session and the most engaged session and that everyone contributed. They had set some parameters around the story. Everyone had something interesting or amusing, and everyone was able to connect with that...the technique of giving everyone the space to talk about their own experience. And then, based on what came up, the facilitators would make links to cultural references and whatever was appropriate. What we know is it's the delivery. It's what the facilitators bring (that enables) the success of the diversity component in the curriculum...it's the awareness and skill of the facilitator in using opportunities to always be pulling in references from places other than European or heterosexual background."

Facilitating discussion and group dynamics on topics related to gender, race and sexual orientation is not without challenges. The Adult Facilitators said that, when these topics are raised, students react in a different ways. Some use slurs or “jokey” comments; others deny that these issues exist in their school or community; while still others go quiet or withdraw from the discussion. While the strong reaction of some students to the issues can open up the discussion and create teachable moments, the challenge to the facilitator is to find constructive ways to enable students to open up to thinking differently about this topic. They must also be sensitive to students who withdraw or go quiet and to find ways to involve them. They found they needed to be particularly sensitive to girls who would become intimidated and didn’t want to say anything in the larger group discussions or when students self segregated with others of their own race to do group activities. They recognized the need for individuals and groups to be able to be in their own comfort zone, yet the need to facilitate cross gender and cross cultural learning about these topics.

Being sensitive to the local and national context can affect the complexity and nature of diversity discussions. For example, discussions related to race at Chedabucto Place were affected by the walkout that occurred during the first year of the project. The walkout was a student protest against the school’s response to a racist incident. Another example has been the interest in homophobia with the same sex marriage issue at the forefront in media and community discussions.

### **3.2.2 Recruitment and Retention of RYEP Staff**

Gender diversity on the Adult Facilitator team has been achieved each year. However, ensuring consistency in the teams from year to year and maintaining cultural diversity has been a significant challenge. While one female facilitator remained throughout the four-year period and one female Mi’kmaq facilitator remained for a two-year period, there was no other carry over from year to year.

It has been particularly difficult to recruit and retain Adult Facilitators from the Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities and to keep male facilitators for more than one year. Several reasons were offered for this dilemma. One reason was that the position was part time and it was difficult for staff to hold another part time position, due to the school cycle which does not follow the days of the week. Added to this, the salary for the position was very modest. Being in a rural community was another reason. For example, it was noted that the Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian women and men with the skill sets for the position have moved elsewhere for work or required full-time work. The men who applied and accepted the position only stayed for one year, and often viewed the position as a transition to another job in their career rather than an end goal. Other challenges are requirements that someone have a vehicle and be willing to travel up to two hours each day. The Women’s Centre recognized these difficulties and suggested that these issues would need to be looked at when structuring staff positions in future projects in order to engage diverse communities.

The nature of the position as working off site from the sponsoring organization and working in more than one school presented some difficulties for the Adult Facilitators in having a consistent, stable work space. While there were designated areas in the schools for the Adult Facilitators, they were often shared spaces or not always accessible to students and Youth

Facilitators. To strengthen contact with the students and the program's visible presence in the school, the Adult Facilitators suggested that the program should have a consistent space in the schools. Ideally, the same space could be used for youth team meetings. Having access to a telephone and computer would support their ability to prepare for and provide any follow-up to classes.

At the Women's Centre, the Adult Facilitators had a designated area in an office; however the space, particularly the computer, was shared with other staff. Similarly to the schools, the Adult Facilitators suggested that, to be more effective and efficient in their work, future Adult Facilitators should have a workspace where they can leave their materials and work individually or together, as required, to prepare for classes. In addition, the male facilitators were restricted access to the some areas of the Women's Centre which were designated for women's direct services. This, in addition to the office space concern, resulted in some male facilitators feeling excluded from some aspects of being part of the staff team. It was suggested that, if future programs include male staff, the Women's Centre should find ways to be more proactive in supporting and including male staff. This could include providing meeting space, office space, and resources that can be accessed freely by male staff which would not infringe on Women's Centre direct service space and would respect policies and procedures that support direct services to women.

With respect to training, the Adult Facilitators offered suggestions throughout the project which continued to improve the training program. They suggested training programs include: (a) curriculum; (b) facilitation skills (handling difficult situations; what to do when someone challenges you); and (c) discussion and analysis on critical issues such as feminism, racism, and men's role in modelling gender roles to be more balanced. They noted that, while training was important, equally important is the knowledge, analysis, and experience with anti-violence work and diversity that the facilitators bring to the position. These qualifications should be considered in engaging future facilitators as noted in the following comments by an Adult Facilitator and by a teacher.

*Adult Facilitator*

"There needs to be a pretty stringent practice around recruitment and then a vigorous structured approach to training."

*Teacher/Administrator*

"I say again you have to have ...somebody with the background in it for any consistency at all. (The female Adult Facilitator who has been here for four years) really kept things together."

It is evident after four years of some different approaches to structuring the Adult Facilitator positions, that there is a need to carefully consider how future positions are structured to ensure the diversity, consistency, knowledge, skills and experience required to effectively facilitate the curriculum.

### **3.3 STRATEGIES TO ENABLE PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS TO ACCESS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

The third theme is related to the ability to ensure access to programs in rural areas. In relation to this theme, evaluation participants reflected on what has worked well to gain buy-in and trust to deliver the program, for promoting the program, and to ensure effective program delivery in rural communities. Partnership development and the role of the Advisory Committee are also explored.

#### **3.3.1 Gaining Buy-In and Trust to Deliver the Program**

When asked what has worked to gain buy-in and trust to deliver the program in a rural community, teachers, administrators, Advisory Committee members and Adult Facilitators offered a number of positive aspects as well as some challenges they have had to overcome. What worked well was: overall management and coordination by a skilled Coordinator; positive working relationships between Adult Facilitators, teachers and administrators; the role of the Adult Facilitator; and the role of the Youth Facilitator.

##### Overall Management and Coordination

It is important to have a Coordinator who can provide overall management and coordination, who is knowledgeable about the topic, and who can work with the school system and the teachers as noted by this Advisory Committee member:

###### *Advisory Committee member*

We had a fantastic Coordinator. That has worked really well and ...the fact that she has been here for the full program, that fact that she has been able to build, the fact she has had a skill set that has enabled her to work at many different levels with the Adult Facilitators, peer facilitators, schools, school board, Department of Education, Women's Centre, etc. So I think that has been one of the real strengths of the program."

##### Positive Working Relationships

Another aspect has been the positive working relationship that developed between the Adult Facilitators and the teachers and school administrators. Over the four-year period, the Adult Facilitators reported that, for the most part, the teachers that they worked with were supportive, helpful, and provided encouragement, but let them facilitate the class. Teachers also reported a positive relationship and viewed their role as supporting the facilitators, observing the program, evaluating the students, and discipline issues, otherwise not to intrude. One teacher helped to set up the classroom ahead of time:

###### *Teacher*

"After the first or possibly second class I cut to the chase. I moved all the desks before they came in. Then, there are 2-4 minutes of banging and cluttering around; but I stand in the middle and say, 'Your booklets, where are they? Get them out.' I do this to minimize the down time ...and (the Adult Facilitators) appreciated that."

Teachers and administrators identified a number of benefits including: the opportunity to continue with some topics raised during this program; being able to step back and view the students in a different light; learning different techniques and approaches; participation by

Youth Facilitators in the classroom; and an overall positive experience for the school. The following are some comments provided by teachers:

*Teachers*

I learn a lot about (the students) when you listen to the check-in. I liked the check in, so I do it for PDR now ... and the (Youth Facilitators) are very good. I taught them in PDR and taught them for years. To see these particular students taking part was great, because they were the students that would kind of sit back as a student....I thought it went very well in my class.”

“My (students) are very enthusiastic and mature in answering and, I think (the Adult Facilitator) is well in control of things... my students really appreciated it and I can see where it’s going.”

Others also observed the positive relationships with the schools as noted by this Advisory Committee member:

*Advisory Committee member*

“The one thing I liked hearing about and, again this is ... through our meetings, was the buy in from the schools (and) the teachers themselves - their recognition of the value of this type of program in the school....I think it was great to see that sort of feedback from our teachers and the principals. And the principals, when they came to the meetings, I just find them so supportive and so open and so wanting this to be a successful program. It was exiting to see that.”

While, for the most part, their working relationships are positive, Adult Facilitators and teachers were continually clarifying their mutual roles in the classroom, particularly new PDR teachers. An ongoing challenge was related to students’ behaviour in the classroom and when teachers should step in to discipline. Some teachers were very comfortable with their role, while others found it hard to know exactly when to step in. The level of comfort with their role in the classroom seemed to be related to two factors: whether this was the teacher’s first time with the program and their level of comfort with the formality of the classroom environment. A few teachers stated that the program had a much more informal environment that they usually find acceptable in their class.

*Teacher*

“This is my first year being involved with it. ...So I found it very hard knowing what exactly I was supposed to do. Was I supposed to sit back and do nothing or am I stepping in? And, you know, what were their boundaries as far as acceptable and respectable behaviour in conjunction with what were my boundaries for it?”

Neither teachers nor Adult Facilitators had easy answers to address this challenge. The Adult Facilitators viewed the informal environment as an opportunity to encourage the students to open up and have a discussion on topics they wouldn’t normally discuss; and they recognized that this was difficult for some teachers. From their perspective, most teachers reported that they talked with the Adult Facilitators and were able to work out an arrangement with them as noted by this teacher:

*Teacher*

I talked to (the Adult Facilitators), and I said, ‘You know, when do you want me to step in?’ (I said), ‘How about you indicate to me when you want me to.’ ....A few times with this certain group ... we had a few fairly disruptive students who were really ruining it and a couple times they said, ‘Ok it’s time.’ That was how we dealt with it.

Both teachers and Adult Facilitators recognized the importance of the Adult Facilitators having the skills to handle difficult situations. The turnover rate with the Adult Facilitators, identified earlier as a challenge, is also a factor that adds to this challenge. Some teachers noted that the Adult Facilitator that had been there for four years had provided the consistency required and had well-developed skills in handling the content and group dynamics in the classroom because of her experience with the program.

*Teacher*

“I thought (the female Adult Facilitator who has been here for four years) has a lot of common sense so she can see things before they happen; and I felt she totally knows what’s going on. You can tell she has been here longer. I know it’s difficult with the (male facilitator) situation because they changed so much. (The male Adult Facilitator) did so well for his first year, but (the female Adult Facilitator) does exceptionally well.”

Scheduling was an ongoing challenge. Both teachers and the Adult Facilitators noted that, when the schedule had changed to a ½ hour class in one school, it was difficult to fit the program into the schedule. Also, the way the schedule worked in one school in 2005-06, there was quite a bit of time between classes, up to 12 teaching days between classes. This break meant there was a loss of consistency for the students to the program. Both teachers and the Adult Facilitators noted this was a problem, and that the program requires more a more consistent schedule to be fully effective. For some teachers, especially new teachers to the program, this was a barrier to setting up how things would work between the teacher and the Adult Facilitators in the classroom.

Role of Adult Facilitator

A third aspect, that has helped to facilitate trust, has been the role of the Adult Facilitator in the classroom. In the early stages of the internal evaluation, the teachers noted that the students have a different relationship with the facilitator, who is not viewed as an authority figure, than they do with the teacher. Also, having open minded facilitators who are not judgemental was seen to be very important as indicated by this Advisory Committee member who works in the school:

*Advisory Committee member*

“(It is important) to have open-minded facilitators who are not judgmental and (who are) youthful enough and genuine because you have to believe that you want to make a difference. Kids sense those things and they need to feel that they can trust and approach someone. (They may) have an issue that they wouldn’t want to talk with me about, but they may go talk with the facilitator. The Adult Facilitators play the most major role and when they are approachable and easy, the kid’s attitudes change.”

### Role of Youth Facilitator

The role of the Youth Facilitator was important in gaining the buy-in and trust of the students. Most teachers/administrators reported that having Youth Facilitators in the classroom works well and provides an excellent role modelling activity for the students. In the last year of the program, teachers who had been involved for more than one year indicated that the participation of Youth Facilitators has improved over the four year period. They also noted positive changes in the students who had taken on the role.

#### *Teachers/Administrators*

“That was definitely an improvement over the previous years. (Previously) the Youth Facilitators would come in and not have anything ready. (This year) they had tasks assigned to them and there was active participation in all classes. And they had the prior knowledge and how long that task should take in that hour.”

“I’m talking about the Youth Facilitators I had them in this program years ago and obviously it help them to know the students that were in this program. They were very withdrawn. Some of these students and others were the ones that wanted to be heard. Now they are in the position that they are helping out.”

“What’s important is that it is kind of a win-win situation, because the facilitators are natural leaders; or, through the program, have become leaders. As a result of that they well continue to be leaders. They won’t just drop the program, and they will take up involvement in something else like some already have. It is certainly a plus for us. Even after the program is over, it continues to have tremendous benefits to the school. There are that many more people that are promoting a positive role model in the school.”

### **3.3.2 Promoting the Program**

Adult Facilitators, Advisory Committee members and parents reflected on what strategies worked well to promote the program.

In many respects, what worked well from the Adult Facilitators’ perspective was similar to what has worked well to gain buy-in and trust to deliver the program. They have promoted the program in their relationships with the teachers and school administrators, through their role as facilitators in the classroom, and in their work with the Youth Facilitators to facilitate parts of the program in the classroom. As the front line staff, responsible for implementing the curriculum, they were the most visible representatives of the program in the schools.

Depending on their position, Advisory Committee members played a role in promoting the program within the school, within their communities, within their organizations, and other community agencies; as well as education, advocacy, and ongoing communication with the School Board, the Department of Education, and SWOVA. Some said that they promote discussion on the topic generally in their communities. Some also had particular roles in encouraging and supporting youth to get involved as Youth Facilitators.

Another avenue for promoting the program was to the parents. In 2004-05, the RYEP Parent/Guardian Guide was distributed to parents of students taking the program. Parents who attended focus groups in the spring of 2005 indicated that they didn’t read or use the

guide, although some remembered receiving the guide. In general, they felt that providing information to parents about the program was important; however, the guides, if used again, need to be revised and shortened. Parents noted that most parents read the school newspaper and suggested it was a good place to put information about the program, to provide updates, and program contact information.

In 2005-06, the RYEP decided not to distribute the Parent/Guardian Guide and to use the student newspaper for promoting the program. In parent focus groups held in spring of 2006, parents reported that they had read the RYEP articles in the newsletter and found it useful for learning about what their children were learning in the program.

### **3.3.3 Program Delivery in a Rural Area**

In the 2004 internal evaluation, evaluation participants identified important elements and associated challenges that need to be considered for delivery in a rural area. These elements were:

- ♦ Delivering as an in-school program;
- ♦ Ensuring accessibility of the youth facilitator position;
- ♦ Understanding the realities of rural communities;
- ♦ The need for sensitivity that the program challenges traditionally held attitudes and values;
- ♦ Safety issues for the students.

The RYEP continued to consider these factors in program and evaluation design and implementation. While discussed in the first Internal Evaluation Report, they are included again here as strategies that have worked to promote participation of rural youth.

#### Delivering as an In-School Program

Delivering as in in-school program meant that each student had the opportunity to participate and, therefore, no-one was left out due to transportation and other barriers they might face by living in a rural community.

#### Ensuring Accessibility of the Youth Facilitator Position

Underlying ensuring access to the Youth Facilitator position are the principles that the position must be (a) accessible to everyone who meets the criteria; and (b) that everyone is given a fair chance to participate. In rural communities this can be challenging because some youth are balancing their participation with other activities such as an after-school job or recreational activities, and may face barriers such as access to transportation. Another aspect is that there are limited opportunities for youth in rural areas and the Youth Facilitator positions offered an opportunity for leadership development and experience. As a result the RYEP used a formal application and interview process that gave students a direct experience with submitting a resume and being interviewed for a position. This also enabled an open and transparent selection process.

One strategy the project used to ensure accessibility is by giving youth input into what makes it possible for them to be able to participate effectively. This input was solicited through the

internal evaluation processes such as the Youth Involvement Survey and the reflection on “lessons learned” at monthly youth team meetings throughout the project. Through these processes youth made suggestions to improve access to the position.

Their suggestions affected the following: (a) the timing of youth team meetings; (b) recruiting and hiring sooner with more advertising; (c) finding the right forum for students to learn about the position; (d) being more proactive in recruitment of young men, youth from different cultural backgrounds and with different experiences; (e) opening the position to Grade 10 (RYEP started with Grades 11 and 12); and (f) hiring previous facilitators to provide consistency and support to new recruits.

### Understanding the Realities of Rural Communities

Understanding the realities of rural communities from an administrative and curriculum development point of view included three aspects. The first aspect is the need to recognize the uniqueness of different communities and schools, particularly related to the elements of cultural diversity and geography and to adjust the curriculum accordingly. The second aspect is the need to make an investment in a philosophy that delivery in rural communities means costs of time and distance to travel for facilitators and program coordination. The third aspect is the need to be practical with how to get people involved and together for meetings and other program activities. The latter has been an ongoing challenge to bring people together for training, meetings and informal networking. One solution has been to rotate these events between schools and communities.

### Sensitivity to Challenges to Traditional Attitudes and Beliefs

The RYEP has realized the need to be sensitive to the fact that the program challenges attitudes and beliefs that may be traditionally held by some community members. This was evident in the discussion of gender stereotypes in section 3.1.1 of this report. While this sensitivity would be required no matter where the program is delivered, evaluation participants noted that in a rural community this becomes an even more sensitive and challenging endeavour because communities are small, families are intertwined, and everyone knows everyone else.

The Adult Facilitators recognized that they had a role to support Youth Facilitators who might be facing complicated situations in their communities or in their own homes related to racism, homophobia or violence. They recognized the need to work with Youth Facilitators who come to realize that there are some significant issues at home that may not be addressed. They were aware that this adds some pressure to the Youth Facilitator’s role as a role model and that their own behaviour is under more of a microscope. One of the Adult Facilitators, who grew up in an urban environment, described this as a particular challenge in a rural area compared to his own experience; however, he also saw a positive aspect to it which he described as having a ripple effect.

#### *Adult Facilitator*

“Growing up in elementary school I might have known the parents of two or three of my friends that came on class trips, but otherwise I would have no clue whatsoever the social background the economic background (of the families). ... and, you know, we just sort of

assumed things about each other but we never really knew whether or not it was true. We were close at school which was totally separate from your home life, so you could basically be who ever you wanted to be at school and nobody could say hey that's not who you really are because your parents are actually like this....and it looks like its much more challenging to create change here, but the up side of it would be if change is created it is changed through the whole community, through the families, through all the connections.”

Another Adult Facilitator, who grew up in an urban setting, felt that there were more challenges in rural area than in an urban setting to engaging the youth team and students to think differently about issues and to address diversity and relationships. From his experience in an urban setting, there was more exposure to different ideas and experiences due to a larger population of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Also, there was usually an activist group present in the schools which exposed students to alternative ideas. He noted that, while diversity exists in a rural area, students don't have as much exposure to it and, as a result, there are fewer pressures to change their way of thinking about things. He saw this as creating particular challenges for the Adult Facilitators to “get the kids to think in different ways and to engage them in different ways than they have been before.”

#### Safety Issues for the Students

Similarly, evaluation participants pointed out the importance of being aware of personal safety issues for students, noting that students are aware that there are issues in community that are neither being addressed by the adults nor by the police. Some felt this could leave students to wonder why they should believe they can make a difference by changing their own behaviour. Furthermore, how students are able to connect and socialize outside of the school, due to realities of distance, access to transportation, and traditional ways of socializing could affect their ability to practice what they have learned in the classroom. Others, on the other hand, noted that small changes are making a big difference.

### **3.3.4 Partnership Development**

Advisory Committee members identified two different kinds of relationships that were helpful in supporting the program. The first were the formal partnerships with the schools and the School Board. The second were new and strengthened relationships with communities, community organizations, and the Youth Health Centre and the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Centre.

The formal partnerships with the two schools and the School Board led to several positive outcomes. These outcomes, identified by Advisory Committee members are: support of the project and the curriculum; acceptance that what is being done is worthwhile and being done in a responsible way; stronger relationships and communication between the community and school administration and teachers; and increased visibility and credibility of the Women's Centre with the School Board and the school.

The project has enabled the Women's Centre to strengthen its relationships with groups such as the Antigonish Town and County Community Health Board and Naomi Society who remained active participants on the Advisory Committee. It also enabled the Women's

Centre to make stronger links with organizations and communities in Guysborough that had little or no prior involvement with the Women's Centre. These included the Black Development Association and two centres within Chedabucto school, the Youth Health Centre and the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Centre. Advisory Committee members offered these comments:

*Advisory Committee member*

"The partnership they built with the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Center within the school was very strong. Certainly (at the Youth Health Centre), when the youth team decided to focus on gambling, they approached (the centre) about resources. (The Coordinator of the Centre) was able to facilitate that process and get them some up to date resources and stats on gambling. So, definitely, I think they were aware of where they could partner."

### **3.3.5 Advisory Committee Role**

In 2004 and 2006, Advisory Committee members indicated that the committee has played an effective role in bringing together different perspectives from the school, diverse communities, community organizations, and the school board.

*Advisory Committee members*

"I think that was really valuable because the project was managed from Antigonish so I think having the advisory committee made up of the local community members was really important and valuable."

"I think it was very well laid out for when the meetings were. I enjoyed the piece of rotating the meetings because I think that adds to the community ... it's important that we build some relationships ...so you can actually make a link, 'Oh this person is a part of the project.'

They also agreed the committee provided opportunities to play an advocacy and support role which has been critical at various points in the project's progress as illustrated in the following comments:

*Advisory Committee members*

"I see myself as a support and also as a resource if needed."

"Meeting with the Strait Regional School Board ... I participated in two meetings for that when (RYEP) did the presentations, because it was so important to be there to advocate on the behalf of this project."

They noted that meetings are well organized and informative with good reports, and that the Coordinator is approachable and willing to connect between meetings.

*Advisory Committee members*

"The monthly reports and the minutes that were given especially the monthly reports were really in detail so you actually could really see ... the large number of classes that were being offered and students that were participating in the sessions; and, also, it was nice getting comments back on (student) evaluations."

The biggest challenge for the committee was low attendance at face-to-face meetings despite efforts to rotate meetings to different locations. Members come from a large geographic area and some found it hard to attend monthly meetings when it was not in their community. Some felt that low attendance results in less collective process related to suggestions and ideas.

*Advisory Committee members*

“That strength wasn’t there for (the Coordinator) as a total board coming together.”

“I think personally for myself to make the role more effective is to be at the meeting.”

“There wasn’t a lot of attendance to the meetings, so it would be nice to see more participation”

Even though there was the low attendance at the meetings, there was a core group who consistently attended the meetings. The Coordinator ensured that all members received regular communication through e-mail and telephone. Those who found it more difficult to attend meetings were offered other ways to participate. They provided input and feedback on various documents and reports, shared information on RYEP within their communities, and assisted with recruitment and hiring for Adult and Youth Facilitators. One committee member suggested the inclusion of conference calls in the budget for future projects.

### **3.4 SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Within the theme of safety and confidentiality, three areas are explored: what makes the classroom a safe place to discuss issues related to healthy relationships; differences in male and female safety needs, and the ability to identify the need for self care.

#### **3.4.1 Making the Classroom a Safe Place for Discussion**

Throughout the program the teachers, who were observing in the classroom, consistently reported that the classroom was a safe place for discussion of various topics. The teachers and Adult Facilitators identified various activities and techniques used to help make the classroom safer for those who were quite shy and to address inappropriate questions or behaviour.

One teacher offered an example of a technique that involved anonymously writing questions on cards that were given to the Adult Facilitators. This enabled students to ask sensitive questions without being identified and it enabled the facilitators to name inappropriate questions. The teacher who described this technique indicated that, after the first time this occurred, the students took it more seriously and in some cases inappropriate behaviours were nullified. The teacher also felt that it may have promoted a greater level of thinking as illustrated in the following comments:

*Teacher*

“Students would soon realize that there’s no sense in acting this way or writing that sort of comment because it’s not going to be recognized... And what it may do it may promote a greater level of thinking, because everyone wants to be heard and they (the

Adult Facilitators) are not going to listen to negativity, let's be positive about it. So it may create a more positive atmosphere.”

Similar to the teacher's comments above, the Adult Facilitators shared their strategy with respect to handling inappropriate comments by students. They noted that they don't ignore the comments but confront the student. What they believed was that, after a while, even those students who were making comments just to get attention would realize that the Adult Facilitators were taking their opinion seriously and would think twice before making the comments in the future.

*Adult Facilitator*

We are not going to just ignore the comment. Even though they may be saying them to get attention; or saying them in the only way they know how, which may be inappropriate. But they know we are taking it seriously – we are not going to just ignore the comment. We say, ‘What is your point?’ They realize that they can't get away with blurting things out. They realize their voice is being heard whenever they speak. It might result in them less likely to make the comments.

RYEP staff, school administrators and Advisory Committee members stated that, when there have been issues related to confidentiality or disclosures, they have been handled appropriately. The “Community Standards”, developed in the first session, provided the framework for addressing any unwanted behaviour. These community standards focused on the following themes: communication; participation; respect; personal safety; and confidentiality. The Adult Facilitators said that, overall, rules related to confidentiality worked well in the classroom. They said, however, that rules had to be reiterated over and over again and that some students need to be reminded all the time.

*Adult Facilitator*

“It is easy for students to pop out with an insult so it is really important that is clear all the time. ‘You can give examples but not with names.’”

The Adult Facilitators noted that another safety mechanism is making it clear to students that the program is voluntary and a student can sit out if not comfortable. Also, having a male and female facilitator means that one can take a student out of the classroom and provide support if needed (male-male; female-female). The teachers played an important role with respect to safety; if something serious occurred the teacher would be there to take it to the next level.

Another technique to create a safe, comfortable environment was using an open format for discussion. This format included making a circle or a “horseshoe shape” (without desks) with the open end of the horseshoe to accommodate a flip chart or the person facilitating. This format is intended to enable better interaction and discussion than students seated behind desks in rows. At times throughout the project both Adult Facilitators and teachers raised questions about whether this format, as an ongoing model, added another dimension to the group dynamics. At times, Adult Facilitators and teachers wondered if some students were having trouble with the requirement to sit in a more open situation. Some wondered if the more open format might sometimes hinder discussion. An open format implies that

everyone is expected to carry on a discussion; however, if the topic is difficult for students, they noted some people will go quiet and others will go the other way to the extreme and try to dominate the conversations with inappropriate comments or behaviour.

Teachers pointed out that it was good that the facilitators are not a teacher, the authority figure, and that, because of that, the students enter into a different relationship with them, as illustrated in this comment by one teacher:

*Teacher*

“They don’t necessarily see the Adult Facilitators as a teacher which means they have a different relationship with them in terms of the conversations that they may enter into as opposed to a teacher, someone who carries that title.”

### **3.4.2 Female and Male Safety Needs**

Both the Adult Facilitators and teachers agreed that the separate gender sessions were very important for safety and the ability to talk more comfortably about the issues, as illustrated in these comments:

*Teachers*

“A lot of girls in the journal entries made the point of how they liked that, especially if they got a chance to talk amongst themselves and not have the boys there.”

“I think the boys and the girls both really liked the separation. They were able to talk more comfortably.”

The female Adult Facilitators, who facilitated the girls separate gender sessions, noted that the girls talk more openly in the separate gender sessions as illustrated in these comments:

*Adult Facilitator*

“I would say separate gender is the only time that the girls even come close to really feeling safe usually they are really quiet.”

“When we get into the separate genders...we had a separate gender session where this one girl was like, you know, really expressing herself; and she’s not scared to express herself and she has no problem expressing her opinion. And one girl says, ‘You never talk in class.’...and she’s like ‘Well that’s because I’m afraid of the boys.’ ...It was like exactly like this when we get the girls together. Usually it’s hard to contain the discussion because once the discussion happens then it’s sort of like a spiral.”

The male Adult Facilitators facilitated the boys separate gender sessions. One male Adult Facilitator noted that the separate gender discussion enables the boys to be more engaged in a serious manner and to discuss their ideas. When they are around the girls they want to show off or fall into the stereotypes. This facilitator found that the separate gender groups tend to break down the stereotypes, the boys are more willing to come up with ideas, and they are more willing to share their ideas back in the larger, mixed group afterward.

*Adult Facilitator*

“The gender discussions, it is what they like the best. It allows the boys to calm down a bit and enables them to express their ideas...When around the girls, they want to show

off or fall into stereotypes such as “all boys are dumb, all girls are smart.” ...It breaks the stereotypes and, then, we get together and they share their ideas.”

Another male Adult Facilitator suggested that boys behave differently than girls when feeling safe. One noted that boys tend to come out in an aggressive way when they are starting to feel safe. This facilitator went on to say that what started out as an argument or disruptive behaviour could end up in a good learning experience if followed through effectively.

*Adult Facilitator*

“There were certain things where they just got really deep into certain issues and again not always in a very constructive way ... they wouldn’t have gotten that deeply into those issues if we had not made them feel safe and comfortable ... what starts off as an argument that you’re like, ‘What does this have to do with anything?’ and it ends up that one of them jumps in and really acts like a facilitator and takes a learning and translates into something else....(so) although it doesn’t always appear like they are doing it in a constructive way, I still think it is resonating a lot more deeply than they are letting on.”

### **3.4.3 Ability to Identify the Need for Self Care, When and How to Seek Help**

During the Appreciative Inquiry interviews, Youth Facilitators were asked to tell a story about what most challenged or most engaged them. Some said that being a Youth Facilitator played a role in personal healing or it increased their own understanding of their own situation. They also saw it as an opportunity to help others or to help prevent a similar situation from happening to others.

*Youth Facilitator’s story (2004)*

“I had an experience happen to me, so I thought that it as actually part of my healing process. I thought that if I could make a difference or if I could prevent something from happening to another person then that’s what made me do it (become a member of the youth team).... It was really a good feeling. You didn’t feel so, like uncomfortable, and like you are able to discuss anything. And when we had our group discussions, like at first everybody was just really quiet; nobody really wanted to say anything. Then after it just got so intense and it was like a really big rush.”

*Youth Facilitator’s story (2006)*

“I have a more positive attitude toward a lot of topics. Like I used to have a really negative attitude toward abuse against women. I still do, but it’s more open. I’m willing to see from both sides now. I still know it’s wrong, but I’m willing to try and understand it more.

I was really against it because some people I grew up around ...were really violent; so I just learned that this is wrong and I don’t like it, without understanding why. My attitude toward that changed.

When we talked about the Montreal Massacre, we did a big presentation with the...class. We showed the video from the school in Montreal. We handed out the ribbons. Then we did facts on it. It helped me to see different people’s points of view on why it happened.

(What has been important to me) I’d say helping out because when I was growing up I had a lot of trouble....We went through the system (and) we know what it means to be in

need of support. So this was really good to be able to return the favour. That helped us a lot, so it feels good to be able to return the help.”

### **3.5 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL, INTERACTIVE APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION**

Within this theme the strengths and challenges of the various approaches to intervention are explored. These approaches are: the fit with the existing curriculum; the use of interactive techniques; strategies that help to overcome resistance to curriculum topics and taking advantage of teachable moments to reinforce curriculum messages; school and community factors that can facilitate or challenge the delivery of the curriculum; and strategies for the supporting the adult team and to enhance youth involvement.

#### **3.5.1 Fit with the Existing Curriculum**

The program curriculum was assessed and approved by the Nova Scotia Department of Education to be a fit with the PDR curriculum for Grades 7, 8 & 9. Teachers, Advisory Committee members, and Adult Facilitators noted that it enhances the current PDR curriculum.

*Advisory Committee member who works in the school*

“I think it is introducing topics that they cover in PDR in a very healthy way. It is a conversation and interactive. ... We are reaching the kids in the Junior High grades and it is a natural fit. It is also a benefit for the school, PDR and guidance teachers. The curriculum is wonderful and it matches the outcomes. It is a very, very well done project.”

In the teachers/administrators focus group in 2004, participants noted that the students like the topics and this program adds an element of being current, relevant as illustrated by the following comments:

*Teachers/Administrators focus group*

“I taught the PDR and I really think the PDR program, as it was, needed a shake up and with regard to a change, a creative change in things like that, certainly in our school having provided a nice twist to make it a little more current and coming at the students from a different angle with regards to dealing with issues and the methods that are used.... We’ve all been educators and we know that there is an academic success but there is also you know other successes I always say you have to educate the body, mind, and soul. Do all three so you can be...probably most of us know students that have gone on to university or whatever with a 95% average and left after two weeks because they couldn’t handle some of the outside situations or whatever they chose to do in life so a course like this is needed for the kids.”

Some stated that this program has been more successful in having the students see it as meaningful, however, it is problematic because of the way the system sees PDR. A number of evaluation participants indicated that because PDR is not considered a priority for the schools and it is not part of academic learning, the course is not treated as a serious subject. They stated that because PDR is not treated seriously by the system, therefore it is not treated seriously by the students.

*Advisory committee member*

“I think the program is a good thing...The negative is that it is mixed in with what the Department of Education says we must deliver and it may interfere with the success of this program. It is a better forum ... We have to start looking at what is the best way to deliver this program....some kids view it as another PDR class, and kids have a present notion around PDR ...by Grade 9, the kids say, “oh not PDR again” ...It is not the fault of the (RYEP) program. It is the reality of PDR.”

*Teachers/Administrators*

“PDR is just kind of seen as the filler course maybe for a lot of people especially in smaller schools where you have teachers you don’t want to do PDR you have to do this and I think that sometimes reflects back to the students because the students are able to read the teachers sometimes.”

The last comment raised another difficulty. PDR is often relegated to whomever will teach it and is plugged into the schedule after everything else is scheduled. This means ongoing orientation for new teachers, which creates some challenges for them and for the program. There have also been some difficulties in determining how the program will fit into Grade 11. In the project schools the CLM 11 program was delivered to Grade 10 in 2003-04 because of the need to focus on required academic courses in the schedule in Grade 11. As a result, in 2004, most of the students in the class were Grade 10 students (45 out of 52) with a small number of Grade 11 students (5) and a few Grade 12 students (2). In 2005-06, the CLM 11 students at East Antigonish were Grade 10 students and the students at Chedabucto were all Grade 11 students.

### **3.5.2 Use of Interactive Techniques Helps Learning**

Each year the students were asked which techniques they preferred by gender and by grade over the four years. Table 3 shows the percentage of students by grades who found the methods were “useful” or “very useful.” The majority of students in all grades from 2002-2006 said the techniques such as gender sessions, small groups, discussion and video were useful or very useful. For the most part, students in every grade said they found the role plays less useful than the techniques just mentioned, but more useful than handouts and workbooks. When asked what works well in the classroom over the four years, Adult and Youth Facilitators also stated that “student involvement”, interactive sessions, discussion, games, group work, and separate gender sessions.

Table 4 shows the percentage of students by gender who indicated the methods were “useful” or “very useful” in 2004-05 and 2005-06. In both years over 60% of the male and female students found interactive techniques such as separate gender, discussion, small groups and video to be useful or very useful. There were variances from year to year as to what students preferred. However, in both years over 80% of the female students found the separate gender sessions useful to very useful. Over the two years, males and females were similar in rating role plays, written materials, and workbooks. Between 40% and 57% of both males and females found the role plays useful or very useful. Fewer males and females found the written materials and workbooks useful or very useful.

**Table 3 Student Survey 2002-06: The percentage of students by grade indicating methods were “useful” or “very useful”**

<b>Year</b>	<b>CLASS</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>SMALL GROUPS</b>	<b>ROLE PLAY</b>	<b>SEPARATE GENDER</b>	<b>VIDEO</b>	<b>WRITTEN MATERIALS</b>	<b>WORKBOOK</b>
<b>2005-06</b>	<b>Grade 7</b> (3 classes + grade 7 students from 7/8 split class)*	69.3%	64.5%	58.1%	82%	64.5%	43.5%	42.8%
	<b>Grade 8</b> (3 classes + grade 8 students from 7/8 split class)*	62.5%	64%	41.9%	66.7%	74.6%	22.2%	21.9%
	<b>Grade 9</b> (5 classes)	68.5%	68.5%	45.2%	75.3%	71.3%	19.2%	9.6%
	<b>CLM 11-1</b> (2 classes)	68.9%	55.1%	20.7%	58.6%	55.2%	13.8%	17.2%
<b>2004-05</b>	<b>Grade 7</b> (5 classes)	73%	84%	57%	78%	68%	45%	54%
	<b>Grade 8</b> (5 classes)	75%	70%	63 %	74%	88%	42%	48%
	<b>Grade 9</b> (5 classes)	63%	66%	47%	73%	79%	30%	28%
<b>2003-04</b>	<b>Grade 7</b> (1 class)	70%	70%	55%	80%	50%	50%	50%
	<b>Grade 8</b> (1 class)	63%	69%	37%	58%	63%	31%	37%
	<b>Grade 9</b> (2 classes)	52%	68%	48%	60%	61%	16%	14%
	<b>CLM 11-1</b> (2 classes)	52%	50%	43%	57%	52%	30%	29%
<b>2002-03</b>	<b>Grade 7</b> (1 class)	93%	100%	100%	73%	100%	86%	93%
	<b>Grade 8</b> (1 class)	60%	67%	33%	60%	53%	60%	80%
	<b>Grade 9</b> (3 classes)	77%	76%	56%	76%	59%	37%	32%

\* The 7/8 split class self identified as grade 7 or grade 8. They were recorded according to how they self identified with those who identified as grade 7 being included in grade 7 data and those who identified as grade 8 being included in grade 8 data.

**Table 4: Student Survey 2004-06: The percentage of students by gender indicating methods were “useful” or “very useful”**

CLASS	YEAR	DISCUSSION	SMALL GROUPS	ROLE PLAY	SEPARATE GENDER	VIDEO	WRITTEN MATERIALS	WORKBOOK
Female (all grades)	2004-05	75%	76%	53%	82%	71%	40%	45%
	2005-06	71.5%	65.5%	50%	80.5%	69.8%	33.9%	22.7%
Male (all grades)	2004-05	65%	67%	57%	66%	88%	37%	39%
	2005-06	63.2%	64.1%	40%	64.8%	67.6%	17.9%	24.3%

**Table 5: Student Survey 2004-05: Response by grade  
to having Adult and Youth Facilitators and Teacher Present with “1” being “not useful” and “9” being “very useful.”**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>		<b>HAVING ADULT FACILITATORS DELIVERING SESSIONS</b>	<b>HAVING YOUTH FACILITATORS ASSISTING</b>	<b>HAVING YOUR TEACHER PRESENT</b>
<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	Mean *	6.17	6.17	5.41
		Std. Deviation **	2.036	1.922	2.569
<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	Mean	6.29	6.30	5.67
		Std. Deviation	2.090	2.037	2.279
<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	Mean	6.14	5.75	5.08
		Std. Deviation	2.161	2.327	2.622
<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	Mean	5.34	5.22	4.67
		Std. Deviation	2.614	2.711	2.834
<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	Mean	6.24	6.09	4.23
		Std. Deviation	1.779	2.169	2.404
<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	Mean	5.82	5.71	4.22
		Std. Deviation	2.064	2.486	2.556
<b>CLM11</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	Mean	6.21	5.34	4.03
		Std. Deviation	2.210	2.595	2.195

\* The “mean” is the average rating of all students in the grade.

\*\* The “standard (std.) deviation” shows how much 2/3 of the students deviated from the mean. A standard deviation of 1 to 2 from the mean is considered quite small.

In 2004-05 and 2005-06, students were asked to rate how useful it was to have Adult Facilitators delivering sessions, Youth Facilitators assisting, and the teacher present. They were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 9 with 1 being “not useful” and 9 being “very useful.” Table 5 shows their responses, with the “mean” being the average rating of all students in the grade and the “standard (std.) deviation” showing how much 2/3 of the students deviated from the mean. A standard deviation of 1 to 2 from the mean is considered quite small.

Over the two years all grades rated the Adult Facilitators and Youth Facilitators very similarly with an average rating of between 5.34 and 6.30 on the scale, which is just above the midpoint on the scale. There was more variance when the students were asked to rate having the teacher present. Grade 7 and 8 students rated similarly around the midpoint between 4.67 to 5.41; while Grade 9 and CLM11 rated at an average of 4.03 to 4.23 which indicates they find having the teacher present less useful than the other two grades.

### **3.5.3 Strategies for Overcoming Resistance to Change**

When the Youth Facilitators were asked to identify what ideas were the hardest to accept, either among the students in the classroom or for themselves, they identified a number of issues (see Table 6, column 1). These included: discussion related to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gendered); racism and denial that it exists; dating violence including various types of violence, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment; gender stereotypes; the role of women; how women and minorities are treated; and resistance to the term “feminist.” Ideas related to the bigger picture analysis were also resisted such as the gap between the rich and the poor. They also indicated that students resisted the ideas if they felt they had done something before or they felt that they already knew it. This latter could also be a form of resistance to change, for example, saying that they know something already means they don’t have to deal with it. Therefore, in Table 6, “knew it already” has been listed in the first column and the second column.

A small number of Youth Facilitators were not sure if students were resisting ideas. Some mentioned that they had a “good class.” Because resistance can depend on an individual’s response, the observation of resistance to some ideas or concepts and to change would depend on the class composition and dynamics.

#### What Form Resistance Takes

In 2004 and 2006, when asked what form resistance takes, Adult and Youth Facilitators identified similar behaviours: (a) students refuse to participate; (b) students make jokes or rude comments so they don’t have to listen or to shut themselves out; (c) students go quiet; and (d) students escape or leave the classroom; (see Table 6, column 2). A Youth Facilitator points out about what happens when a student resists a topic in the following comments:

#### *Youth Facilitator*

“Then I had another time when one of the kids asked us the day before what we were doing in class and you could tell there was some hesitation and then he never ended up coming to class. Then we found him and took him in and the whole time you could tell he was opposed to the whole thing, he was very uncomfortable, so that was some resistance on his part.”

One Youth Facilitator noted that it is a big challenge to help students to learn something when they are resisting change as follows:

*Youth Facilitator*

“When you look at it if they are kind of closed off (to a topic) then they will never know what to do if they are encountered by it. That’s probably the biggest challenge is to get them to take it in and take it seriously...It’s kind of that iffy ground, especially for the younger kids, because they tend to joke about it a little bit more. It’s a challenging thing to do but it’s rewarding at the end of it when you see what they have learned.”

What Helps to Overcome Resistance to Change

What helped to overcome resistance to change is similar to three of the themes for best practices (see Table 6, column 3): the curriculum using a gender-based feminist approach; safety and confidentiality, and multi-dimensional, interactive techniques.

The Youth Facilitators said that it was useful when the Adult Facilitators put the issues out for discussion, were willing to discuss tough issues, and introduced students to different perspectives on different topics. Adult Facilitators said the curriculum and being gender-based and feminist, is important in helping to overcome resistance to change, because it “puts the issues out there.”

*Adult Facilitator.*

“We are doing a good job of identifying gender as a legitimate issue for these students in their lives and giving them permission to pay attention to that.” The same with violence. We are giving them permission to recognize verbal abuse, sexual harassment, (and) and letting them know, ‘You deserved to be treated well.’ They’re getting that. I don’t know how dramatic the results will be but I do feel we are making progress there.”

Youth and Adult Facilitators indicated that interactive techniques helped to overcome resistance to change. Techniques that were mentioned included: discussion; activities (games); separate gender groups; talking about issues; sharing stories; and raising awareness through videos. Some noted the willingness to hear everyone’s opinion and to express opinions were useful. Two Youth Facilitators offered the following points:

*Youth Facilitators*

“I think it has a lot to do with talking it out, and sorting it through, and seeing how their beliefs differ from others; and maybe trying to figure out which is more logical and sounds more reasonable.”

“I was in with a grade 8 class...So, at first, they were against everything we were doing. They were joking and making fun of it and completely had their mind off it. Then, when we had activities around bullying, they started to become more involved with that. Then, when we came to the bigger parts like sexual preference. ...They were still a little bit tense with it but they were starting to talk about it a little bit.”

Youth and Adult Facilitators referred to the importance of a safe environment where students can say what they need to say as helping to overcome resistance to change. However, an ongoing facilitation challenge is handling the strong reaction from some students to issues,

particularly related to race and sexuality; and, at the same time, to keep other students engaged in discussion when some students begin to act out. This involves knowing when to set the boundaries so that the discussion remains respectful and knowing when to ask the classroom teacher for support in these situations. The Adult Facilitators noted that these are not simple tasks as the discussion can sometimes move quickly from being reasonable into one that is hard to manage. The Adult Facilitators said that they work on an ongoing basis to find constructive ways to confront students who make jokes and encourage them to think about the importance of accepting difference; and to recognize the need to be sensitive to students who withdraw and to find ways to involve them.

Youth Facilitators stated confidentiality and a safe environment with people who are not teachers or parents were useful, as well as information and support about where to get help. Community standards enabled people to speak out or say they didn't want to be involved. They pointed out that support from the Adult Facilitators and other Youth Facilitators in the classroom was helpful, as illustrated by this youth:

**Table 6: Overcoming Resistance to Change**

<b>IDEAS THAT WERE HARD TO ACCEPT</b>	<b>FORM THAT RESISTANCE TAKES</b>	<b>WHAT HELPED TO OVERCOME RESISTANCE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Sexuality</i>: homosexuality, lesbian, gay.</li> <li>- <i>Dating Violence</i>: range of types of violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, statistics on violence.</li> <li>- <i>Gender Stereotypes</i>: role of women; how women and minorities are treated; identifying stereotypes and dispelling them; the term feminism</li> <li>- <i>Racism</i>: understanding racism saying it doesn't exist.</li> <li>- <i>Bigger picture analysis</i>: gap between the rich and poor.</li> <li>- Knew it already.</li> <li>- Small things you can say can affect people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students refuse to participate.</li> <li>- Students make jokes or rude comments; are not listening, and shut themselves out.</li> <li>- Students go quiet.</li> <li>- Students leave the classroom.</li> <li>- Knew it already.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What Youth Facilitators said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Curriculum</i>: Adult Facilitators putting issues out there; willing to discuss the tough issues.; introduce students to different perspectives on different topics.</li> <li>- <i>Interactive techniques</i>: discussion; activities (games); separate gender groups; talking about issues; sharing stories; videos; willingness to hear everyone's opinion and to express opinions.</li> <li>- <i>A safe environment</i>: confidentiality; felt comfortable in an environment with people who are not teachers or parents; community standards enabled people to speak out or say they didn't want to be involved; facilitators offer information and support.</li> </ul> <p><b>What Adult Facilitators said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Curriculum</i>: puts the issues out there; gender-based and feminist.</li> <li>- <i>Interactive techniques</i>: discussion and willingness to hear everyone's opinion and to express opinions.</li> <li>- <i>A safe environment</i>: for students to say what they need to say.</li> </ul>

### *Youth Facilitator*

“I had a little girl in one of the classes I teach and she is very shy and I don’t know if it’s just around big groups. When she was working with her class she looked very resistant, like she didn’t know what to do; and I switched with her group member. Then she was good; she was fine. We had to act out our emotion and I was making funny faces at her and smiling, and she started laughing. Then we switched again and she was fine. I think it’s a whole comfort zone.”

### **3.5.4 School and Community Factors that Facilitate and Challenge Curriculum Delivery**

Youth Facilitators and Advisory Committee members discussed school and community factors that both facilitate and that challenge the delivery of the curriculum.

Community and school factors identified by youth that can challenge the curriculum are:

- ♦ Peer pressure, particularly for boys who “have a reputation to look up to” or the “coolness factor;”
- ♦ Segregation within the school with cliques and the difficulty of changing these patterns;
- ♦ The level of violence in the community and within families;
- ♦ The level of neglect of violence issues by the police and others;
- ♦ The minimization of or desensitization to violence due to exposure to violent video games;
- ♦ The difficulty of changing gender stereotypes in small communities;
- ♦ The racism that exists in the community with segregated communities;
- ♦ The distance to travel in rural communities, the make-up of communities, and traditional patterns of socializing can affect the ability of students to connect and socialize with others outside of their communities and, therefore, affect their ability to practice what they have learned in the classroom.

Some school and community factors that youth participants identified that can facilitate or support curriculum are:

- ♦ Anti-bullying clubs;
- ♦ Participation in after-school groups and community organizations;
- ♦ Policies of zero tolerance for violence in the church;
- ♦ Knowing that there are resources/help in the school and in the community;
- ♦ Youth Facilitators being from different communities and groups of friends can influence those communities and friends.

Advisory Committee members identified two other factors that they believed help to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum:

- ♦ The program is coming from the community (from members outside the school) and is being promoted by youth in the school.

- ♦ There is no evaluation of the students in the context of “pass” or “fail”. Rather the program is helping them think through issues, develop a larger social perspective, and develop new skills to lead healthy lives.

### **3.5.5 Strategies for an Effective Adult Team**

This section focuses on the Adult Facilitators’ reflection on strategies for an effective team. These strategies include program facilitation skills and approaches, understanding and comfort with content, teambuilding and cooperation, and working with the youth team.

#### Program Facilitation Skills and Approaches

Effective facilitation skills and approaches are key to the effectiveness of the adult team. Part of effective facilitation is recognizing the challenges and having the skills to handle them.

Over the four years, when discussing their facilitation in the classroom, the Adult Facilitators identified some similar issues and challenges, particularly related to handling group dynamics. One challenge was how to keep the students involved and engaged in discussion. As an example, one facilitator noted that Grade 7’s listen well but it takes quite a bit to get discussion occurring among the students. The Grade 8’s move into discussion well, but it tends to go all over the place and it is hard to keep the discussion focused and to put closure to it. The Grade 9’s were challenging but seemed more able to make the transitions into discussions. Another challenge was handling resistance to change and the various ways students respond. Related to this was improving their ability to name issues when they surface in the classroom and outside the classroom.

Related to these challenges, Adult Facilitators identified areas for ongoing staff development to ensure facilitation of the curriculum as follows:

- Techniques for making the classroom a safer environment for girls to express themselves;
- Methods and skills in dealing with disruptive behaviour, handling difficult situations, and how to get more buy-in from some students;

In addition to opportunities to gain more knowledge and skills, another key factor to enable effective facilitation was the actual experience in the classroom. The Adult Facilitators noted that they were continually learning as they were teaching. Some key areas they learned through experience were to be more sensitive to use of language such as slang expressions that can be racist, sexist or homophobic; and their need to use plain, accessible language when trying to get ideas across to students, particularly for the first time. They also realized that their process in the classroom is as important as the material that they deliver; therefore, the need for flexibility, not to force discussions that are not working well, and that buy-in is important from the beginning. They identified that they needed to continually be aware of actively working on the skills that they teach such as assertiveness and reflective listening.

The clearest evidence of this was the reflection of teachers and school administrators in the last year of the program (2005-06) who observed that the facilitator who had remained with the program over the 4-year period was confident with the curriculum and with handling

difficult situations. In considering how what is required for future facilitators for this program, it will be important to consider how to ensure both the level of knowledge, analysis, and skills required as well as the cumulative effect of experience and comfort level in facilitating the curriculum.

### Understanding and Comfort with Content

The Adult Facilitators pointed to the importance of the content and engaging students in topics they wouldn't normally discuss in other classrooms. They noted the discussions about relationships broadening into a discussion of history and current events, cross-cultural and race relations, and boyfriend-girlfriend and same sex relationships.

The more challenging aspects of the content were related to addressing diversity of gender, race and sexual orientation; and addressing the discrimination and oppression related to sexism, racism, and homophobia. The Adult Facilitators noted that this was not only challenging through the curriculum with the students, but also in their own workplace and in working toward a team approach. They said it was crucial for the team to have ongoing opportunities for discussion and analysis on critical issues such as racism, feminism, and men's role in modelling balanced gender roles.

They pointed out that what they learned is that it is important to understand how the curriculum content applies to self and one's own resistance to change which can inform facilitation of the content with the students. For example, the Adult Facilitator needs to be comfortable with the topics or they won't be able to put the issues out for discussion as noted in these comments:

#### *Adult Facilitator*

"If someone is not comfortable with the terms, then they are less likely to bring it up at every opportune moment."

They noted that an advantage of having an outside facilitator is that, because they don't relate to the youth in the more formal teacher-student relationship, they have more flexibility to raise challenging topics and to open up discussion around these. They also pointed to the importance of Adult Facilitators having a willingness to learn, having passion for the topic and the work and the ability to try new things.

### Teambuilding and Cooperation

The Adult Facilitators pointed to several factors that contributed to working positively as a team: cooperation; knowing when to let go of some things to be part of the team; appreciating what different people bring to the table; and patience.

Different teams over the four years identified elements that supported their teamwork. One team said they were able to openly discuss issues while still being respectful of each other's opinions. Another team talked about developing a comfort level with each other and their experience together enabled them to refine their technique as co-facilitators. This team also mentioned that, once the Adult Facilitators can be more comfortable with each other, they were able to bring in Youth Facilitators more. Another team identified having similar

approaches to facilitation as being important, as well as agreeing in general on issues to minimize conflict and avoid confusion for the students.

The Adult Facilitators mentioned three strategies that helped to strengthen their teamwork. The first was self evaluation. The second was adequate time for preparation and debriefing. They said this is essential to self improvement and to strengthen a co-facilitation style; and, while external factors may make it difficult to check-in and debrief, it is important to prioritize this and make it possible. The third strategy is being aware of how power is shared inside and outside of the classroom; and to discuss and address any power imbalances in the team.

Teambuilding was particularly challenging in 2004-05 due to the changeover in the Adult Facilitators in the fall of 2005. This resulted in one team working together in Chedabucto Place and one member of the same team primarily providing facilitation in East Antigonish. Having one, rather than a male and female facilitator, created challenges for the separate gender sessions, for addressing gender issues with a balanced male-female perspective, and opened up more areas for resistance by students. The outcome of this experience was recognizing the importance of having two facilitators and a male and female facilitator to bring different perspectives. In their reflection, the team in 2005-06 reinforced this point, noting the following:

*Adult Facilitators*

“As a team it has worked well. It is very important that the team works well together. The balance between the two people is imperative. Male and female – you have to have both perspectives there. Not to say that everyone brings a perfect representation, but it does provide a balance. We both bring our own strengths to it which are complementary.”

Early in the project, when there were two part-time teams, one suggestion to improve the team was to have two Adult Facilitators whose priority would be focused on this program and who would be working as a team in both schools in the classroom and with the youth team. In 2004-05 and 2005-06 there was only one team for the two schools, but the positions continued to remain part-time. As noted in the section related to recruitment and retention of Adult Facilitators, in future programs there is a need to carefully consider how to structure the positions to ensure diversity, consistency, and the required skills and experience in order to create a team that can effectively facilitate the curriculum.

Working with the Youth Team

The Adult Facilitators work with the youth team in the classroom to facilitate the curriculum and at youth team meetings. How they worked with the youth changed over the four years. This was due to the Youth Facilitators requesting more opportunities to participate in the classroom and Adult Facilitators recognizing they needed to find ways to make the Youth Facilitator role in the classroom more active, which they felt would also improve the youth team meetings.

In the first Internal Evaluation report, which covered the school years 2002-2004, the Adult Facilitators said that, to facilitate effective participation of Youth Facilitators, the youth need to have a clear notion of what is expected of them, they need to feel part of a team, and it is important to help youth understand they are role models. The RYEP responded by

considerably changing the Youth Facilitator training program to incorporate the suggestions. In 2004-05, the youth team presented the skits that they developed during their training in the classroom. In the 2004-05 school year evaluation, the Adult and Youth Facilitators acknowledged that, while there was improvement, the classroom involvement still requires further development. There were timing and content issues; for example, not all youth were facilitating at the same time or with the same grade curriculum, so it was difficult to work with the youth team as a group to prepare for the classroom. The Adult Facilitators offered some suggestions such as: one-on-one time and support with the youth who are in each classroom; to encourage the youth to come a little earlier for class; and to encourage them to do the check-in portion of the class or another activity that they might be comfortable doing.

In 2005-06, the way the classroom activity was structured in both schools changed so that the curriculum was taught in all classes in one school for the first term and, similarly, for the second school in the second term. This enabled the youth team meetings in one term to focus on class preparation which resolved some of the content and timing issues identified in 2004-05 and enabled youth to be more prepared for the classroom facilitation. The Adult Facilitators indicated that this worked relatively well, although one hour per week is still a very short time to help some Youth Facilitators to prepare for their activity. They suggested that the 'suggested youth activity' could be written right into the curriculum, which would assist in focusing their participation, as well as focusing the Youth Facilitator training program.

Initially, in the school years 2002-2004, the Adult Facilitators noted the need for more focus and more structured activities for the youth team meetings. They recognized that the youth benefited from helping to plan and organize activities outside the classroom, such as the Youth Health Fair. While they had some positive experiences, the Adult Facilitators wanted more training in how to run a youth group to make it more engaging. In 2004-05, the Adult Facilitators found that working on skits for presentation in the classroom, topic-based discussions and quizzes, and an anti-racism campaign worked well. They noted that the interest in more involvement in the classroom by the Youth Facilitators means there is a need to continue to assess and strengthen this role and to find mechanisms that can support it.

In 2005-06, there was more opportunity to focus youth team meetings on classroom facilitation when the Youth Facilitations in one school were in the classroom in one term and were not in the class room but involved in other activities during the other term. The Adult Facilitators noted, however, that this was not always so clear cut because some important related events (December 6, Black History Month, Mi'kmaq History Month) still occurred during the term when they were in the classroom. Therefore, it was sometimes challenging to figure out how to fit both into their meetings. Also, the issue still remains of the difference between working with youth to facilitate their classroom involvement and engaging the group in other activities which involves ensuring the activities are youth driven. The Adult Facilitators also noted that the latter works better with some Youth Facilitator teams than with others.

### 3.5.6 Youth Involvement

All the evidence points to the youth involvement as facilitators as being an important dimension of the RYEP program. Over the course of four years, this component of the program has evolved.

An important lesson learned about youth engagement is, first, to give them a legitimate role in the program; and, secondly, to provide a variety of opportunities for students to have their voice heard in relation to their role. This has been demonstrated throughout the life of the project. Youth Facilitators have had an opportunity to reflect on their involvement in various aspects of the program including: their role in the classroom and the curriculum; their training program; their perception of the youth team; the effectiveness of the youth team meetings; and the recruitment of Youth Facilitators. A variety of methods were used to gather information from the youth including anonymous individual surveys, individual reflection, group discussion, and appreciative inquiry (individual interviews). The second aspect that made this effective was the documentation of their ideas, concerns and recommendations which were then considered and incorporated into the program. This has been evident in the adjustments made to the various aspects of the youth component of the program and observations made by teachers, Advisory Committee members and the youth themselves.

This section focuses on some specific strategies that helped to improve the youth engagement in the program with respect to: (1) role of the Youth Facilitator in the classroom, (2) training (3) building the youth team; (4) youth team meetings; and (5) recruitment of Youth Facilitators.

#### Role of the Youth Facilitator in the Classroom

The Youth Facilitators offered recommendations to continue to improve and strengthen their role in the classroom. Their suggestions were:

- ♦ Having consistent Youth Facilitators for each class and the students' recognition of a "peer helper" was important to the classroom dynamic.
- ♦ To work more as a group to develop skits and other activities for the classroom. This would enable the youth team to work collectively on developing and delivering some curriculum activities.
- ♦ To feel better prepared for the classroom work by having a schedule for each week, an outline for each class ahead of time, and time allotted for preparation.
- ♦ To have information on ways to help them relate to the students, to develop relationships with the students, and to make students more comfortable.

#### Training

The strategies that youth suggested to help facilitate Youth Facilitator training were:

- ♦ Hold at least a three-day training event prior to school starting with all the Youth Facilitators;
- ♦ Involving the Adult Facilitators and other program staff in the training event;
- ♦ Include interactive activities that engage the youth in the program;
- ♦ Information on the role of the Youth Facilitator;

- ◆ Skill building activities such as facilitation skills;
- ◆ Activities that strengthen the youth's knowledge of the curriculum such as diversity and LGBT training;
- ◆ Opportunities to integrate the youth's learning into the classroom, such as preparing a skit that will be used in the classroom;
- ◆ Opportunities for teambuilding with other Youth Facilitators and with the Adult Facilitators;
- ◆ Include a the binder with information about the program and curriculum.

### Building the Youth Team and Youth Team Meetings

Youth team meetings are the primary way for the youth teams in each school to connect with each other on a regular basis as a group, to discuss the program, and their role as Youth Facilitators in the classroom. What youth said worked well for youth team meetings were:

- ◆ Opportunities to learn more about and discuss curriculum topics such as healthy relationships, sexism, racism, media etc.
- ◆ Opportunities to prepare for activities they will be doing in the classroom;
- ◆ Getting to know and work with other youth team members;
- ◆ Doing activities together; for example the video at Chedabucto Place in 2004-05 and the posters for the anti-racism campaign in East Antigonish in 2004-05. What the youth said was particularly useful about these collective activities were that everyone cares about the issue(s), they collectively agreed to the idea, the creativity, and everyone participated.
- ◆ Taking advantage of opportunities to promote issues in the school that would not otherwise be covered. Start early to promote a cause or to do fundraising for a cause.
- ◆ Ensure coordination with the school activities and events when planning an event or a commitment to an outside event, such as a youth symposium.
- ◆ Raise visibility of the RYEP and the youth team to make a stronger impact. Have a cool name; logo; and T-shirts for the youth team. Update students on RYEP and youth team activities through the school newsletter.

What youth found challenging about team meetings were the following:

- ◆ When goals for the group were unclear;
- ◆ When the attendance was down;
- ◆ When some youth were not as motivated;
- ◆ Conflicts with other engagements and activities;
- ◆ Issues related to starting on time, some coming late, and others coming and going during meetings.

Through the Appreciative Inquiry process in 2004 and in 2006 the Youth Facilitators identified what they learned about working in a team and some offered a story about their experience in working with a team. Most said working in a team was a positive activity, although some noted that it was not always easy.

Some of the positive aspects of teamwork were working together to get something accomplished. Youth Facilitators said this involved good communication, everyone contributing, cooperation, and listening to different ideas and viewpoints. They said you can do more when working in a team than when working alone and other people can help out. The following are some comments that illustrate these points.

*Youth Facilitators*

“Just that you have to listen to everyone’s ideas. I think its better working as a team because you get everyone’s view points. You can do a lot more when you are working as a team because one person can’t do everything; but if you have a team you can assign different people to do different things and then bring it all together and then you have this big thing.”

“Actually, just recently we did a folk tale. I thought the one we did this year was really good. We had props and everything and an actually script; and I thought it was just really well put together and delivered really nicely. We had a lot of good communication. Everyone contributed something to it. We all had our own roles to play and just bring it all together.”

“A lot of the activities were teamwork oriented so I learned how important it was when you are working with a team, how cooperative you are, and how much work you put into something.”

Other Youth Facilitators pointed to some of the challenges associated with teamwork such as disagreements, respecting different opinions and viewpoints, sometimes things don’t get done, and the need to know and trust other team members as follows:

*Youth Facilitators*

“It takes work to be on a team, everyone has to work together, and it’s not always easy. There’s always going to be disagreements that come up but you just have to face them.”  
“I learned that it takes a lot of patience. You have to respect other people’s opinion you can’t shoot them down because yours might be wrong and theirs might be right. Depending on what angle you are looking at.”

“It takes a lot of effort and work. Even if you feel that you are doing more then your fair share, you may just have to in order to get it done. We would have certain roles that everyone would have to do. Sometimes things wouldn’t get done and you would have to pick up the slack. “

“I remember when I first got into it I got thrown into a group of people that I didn’t really hang out with at the start so I didn’t really trust them to the point that I was supposed to so I didn’t really get involved until the end. It’s a lot easier to be in a group if you have a lot of trust.”

Recruitment of Youth Facilitators

The Youth Facilitators were asked what was working well and what could be improved with respect to recruitment of Youth Facilitators. Strategies that youth suggested were working well and would help to recruit Youth Facilitators were:

- ♦ Use multiple strategies for recruitment: e-mail; hold an information session at lunch time for anyone interested; have current Youth Facilitators present benefits of position to classes; have homeroom teachers announce recruitment in the classroom; .
- ♦ Consider incentives for application; for example, one teacher had resume writing as a classroom assignment as a way of promoting interest in the position;
- ♦ Show some of the other work undertaken by the youth team such as the video production;
- ♦ Have a well organized application and interview process which helps to screen for suitability.

### **3.6 IMPACT ON YOUTH PARTICIPANTS**

This section of the report focuses on the sixth evaluation theme, the impact on youth participants. Because of their different involvement in the program the impact on the Youth Facilitators is discussed separately in this section from the impact on the students taking the program.

#### **3.6.1 Impact on Youth Facilitators**

The Youth Facilitators described the impact of the program on them through their responses to lessons they have learned in the program; what knowledge, skills and attitudes they have developed; and through the stories they told about what most engaged or challenged them in the program.

In 2004 and 2006, 16 and 15 Youth Facilitators respectively participated in the Appreciative Inquiry interviews. They were asked what knowledge they have developed, what skills they have developed, what attitudes have changed. Table 7 shows the responses of the youth to these questions in both years. Note that some offered more than one response to each question.

*Column 1* shows what knowledge the Youth Facilitators said they gained. In 2004 and 2006, at least ½ or about ¾ respectively, said they had learned facts about racism, homophobia, healthy relationships, and other topics. After that, the knowledge they gained seemed to be more individualistic.

*Column 2* shows what skills the Youth Facilitators said they acquired. In both years public speaking/presentation skills and communication skills were at the top of their list. Also, in both years, youth tended to list more than one skill that they had developed.

*Column 3* identifies what attitudes they said they changed. Here there were some similarities and differences. In both years, a number of Youth Facilitators (19% in 2003-04 and 40% in 2005-06) indicated they had developed an understanding of different cultures and value different ideas and opinions, and a few indicated they were not as judgemental. In 2003-04, some indicated that they “have to do something”, they can’t brush it off or joke about issues; whereas this was not specifically identified as part of changing an attitude in 2005-06. In 2005-06, some said they are more aware of reasons behind things. Similarly as for knowledge and skills, other attitudes changes were more individualized or a few said they didn’t know.

When looking across the columns, some general themes emerge for both years as follows:

1. Increased knowledge and understanding about issues;

2. Openness to difference and diversity;
3. Increased confidence in public speaking and communication skills.

These and other themes emerged through the youth's stories told in the appreciative inquiry interviews (2004 and 2006), focus groups held with Youth Facilitators (2005), and a review of the Youth Facilitators "lessons learned" over four years. These additional themes are:

4. Openness to talk about personal experiences and to healing;
5. Meeting and working with new people.
6. Teaching as a positive experience;
7. Working on creative projects together;
8. Having an impact on the students;
9. Change in personal behaviour;
10. Looked up to as a role model;
11. Influencing others outside of the classroom;

The next part of this section explores these ten themes illustrated by the Youth Facilitators stories of what most engaged or most challenged them.

#### Increased Knowledge and Understanding of Issues

Youth Facilitators in all years indicated increased knowledge and understanding about various issues as illustrated in the following comments.

##### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I've learned a lot about relationship violence and violence to other people and drug abuse, and a lot of those issues. I didn't know much about it except that it was there, and I had to stay away from it but I didn't know why. So if I didn't learn all the stuff I did in training I might have been more likely to try that."

##### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I learned a lot more about the different genders and how they work; and bullying, and sexual assault. Some of that I didn't know a lot about before. So there was a lot of stuff covered that I learned a lot from."

#### Openness to Difference and Diversity

When looking at Table 7, difference and diversity shows up in all categories whether it is understanding difference (cultures, people, opinions), accepting others (not as judgemental), valuing and respecting difference (opinions and values), or being more respectful and relating to others. When asked to describe a positive experience in facilitating learning that leads to change, some Youth Facilitators told a story related to accepting and respecting difference.

##### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"Respecting everybody in terms of diversity. I've broadened myself as a person, brought a lot of stuff in my life that I didn't have prior. I thought it was all really neat. LGBT, respecting everybody's individuality, and learning to communicate with my partner; and it was just really nice stuff."

**Table 7: Youth Facilitators: Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes 2003-04 and 2005-06**

KNOWLEDGE		SKILLS		ATTITUDES	
2005-06 (15 interviews)	2003-04 (16 interviews)	2005-06 (15 interviews)	2003-04 (16 interviews)	2005-06 (15 interviews)	2003-04 (16 interviews)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Course Content: (11)</li> <li>- Homophobia/LGBT;</li> <li>- Relationships;</li> <li>- Sexism; stereotypes;</li> <li>- Sexual assault;</li> <li>- Relationship violence;</li> <li>- Bullying</li> <li>- Drug abuse/addictions</li> <li>◆ Understanding difference: (1)</li> <li>◆ More open minded (1)</li> <li>◆ Teamwork (1)</li> <li>◆ Being a role model (1)</li> <li>◆ Learned more about my own culture (Mi'maq) (1)</li> <li>◆ Communication styles (1)</li> <li>◆ Program planning (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Course content:(8)</li> <li>- Racism;</li> <li>- Homophobia;</li> <li>- Healthy relationships;</li> <li>- Understanding difference; others' opinions; not to judge others. (3)</li> <li>◆ Boundaries (1)</li> <li>◆ Empathy (1)</li> <li>◆ How to talk with others about problems (1)</li> <li>◆ How to teach people (1)</li> <li>◆ How to express myself (1)</li> <li>◆ How girls open up in separate gender (1)</li> <li>◆ Everyone will come together (1)</li> <li>◆ Don't know (1).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Public speaking/presentation skills (8)</li> <li>◆ Communication Skills/Listening (3)</li> <li>◆ Dealing with other people's points of view and different personalities (3)</li> <li>◆ Speaking out more/less shy (3)</li> <li>◆ Leadership (3)</li> <li>◆ Facilitating (2)</li> <li>◆ More comfortable with people/my boundaries (2)</li> <li>◆ Confidence (2)</li> <li>◆ Talking with people/mediation (2)</li> <li>◆ Teamwork (1)</li> <li>◆ Patience (1)</li> <li>◆ Assertiveness (1)</li> <li>◆ Talk about feelings (1)</li> <li>◆</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Public speaking; talk in front of people; (10)</li> <li>◆ Communication skills; listening (6)</li> <li>◆ Critical thinking (2)</li> <li>◆ Teaching; passing on knowledge (2)</li> <li>◆ More respectful (1)</li> <li>◆ Relate to others more/open up (1)</li> <li>◆ Organizational (1)</li> <li>◆ Leadership (1)</li> <li>◆ Acting (1)</li> <li>◆ No answer (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Understanding different cultures and people; value different ideas and opinions (6)</li> <li>◆ More aware of reasons behind some things and/or why some people act the way they do (4)</li> <li>◆ Not as judgemental (2)</li> <li>◆ More positive attitude about a lot of topics (1)</li> <li>◆ Broadened myself as a person/being a good person (1)</li> <li>◆ No new attitudes (2)</li> <li>◆ Went into with open mind (1)</li> <li>◆ Don't know (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Have to do something; can't brush it off/can't joke about issues; (4)</li> <li>◆ Understanding different cultures and people; value different opinions (3)</li> <li>◆ Not as judgemental (2)</li> <li>◆ More confidence (2)</li> <li>◆ Changed attitudes about sexual harassment (1)</li> <li>◆ More positive; less negative (1)</li> <li>◆ More respect (1)</li> <li>◆ Restrained myself from acting out; thought about my actions and the consequences; (1)</li> <li>◆ More cautious in relationships – the need to do something/take action; (1)</li> <li>◆ Changed when I became part of the youth team; (1)</li> <li>◆ Don't know (1)</li> </ul>

*Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I've learned that you have to be very understanding and you have to be very open to what (the students) are saying you can't be judgmental in any way. You can't tell them in any way speaking that they are wrong. You have to think about what they are saying and try to come up with a good response. So you have to put a lot of thought into everything."

Increased Confidence in Public Speaking and Communication Skills

Another change that stands out is the increased confidence to speak in front of others, to "teach", to communicate effectively, identified both as knowledge and skill development. This is illustrated in the following comments.

*Youth Facilitator (2004)*

"I am more confident and willing to speak in front of people and, when I'm asked my opinion I'll give it. If it's not what other people think, I will deal with it respectfully."

*Youth Facilitator (2006)*

"Through the training. We attended Heartwood training. We worked with facilitators from other schools. That helped me with my confidence. They were complete strangers it helped me learn to talk in front of people. ...I learned even more about everything such as communication styles. I found it quite helpful when I was trying to present stuff in class or talking to someone like yourself (the interviewer) that I've never met before."

*Youth Facilitator (2006)*

"Public Speaking, getting up and talking to people and not stuttering all over your words. That comes easier now. Communication and listening, you really have to learn to listen because sometimes you're not really listening. You should really concentrate on what someone is telling you because obviously they have enough trust and are comfortable to talk to you, and you want to be able to listen."

Openness to Talk about Personal Experiences

Some youth found the project was an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and to learn from sharing those experiences.

*Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

"The meeting where we met the two girls from Canada World Youth and we were talking about racism and just different things like that. That was the best part...I could relate a lot to what other people were saying too and how some of their parents were racist and their values were different. That's the most I talked during a meeting. Everybody had their own opinions and everybody said what they thought."

*Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"What really stands out to me is that in the meeting we seem to be really comfortable talking about issues with each other and we are not afraid to share our point of view and debate about it."

### Meeting and Working with New People

Meeting and working with new people was a positive experience for some youth. They referred to getting to know and developing friendships with others whom they would not normally have socialized with previously. This is described by these Youth Facilitators:

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

“The chance to get to work with a bunch of youth that you don’t know. I think that’s a great experience to come to get to know them and stuff like that.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“I think it was really helpful that everyone on the project was different. It wasn’t just one set type of person that they wanted to facilitate. They got kids from all over the community. Most of the people I never talked to; but then I started to get to know them and I realized that, even though they are not in my circle of friends, they are good people. You can learn a lot from people you’ve never met before.”

### Teaching as a Positive and Challenging Experience

A number of Youth Facilitators talked about their positive or challenging experiences in the class as being important for them. More students talked about this as a positive experience in 2006, which is likely related to their increased involvement in classroom facilitation over the past two years as a result of their input into the evaluation.

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

“I really enjoyed being in the classrooms...when I would talk that they would really listen. They would really understand what was going on. It kind of made me feel good that they had a certain respect for me. One day we were doing personal boundaries and I had a couple people get up and do their presentation. They were all kind of listening and understanding and you just get really interactive...It was then that it was starting to get more comfortable. I felt good. It was nice to know that I could have a big impact on someone.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“I remember we were teaching about stereotypes towards male and female and I was really engaged that day because I had to be up at the board to write stuff and they were really getting into it they were picking out tons of stereotypes and for men and women and what they felt they had to accomplish to be stereotypically fit.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“Just being prepared. You have to know your stuff, you can’t really talk to someone about something if you don’t know what it is. You have to read ahead, understand it, know what you are talking about and really enjoy it. If you enjoy it they’re going to enjoy it. And if you are bored with it then they are not going to want to listen.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“When I did the class sessions. It was like to get in and actually get to work with them and get to know all the stuff. It was fun. It wasn’t too challenging, but it taught me a lot. They like to split up the boys and girls because they felt free to talk about it. They would open up a lot more then if they were in with the entire class. They talked more and got a lot of conversation going. It was interesting.”

### Working on Creative Projects Together

When asked what most engaged or challenged them, some students said working together on creative projects and activities for class or for the broader school community.

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I would have to say the play we put on, because we had to put a lot of work into it and it was really hard and we had to talk about the most, and how to put our point across to the class. It was important because I like doing plays and the subject that we choose was an issue in our school. The students seem to like it. They asked a lot of questions. It's like fun activities engage students more and they learn more."

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"Right now we are working to put on awareness around gambling and the effects of it for our school. We are doing announcements on the speaker, just like little facts and posters and everything. And the whole team is working on that because we thought it would be a good thing for the school."

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I would say last year when we did our folk tale because what it was like Cinderella but reversed. All the women characters were played by guys, like it was the fairy godfather. And I just thought it was cool how we did it. And you tell the class was like, 'What is going on?' And you had to do your best to portray your part so they knew what was going on and who you were and what the whole point of it was."

### Having an Impact on the Students

Some Youth Facilitators talked about having a positive impact on the students as follows:

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"When I got the job and became (a Youth Facilitator), I went through a bunch of different teaching methods and how they taught me. It's how a teacher feels. I can teach this kid now perhaps. It was important because at our age we keep learning but we (are also) teaching. It feels good to know that you made a difference in another person's life."

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I think pretty much all of the class sessions kind of make me feel pretty good. Going in there and teaching people what I learned from the project itself. They are my peers and I don't have a very big age gap between them like maybe 1 or 2 years and it makes me feel really good helping people my age. I found this stuff really interesting and I think it could be very useful to the people around me.... We did a unit on sexual harassment and we did a sexual harassment myth tic-tac-toe. And I thought it was very enlightening to them and (for) myself, because I saw the statistics prior."

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

"I remember one time we partnered up and I had to be with one of the kids and you had to look a certain emotion. Then they would ask you certain questions and you would have to try and put them together, like how you look and what you say; because if someone looks really depressed, and they don't say anything, you're not supposed to assume that nothing's wrong. And I could see her getting it."

### Change in Personal Behaviour

The Youth Facilitators also reported changes in their personal behaviour. They state they are making conscious choices to act differently by either taking action to address an issue, to restrain themselves from acting out, or to be more cautious than they might have been previously. For example, in 2004 a number of Youth Facilitators reported that they are more aware of violence in the school and react differently now. They are more personally assertive, less violent, and don't fight anymore. One Youth Facilitator describes this as follows:

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

“The day (the Adult Facilitator) said, ‘it’s not bad to be gay’. Like, I made jokes myself about people, like ‘that’s so gay, why are you wearing pink?’ It’s pretty disrespectful, you know. If there was somebody in the room trying to figure out their sexual orientation and then I said that, then they think it is completely bad.... When people say it now, I say, what the (Adult Facilitator said), ‘it’s not bad to be gay’. I used to try and bite my tongue and not say it, but now I don’t even think about it. Some people are kind of quiet when it happens, like they get red-faced and embarrassed that they said it. Education seems to do that to people. I feel good in a way that kind of made them think about it, the way that (the Adult Facilitator) made me think about it.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

“Violence. I used to be really snappy, especially with my little sisters. And it really helped me see that it’s not right, that violence isn’t nice. So I slowly stopped. Sure, I get mad still, but I’m not like I used to be. I really calmed down.”

Some others commented that they have changed some of their behaviour based on what they have learned by being in the classroom as a Youth Facilitator. This is illustrated in the following comments:

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“You have to be careful of what you say to people because I know one time we were in the classroom and something was said to a certain student then the student reacted very aggressively. ...I don’t even think it was something that was said. I think it was laughing at what he said. And what he said was funny. Everyone was chuckling. Then he went and turned around and it was scary. So then I thought, ‘You can’t laugh when someone else is talking because you don’t know what they are thinking that the laugh means.’ You have to be really conscious of what you say or do when you are around other people.”

Others noted that, when teaching some topics that they’ve learned more about and as a result had changed their thinking about it, they came to realize how much their own friends were thinking or acting the way they used to. This was challenging for them as Youth Facilitators. These stories also point to the importance of the role of the Adult Facilitators and the youth team to provide opportunities for debriefing with youth having these insights and experiences.

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“You wouldn’t think that from such a small community that there would be such a range of racial and gender slandering and it’s awful. When I first learned about it, I started to

recognize that. I was like, ‘Oh my god block my ears,’ because I just couldn’t deal with it because there were so many, even from your friends. You don’t know what do to. They’re your friends. You don’t want them to look at you like, ‘Oh you’ve been saying this all along, and now you are saying this.’ Before you realize what your words can do, you are not conscious to other people’s feelings. Now that you know, you want to take it all back but you can’t.”

*Youth Facilitator’s story (2006)*

“I was the youth facilitating with the Adult Facilitator and there was a number of people in there that were friends of mine, so it was hard to teach them, but they knew that I knew what I was talking about from all this training that I’ve had....From those days I’ve learned a lot and I was able to relay the message to some people, but there were a few people that were resisting the thought. I don’t know if it was because they weren’t comfortable with it or maybe they were experienced to it before. Some of my good friends, that you would never think would act that way, they turned out acting that way.

We were having a discussion about sexual pressure and one of my good friends, was quiet through the whole thing. She wasn’t giving any input or anything. So then we had a question part where you had to go around and state a question or idea that you thought of what we were talking about that day. When it came to her, it seemed like she was almost angry at us for discussing it. She was completely dead set against it. Even though we were friends ... you don’t really talk about that stuff on a mutual basis. You have to be out in a setting where you are going to be forced to talk about it.... She got really mad and I couldn’t understand why. I tried to talk to her after but she wouldn’t even talk to me about it.”

Looked up to as a Role Model

Some youth pointed to the importance of being a role model and how that affected them in both challenging and positive ways.

*Youth Facilitator’s story*

“Around the school, talking to kids that I taught...they, it’s like they look up to you. They respect you for what you’re doing. But they always keep a close eye on you, you know what I mean? You know, like we talk about in our meetings. If they catch you doing stuff, they’re like, ‘you’re a Youth Facilitator, (and) you shouldn’t be doing that.”

*Youth Facilitator’s story (2006)*

“I learned there’s a word called homophobia because when I first started we were doing training the word came up and I was like, ‘What is that?’ I never heard the word and then they explained it to me and I was like, ‘Oh my gosh I didn’t know, I never heard that word before.’ You walk down the hall and there would be so many homophobic gestures or comments ... You never realized it before because you never had a name for it before it was amazing. This year, if you are walking down the hallway and you know you are a role model and you hear stuff like that, you stop it and tell them not to say it because it’s not right. It’s really hard to get them to understand that their words can hurt people.”

### Influencing Others Outside of the Classroom

Youth Facilitators reported that they are helping to influence changes outside the classroom, based on what students are learning in class or what they have learned as facilitators. The following are two examples of transferring what they learned to other situations:

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2004)*

“I think I’ve changed the way people use the words commonly, like ‘retarded’ and ‘so gay’, and stuff like that. I didn’t realize how much people around me talked like that and just kind of, like telling them and talking (using those words) myself was a change.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“On our hockey team we had one team mate that wasn’t ‘the best hockey player and the way he thought about things were different and the things that he was into were different. So the guys were kind of making fun of him, but I put a stop to it one day when they were pushing him around in a circle. I just stepped in and said, ‘Alright that’s enough of that;’ and then just went and sat down with him and was friendly to him. We were pretty good friends for the rest of the year and he improved in hockey as well.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“I’ve been using my facilitating skills outside of the classroom which is kind of interesting, like if someone uses a derogatory term for someone of a different race or sexuality, instead of just laughing at it I’ll challenge them, I will make them think.”

#### *Youth Facilitator's story (2006)*

“I learned that people are different, I didn’t really learn it but I learned more about it like how people are different and you have to know that people are different if you are going to teach people stuff, you have to understand that there are differences. I learned it when we were doing our training. It helps a lot with other things I do to. I teach swimming lessons so it kind of helps to know that people see things different and you have to change your approach to some things so they can understand it better. Maybe it’s not what you are saying but how you’re saying it.”

The Youth Facilitators identified the support they received from the Adult Facilitators as having a positive impact on them as follows:

#### *Youth Facilitators*

“The Adult Facilitators made me feel comfortable...Your opinion was always accepted. There were no put-downs.”

“(The Adult Facilitators) are really good to us. They want us to be as involved in the class as they are. They try not to let us feel left out and they want us to feel important. They are there to listen and stuff.”

A number of Advisory Committee members, who played a role in encouraging youth to participate in the program, and teachers commented on the importance of the Youth Facilitator involvement in the program. They noted the importance of opportunities for leadership development, training, being a role model, and the potential for students to open up more to the program content and learn more.

*Advisory Committee member*

“Encouraging Youth Facilitators to think about applying. I see it as a leadership opportunity and it has a training component.” If it was just the Adult Facilitators, you would be missing a big component of the potential of the program. ... That component is very important. Having the youth in the classroom is a role model. I think there is a better learning. (The students) connect with it. They hear it. Maybe it is someone in the class who is only interested in playing hockey, especially the young males. If they see another young male talking about this... who also plays hockey ... oh they are good at that and they still want to come and talk with me about this... it is the sell value.

*Advisory Committee member*

“The kids themselves are teaching the other kids. They are hearing from their peer group rather than from an authority figure. I think they leave it more open. I also think the groups themselves (adults and youth) it is important that they meet and go over the exercises and role plays.... Youth Facilitator is the biggest part of that project and strengthening that component is very important.”

*Advisory Committee member*

“Having the Youth Facilitators emerge and having a role model for the other kids in the school. You get 10 kids and 10 or 20 behind them. It has a domino effect.”

*Teacher*

“Well even if they...if students don't feel like they have maybe as close a connection with the Adult Facilitators, they feel comfortable with the students that they see everyday that are coming in and helping.”

This Advisory Committee member referred to the Youth Facilitators as being a resource to their peer group outside of the classroom.

*Advisory Committee member*

“One of the real strengths of this program is that the Youth Facilitators are key because they are in their communities 24/7. They might be in the classroom for about 12 hours (overall), but what they are doing outside of that is huge. They are taking their knowledge and skills into their peer group on an ongoing basis. They become a resource to their peer group.

Increased self confidence and maturity were also observed by Advisory Committee members, from their contact with the Youth Facilitators in their role in the school or in the community. These two comments illustrate these observations.

*Advisory Committee member*

“You see those kids grow. That is the big one and I know. Looking at some of the kids who put their names in this year, I know for a fact that, if they get it, it will be tremendous for them. And you can track these. I can see changes in those kids, a tremendous change (in) self confidence, leadership. They are very proud about this and they see it from a different perspective. They get to see it from the teacher's perspective. I really see a confidence thing. Some of the kids that have been involved in this program, I thought they might fall on their face...It is like they had a lead role in a play... they take that lead role and the next thing you know you are a different person.”

*Advisory Committee member*

“I see more maturity of them handling themselves in a different way. Our community doesn’t offer workshops on these issues. They want to grow, learn and be somebody and this program has given them an opportunity to absorb it and they have absorbed more than they realize. The attitude is changing about different issues and they are coming into their own.”

### **3.6.2 Impact on Students Taking the Program**

This section reports on the students’ assessment of the program as reported in the student surveys over the four years of the program in the following areas: (1) what they most appreciated about the program; (2) learning about stereotypes, differences, conflict resolution and communication skills; (3) what students learned about violence; (4) any differences they have noticed in their self esteem, their relationships or in the school; and (5) overall impression of the session. In some cases the results are shown by gender as well as by grade level. The comments from the student focus groups held in both schools in 2005-06 are summarized at the end of this section as, “The Students’ Final Word.”

#### What Was Most Appreciated and Why

Table 8 shows the results of the question, “what part of these sessions did you appreciate the most?” for the three years 2003-2006. In the first year of the program, 2002-03, students were asked, ““Was there something that stands out for you?”

The upper part of the table shows the general responses of by students each year in the following four categories: provided positive comments; said “none”, “none really” or “don’t know;” said “not much help” or “boring;” or provided no response or spoiled their response with an inappropriate comment.

A review of the table will show that the results for the first two categories are very different in 2002-03 than for the other three years. The results show that, in 2002-03, over half of the students didn’t comment and 33 or 33% offered positive comments. Because the question was a closed question, if nothing particularly stood out for them, students answered “no”, “not really”, or “nothing.” In 2003-04, the question was revised to read, “What part of the sessions did you appreciate and why?” This question generated more comments from the students.

In the three years, from 2003-04 to 2005-06, between 81% and 83% of the students offered positive comments. In those same years between 7% and 9% indicated “don’t know,” or “none” indicating there was nothing that they appreciated. In all four years only a few students, between 1% and 3% indicated the RYEP was “not much help or “boring.” Those who didn’t respond or spoiled their answer ranged from 7% in 2003-04 to 12% in 2002-03.

The lower part of the table shows what the students, who offered positive comments, said they appreciated about the program. Despite some problems with the question in the first year, it is interesting to compare the comments made by students over the four years. In all

**Table 8: Student Survey 2002-2006**  
**What students appreciated (2005-06, 2004-05, 2003-04); Said stood out (2002-03)**

What Students Said	Number of Students (Percentage)			
	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03
Positive Comments	186 (81%)	195 (83%)	100 (83%)	33 (33%)
None; none really; don't know.	21(9%)	19 (8%)	8 (7%)	52 (53%)
Not much help; boring	3 (1%)	2 (1%)	4 (3%)	2 (2%)
No response/spoiled	19 (9%)	18 (8%)	8 (7%)	12 (12%)
Total	229 (100%)	234 (100%)	120 (100%)	99 (100%)
Type of Positive Comments	Number of Positive Comments (Percentage)			
	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03
Separate gender groups	62 (33%)	50 (26%)	32 (32%)	13 (39%)
Interactive activities: role plays; games, group discussion; speaking out	46 (25%)	35 (18%)	35 (35%)	9 (27%)
Content: sexual harassment, bullying, date rape, drugs, gender; racism, sexism; anger; healthy relationships.	26 (14%)	51 (26%)	14 (14%)	4 (12%)
Video	21 (11%)	21 (11%)	4 (4%)	1 (3%)
"All"	12 (7%)	14 (7%)	4 (4%)	1 (3%)
Facilitators	2 (1%)	3 (1%)	1 (1%)	3 (9%)
No bookwork/writing	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	4 (4%)	0 (0%)
Process with students: inclusive; helping ; opportunity to talk about what was important to me/us; personal space.	7 (4%)	7 (4%)		
Outcomes: enjoying learning; increased understanding of each other; respect for each other	2 (1%)	4 (2%)		
Other	6 (3%)	10 (5%)	6 (6%)	2 (6%)
Total	186 (100%)	195 (100%)	100 (100%)	33(100%)

four years the students appreciated the separate gender groups, interactive activities, and the content of the program, although there were some variances in the percentages in some years.

Separate gender groups and interactive activities being at the top of the list supports earlier observations by teachers, Adult Facilitators and Youth Facilitators that the separate gender classes are well-liked by the students and interactive activities engage the students more. The students themselves also rated these quite high when rating their preferred methods (see Tables 3 and 4). Another 3% to 7% said they liked all aspects of the program.

When compared to the student surveys in 2002-03 and 2003-04, students in 2004-05 and 2005-06 appreciated the videos more. This may have been due to an improvement in the video selection as a result of evaluation by students in the first two years. Also in the last two years a few students, between 5% and 6%, identified broader processes and outcomes, more than they did in the previous years. Some of the students' comments follow:

*Grade 8 Students (2006)*

"I enjoyed doing communication skills because I found it extremely helpful."

"That we could say what was on our mind and got to talk about stuff that actually happens."

*Grade 9 Students (2006)*

"I appreciated it the most when we talked about healthy relationships and about how each other feel."

"I appreciated the group discussion, because it gave everyone a chance to add something if they wanted to and everyone was able to express their thoughts and opinions."

*Grade 7 Students (2006)*

"Ways to solve conflicts/fighting. It was useful because you think twice before doing it."

"I liked when we did separate sessions (boys and girls). Taking the time to know what we feel. Covering all the situations that needed to be"

*CLM 11 Students (2006)*

"That we all had free speech. It seemed extremely uncomfortable at first, but then as you got used to doing it and I enjoyed listening to the discussion."

"I appreciated the part where we talked about sexual assault and stereotypes because there so much of it around that sometimes we forget and don't notice it going on."

Learning about Specific Topics

In 2004-05 and 2005-06, the students were asked to rate how helpful it was to learn about stereotypes for girls and boys, understanding differences, conflict resolution and problem solving and healthy communication skills. They rated on a 9-point scale with 1 being "did not help at all" and 9 being "extremely helpful." In 2005-06, students were also asked to indicate how helpful it was to learn about African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities who contribute to Nova Scotia's diversity, using the same scale.

Table 9 shows the students' responses for the two years *by grade level* for each topic.

**Table 9: Student Survey 2004-05 & 2005-06: Student responses by grade  
Stereotypes, Differences, Conflict Resolution, Communication Skills  
and African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities contribution to Diversity**

The Rating Scale was a 9-point scale with 1 being “did not help at all” and 9 being “extremely helpful.”

GRADE	YEAR		TOPIC AREA				
			Stereotypes	Understanding Differences	Conflict Resolution/ Problem Solving	Communication Skills	Communities Contribution to Diversity
Grade 7	2004-05	Mean	6.39	6.44	6.16	6.47	
		Std. Deviation	1.965	1.661	1.978	1.745	
	2005-06	Mean	5.87	6.08	6.21	6.26	5.18
		Std. Deviation	2.100	1.902	2.189	1.792	2.479
Grade 8	2004-05	Mean	6.16	6.25	6.13	6.01	
		Std. Deviation	2.046	1.834	1.975	2.126	
	2005-06	Mean	5.34	5.39	5.36	5.44	4.68
		Std. Deviation	2.483	2.466	2.597	2.513	2.817
Grade 9	2004-05	Mean	5.74	5.67	5.48	5.73	
		Std. Deviation	2.081	2.055	2.228	2.266	
	2005-06	Mean	5.68	5.63	5.51	5.58	4.92
		Std. Deviation	2.159	1.904	2.167	2.285	2.465
Grade 11	2005-06	Mean	5.59	5.52	5.41	6.00	4.81
		Std. Deviation	2.428	2.148	2.196	2.268	2.561

**Table 10: Student Survey 2004-05 & 2005-06: Student responses by gender  
Stereotypes, Differences, Conflict Resolution, Communication Skills  
and African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities contribution to Diversity**

The Rating Scale was a 9-point scale with 1 being “did not help at all” and 9 being “extremely helpful.”

GENDER	YEAR		TOPIC AREA				
			Stereotypes	Understanding Differences	Conflict Resolution/ Problem Solving	Communication Skills	Communities Contribution to Diversity
Female	2004-05	Mean	6.44	6.52	6.20	6.33	
		Std. Deviation	1.887	1.879	1.990	2.067	
	2005-06	Mean	6.14	6.04	5.92	6.06	5.23
		Std. Deviation	2.080	1.963	2.128	2.005	2.458
Male	2004-05	Mean	5.57	5.56	5.46	5.72	
		Std. Deviation	2.144	1.805	2.145	2.060	
	2005-06	Mean	5.11	5.32	5.40	5.52	4.38
		Std. Deviation	2.327	2.185	2.468	2.439	2.617

Consider first the topics that were asked both years: stereotypes, differences, conflict resolution, and communication skills. For *Grade 7*, the mean or average rating for both years were generally between 6 and 7 on the scale which is above the mid-point on the scale. The *Grade 8's* mean or average rating for each topic was slightly lower, between 5.34 and 6.25 on the scale. Also, the *Grade 8's* rating was slightly less in 2005-06 than in 2004-05 and there was a slightly higher standard deviation meaning there was a slightly higher variance from the mean for the 2005-06 group. The *Grade 9's* mean rating was similar for both years, between 5.48 and 5.74. The CLM11 rating was similar, between 5.41 and 6.00 for 2005-06 (CLM11 was not offered in 2004-05).

The topic of “African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq communities who contribute to Nova Scotia’s diversity,.” was rated slightly lower in each grade than the other topics with the average for each grade just under and above the midpoint, from 4.68 to 5.18.

Table 10 shows the students’ responses for the two years *by gender* for each topic. Consider first the topics that were asked both years: stereotypes, differences, conflict resolution, and communication skills. In both years the females rated slightly higher than the males in each topic. For both genders the average rating for 2005-06 was slightly less than in 2004-05. However, the ratings for both males and females were above the midpoint, between 5 and 6.5 on the scale. Similarly, as for the grade levels, female and male students rated the topic of African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq communities who contribute to Nova Scotia’s diversity, slightly lower than their average ratings for the other topics. Also, the females rated slightly higher than males for this topic, 5.23 as compared to 4.38. In addition, for this topic, there tended to be a higher standard deviation than for the other topics, both when comparing grades and gender, meaning there was higher deviation from the average rating.

Although there were some variations from grade to grade and between gender, it is evident that students generally found these topics helpful. The females tended to find the topics slightly more helpful to them than the males. Also, students said what they learned about how African Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq communities contribute to diversity less helpful than the other topics, although still generally helpful. This fits with the Adult Facilitator’s comments that, while there is one session that focuses on diversity, another session that focuses on ‘culture’ and specifically different local cultures would be an asset to the program.

### What Students Learned About Violence

Table 11 shows the students responses to the question, “What have you learned about violence?” Of the students who responded in 2005-06 and 2004-05,  $\frac{3}{4}$  or 75% offered positive comments. This is a small increase over the response in 2003-04 which was 68%.

In 2005-06 just under 1/10 or 9% of the students said they already knew the information compared to 12.4% in 2004-05 and 7% in 2003-04. There was more variance with the students who said they didn’t learn much or nothing, which was 9% in 2005-06 compared to 6.4% in 2004-05 and 17% in 2003-04. Over the three years, between 6% and 8% did not respond or spoiled their response.

**Table 11: Student Surveys 2003-06: What students said they learned about violence**

<b>What Students Said</b>	<b>Numbers (Percentage)</b>	<b>Numbers (Percentage)</b>	<b>Numbers (Percentage)</b>
	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
Offered comments	171 (75%)	176 (75.2%)	81 (68%)
Already knew; not new	21 (9%)	29 (12.4%)	9 (7%)
Nothing much; nothing; not much really.	20 (9%)	15 (6.4%)	20 (17%)
No response/spoiled	17 (7%)	14 (6%)	10 (8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>229 (100%)</b>	<b>234 (100%)</b>	<b>120 (100%)</b>

Table 12 shows the students comments related to what they learned about violence for three years, 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06. The students tended to fall into two categories: (1) learned more about violence, and (2) learned strategies to deal with violence or prevent it.

The percentage of responses in the second category has gradually increased from 20% of the total comments in 2003-04 to 35% of the total comments in 2005-06. The students who indicated that they learned about how to prevent violence, increased from 5% in 2003-04 to 15% in 2005-06. Those who said they “can do something” to deal with violence has increased slightly each year from 14% in 2003-05 to 19% in 2005-06.

In the first category, learned about violence, students offered a variety of comments each year. Over the three years between 24% and 34% said they had learned that violence is not right. In 2005-06 and 2004-05 between 5% and 10% said that they learned about different types, reasons, statistics, and personal safety; whereas in 2003-04, a higher percentage said they learned about these issues, between 13% and 18%. In 2005-06 about 13% said it doesn’t solve anything compared to 6% who said this in the other two years. A few students indicated they “learned a lot” or “useful things.”

A small number of students in 2005-06 and 2004-05, 3% each year, indicated that violence is a useful way to solve problems. It is difficult to know how to assess these responses. Suffice it to say that there are still some students who believe that violence is a way to solve problems.

**Table 12: Student Survey 2003-2006: Students comments on what they learned about violence**

Category	Comments	Numbers (Percentage)		
		2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
<b>Learned More About Violence</b>	<i>Wrong:</i> “bad”, “wrong”, “not right”	41 (24%)	76 (34%)	22 (24%)
	<i>Types &amp; Reasons:</i> different types of violence; different reasons.	14 (8%)	23 (10%)	16 (18%)
	<i>Statistics:</i> “it is everywhere,” “happens too much,” “a lot.”	7 (4%)	11 (5%)	13 (14%)
	<i>Safety:</i> “it hurts someone”, “you get hurt” personal safety	9 (5%)	17 (8%)	12 (13%)
	<i>Doesn’t solve anything</i>	22 (13%)	13 (6%)	5 (6%)
	<i>General:</i> “learned a lot,” “learned new things.”	7 (4%)	8 (3.5%)	0
	<i>Other:</i> has consequences, not reported, relationship cycle; peer pressure; not a joke.	7 (4%)	8 (3.5%)	4 (4%)
	<i>Can be useful; solves problems more effectively or quickly; is better than being put down.</i>	5 (3%)	6 (3%)	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>112 (65%)</b>	<b>162 (73%)</b>	<b>72 (80%)</b>
<b>Learned Strategies to Deal With Violence or to Prevent It</b>	<i>Can do something:</i> “can change it”, “can talk it out”, “assertive”, “how to deal with it”	33 (19%)	31 (14%)	13 (14%)
	<i>Prevention:</i> “don’t have to use it”, have a choice	26 (15%)	30 (13%)	5 (5%)
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>59 (35%)</b>	<b>61 (27%)</b>	<b>18 (20%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>171 (100%)</b>	<b>223 (100%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>	

Differences in Self Esteem, Relationships and in the School

Students were asked to describe any differences in their self esteem, their relationships, and in their school compared to before they participated in the healthy relationship sessions. Tables 13 and 14 show the students’ response to these questions in 2004-05 and 2005-06.

With respect to *self esteem*, 36.9% to 38.1% of Grade 7 students in 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively said their self esteem changed for the better, compared to 25% to 33.3% of Grade 8 students, 20.5% to 26.4% of Grade 9 students, and 17.2% of CLM11 students. About 50% to 66% of the students in all grades felt that their self esteem stayed the same.

With respect to *differences in relationships*, about 30% of the Grade 7 students in both years indicated a positive change in their relationships compared to between 18.3% and 24.1% of Grade 8 and 9 students, and about 20% of the CLM11 students. Between 44.6% and 50.8% of Grade 7 students said their relationships stayed the same, compared to between 52.8% and 59.2% of Grade 8 and 9 students and over 65% of CLM11 students.

With respect to *differences in the school*, between 22.2% and 33.8% of Grade 7 students in both years indicated that things had changed for the better, compared to between 12% and 15% of Grade 8 and 9 students and 10% of CLM students. Over 55% of Grade 7 students in both years indicated things had stayed the same, compared to between 61.9% and 68.5% of Grade 8 and 9 students and 75.9% of CLM students.

**Table 13: Student Survey 2004-05: Differences by grade level in self esteem, relationships, and in the school**

CATEGORY	GRADE	RATING				% WITHIN GRADE LEVEL/COUNT
		Changed for the Better	Stayed the Same	Changed for the Worse	Don't Know	
<b>Differences in Self Esteem</b>	Grade 7	36.9%	49.2%	1.5%	12.3%	100%/65
	Grade 8	33.3%	51.3%	1.3%	14.1%	100%/78
	Grade 9	26.4%	56.0%	1.1%	16.5%	100%/91
<b>Differences in Relationships</b>	Grade 7	32.3%	44.6%	1.5%	21.5%	100%/65
	Grade 8	23.4%	58.4%	1.3%	16.9%	100%/77
	Grade 9	24.1%	52.6%	2.2%	21.1%	100%/91
<b>Differences in the School</b>	Grade 7	33.8%	55.4%	1.5%	9.2%	100%/65
	Grade 8	15.4%	66.7%	6.4%	11.5%	100%/78
	Grade 9	12.2%	66.7%	2.2%	18.9%	100%/91

**Table 14: Student Survey 2005-06: Differences by grade level  
in self esteem, relationships, and in the school**

CATEGORY	GRADE	RATING				% WITHIN GRADE LEVEL/ COUNT
		Changed for the Better	Stayed the Same	Changed for the Worse	Don't Know	
<b>Differences in Self Esteem</b>	Grade 7	38.1%	47.6%	1.6%	12.7%	100%/63
	Grade 8	25%	57.8%	7.8%	9.4%	100%/64
	Grade 9	20.5%	60.3%	2.7%	16.4%	100%/73
	CLM 11	17.2%	65.5%	3.4%	13.8%	100%/29
<b>Differences in Relationships</b>	Grade 7	28.6%	50.8%	0%	20.6%	100%/63
	Grade 8	19%	47.6%	6.3%	27%	100%/63
	Grade 9	18.3%	59.2%	1.4%	21.1%	100%/71
	CLM 11	20.7%	65.5%	0%	13.8%	100%/29
<b>Differences in the School</b>	Grade 7	22.2%	58.7%	6.3%	12.7%	100%/63
	Grade 8	12.7%	61.9%	9.5%	15.9%	100%/63
	Grade 9	13.7%	68.5%	4.1%	13.7%	100%/73
	CLM 11	10.3%	75.9%	0%	13.8%	100%/29

Some respondents in most grades in both years indicated that things had changed for the worse in all categories. The exceptions to this were in 2005-06, where no students (0%) in CLM 11 and Grade 7 indicated their relationships had changed for the worse and no students (0%) in CLM 11 indicated things in the school had changed for the worse. It is also worth noting that a higher percentage of Grade 8's than other grades indicated that things were changing for the worse, although the numbers are still relatively small.

When comparing the two tables and the grades in their responses, there are two general observations. The first is that a higher percentage of students in all grades indicated that things had "stayed the same" with respect to differences in their self esteem, their relationships, and in their school. Secondly, of those who felt things had changed for the better, a higher percentage of Grade 7's indicated that things had changed for the better in all three areas than in the other grade levels. One reason for this might be the initial impact of the program in raising awareness on a number of issues. For the Grade 7 students this was the first year of the program, whereas students in the other grades have had the benefit of the program for two to four years. This could also explain why the percentage of those indicating that their self esteem changed for the better decreased as the grades went higher.

When looking at differences by gender (see Tables 15 and 16), the percentage difference between males and females for each category is quite small with about 4-6 percentage points apart. In both years 50% or more of males and females felt that things had stayed the same with respect to self esteem, relationships and the school. Slightly more females than males felt self esteem and relationships had changed for the better; whereas slightly fewer females than males felt things in the school had changed for the better.

**Table 15: Student Survey 2004-05 Differences by gender in self esteem, relationships, and in the school**

CATEGORY	GENDER	RATING				% WITHIN GENDER / COUNT
		Changed for the Better	Stayed the Same	Changed for the Worse	Don't Know	
Differences in Self Esteem	Female	34.1%	50.4%	1.6%	13.8%	100%/123
	Male	29.8%	54.8%	1.0%	14.4%	100%/104
Differences in Relationships	Female	26.4%	49.6%	1.7%	22.3%	100%/121
	Male	22.1%	55.8%	2.9%	19.2%	100%/104
Differences in the School	Female	17.2%	66.4%	.8%	15.6%	100%/122
	Male	22.1%	59.6%	6.7%	11.5%	100%/104

**Table 16: Student Survey 2005-06 Differences by gender in self esteem, relationships, and in the school**

CATEGORY	GENDER	RATING				% WITHIN GENDER / COUNT
		Changed for the Better	Stayed the Same	Changed for the Worse	Don't Know	
Differences in Self Esteem	Female	27.7%	58.8%	2.5%	10.9%	100%/119
	Male	25.2%	54.2%	4.7%	15.9%	100%/107
Differences in Relationships	Female	24.1%	53.4%	1.7%	20.7%	100%/116
	Male	19.6%	55.1%	1.9%	23.4%	100%/107
Differences in the School	Female	12.7%	69.5%	3.4%	14.4%	100%/118
	Male	18.7%	59.8%	7.5%	14%	100%/107

## Overall Impression of the Program

Table 17 shows the responses of the students over the three year period to the question, “What was your overall impression of the healthy relationships sessions?”

When looking at the responses over the four year period, the majority of students, between 52% and 62% indicated that the program “helped,” “was good,” “fun,” or “interesting.” While there were some fluctuations between 50% and 60% from year to year, this percentage remained relatively consistent.

The percentage of students who indicated the program was “okay,” “all right,” or “they already knew it” was only 7% in 2002-03, jumped to 19% in 2003-04, and has gradually decreased to 14% in 2005-06. The jump to 19% in the second year of the program could be due to a number of factors such as students perceiving some repetition in topics from the first year as noted in the footnote.

The percentage of students who indicated the program was “boring,” “uninteresting,” “disliked,” or was “not helpful” stayed the same at about 20% for the first two years and then decreased slightly to between 13.5 and 17.9 % in 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. This decrease could reflect improvements or changes in the curriculum as a result of the evaluation process. The “no response” and “spoiled” category remained relatively constant until 2005-06 when it increased to 15.3%.

**Table 17: Students’ Overall Impression of the Program 2002-2006**

What Students Said	Total Number of Students (percentage)	No. of Students (percentage)			
		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Helped, good, fun, interesting,	388 (57%)	61 (62%)	63 (53%)*	144 (61.5%)	120 (52.4%)
Okay, all right, needs something, already knew it.	100 (15%)	7 (7%)	23 (19%)*	37 (16%)	33 (14.4%)
Boring, uninteresting, disliked, not very helpful.	119 (17%)	22 (22%)	24 (20%)	32 (13.5%)	41 (17.9%)
No response/spoiled	75 (11%)	9 (9%)	10 (8%)	21 (9%)	35 (15.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>682 (100%)</b>	<b>99 (100%)</b>	<b>120 (100%)</b>	<b>234 (100%)</b>	<b>229 (100%)</b>

\* 10 CLM 11 students indicated they had learned this material previously. 3 students said the program was good; 7 said that because of the repetition, it was not useful or they didn’t learn new information.

Overall, 57% of the students taking the program over the four years responded positively to the program and offered positive comments as follows:

*Grade 7 Students*

“I think that it is a good way to learn about personal relationships.”

“My overall impression was that the sessions might help me in the future and it was pretty good and I learned some new stuff.”

“I thought it was good because you learn a lot about relationships, violence, and more.”

*Grade 8 Students*

“It helped us understand each other’s differences.”

“I really liked these sessions they were very helpful they make you think about all that is happening around us and I think that is good.”

“My impression of the “Healthy Relationship” sessions is pretty good. I think they helped people understand what to do and not to do in a relationship.”

*Grade 9 Students*

“It’s good because it teaches us respect for others and it is good.”

“It made me think about stuff and helped me to understand how to resolve problems.”

“It helps out. Maybe not a lot of people show it; but if you’re in a relationship, it helps you to stay calm and assertive, not passive and aggressive.”

*CLM 11 student*

“My overall impression was that everyone deserves to be treated fairly and with respect.”

“With info from Rural Youth I was able to realize I was in an unhealthy relationship and was able to change it for the better.”

“I now know of ways to deal with things, if I’m being pressured or pressuring someone. I know to back off or go for help.”

Another 15% indicated that it was okay, all right, or they already were aware of the information, with some students offering suggestions for improvements.

*Grade 7 Student*

“The session was alright. They were useful in some ways about certain topics!”

“I wish we did more stuff about males/females.”

“It was ok, it helped me a little.”

*Grade 8 student*

“Needs more games.”

“It was nice to have, although we should do a few other topics. We pretty much did the same thing as last year.”

“I didn’t like it cause we already knew everything.”

*Grade 9 student*

“The sessions were okay, but I did not like presenting the role plays.”

“It didn’t change really much and most of the stuff we did, we learned in 7 & 8 classes.”

“It was a bit useful.”

*CLM 11 student*

“I think that we did them before, but it’s good to be reminded.”

“It will not help me in choosing a career. Career Life Management, I thought that this was for a job, not relationships.”

“This was somewhat helpful, but I didn’t really learn anything that I wasn’t told before.”

Another 17% indicated that it was boring, uninteresting or they disliked it.

*Grade 7 Student*

“They were sort of boring; too much talking. It needs more movement-like activities.”

“Didn’t help much/ waste of time.”

*Grade 8 student*

“I think it was somewhat boring and not much fun.”

“I thought they were very boring. I didn’t like the circle thing.”

*Grade 9 student*

“I was kind of bored. I didn’t really get into it at all.”

“I found the sessions were too simple. They didn’t have enough ‘deep’ discussions.”

*CLM 11 student*

“I personally am starting to get bored of this.”

“I didn’t find it very helpful, mainly just review.”

When students were asked for anything else they would like to convey about the program, a number of students offered concrete suggestions. Some students suggested dropping some activities and/or techniques while others suggested adding more of some techniques and topics. These suggestions correspond with what the students found least and most useful with respect to teaching methods. What follows are general suggestions made by students over the last two years:

- ♦ Less focus on the workbooks or don’t use them at all;
- ♦ More separate gender sessions;
- ♦ More video with discussion questions;

- ◆ Add new videos;
- ◆ More talk about boyfriend/girlfriend relationships and sex (Grade 8 and 9).
- ◆ Consider new topics for later grades (e.g. grade 8 and 9) to avoid repetition from previous grades;

Related to this last point, repetition of program material from year to year came up each year in the evaluation. In 2005-06, 8 of the 229 students said they found the program repetitive of previous years. This was fewer students than in 2004-05 and 2003-04, which may have been due to changes made in the curriculum as a result of students' suggestions to avoid repetition.

In 2004-05, 20 of the 234 students said they found the program repetitive or that it was too simple and needed to be more focused on their grade level. Of the 20 students, some indicated they found the program useful; others said it was okay, while still others said they found it boring or uninteresting. Seventeen (17) of the 20 students were in Grade 9 and represented about 19% of the Grade 9 students. In 2003-04 (see asterisk in Table 14), 10 CLM 11 students indicated they had learned this material previously. Of those 10 students, 3 said the program was good; 7 said that, because of the repetition, it was not useful or they didn't learn new information.

### The Students' Final Word

In 2005-06, the evaluator and the two Adult Facilitators facilitated eight focus groups with grades 7, 8, 9, and CLM11 in each school (one focus group per grade in each school). The focus groups were a representative sample of the students in the program. Sixty-four students participated, with eight students (4 female and 4 male) participating in each group.

A component of the focus group included a separate gender session with two questions: how has this program been helpful or useful to you; and have you done anything differently in friendships or dating relationships? The process for each focus group was to have the students first answer the question on their own by putting their response to the question on a sticky note. Then the facilitator of the separate gender group facilitated a group discussion based on the responses on the sticky notes.

An analysis of the responses to the two questions resulted in thirteen categories of responses as follows:

1. More aware of things around me
  - a) Racism;
  - b) Stereotypes in different forms;
  - c) Abuse and different types; violence;
  - d) Bigger problems than in my school or my family;
  - e) Sexual harassment; didn't think it could happen to me;
  - f) What's unhealthy.
2. Relationships
  - a) Healthy and unhealthy relationships;
  - b) Equality in relationships;
  - c) Think more about what you want in a relationship.

3. Boundaries
  - a) To know and respect other people's boundaries (tended to be boys);
  - b) To know your own boundaries; how to express them to others (tended to be girls).
4. Stand up for myself more; increased self confidence. (tended to be girls)
5. More comfort with myself, my body (tended to be girls);
6. Trusting others more
7. Assertiveness
  - a) Aware of differences between assertive, passive and aggressive;
  - b) Now acting more assertive, less passive; (tended to be girls)
  - c) Now acting more assertive, less aggressive (tended to be boys)
8. Understanding Differences
  - a) Now more open and non judgemental of others;
  - b) More understanding of differences;
  - c) Get to know others better.
9. Communication Skills
  - a) Increased communication with others;
  - b) Listen better.
10. Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution;
  - a) Know how to deal better with things and to handle predicaments.
  - b) Dealing better with things: e.g. more control over my anger; walking away from a bully; can say no; and don't have to be pressured into something because others are doing it.
  - c) Talking out problems more; going to friends to talk out problems;
  - d) Resolving conflicts better; resolving conflicts without yelling or resorting to violence.
11. Help and Teach Others
  - a) Help others with problems or to give them a positive perspective on themselves;
  - b) Teach others what I've learned.
12. Consideration for others
  - a) Respect others more;
  - b) Think more before I speak or act;
  - c) Treat others better;
  - d) Getting along better with others.
13. Challenging others
  - a) Stick up for people who are being treated badly;
  - b) Have to tell people if they are hurting themselves or others.

A further analysis of this information revealed that a number of the categories above were directly related to the key content areas in the curriculum such as understanding difference, stereotypes, abuse and violence, sexual harassment, relationships, boundaries, assertiveness, communication skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution. These results further support the results from the student survey specifically reported in section 3.6.2. Section 3.6.2 outlines students responses to what they learned about specific topics; what students learned about violence; and what students reported as differences in self esteem, relationships, and in the school.

There were some gender differences in the responses. Girls were more likely to mention what they had learned about relationships; and that they were standing up for themselves more, had increased self confidence, and were more comfortable with themselves and their body. With respect to boundaries, boys tended to say they had learned to know and to respect other people's boundaries, whereas girls tended to say they had learned to know their own boundaries and how to express them to others. With respect to assertiveness, of those who said they were acting more assertive, girls tended to say they were more assertive and less passive and boys tended to say they were more assertive and less aggressive.

There were some similarities in responses by boys and girls. Boys and girls mentioned problem solving and conflict resolution with similar frequency. They also both noted "more aware of things around me", although girls mentioned this more often than the boys. While boys and girls mentioned consideration of others, boys mentioned this more often than girls.

Another observation about the results of the focus groups is that some students talked about an *increase in awareness* in several areas; others referred to *skill development*; and others said they were *acting on* what they had learned.

A good example of increased awareness is the first category, "more aware of things around me." Students also indicated increased awareness related to relationships, boundaries, assertiveness, as well as problem solving and conflict resolution. The following are some of the students' comments that reflect an increase in awareness:

*Students*

"I tend to be more aware of things around me; ex. racism, stereotypes and their different forms. I am more aware of abuse and their different types."

"In the past when we discussed healthy vs unhealthy relationships, it was very helpful with the facts of an unhealthy relationship and I realized I was in one."

"If you are in a relationship and it doesn't feel right, you know you don't have to stay in it."

"Learn more about effects of aggressive or assertive behaviour and when to steer away from them."

"Sexual harassment. If it feels like it, it is. I might have thought I was overreacting. The other person might have convinced you that you were over-reacting."

Students also said they had developed skills in setting boundaries, communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution as indicated by the following comments:

*Students*

“The program has helped me with boundaries personally. I know how to show my boundaries.”

“I learned to listen more when somebody is speaking to me.”

”If you get in a situation you know how to handle it; not as passive.”

“It gives me more ways to deal with my problems that I would never thought about.”

“I learned how to resolve a conflict peacefully and fairly.”

“Different ways to resolve conflict with friends and family.”

“I think I would be more aware of my partner’s/my family’s feelings and emotions; resolve conflicts without escalating to violence.”

Students also stated that they were now *acting differently* as a result of the program. For example, they were getting out of an unhealthy relationship (#2); were respecting others boundaries or expressing their own boundaries to others (#3); were standing up for themselves more (#4); were more comfortable with themselves, their body (#5); were acting more assertively (#7); were taking action to get to know others better or were less judgemental of others (#9); were communicating better (#10), and were problem solving and resolving conflicts better (#11). They pointed to differences with friends and some mentioned family. The following are some of their comments:

*Students*

“Got out of an unhealthy relationship.”

“Express boundaries more with guys.”

“Yes, I would try to respect their personal boundaries and not push them into doing something they don’t want to do. I would also be assertive and listen to whatever they have to say.”

“(I am) more self confident; stand up for myself; resolve conflicts by talking them out; understand stereotypes; and feel good about (my) body.”

“I learned that who you hang out with whether their popular or not doesn’t make you better or worse than anyone else. I’m using what I learned in this program by not letting what other people think of me affect me.”

“It helps me stand up for myself. I know not to let a guy make me do anything I don’t want to do. I know if I’m in a violent relationship just don’t sit around and it’s not okay. It’s good to be assertive. It taught me that stereotypes are not really so when you see people are skinny, and done up, not everyone is right skinny. So you have to be proud of yourself and confident. “

“(I have) more respect for different cultures and people.”

“Learned to respect what other people have to say.”

“I can communicate better with other peers, family, and community.”

“I talk about problems more, not all the time, but try and instead of getting angry, I try to talk about it.”

“If I get in a conflict with someone, I try to talk it out calmly.”

“I listen to people’s opinions more closely and openly. I learned how to resolve a conflict peacefully and fair. (I) try and look at everyone as equals.”

Some students noted that they were helping and teaching others, were more considerate of others/had more empathy, and were challenging others who were either making fun of people who were different or who were hurting themselves in some way. Some of these comments are as follows:

*Students*

“Someone’s talking about their problems and you listen.”

“I have been more respectful of others.”

“I think a lot before I say stuff now, because I know it can offend people.”

“In this program I have learned to pay more attention to people’s opinions and concerns about something; or if they would want to talk about their problems. It has helped me to help other people in my community with some of their problems.”

“Helps you help others who are having problems at home or school.”

“Well now that I have seen some movies and stuff and see how the people that get made fun of feel, and I try to stick up for people to prevent bullying.”

“More aware of racial conflicts – able to say something about it even if nobody wants to listen.”

“I don’t let it pass by when people are two-faced. Tell them you don’t think it’s such a good idea.”

“I learned a lot about racism and how it affects other people. I do not use any racial comments to make fun of others.”

“If someone says something racist, I call them on it.”

It is evident from the focus groups that the students had not only acquired knowledge and skills through the program, but that they were also transferring this knowledge and skills to their everyday experiences.



## SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The internal evaluation has examined how well the RYEP is addressing best practices in violence prevention, including the strategies and challenges in five areas: feminist understanding of violence and abuse, a focus on gender and diversity, strategies to enable people in rural areas to access violence prevention programs, safety and confidentiality, and multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention. It has also examined an important and sixth evaluation theme, the impact on youth participants, both the Youth Facilitators and students taking the program.

This section summarizes the best practices, challenges, and outcomes for each theme and offers recommendations for future programs.

### 4.1 FEMINIST UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

The Youth and Adult Facilitators identified strategies that worked well from their perspective, as well as challenges they faced in addressing gender and other stereotypes.

#### 4.1.1 Best Practices

- ♦ *Classroom strategies.* Three important classroom strategies were: (1) creating a space for both boys and girls to talk about gender stereotypes; (2) building an understanding that stereotypes exist for both genders; and (3) helping students to recognize and deal with gender stereotypes when they encounter them.
- ♦ *Showing by example.* This involved conscious role modelling inside and outside the classroom by the Youth and Adult Facilitators demonstrating healthy relationships practices between male and female adults and between adults and youth.
- ♦ *Overall program approach.* Two successful strategies related to overall program approach were having a community-based organization with experience and knowledge with these issues deliver the program and starting with the younger grades when students are picking things up.
- ♦ *Strategies within the broader school environment.* It was important to have school policies and activities that support and reinforce what is being taught in the program.

#### 4.1.2 Challenges

- ♦ Changing stereotypes is a long, slow process due to the difficulty in changing traditional and long-held ideas and attitudes about males and females and their roles, particularly in small, rural communities.
- ♦ How to help students feel they have some control over doing something about creating change, particularly where they may be facing traditional attitudes within their families or communities;
- ♦ Many ideas were hard for students to accept (such as LGBT; the existence of racism in their communities; various forms of violence particularly sexual violence; gender stereotypes; the role of women; and big picture analysis such as the gap between the rich and the poor.

- ◆ There are many stereotypes associated with use of the word feminism. Students were able to think about equity in the workforce but to connect it to a different way of thinking about relationships and a more just society was challenging.

### 4.1.3 Outcomes

- ◆ The list of stereotypes, related to gender and race or culture, identified by students and Youth Facilitators is a clear indicator that they recognize the stereotypes exist.
- ◆ Students were able to name forms of personal and systemic violence, some of the outcomes that result from these forms of violence, and the reasons why these attitudes and behaviours exist.
- ◆ Students taking the program identified strategies for acting differently (2006 student focus groups).

## 4.2 A FOCUS ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The RYEP has made a conscious effort to model gender and diversity through using multiple strategies, following basic principles, and working to address the challenges related to diversity.

### 4.2.1 Best Practices

- ◆ *The principle that diversity must be visible.* Every effort was made to ensure diversity was visible in the curriculum, within the Adult Facilitator and Youth Facilitator teams, and within the Advisory Committee.
- ◆ *Relationships and partnerships with the African Nova Scotian and Paq'tnekek First Nation communities.* Developing relationships, maintaining communication with and working to involve ethnic and culturally diverse communities in every aspect of the program was essential to supporting the involvement of students as Youth Facilitators, to inclusion of local culture and history in the curriculum, and to facilitate the curriculum discussion.
- ◆ *Program leaders must recognize that diversity is complex and challenging.* Most defined the focus on gender and diversity as achieving a gender balance and cultural diversity among the adult and youth teams; however, as the program evolved, other dimensions of diversity needed to be considered such as age, sexuality, rural-urban (from here; come-from-away), and difference of perspectives and opinions.

Three key strategies for addressing diversity are:

- ◆ *Appropriate program leadership, resources and training.* An important strategy was having a diversity consultant who supported curriculum content and training of all staff, Youth Facilitators, and teachers throughout the four years.
- ◆ *Modelling gender equity and diversity within program leadership.* The Adult and Youth Facilitators promoted diversity through role modelling inside and outside of the classroom.

- ♦ *Appropriate curriculum and delivery, as well as strategies for taking advantage of “teachable moments.”* It was important to continually update the curriculum to reflect the culture and history of the local communities. Equally important was the skill and comfort level of the facilitator in delivering the content, promoting discussion of issues, and taking advantage of teachable moments to reinforce curriculum messages.

#### **4.2.2 Challenges**

- ♦ Achieving cultural diversity on adult teams and retaining adult male facilitators for more than one year has been an ongoing challenge. In 2004-05 and 2005-06 racial diversity was not maintained. The reasons for these difficulties were a combination of factor which included: the nature of the position as a part-time position with a schedule that made it difficult to maintain another part-time position; the salary was very modest; the male facilitators often saw the position as a transition to another position in their career rather than an end goal; the location in a rural community with a relatively small population to draw on for the required knowledge and skills; and the Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian women and men with the appropriate skill sets may have been looking for full-time positions and /or would likely have moved elsewhere to look for those positions.
- ♦ The male facilitators had restricted access to the some areas of the Women’s Centre which were designated for women’s direct services. The challenge for the Women’s Centre is to ensure the safety of women using Women’s Centre services according to their policies and procedures; while, at the same time, ensuring that male facilitators have access to space and resources to effectively carry out their work.

#### **4.2.3 Outcomes**

- ♦ There was a male and female adult team all four years and a Mi’kmaq Adult Facilitator for two of the four years.
- ♦ By the second year, the Youth Facilitator team included males and females, Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian youth, and youth representing a broad spectrum of interests. In the fourth year, there were no African Nova Scotian youth on the youth team.
- ♦ The composition of the Advisory Committee included various diverse perspectives. While attendance at those meetings was relatively low, a small core group met consistently throughout the project. The RYEP Coordinator maintained contact with and engaged other members through e-mail and telephone, as well as involving them in other ways such as providing input and feedback on project documents and reports.

### **4.3 STRATEGIES TO ENABLE PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS TO ACCESS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

Teachers, school administrators, Advisory Committee members and Adult Facilitators identified strategies that have been successful in supporting access by youth to various aspects of the RYEP program. There was an ongoing challenge related to the role of the teacher in the classroom, particularly for new PDR teachers.

### 4.3.1 Best Practices

- ♦ *In-school Program.* Delivery as an in-school program ensured accessibility to the program by all students.
- ♦ *Knowledgeable Program Coordinator.* A knowledgeable Program Coordinator enabled effective working relationships with the schools and teachers in the provision of overall coordination and program management.
- ♦ *Positive Working Relationships.* Positive working relationships were essential between Adult Facilitators and teachers and between Adult Facilitators and other in-school programs such as the Youth Health Centre and the Afrikan Canadian Heritage and Friendship Centre.
- ♦ *The Position of Youth Facilitator is Accessible.* Efforts were made to ensure that the opportunity to become a Youth Facilitator was as accessible as possible to students in the schools. This was accomplished through a well organized, open application and interview process; using multiple strategies for recruitment; offering incentives for application; and working to accommodate needs of Youth Facilitators. An essential component to the success of this strategy was asking for *and* acting on youth recommendations for making the position more accessible.
- ♦ *Trust Relationships with Students.* Both the Adult and Youth Facilitators worked toward establishing a trust relationship with students in the classroom. This was important to the students feeling they can open up and talk about issues of concern to them.
- ♦ *Sensitivity to Rural Communities.* The realities of offering programs in rural communities were considered from an administrative and curriculum point of view including: practicalities of getting people together, the time and distance to travel for meetings and program activities, and recognizing the uniqueness of different rural communities and schools particularly related to cultural diversity and geography and to adjust the curriculum accordingly.
- ♦ *Sensitivity to Traditionally held Attitudes and Values.* There has been recognition of the need for sensitivity to traditionally held attitudes and values that may be held by student's family or community members, and sensitivity to safety and confidentiality for students and Youth Facilitators.
- ♦ *Advisory Committee members Advocate and Promote the Program.* Program partners, many of whom are also Advisory Committee members, played a role in supporting and advocating for the program with the School Board, in the schools, in the community, and with parents. A number, who work in the school or in community agencies, also played a role in encouraging Youth Facilitators to become involved in the program.
- ♦ *Communication with parents.* As with the Youth Facilitators, it was important to get input from parents about what forms of communication work best for them and to act on that information.

### 4.3.2 Challenges

- ♦ Both Adult Facilitators and teachers acknowledged the need for ongoing clarification of the teacher's role in the classroom. Related to this was when teachers should step in to

discipline students. The level of comfort with the role depended on whether this was the teacher's first time with the program and the teacher's level of comfort with the level of formality of the classroom environment. A few teachers found the program had a more informal environment than they would usually find acceptable in their class.

- ◆ Scheduling was an ongoing challenge. To be fully effective the program requires continuity, with not too much time between sessions. A one-hour class time is optimal, although not always possible with the school schedule.
- ◆ The nature of the Adult Facilitator position as an off-site position and working in more than one school presented some challenges with respect to having a consistent and accessible work space in the schools where they could work together and with the Youth Facilitators to prepare for classes.
- ◆ Effective communication with parents and community members to strengthen parent and community involvement in order to address the community factors that can both facilitate and challenge the delivery of the program and the curriculum.

#### **4.4 SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is evident that various mechanisms and support procedures have been instituted to address safety and confidentiality for the students, Youth Facilitators, and Adult Facilitators.

##### **4.4.1 Best Practices**

- ◆ *Confidentiality rules and support systems.* The program had clearly defined and communicated confidentiality rules and support mechanisms for students taking the program as well as Adult and Youth Facilitators. This included the development of community standards during the first session for each grade, which included standards for student safety and confidentiality.
- ◆ *Relationship between students and facilitators:* Both teachers and Adult Facilitators agreed that the relationship between the students and facilitators, who are not authority figures was important to safety, particularly in enabling students to open up and talk more comfortably.
- ◆ *Separate gender sessions.* Both boys and girls open up in separate gender sessions and become more engaged in ideas. Separate gender sessions also tend to break down the stereotypes particularly for the boys.
- ◆ *Boys and girls behave differently.* There were some indications that boys and girls might behave differently when feeling safe. Some boys may initially tend to be aggressive when they are starting to feel safe, with the suggestion that, if followed through effectively, it could be turned into a positive learning experience.
- ◆ *Handling inappropriate comments.* It is important to have various agreed-upon techniques for handling inappropriate comments by students. It is important not to ignore the comments, but to include the student where possible to show that students' opinions are taken seriously.
- ◆ *Voluntary program.* The program was voluntary and a student could sit out if she/he was not comfortable.

- ♦ *Male and female Adult Facilitators.* Having a male and female facilitator ensured someone from each gender was able to provide support to the students if required.
- ♦ *Discussion format.* Using an open format (horseshoe or circle), while the subject of debate, did enable a more open discussion on various topics.

#### **4.4.2 Outcomes**

- ♦ Any issues related to confidentiality were dealt with appropriately.
- ♦ There were few complaints which are an indicator that safety procedures were followed and did ensure a safe environment for students.
- ♦ A number of students taking the program and Youth Facilitators were able to identify the need for self care and when to seek help. Some Youth Facilitators told stories related to self care and healing which, for them, was their most challenging or engaging experience with the program.
- ♦ In the student survey, some students identified that they had learned ways to deal with or cope with violence or to prevent violence.
- ♦ Other students identified increased self esteem, differences in ways of behaving in their relationships or at the school that they were looking after themselves more.

### **4.5 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL, INTERACTIVE APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION**

There are a number of important elements ensuring an appropriate approach to intervention. These include: an appropriate curriculum; school and community supports that can help to support the curriculum; an effective, diverse, male and female Adult Facilitator team; an adult team who are well versed and comfortable with the content and who are willing to name the issues while creating an interactive and safe environment for discussion; and a Youth Facilitator team who work creatively with the adult team in the classroom to engage the students in learning about the various topics in the curriculum. There were associated challenges for the Adult and Youth Facilitators to student resistance to new ideas and change, and being sensitive to school and community factors that may challenge delivery of the curriculum.

#### **4.5.1 Best Practices**

- ♦ *Fit with the curriculum.* The RYEP program not only fits with the PDR curriculum, it enhances this curriculum by adding an element of being current and relevant for the students.
- ♦ *School and community factors that facilitate the curriculum.* School and community factors that facilitate the curriculum are clubs and after-school groups such as anti-bullying groups, community agencies such as churches with zero tolerance policies, and students being aware of community supports and resources. When Youth Facilitators are from different communities and have different groups of friends, they are able to influence friends outside the school. The program being delivered by a community agency and promoted by the Youth Facilitators helps to facilitate the curriculum.

- ♦ *Co-facilitation and diverse adult team.* It is important to have two facilitators, a male and female, in the classroom to jointly take responsibility for facilitation, to provide different perspectives for the students and to ensure effective overall facilitation.
- ♦ *Teamwork.* What contributed to effective Adult Facilitator teams was cooperation, patience, knowing when to let go of some things to be part of the team, and appreciating what different people bring to the table. Strategies that helped to strengthen teamwork are self evaluation, adequate time for preparation and debriefing, and sharing power which involves addressing any power imbalances on the team.
- ♦ *Having an external facilitator.* Teachers and Adult Facilitators recognized that an external facilitator, who is not a teacher, has more flexibility to raise challenging topics.
- ♦ *Effective facilitation skills and techniques.* The Adult Facilitators reported on the importance of strong facilitation skills; confidence in handling different and difficult situations; sensitivity to use of slang expressions that can be racist, sexist or homophobic; and sensitivity to their use of plain language to explain concepts. They realized they needed to be continually aware of working on skills they teach such as assertiveness and reflective listening. It was also important that Adult Facilitators have passion for the topic, be willing to learn, and be open to new approaches and techniques.
- ♦ *Comfort level with curriculum.* As already noted related to diversity, Adult Facilitators emphasized the importance of understanding and being personally comfortable with the content in order to be able to put the issues out for discussion, and to handle challenges from students and within their own team.
- ♦ *Classroom process.* The process in the classroom is as important as the material that is delivered.
- ♦ *Strategies for overcoming resistance to change.* Three key elements that help to overcome resistance to new ideas and to change are a combination of the following: (1) the Adult Facilitators putting the issues out there and being willing to discuss the tough issues; (2) a safe environment where students can say what they need to say; and (3) interactive techniques, particularly the separate gender groups, sharing stories, and information and support about where to get help.
- ♦ *Recognition and valuing contribution of Youth Facilitators.* The RYEP staff, Adult Facilitators, and teachers/school administrators commented on the importance of having the youth team component to the program and its value to the students and to the leadership development of the youth themselves.
- ♦ *Youth Engagement.* An important lesson learned about youth engagement is, first, give them a legitimate role in the program; and, secondly, provide a variety of opportunities for them to have a voice related to their role.
- ♦ *Strengthening the Role of the Youth Facilitator.* Throughout the program Youth Facilitators offered suggestions to recruit new Youth Facilitators, to improve their role in the classroom and their training program, as well as to use the youth team meetings in a more focused way to plan classroom sessions. The RYEP staff remained committed to strengthening their role through finding ways to have the youth team meetings complement the classroom activity and engaging youth in identifying their interests and priorities to have a clear focus for collective youth team activities and meetings.

- ♦ *Youth Facilitator Team.* The Youth Facilitators were able to identify both the positive and challenging aspects of teamwork. Many told stories of feeling most engaged when working together on creative projects or sharing their experiences at youth team meetings.
- ♦ *Recruitment of Youth Facilitators:* What works well to recruit Youth Facilitators are multiple strategies that involve giving information to youth; incentives for application; and an open and well organized application and interview process.

#### **4.5.2 Challenges**

- ♦ An ongoing challenge is to enable students to open up to thinking differently about topics, while at the same time to support students who withdraw or go quiet and to constructively confront students who act out and/or make inappropriate or rude comments.
- ♦ The need for Adult Facilitators to have regular discussion and analysis on critical issues such as racism, feminism and men's role in modelling balanced gender roles.
- ♦ Community and school factors that challenge the delivery of curriculum which are: the level of violence in the community and families; the level of neglect of violence issues by police and others; the minimization or desensitization to violence due to exposure to violent video games; racism that exists in the community; difficulties of challenging gender stereotypes in small communities, and distance to travel. Within the school, youth stated that peer pressure or the "coolness factor", particularly for boys, challenges delivery of the curriculum.

#### **4.5.3 Outcomes**

- ♦ The majority of students in all grades over four years said the interactive techniques such as separate gender sessions; small groups, discussion, and video were useful or very useful.
- ♦ Each grade also said that role plays were less useful than the techniques just mentioned, but they were more useful than handouts and workbooks.
- ♦ When compared by gender over two years, the girls preferred separate gender sessions and the boys preferred videos over all other techniques.
- ♦ Students in all grades indicated that they found having Adult Facilitators delivering sessions with Youth Facilitators assisting to be useful. There was more variance when asked to rate having the teacher present, with Grade 9's and CLM11's indicating this is less useful than the other two grades.

## **4.6 IMPACT ON YOUTH PARTICIPANTS**

This theme outlines the impact on the youth participants, the 76 Youth Facilitators and 1,277 students, who participated in the program over the four years.

### **4.6.1 Impact on the Youth Facilitators**

In the two years that the Appreciative Inquiry process (2003-04 and 2005-06) was used to gather information from the Youth Facilitators, there were similarities in what Youth Facilitators said they gained with respect to knowledge, skills and attitudes. Because these represent ½ of all the Youth Facilitators over the four years, it can be concluded that these findings represent what most Youth Facilitators would have experienced through this program.

- ♦ The Youth Facilitators expanded their knowledge and increased their confidence and skills, particularly public speaking and communication skills.
- ♦ The Youth Facilitators are more open to difference and diversity through understanding difference, accepting others, valuing and respecting difference, and being more respectful of others.
- ♦ They are more open to talking about personal experiences, with some being able to address their own healing through this avenue.
- ♦ The Youth Facilitators have benefited from working with and meeting new people.
- ♦ They reported finding teaching and being looked up to as a role model to be a positive experience. They appreciated working together on creative projects for presentation to the classroom.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators reported changing their behaviour and making conscious choices to act differently; for example, decreasing violent behaviour or ‘thinking before they act or speak.’
- ♦ Youth Facilitators reported helping to influence change outside the classroom.
- ♦ Having a positive impact on the students overall made them feel positive about their role in the program.
- ♦ They identified and appreciated the positive support from the Adult Facilitators.
- ♦ Youth Facilitators learned about and appreciated working in a team and acknowledged both the positive aspects and the need to work through challenges associated with teamwork.

### **4.6.2 Impact on the Students Taking the Program**

The program has had a positive impact on the majority of students judging from their responses to the survey and their participation in student focus groups (2005-06).

- ♦ When asked what they appreciated most, from 2003-04 to 2005-06 between 81% and 83% offered positive comments about the program.
- ♦ Of those who offered positive comments, between 70% and 81% over the four years said they appreciated the course content, interactive activities and separate gender groups.

- ◆ In the last two years a few students mentioned they appreciated the process – opportunities to talk about what is important to them – and the outcomes – increased understanding and respect for each other.
- ◆ Although there were some variations from grade to grade and between genders, it is evident that students generally found learning about stereotypes, understanding differences, conflict resolution/problem solving and communication skills to be helpful. Girls tended to find the topics slightly more helpful to them than the boys.
- ◆ Students said what they learned about how African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities contribute to diversity less helpful than the other topics, although still generally helpful. This fits with the Adult Facilitator's comments that, while there is one session that focuses on diversity, another session that focuses on 'culture' and specifically different local cultures would be an asset to the program.
- ◆ When asked what they had learned about violence,  $\frac{3}{4}$  or 75% of the students in 2005-06 and 2004-05 offered positive comments about what they had learned. This is a small increase over the response in 2003-04 which was 68%.
- ◆ Of those who they had learned more about violence an increasing number of students said they were learning to prevent violence or were learning strategies to deal with violence (from 20% in 2003-04 to 35% in 2005-06).
- ◆ The majority of students in all grades said that things “stayed the same” with respect to differences in their self esteem, their relationships, and in the school. The percentage of students indicating things stayed the same tended to increase as the grades went up from Grade 7 to CLM11.
- ◆ When compared to other grades, the Grade 7 students reported the largest increase in self esteem (just under 40%), in positive change in their relationships (about 30%), and that things had changed for the better at school (between 22% and 33.8%).
- ◆ An average of 57% of the students over the four years said the program was helpful, fun or interesting overall. When looking at individual years, the percentages were fairly consistent ranging from 52% and 53% in 2003-04 and 2005-06 respectively to 62% and 61% in 2002-03 and 2004-05 respectively.
- ◆ It is evident from the student focus groups (2005-06) that students had developed knowledge and skills in areas directly related to the curriculum topics such as understanding difference, stereotypes, abuse and violence, sexual harassment, relationships, boundaries, assertiveness, communication skills, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, it is evident that students were acting on what they had learned by transferring it to their everyday experiences in their relationships at school and at home.
- ◆ In the focus groups, the students self reported that they had more consideration for others, particularly more respect for others, thinking more before they speak or act, treating others better, and getting along better with others. Some said they were helping others with their problems or were challenging others if they were treating others badly, hurting others or hurting themselves.

## **4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are the recommendations for future healthy relationships programs based on the experience and lessons learned from the RYEP program.

### **4.7.1 Best Practices and Ongoing Challenges**

Ideally, future programs would incorporate the best practices from the RYEP program and would be prepared for the ongoing challenges related to delivering a curriculum that ensures diversity in all aspects of the program and is sensitive to realities of rural communities.

Future programs would consider the best practices and challenges in five areas: (1) feminist understanding of violence and abuse; (2) a focus on gender and diversity; (3) strategies to enable people in rural and remote areas to access violence prevention programs; (4) safety strategies that enable women and girls to access services and give them options; (5) multi-dimensional, interactive approaches to intervention.

### **4.7.2 Overall Program Approach**

To be most effective, future programs must include these components:

- ◆ A community-based organization with experience and knowledge with these issues should deliver the program and/or provide ongoing coordination, training, and consultation in the delivery of the program. This will ensure consistency in curriculum delivery and will enable the trust that is required for students to fully participate in this program.
- ◆ The composition of the adult and youth teams should reflect the diversity of the communities that the school serves.
- ◆ Adult Facilitator teams should be female and male teams, preferably from diverse cultural backgrounds and external to the schools. Adult Facilitators must have an excellent knowledge of the topics and comfort level with delivering all aspects of the curriculum.
- ◆ The adult team works with a Youth Facilitator team in each school to deliver the curriculum. The youth team should have a designated role in curriculum delivery and should participate in developing interactive techniques to deliver their portion of the curriculum. This can be accomplished during training and youth team meetings.

### **4.7.3 Adult Facilitator Team**

- ◆ The Adult Facilitators should work as a team to model curriculum messages with respect to gender and diversity.
- ◆ The Adult Facilitator team should develop positive relationships with the respective classroom teachers and school administration.
- ◆ Ideally, the Adult Facilitators should have a designated space in the schools, preferably with computer and telephone access, where they can work together and with Youth Facilitators to prepare for and provide follow-up to classes. This space or another designated space could be used for youth team meetings.

- ◆ If future programs include male staff working out of the Women's Centre, the Women's Centre should find ways to be more proactive in supporting and including male staff. This could include providing meeting space, office space, and resources that can be accessed freely by male staff which would not infringe on Women's Centre direct service space and would respect policies and procedures that support direct services to women.

#### **4.7.4 Youth Involvement**

- ◆ An important component of youth involvement is the youth role in the classroom and in other activities that can help to promote and reinforce the curriculum messages, such as youth health fairs, Mi'kmaq Heritage month, Black History month, and December 6 remembrance of the Montreal Massacre.
- ◆ Ensure opportunities for the Youth Facilitators to all meet together regularly, to continue to develop their knowledge and skills related to curriculum topics and program delivery.
- ◆ Ensure accessibility of youth to the Youth Facilitator position through similar strategies used for this program; and, most importantly, by consulting with youth and acting on their recommendations for ensuring access.

#### **4.7.5 Training Programs**

Adult and Youth Facilitator training programs should include:

- ◆ At least one annual training event that strengthens and supports the adult and youth facilitator teams.
- ◆ Discussion and analysis of critical issues such as feminism, racism, and men's role in helping gender roles become more balanced; diversity training, curriculum topics, facilitation skills, strategies in handling different aspects of resistance to change, and teambuilding.

#### **4.7.6 Interactive Teaching Techniques**

- ◆ The program must incorporate interactive techniques that engage the students and interest them in the topics.
- ◆ The program should incorporate separate gender sessions where girls and boys can open up to discussion of important issues, and then share their insights with each other.
- ◆ The program should incorporate strategies that enable students to overcome resistance to new ideas and change through the three components identified in this project: Adult Facilitators putting the issues out for discussion; provision of a safe environment to enable students to express their opinions and ideas; and interactive techniques to facilitate active involvement by students.

## **APPENDIX A: Internal Evaluation Steering Group Members**

Mary-Jess MacDonald, School Board representative

Dave Bance, PDR teacher, East Antigonish

Linda Peters & Thomas Melong, Youth Facilitators, East Antigonish

Nancy Peters, Evaluation Consultant, Coady International Institute, StFX University

Patrick Taman, RYEP Adult Facilitator and Appreciative Inquire Research Assistant  
(2003-04)

Lucille Harper, Executive Director, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre

Jean Crosby, RYEP Coordinator

Jackie Jacques, RYEP Office Administrator

Peggy Mahon, Internal Evaluation Consultant



**APPENDIX B: In-House Evaluation Themes, Outcomes and Methods Revised December 2005**

INTERNAL EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	METHODS
1. Framework for Understanding Violence and Abuse	Objective 1	1.1 The difference that the gender-based approach makes; 1.2 Ability to name gender stereotypes for girls and boys 1.3 Ability to name forms of personal and systemic and to make links between/among forms of violence. 1.4 Why violence and abuse should be framed as a systemic, not individual problem.	part of overall analysis and conclusions of the evaluation YF/students YF/students literature	AI analysis AI analysis Literature review
2. Gender and Diversity	Objectives: 1, 5, & 9:	2.1 The aspects of diversity that are important to address; 2.2 The effects of modelling diversity on what students and Youth Facilitators learned 2.3 A gender-based approach makes it easier to address other forms of violence. 2.4 What supports recruitment and retention of RYEP staff.	RYEP staff, AF/YF teams; teachers/admin. AF/YF teams Youth involvement; AF; Advisory Cttee; School Administrators.	AI – Interviews; focus group (teachers/administrators T/A) AI – Interviews AI analysis Youth involvement survey; Stakeholder interviews
3. Rural and Remote	Objective 1	3.1 Challenges and suggestions for improving delivery of RYEP in a rural/remote area. 3.2 What worked and what could work to gain buy-in and trust to deliver RYEP 3.3 Roles and strategies for promoting awareness and success of the program. 3.4 Positive community partnerships have developed.	Teachers/administrators; RYEP staff; Adv Committee; Youth Involvement Administrators/teachers; RYEP staff; Adv Committee, parents Teachers/administrators; RYEP staff; YF/AF parents Teachers/administrators; RYEP staff; Adv Committee	AI analysis; stakeholder interviews; T/A focus group Stakeholder interviews; T/A focus group T/A focus group; Stakeholder interviews Stakeholder Interviews

### In-House Evaluation Themes, Outcomes and Methods Revised December 2005

INTERNAL EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES (WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW)	SOURCE OF INFORMATION (WHO OR WHERE)	METHODS (HOW)
4. Safety and Confidentiality	Could be related to “engagement” in objective 1. Possible objective 3 & 4.	4.1 What makes the classroom a safe place to discuss violence and abuse. 4.2 Female and male safety needs are compared for similarities and differences 4.3 Ability to identify need for self care and when and how to seek help	Student, YF/AF; teachers/administrators.  students, YF/AF.  YF/AF	AI Interviews; Student surveys; T/A focus group.  Student survey (Gr. 11); AI analysis AI Questions
5. Approaches to Intervention	Objective 1: overall approach and design of the program; factors in school and community that facilitate/challenge delivery  Objective 9: use and involvement of Youth Facilitators; characteristics of strong teams; capacity building of Youth Facilitators.	5.1 Why it is important to deliver the program over several years; 5.2 Themes, topics and skills that are most important to students and Youth Facilitators; 5.3 Links between RYEP curriculum and existing curriculum; 5.4 Use of interactive techniques helps learning; 5.5 Strategies to overcome resistance to some topics; 5.6 School and community factors that facilitate and challenge delivery of curriculum; 5.7 Best practices for taking advantage of “teachable moments” to reinforce curriculum messages. 5.8 Supports and barriers to youth involvement in the program. 5.9 Benefits and challenges of youth involvement in the program 5.10 Requirements to learn more about issues, strategies, resources and supports to help their role in facilitating the RYEP. 5.11 Observations about the impact of this program on students	Literature  Students; YF/AF; teachers/administrators; classroom evaluation; youth involvement; Diversity consultant  Students YF/AF  YF/AF; Administrators; Adv. Committee; RYEP staff. parents YF/AF  Youth Involvement Report; Monthly Evaluation Reports parents  Youth Involvement Report; Monthly Evaluation Report  Parents, teachers	Literature review  AI Questions ; T/A focus group; Document analysis Student survey  Document analysis (report)  Student survey AI Interviews  AI Interviews; Stakeholder interviews.  AI Interviews  Document analysis  Document analysis  Document analysis

### In-House Evaluation Themes, Outcomes and Methods Revised December 2005

INTERNAL EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES (WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW)	SOURCE OF INFORMATION (WHO OR WHERE)	METHODS (HOW)
6. Impact on Youth Participants	Objectives: 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6: increase students; knowledge, understanding, attitudes/ values; and skills.	<p>6.1 Increased students' &amp; YF <u>knowledge, attitudes, and values</u> toward key elements of healthy relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need for self respect &amp; assertiveness</li> <li>- equality and mutual respect</li> <li>- empathy</li> <li>- effective communication</li> <li>- racial and cultural diversity</li> <li>- role and gendered nature of power;</li> <li>- differences between interpersonal and system violence</li> <li>- the effects of interpersonal and systemic violence on their lives</li> </ul> <p>6.2 Increased students' and YF <u>skills</u> in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- problem solving;</li> <li>- conflict resolution</li> </ul> <p>6.3 Increased YF knowledge and skills in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- program planning</li> <li>- facilitation</li> </ul>	<p>Students</p> <p>Youth Facilitators</p> <p>Youth Involvement Report</p> <p>Classroom evaluations</p> <p>Monthly Evaluation Reports</p>	<p>Student Survey</p> <p>AI Interviews</p> <p>Document Analysis</p>



## **APPENDIX C: Rural Youth Education Project Objectives**

1. To engage all students in grades 7, 8, 9, & 11 in two school sites: East Antigonish Education Centre/ East Antigonish Academy and Chedabucto Education Centre/Guysborough Academy, in a series of lessons designed to promote healthy and respectful relationships.
2. To increase students' knowledge and understanding of key elements of intimate relationships; the role and gendered nature of power; the need for self respect and assertiveness; equality and respect; and empathy and effective communication.
3. To influence students' attitudes and values by creating a positive appreciation of the benefits of self respect and assertiveness, equality and mutual respect and empathy and effective communication in relationships.
4. To increase students' skills in establishing and maintaining healthy and respectful relationships including such things as problem solving and conflict resolution in the context of friendships and intimate relations.
5. To increase students' understanding of racial/cultural diversity specifically related to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian community.
6. To increase students' understanding of the differences between interpersonal and systemic violence and the effect it has on their lives.
7. To decrease reported incidents of violence or abusive behaviour in the school setting.
8. To decrease reported incidents of violence or abusive behaviour in friendships and dating relationships; and
9. To involve high school students in a meaningful way in program planning, guidance, and delivery.



**APPENDIX D: RYEP Advisory Committee Members**  
**May 2002 - August 2006**

*All members were involved with the RYEP From May/02 – Aug/06 unless otherwise noted.*

- National Crime Prevention Centre: Senior Program Analyst, Atlantic Region
  - Lucy Burke (March – August/06)
  - Jane Rutherford (Sept /05 – March/06)
  - Karen Swan (May/02 – September/05)
- RYEP Jean Crosby, Project Co-ordinator
- RYEP Diversity Consultant Sylvia Parris
- Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre (AWRC) Lucille Harper, Director
- AWRC Board Member
  - Maureen Shebib, Equity Officer, St. Francis Xavier University (Dec/04 – August/06)
  - Nancy Forestell, Professor, St. Francis Xavier University (May/02 – Dec/04)
- East Antigonish School
  - Darryl Breen, Vice Principal (Sept/04 – Aug/06)
  - Gerard Ryan, Vice Principal (Sept/02 – Sept/04)
  - Sherman England, Principal (May/02 – Sept/02)
- Chedabucto Place
  - Archie Chisholm, Principal (Nov/05 – Aug/06)
  - Paul Ash, Principal (Sept/03 – Sept/05)
  - Elizabeth Teasdale, Principal (May/02 – June/03)
  - Mary Fisher, Teacher (May/02 – June/03)
  - Paul Long (May/02 – June/03)
- Strait Regional School Board
  - Kathy Rhodes-Langille, Race-Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding & Human Rights Co-ordinator (Dec/04 – Aug/06)
- Crime Prevention Association Denise Wood, Youth Services Co-ordinator ( May/02 – Mar/03)
- Afrikan Canadian Heritage & Friendship Centre Wendy Campbell, Co-ordinator
- Guysborough Youth Health Services Centre Leona Purcell, Public Health Nurse
- Black Educator’s Association of Nova Scotia Joanne Reddick, Regional Educator



**APPENDIX E: RYEP Personnel  
March 2002 - August 2006**

Project Co-ordinator: Jean Crosby (March/02 - August/06)  
 Office Administrator: Jackie Jacques (March/02 - August/06)  
 Financial Administrator: Christine Hanlon (March/02 - August/06)  
 Diversity Consultant: Sylvia Parris  
 Evaluation Consultants: Peggy Mahon (Nov 03 to Oct 06); Nancy Peters (Aug 03)  
 Evaluation Assistant: Patrick Taman (03/04)  
 Curriculum Support: Krista DeCoste; Susan Eaton (March/04)

<b>Adult Facilitators</b>	<b>School Year</b>
<u>Chedabucto Place/ East Antigonish:</u> Krista DeCoste James Maynard	05/06 August to June
<u>Chedabucto Place:</u> Krista DeCoste Sean Patterson <u>East Antigonish:</u> Annika Peters Derek Shaw Lucky Campbell Jennifer Hardy Krista DeCoste	04/05 August to May August to May  August to October August September to November October to November November to May
<u>Chedabucto Place:</u> Krista DeCoste John Jantunen <u>East Antigonish:</u> Annika Peters Patrick Taman	03/04 August to June August to June  August to June August to June
<u>Chedabucto Place:</u> Krista DeCoste James Cameron Steve Wardrope <u>East Antigonish:</u> Annika Peters Augy Jones Liam Timmons <u>Relief Positions:</u> Colleen Pelly Flora Murphy	02/03 June/02 - June/03 June/02 - January/03 February/03 - June/03  June/02 - June/03 June/02 - January/03 February/03 - June/03  June/02 - February/03 February/03 - June/03

