Impact of York University Faculty Association - Community Projects (YUFA - CP) funding to Jane and Finch Community access Post-Secondary Education

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Abstract

In the past 10 years, YUFA-CP has spent a significant amount of funding on community projects mainly targeting the Jane and Finch community. In this research, we analyzed annual reports from 2009-2017 and gathered data collected from 8 interviews with community program directors and past program participants in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the funding towards assisting students from low-income communities with accessing higher education at York University. Some positive impact such as social support, financial assistance, improvement on academic achievement and gaining more self-confidence were evident according to the interview results. As a result, the data proves that YUFA-CP funding has been used effectively in the past 10 years.
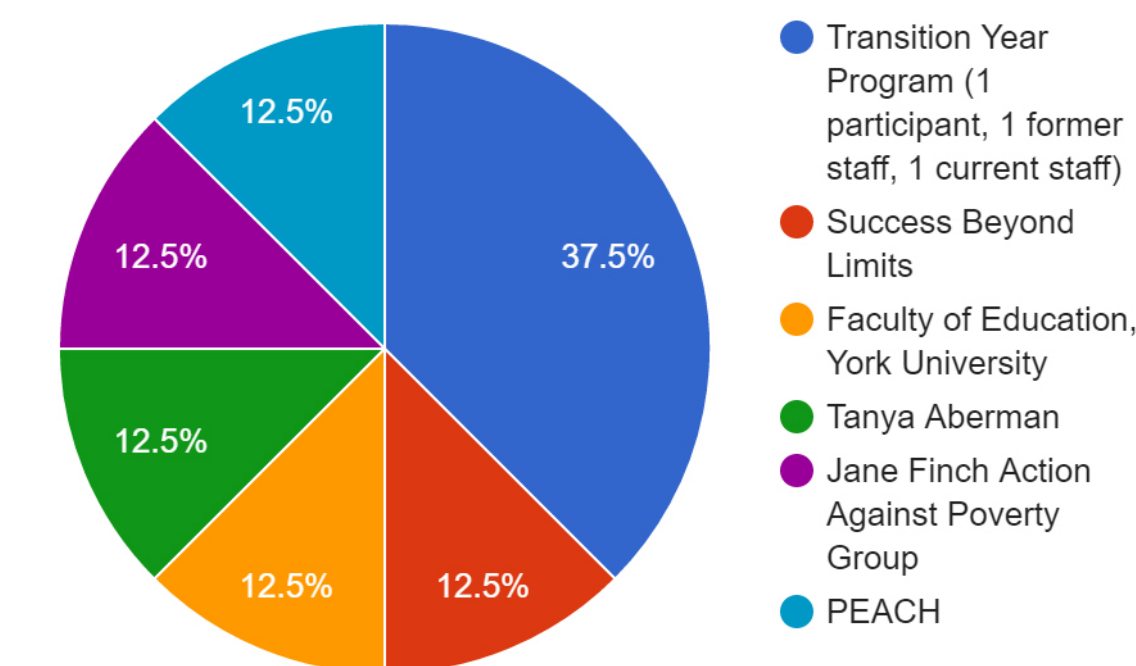
Introduction

Our team has been working with Natalie Coulter, co-chair of YUFA-CP in order to figure out how much funding had been effective in giving students from low-income communities specifically, the Jane and Finch community access to York University. Since the neighbourhood is located directly outside of York and studies have shown that students from low income families are less likely to have access to post-secondary education because of various barriers (Frempong, Ma & Mensah, 2012). The focus of this research was on the large projects that YUFA-CP has funded over $1,500 per year.
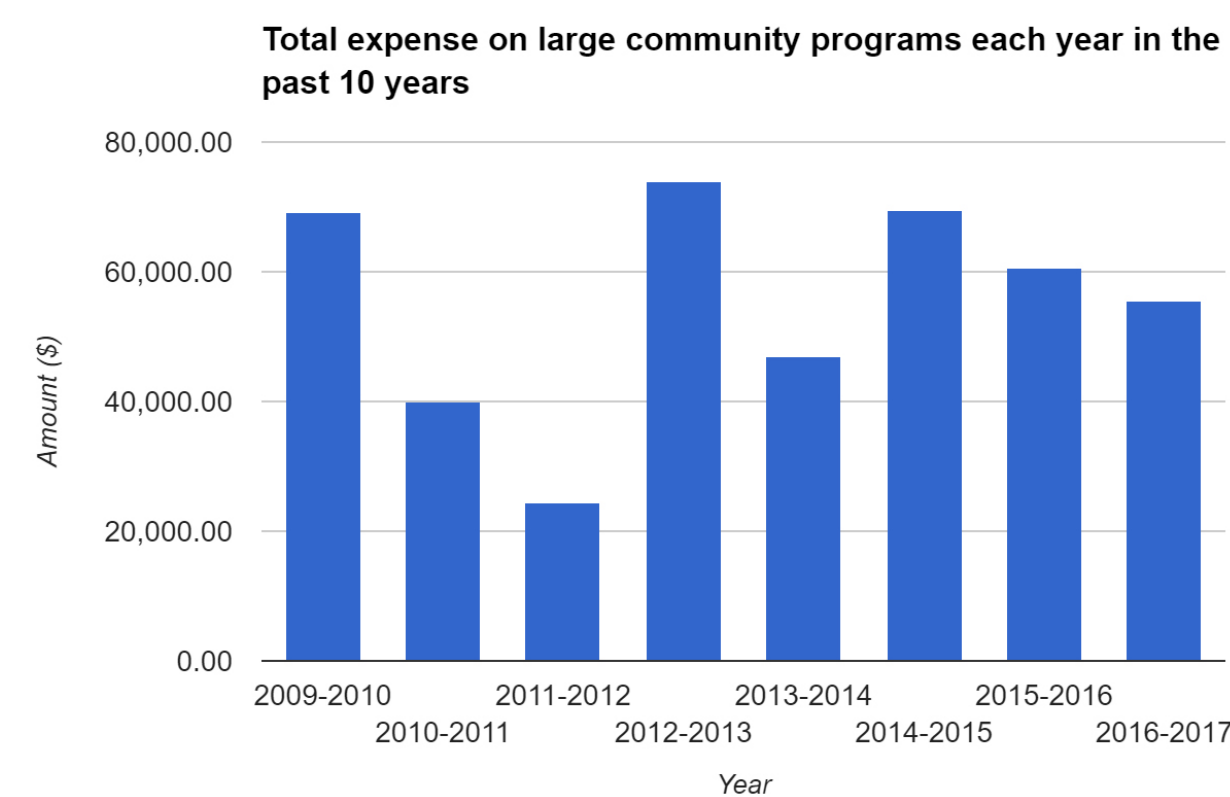
Methods

Phone interview or email response

Total numbers of the interviewees
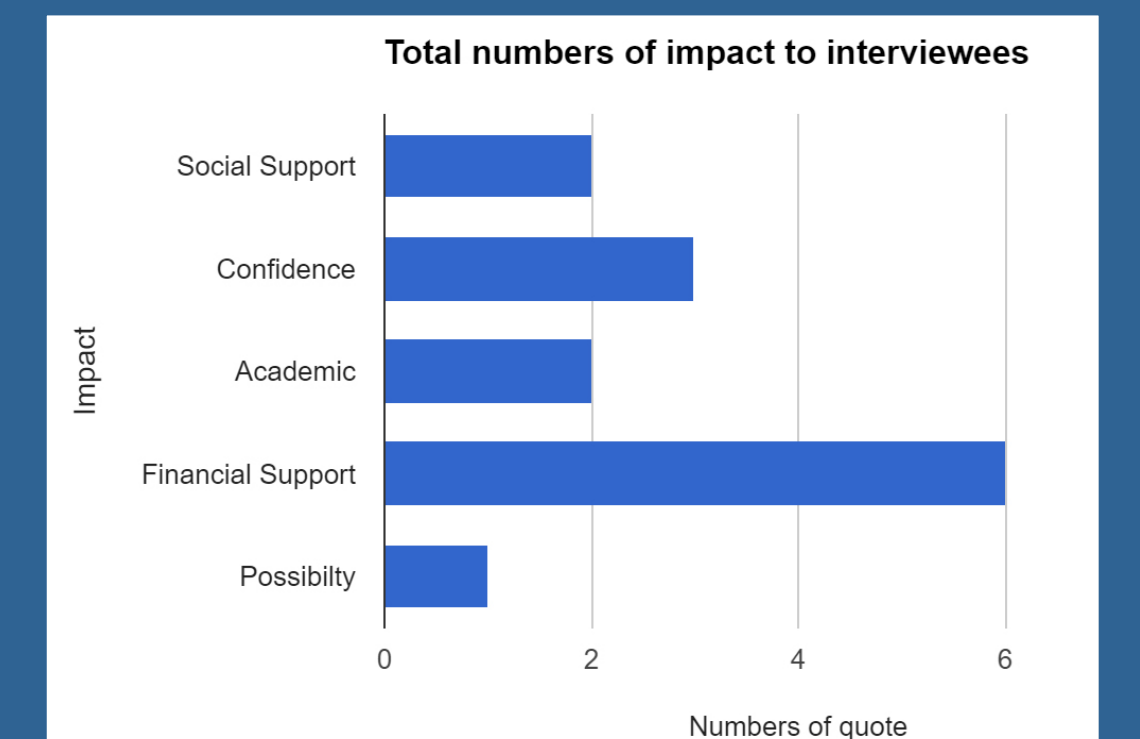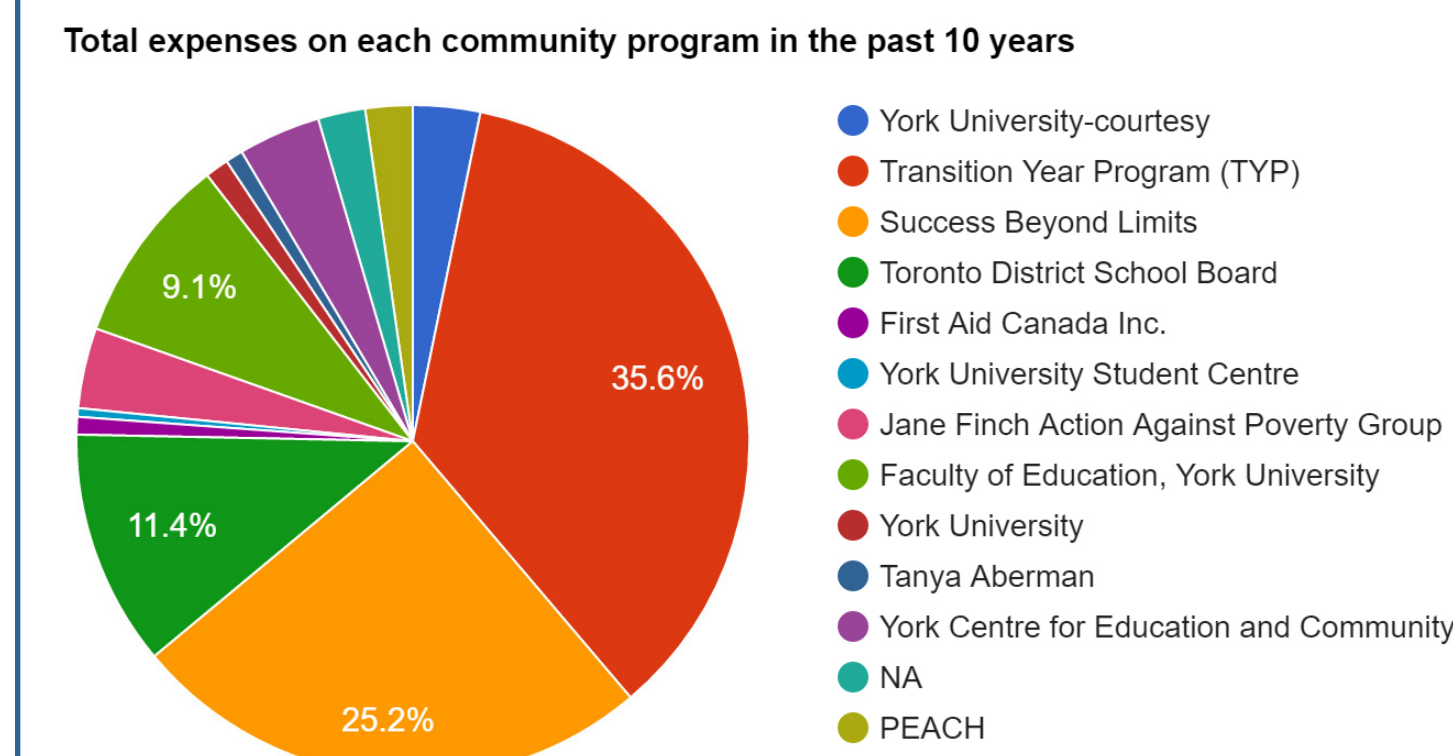

- Transition Year Program (1 participant, 1 former staff, 1 current staff) — 37.5%
- Success Beyond Limits — 12.5%
- Faculty of Education, York University — 12.5%
- Tanya Aberman — 12.5%
- Jane Finch Action Against Poverty Group — 12.5%
- PEACH — 12.5%

Result

Total funding in the past 10 years

Total expense on large community programs each year in the past 10 years

Total funding of the past 10 years on each community program

Total expenses on each community program in the past 10 years

- York University-courtesy
- Transition Year Program (TYP) — 35.6%
- Success Beyond Limits — 25.2%
- Toronto District School Board
- First Aid Canada Inc.
- York University Student Centre
- Jane Finch Action Against Poverty Group — 9.1%
- Faculty of Education, York University — 11.4%
- York University
- Tanya Aberman
- York Centre for Education and Community
- NA
- PEACH

Total numbers of impact to interviewees

Conclusion

We conducted research question and our findings show that the funding from YUFA-CP to Jane and Finch Community is very important when it comes to sustaining the various programs that it has funded and helping members in the community overcome barriers to accessing York University. Without YUFA's funding a lot of those programs would not exist so this shows the importance in building and sustaining those community partners and initiatives. This also shows how helpful those programs are in providing financial support to the participants of the programs since high tuition fees is one the main reasons why students from low income communities do not enroll in university (Coelli, 2009).

5 themes

Social Support

(left: Transition Year Program second year graduate and her mentor)
She said, "I gained a huge network of a mix of professors, and future professionals"

Interviewee #2:
"I met a lot of friends in the program and years after, we are still close friends"
(Past participant from Readers to Leaders)

Building Confidence

Interviewee #1
(Past participant From TYP) - "I gained confidence in myself simply through association with a post-secondary institution, but also through the TYP workshops that taught writing skills, research skills, how to give presentations, etc."

"It helped me to prepare for and pass my grade 10 literacy test by doing practice questions each week which developed my skills and also my confidence that I would do well on the test since I was a new immigrant and did not know what to expect" - Interviewee #2
(From Readers to Leaders)

Academic Success

"I got a full scholarship. I graduated summa cum laude. I have a degree in a professional field, which I can use to get a salary job immediately upon graduation. I can continue with higher education in a variety of fields."
- Interviewee #1
(Past Participant from Transition Year Program)

"...Research has shown that our students have better graduation rates, greater grade-point averages, and lower absenteeism in high school. "
- Interviewee #7
(Staff from Success Beyond Limits)

Financial Support

"It makes funds available to help bridge students financially at the beginning of the academic year before they receive their OSAP, to cover emergency financial assistance, and/or to defray some of the costs of their first course in their chosen degree program once they complete TYP." - Interviewee #3
(Current Program Staff from Transition Year Program).

"YUFA-CP is extremely useful and instrumental for the day-to-day operations of JFAAP and for its community actions."
- Interviewee # 5
(Staff From Jane Finch Action Against Poverty)

Possibility

"There is an inestimable value to the community of having a student in TYP experience a university education, learn the culture of the university, become familiar with York U, and gain that critical sense of belonging. Their experience shared goes a considerable distance to widening the perception that York is accessible...that a university education at York is possible."
- Interviewee #3
(Former Staff from Transition Year Program)

"... I definitely think there was more interest in the issue [barriers to accessing post-secondary education for people with precarious immigration status] after the research because a lot of people didn't know about the issue." - Interviewee #6
(Independent researcher)

Acknowledgements

Reference

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (2011). Chapter Nine: Disseminating your Community- Based Research Project. In Community Based Research Toolkit: Resource for Doing Research with Community for Social Change. Retrieved March 31, 2017 from http://accessalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CBR_Toolkit_Jan2012.pdf; Coelli, M, B. (2009). Tuition fees and equality of university enrollment Canadian Journal of Economics 42 (3), 1072-1099. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docview/56961227?accountid=15182; Creating Posters for the Undergraduate Research Fair. York University, 2016 File https://moodle.yorku.ca/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=1295101; Creating Posters for the Undergraduate Research Fair. York University, 2016 File http://moodle.yorku.ca/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=1301826; Frempong. G., Ma, X., & Mensah, J. (2012). Access to post-secondary education: can schools compensate for socioeconomic disadvantage. Journal of Higher Education, 63 (1), 19-32. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/41343604?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents; University of Regina. (n.d.) Exchanging Knowledge: A Research Dissemination Toolkit. University of Regina, Faculty of Arts Community Research Unit. Retrieved from https://moodle.yorku.ca/moodle/mod/url/view.php?id=1259103