

Youth Policy: What Works and What Doesn't?

A Review of Youth Policy Models From Canada and Other Jurisdictions

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Youth Policy: What Works and What Doesn't
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Executive Summary

In recent years, several governments around the world have recognized the need for policy responses to systemic youth issues and have undertaken policy reforms that focus on youth. Scholars and policy makers alike have developed new perspectives and tools for framing contemporary youth issues and have made the case for a more positive, proactive approach to supporting youth.

Currently, the range of youth policies and strategies represents a 'patchwork' of agreements among various levels of government, ministries, departments, communities, and stakeholders. Most youth service providers rely on short-term funding from multiple sources, which results in short-term or time-limited initiatives that are difficult to sustain or integrate with long-term planning, and challenging to evaluate for effectiveness.

This report is a review of formal policy responses to systemic youth issues from various jurisdictions in Canada and internationally. It reviews policy and legislative frameworks related to youth at the local, regional, and national levels. The purpose of this review is to document existing youth policy models and legislative frameworks and identify the policy mechanisms that contribute to long-term positive outcomes for youth. The findings of the review and lessons learned are outlined below.

What Does Help: Features that Make Youth Policy Models More Effective

After reviewing the literature on youth policy and speaking to policy makers about the policy models and their respective implementation, we found four things that help youth policies work better:

1. A shared vision for determining action
2. A strategy for measuring outcomes
3. Mechanisms for intergovernmental service coordination
4. Mechanisms for reviewing and realigning services based on the needs, aspirations, and expectations of youth

What Doesn't Help: Some Factors that Limit the Effectiveness of Youth Policy Models

Our review identified several challenges related to youth policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy impact on youth. We grouped the challenges we found under four themes:

1. Working in silos
2. Lack of overarching vision
3. Narrow mandate or target group
4. Defining "youth" in different ways

Lessons Learned and Implications for Public Policy

We identified five key lessons from the inter-jurisdictional review of youth policy:

1. There exists no multi-level policy framework in Toronto or Ontario that adopts a comprehensive outcomes-based approach to youth development.
2. In general, policy responses to youth issues are increasingly being aimed at connecting various youth policy sectors and departments. There is also evidence of a shift towards service provision models that aim to develop partnerships between young people, decision makers in the youth sector, and the community.
3. A number of youth policies have narrow mandates and limited target populations. This can act as a barrier that limits impact on the youth population as a whole.
4. There is no single theoretical approach to youth policy that is clearly more effective than another. However, stakeholders who employ differing approaches to helping youth can better collaborate when they are working toward the same overarching goals and long-term youth outcomes.
5. Creating a common vision is the first step in developing an effective policy framework. The real benefit of a vision comes from how it frames the development of policy goals regarding youth outcomes.

Towards the Formulation of a Common Vision for Youth: Next Steps

The formulation of a common youth outcomes strategy or framework will be a crucial first step in addressing the fragmentation that appears to result in limited impact on youth.

In order to achieve this, the following steps can be taken:

1. Document existing fragmentation and disseminate information throughout the sector
2. Convene appropriate stakeholders and build consensus around broad developmental, social, and economic outcomes for youth
3. Focus advocacy activities on developing a Youth Outcomes Strategy at the highest political level

The lessons from other jurisdictions make it clear that the support we give to young people can be maximized if we do not stop at the implementation of several isolated measures, but coordinate these initiatives across levels of government and at the community level.

I. Introduction

In 2004, United Way Toronto set a priority to help youth on pathways to success. This was in response to our research, which has consistently found youth issues to be one of Toronto's most pressing social concerns. Our research has also highlighted the fact that program and service availability in Toronto does not generally correspond geographically to where the youth population is the largest and the needs are greatest - in the "inner suburbs"¹. As a result, recent public policy research at United Way has been aimed at exploring the systemic policy gaps and barriers affecting successful youth outcomes.

Our recent research project (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2008) documented and analyzed the gaps and disconnects in Toronto's youth system and found evidence of an increase in services and programs that target immediate youth needs. However, we also found system-wide problems, primarily the growth of an increasingly complex and fragmented youth sector characterized by incoherence in services, policies, and funding sources. Most youth service providers rely on short-term funding from multiple sources, which results in short-term or time-limited initiatives that are difficult to sustain with long-term planning. As a result, the overall public policy response to youth issues has developed in a piecemeal fashion, with various supports and services set up in isolation from each other by different governments, agencies and departments. At a time when youth face big challenges, the programs and supports to help young people are not close to hand and easy to access.

Rationale and Research Questions

In recent years, governments around the world have recognized the need for a policy response to systemic youth issues. There has been broad international support for undertaking policy reforms that invest in youth. Organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) recognize youth as a population that should be treated separately from children and adults (World Health Organization 2002). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes specific rights for children and youth, and the European Commission published a White Paper on youth providing a framework for co-operation and coordination in the field of youth. At national, regional, and local levels, governments are quickly making youth national priorities by developing policies that recognize youth as an important population and link supports for young people to broader outcomes and long-term goals. Is this worth doing? What are the benefits of a developing a comprehensive youth policy framework?

This report is a review of formal policy responses to systemic youth issues from various jurisdictions in Canada and internationally. The purpose of this review is to document existing youth policy models and legislative frameworks and identify the features that contribute to long-term positive outcomes for youth. We looked at a sample of policy and legislative frameworks related to youth at the local, regional, and national levels and asked the following questions:

- What are the different policy models used to respond to systemic youth issues in Canada and elsewhere?
- What are the theoretical approaches to helping youth that guide policy and program development?
- What specific policy tools or mechanisms facilitate or hinder policy implementation related to youth?
- What can we learn from the experience of other jurisdictions?

¹ This term generally refers to the former municipalities of East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough and York.

Methodology: How we Reviewed the Policy Models

This review compared several examples of youth policy models from 12 national and international jurisdictions. These are listed below. For a description of each, please see Appendix A.

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Name of initiative</u>
City of Toronto	Toronto Youth Strategy
City of Vancouver	Civic Youth Strategy
Province of Ontario	Youth Opportunities Strategy
Province of Ontario	Youth Challenge Fund
Province of Alberta	Youth Employment Strategy
Province of British Columbia	Youth Policy Framework
Province of Québec	Québec Youth Policy
Government of Canada	Youth Justice Renewal Strategy
Government of Canada	Youth Employment Strategy
Province of New Brunswick	Youth Services Partnership
U.S.A	Federal Youth Coordination Act
England, U.K.	Youth Matters: Green Paper on Youth / Every Child Matters
State of Victoria, Australia	Respect: The Government's Vision for Young People

To create this list we searched for existing youth-specific policies in Canada. In addition to Canadian policy models, three examples of jurisdictions outside of Canada were included in this review for comparative purposes. In order to select three international examples, given the wide array of youth policy models existing across Europe and Asia, we looked for evidence of innovation in youth policy development, in addition to evidence of a formalized response to service fragmentation. We reviewed policy documents and also spoke to senior government and NGO personnel to highlight trends, challenges, and lessons to be learned from each of the jurisdictions.²

It should be noted that this review is intended only to compare the key characteristics of the policy interventions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate policy development in detail or to measure and assess specific youth outcomes. For more detail on framework content, research on service fragmentation and related issues, please consult the bibliography.

² A review of academic and grey literature (unpublished studies, government legislative and policy documents, and community reports) was conducted to explore issues related to international standards for youth policy formulation, policy implementation, and youth outcomes. Additionally, individual policy documents were analyzed and key informants representing and working within the jurisdictions were consulted to facilitate the collection of data.

II. Youth Policy: Identifying Different Models

Types of Youth Policy

Policies that target youth can be sweeping or narrow, straightforward or complex – as varied as the governments that create them. Generally we can sort them into three broad categories:

- **Population-based youth policies.** These policies typically include a framework that articulates a desired vision for youth outcomes (i.e. youth that are healthy, socially engaged, employable, etc.). Population-based policies and strategies are universal in that they apply to the entire youth population as well as any sub-groups that make up the youth population.
- **Targeted policies for sub-groups of youth.** These policies focus on a single facet of youth development or a particular sub-population of youth. For example, targeted policies may focus on assisting youth in an area such as employment. They may also address the needs of particular groups at risk of social exclusion or marginalization because of race, ability, religious affiliation, or geographic location. Targeted policies for subgroups of youth may exist on their own or within the context of a population-based policy.
- **Targeted policies for individual youth.** These are policies designed to address personal barriers. These policies include treatment and rehabilitation programs and other such individual interventions. These policies may also exist within a broader population-based policy.

Different Theoretical Approaches to Working With Youth

Policy responses to youth issues include premises or assumptions about how the policies will have impact and achieve objectives. We describe some different theoretical approaches below. Note that a given policy model may include elements of more than one theoretical approach.

- **Youth Engagement Approach.** *Premise:* all youth benefit from opportunities to have a voice, access, and shared power with adults. Policies using this approach seek to limit the marginalization of youth by finding avenues for proactive involvement in the development of programs that affect them. Older and visible minority youth who are at risk of being failed by traditional approaches especially benefit from youth engagement programs that emphasize access, equity and social justice.
- **Population Health Approach.** *Premise:* social institutions, geographic surroundings, and social relationships are the social determinants of health. Inequalities can be prevented or improved through social supports that target the wellbeing of an entire population. The approach includes an overall emphasis on outcomes (as opposed to inputs and processes) and the reduction of inequities among population groups.
- **Asset-Based Approach.** *Premise:* successful policy interventions identify and build on individual and group strengths and skills, rather than emphasizing limitations. Policy responses aim for wider community change through positive social relationships and broad mobilization efforts.

- **Risk Prevention and Resiliency Approach.** *Premise:* building an individual’s resilience to specific dangers and threats can assist them in managing or coping with significant adversity or stress. Policies should counter specific dangers and threats, known as risk factors, which are strongly associated with negative outcomes. This approach builds resilience by developing assets in individuals, families and communities.

Key Features of Youth Policy Models

Table 1 summarizes the key elements of the reviewed policy models. We have indicated the type of policy response and the approaches to helping youth that influenced policy development in each jurisdiction. The policy models are analyzed based on consistency with the following features identified by our research as being helpful to youth policy implementation:

- A vision for determining action
- A strategy for attaining and measuring outcomes
- Mechanisms for intergovernmental service coordination
- Mechanisms for reviewing and realigning services based on the needs, aspirations and expectations of youth

Table 1 - Overview of Key Features of Youth Policy Models

	Type of Policy Response/ Model	Theoretical Approach to Helping Youth	Formal Vision for Determining Action	Mech. for Attaining & Measuring Outcomes	Mech. for Intergovernmental Coordination	Mech. For Realignment & Review
Toronto	Population-based (policy framework)	Youth Engagement	✓	✓		✓
Vancouver	Population-based (policy framework)	Youth Engagement	✓	✓		✓
B.C.	Population-based (policy framework)	Population Health / Asset- Based	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quebec	Population-based (policy framework)	Youth Engagement / Population Health	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alberta	Population-Based (policy framework)	Asset-based	✓	✓		✓
Victoria, Australia	Population-based (policy framework)	Asset-based/ Youth Engagement	✓	✓		✓
England, U.K.	Population-based (policy framework)	Asset-based/ Population Health	✓	✓	✓	✓
USA	Targeted (service coordination strategy)	Population Health/ Risk Prevention			✓	
N.B.	Population-based (service coordination strategy)	Population Health/ Risk Prevention			✓	
Canada - Dept. of Justice	Targeted (investment strategy)	Risk Prevention & Resiliency		✓		✓
Canada - HRSDC	Targeted (investment strategy)	Risk Prevention & Resiliency		✓		
Ontario	Targeted (investment strategy)	Youth Engagement/ Risk Prevention & Resiliency		✓		✓

What is a ‘Youth Policy Framework’?

A policy framework is a statement by government that provides a rationale and philosophy to guide policy and program development and direct financial resources for a target population or aspect of government service. It often includes a vision and guiding principles and is generally written for a broad audience (BC Ministry for Children and Families, 2000).

Countries like Sweden, Estonia, and the Netherlands established national youth policies that link supports for young people to long-term national goals. The Commonwealth Youth Programme and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have each produced youth policy formulation manuals to support countries in the process of developing these frameworks.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (1990) defines a youth policy framework as:

A practical demonstration and declaration of the priority and directions that a country intends to give to the development of its young women and men. A [youth policy framework] specifically represents an inclusive statement that encapsulates the elements of vision, framework and realistic guidelines from which strategies and initiatives can be developed to facilitate meaningful youth participation and development.

Essentially, a youth policy framework (whether developed at the national, regional, or local level) is a model that aims to provide clarity around a government’s long-term investment priorities and goals related to youth. It also helps with policy implementation by fostering strategic direction, consistency, and accountability.

Youth Policies vs. a Youth Policy Framework: What’s the Difference?

Is it good enough to simply have a wide range of policies, programs, and services designed for youth? An examination of jurisdictions indicates that many of our governments already invest in policy initiatives that focus on youth. These initiatives commonly include financial investment strategies for the funding of youth programs or service coordination strategies to help with streamlining service delivery. So, does it really matter whether or not these investment strategies and service coordination tools are part of a ‘framework’? What is the practical difference?

The answer may be that without a framework, the overall goals and impact of various initiatives isolated from each other – perhaps even contradicting each other – can be very hard to determine. On the other hand, helping youth within the context of a policy framework means that more than one domain at a time must be taken into consideration. Additionally, we know how crucial it is that essential youth programs are sustained over the long-term; an outcomes-based framework has the advantage of being connected to a longer-term strategy with positive youth outcomes as the overall goal. This allows policy-makers to more easily plan funding and other investments over a longer period and evaluate for effectiveness.

Several jurisdictions face the serious problem of fragmentation and uneven service provision that can adversely affect youth and other vulnerable groups. In a valuable and fundamental analysis of this problem, Matthias (1997) and Hutchison and Charlesworth (2000) pointed out typical characteristics of child welfare systems in post-industrial societies. They found a series of isolated systems directed by different disciplines such as law, social work, medical science, politics and even economics. In this scenario, each isolated system or “silo” attempts to help the child or youth with reference to only one piece or some pieces of the puzzle.

Many youth face multiple barriers. For example, a parole officer may be unaware of a young person's learning disability. A health care provider may not appreciate the stresses a patient experiences because of racism. A newcomer may not feel comfortable discussing personal problems with someone from an unfamiliar cultural background. Even with substantial financial investments and the best intentions, can we reasonably expect service providers confined to these different domains to achieve the best results?

In order to achieve positive youth outcomes, youth issues need to be addressed holistically. Research has confirmed this: comprehensive strategies linking national, regional and local levels can be more effective than single interventions for implementing youth-focused supports because they are tailored to the specific needs of particular groups and communities (Hardiman et al, 2004). Comprehensive youth policy frameworks explicitly demonstrate the distinctive and complementary roles of governments, non-governmental organizations, and youth groups in supporting successful youth development. Being based on common principles, these outcomes-based policy frameworks also have the potential to provide decreased duplication and improved alignment between policy, services, and funding (Peters, 1998). Unlike isolated policy initiatives, outcomes-based strategies can extend policies across departmental boundaries and among all service delivery partners, including stakeholders outside of government. This can help to build common understanding and support around our ultimate goal of positive youth outcomes.

III. What Does Help: Features that Make Youth Policy Models More Effective

We found four things that help youth policy models work better:

1. A shared vision for determining action
2. A strategy for measuring outcomes
3. Mechanisms for intergovernmental service coordination
4. Mechanisms for reviewing and realigning services based on the needs, aspirations, and expectations of youth

1. The youth policy provides a shared vision for determining action related to youth

An effective population-based policy framework requires a statement of goals, broad outcomes, or objectives that set out what the policy is intended to achieve. This unifies all other supporting policy and program initiatives and assists stakeholders in determining action related to youth. Without a shared actionable vision of the desired outcomes for youth, efforts to focus supports required from families, institutions, and communities result in increased fragmentation, frustration, and failure (Forum for Youth Investment, 2005). The following jurisdictions serve as useful examples of frameworks with formal shared, actionable visions:

Jurisdiction	Example
Toronto	The <i>Toronto Youth Strategy</i> formally outlines an outcomes-based vision for youth in Toronto and is based on the concerns of Toronto youth. The Toronto Youth Strategy describes the City's commitment to working actively with youth, their families, and their communities to meet the needs of all youth and contribute to their well-being. The Strategy is guided by five principles including: Access, Equity, Communication, Education, and Income. In addition to these guiding principles, the Strategy outlines several specific outcomes for youth that the City of Toronto will provide in its roles as service and facility provider, resource provider, and advocate.
British Columbia	The British Columbia <i>Youth Policy Framework</i> clearly outlines the Ministry of Children and Family's approach to youth services. In general, the vision is focused on meeting the basic needs of youth. A formal consultation was essential in order for all stakeholders dealing with youth to 'buy in' to its fundamental principles. The <i>Youth Policy Framework</i> currently serves as a common frame of reference that provides the philosophical basis for all activities related to youth in the province.
Victoria, Australia	Government drew on consultations to develop the overarching vision and guiding principles that underpin the policy framework, <i>Respect: The Government's Vision for Young People</i> . The vision is related to youth 'living health and satisfying lives; the guiding principles are respect, diversity, and partnerships'.
Québec	With the help of an advisory committee made up of youth group representatives, the government developed a proposal that went through an extensive public consultation process. This eventually formed the basis for the <i>Quebec Youth Policy</i> . The policy outlines a vision which aims to 'provide young people with conditions that are conducive to active citizenship: engaging society in a culture of generational renewal, ensuring young people achieve their full potential, facilitating access to the job market, improving the quality of working life and developing a sense of belonging to Québec society'.

2. The policy or framework provides a strategy for attaining and measuring outcomes related to youth

The utility of a youth policy framework is improved greatly if broad goals or outcomes are supplemented with a strategy regarding how these outcomes are to be achieved and measured. All agencies, departments, and organizations dealing with youth issues should use similar metrics and work toward the same overall goals. Stakeholders believed that policy documents that include explicit benchmarks are useful in providing clear targets against which to measure progress. Additionally, broad policy documents that are coupled with more specific 'action plans' help to outline directives for attaining outcomes.

Jurisdiction	Example
Victoria, Australia	Specific milestones related to youth development and indicators of each milestone are clearly defined in the policy document. A milestone such as 'A reduction in the number of students who leave school early with no clear plans for their future' are articulated, with an indicator of progress being '90 percent of young people successfully completing Year 12 or its equivalent by 2010'.
England, U.K.	The <i>Every Child Matters</i> and <i>Youth Matters</i> Green Paper set out the specific actions that need to be taken locally in order to achieve desired outcomes for children and youth. They also outline how the federal government will work with and support local authorities and their partners to do so. The emphasis on outcomes in <i>Every Child Matters</i> has helped all concerned to focus on how services can better be brought together. The framework is designed to map these clearly defined outcomes against local performance indicators. Evaluation of services for young people takes place through local area agreements (LAAs) and comprehensive performance assessments (CPAs).
British Columbia	No specific action strategies or evaluation mechanisms are outlined in Youth Policy Framework document itself. However, benchmarks and target outcomes are outlined in the accompanying document 'Guidelines for Provision of Youth Services'.
Québec	The Quebec <i>Youth Action Strategy</i> 2006-2009 outlines specific 'beacon measures' as indicators for youth success. Some of these include 'a diversification of training paths in secondary education', 'eliminating junk food in schools', and 'to establish a support program for young people aged 16 to 24 experiencing specific problems'.

3. The policy or framework includes formal mechanisms for fostering intergovernmental service coordination

The Auditor General of Canada has observed, “more and more, government needs to manage initiatives that span two or more federal departments” (Report of the Auditor General of Canada, 2000). Collaboration and cooperation among different governments must occur to eliminate duplication of effort and service, increase efficiency, and ensure consistent strong outcomes. Comprehensive youth policy frameworks can ensure the establishment of institutional arrangements and procedures designed to integrate youth policy into federal, regional, and community planning, and assist in the coordination and funding of all related activities. Here are some examples:

Jurisdiction	Example
New Brunswick	The Government of New Brunswick <i>Youth Services Partnership</i> is supported by a Provincial Committee and 10 local committees. The mandate of the Provincial committee is to promote collaboration between federal and provincial government departments to facilitate complementary service delivery. Local committees were developed to provide a practical ‘grassroots’ vehicle through which to discuss and respond to youth issues in a collaborative manner. Federal and Provincial Co-chairs also sit on the provincial and local committees. This vertical committee structure facilitates planning across levels of government and prevents program duplication at the local level.
Federal Youth Development Council, U.S.A.	Under the <i>Federal Youth Coordination Act</i> , funding priority is given to states that have already initiated an interagency coordination effort focused on youth, and who demonstrate the inclusion of faith-based and community organizations in their coordination efforts. Children's Cabinets have also been established in statute in twenty states. Passing of state laws establishing Children’s Cabinets provides funding for a full-time coordinator at the state level and a Cabinet consisting of secretaries from several different departments, as well as representatives from the courts and from philanthropic organizations. Their mandate is to address all cross-departmental issues related to youth and to discuss and establish common indicators regarding outcomes for youth.
British Columbia	British Columbia has recently undergone a regional decentralization process that has greatly facilitated service coordination and integration of youth services through the development of Integrated Youth Service Hubs at the local level.

4. The youth policy includes mechanisms for realigning or reviewing services based on the needs, aspirations, and expectations of youth

Stakeholders noted that meaningful collaboration with various actors working with or representing young people is crucial. Effective youth policies include formal mechanisms to ensure that the recognition of, consultation with, and participation by young people and other stakeholders is ongoing. These mechanisms for ensuring youth voice may also be linked to the assessment of outcomes to ensure that youth policy and services remain relevant to the target population. In order to fully engage youth and other stakeholders in a participatory process it may be necessary to devote time and resources to designing and implementing creative strategies to include traditionally marginalized subpopulations of youth such as racialized youth, newcomer youth, young women, rural youth, and disabled youth.

Jurisdiction	Example
Toronto	Several key implementation mechanisms within the <i>Toronto Youth Strategy</i> have facilitated the formal engagement of youth in decision-making and review processes. The selection process for members of the Youth Strategy Panel was youth-designed and youth-led. The Panel is composed of thirteen members, seven of whom are youth. The Panel was composed in this way in order to ensure a balance of perspectives and the cooperation of youth and non-youth in problem solving and formal decision-making.
Vancouver	The City of Vancouver <i>Civic Youth Strategy</i> policy document underwent a comprehensive independent review in 2002-2005. This review resulted in a revised version of the original policy document. This resulted in the formation of a permanent Youth Outreach Team, which consists of youth between ages 18 and 26. Based on their knowledge and leadership in community and youth issues, they are hired as city staff for terms ranging between 18 months to 2 years. The auxiliary and flexible nature of the Youth Outreach Team positions allows for staff turnover so that youth are represented and the team remains diverse. The Youth Outreach Team encourages peer-to-peer training in various youth communities in order to engage a variety of youth perspectives.

IV. What Doesn't Help: Some Factors that Limit the Effectiveness of Youth Policy Models

Our review identified several challenges related to youth policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy impact. We grouped the challenges we found under four themes:

1. Working in silos
2. Lack of overarching vision
3. Narrow mandate or target group
4. Defining 'youth' in different ways

1. Working in Silos: Limited governmental coordination and collaboration

As discussed above, the existence of isolated organizational systems or “silos” inhibits communication and coordination among these systems. Across different levels of government, lack of sufficient coordination often results in service duplication and unclear mandates.³ On a practical level, this means that youth-serving organizations and their communities must address systemic barriers such as complex funding structures and gaps in service delivery, based on varied criteria.

We recognize that factors such as degree of political will, organizational structure, and the availability of resources greatly influence the capacity for governmental coordination and collaboration. Another factor is the extent to which other ministries, departments, and orders of government are included in the policy development process, joint projects, and collaborations.

Do the youth policy models include formal mechanisms and procedures for managing ongoing communication and collaboration between ministries, orders of government, and agencies related to youth? Not always. Here are some examples from among the jurisdictions we reviewed:

Jurisdiction	Example
Vancouver	The <i>Vancouver Civic Youth Strategy</i> is limited to City of Vancouver programs, services, and facilities. There is no reference made in the policy document to provincial or federal orders of government. This may limit future involvement of other government stakeholders in the strategy.
Toronto	In the <i>Toronto Youth Strategy</i> , the municipal relationship to federal and provincial governments that is referenced in the document relates primarily to financial partnerships rather than ongoing and strategic collaboration.
England, U.K.	The <i>Every Child Matters</i> and <i>Youth Matters</i> proposals indicated some attempts at inter-governmental coordination, however it has been noted that the lack of a protocol on information-sharing across government has posed significant challenges for effective coordination.

³ This is consistent with studies in public administration literature, which holds that lack of coordination in government occurs when more than one organization performs the same task (redundancy), no organization performs a necessary task (lacunae), and when policies with the same clients have different goals and eligibility requirements (incoherence). For example, see Peters (1998) and Lowndes and Skelcher (1998).

Canada (Dept. of Justice)	Although a stated goal of the <i>Youth Justice Renewal Initiative</i> is to 'explore how society as a whole can address youth crime and its associated factors', YJRI's program outcomes lack sufficient congruence with other Government of Canada youth strategies. The independent implementation of this framework functions in a silo that has limited potential to impact the youth population as a whole.
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2. Lack of Formal Overarching Vision

The lack of a formal youth-focused vision limits the ability of governments to pull services and programs together that place needs of youth at the forefront (Commonwealth Youth Programme, 1990). In the absence of an overarching vision based on common outcomes for youth, departments find it difficult to consult with each other to ensure overall coherence in strategy or direction. Staff and organizations may instead emphasize achievement of their own specific priorities, which may not align with desired social outcomes for the broader population. This has a direct impact on tangible social outcomes for youth and their communities, since youth experience service gaps when one part of the system is not able to work with another (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2008).

The existence of a formal policy framework with an overarching vision that emphasizes positive outcomes (as opposed to emphasis on only financial investments or improved processes) can help to mitigate the negative effects outlined above. The following are some examples of policy frameworks that have limited potential to impact the youth population as a whole because they have no formal declaration of guiding principles, desired outcomes, or a formal overarching vision for youth.

Jurisdiction	Example
New Brunswick	Although the <i>Youth Services Partnership</i> has a mandate to facilitate effective service coordination, there exists no guiding policy document outlining the overarching vision related to positive outcomes for youth. There is also no statement of the specific strategies that will be employed in order to carry out the ministry's youth service coordination mandate.
Ontario	The initiatives under the <i>Youth Opportunities Strategy</i> are not guided by a formal declaration that articulates an overarching vision or desired outcomes for the target population.
Canada (Dept. of Justice)	While the <i>Youth Justice Renewal Strategy</i> does highlight the need to redefine the justice system based on a 'new vision for youth offenders', there exists a lack of clarity on guiding principles underpinning the strategy and no overarching vision.

3. Narrow Mandate and / or Target Group

As is noted in the literature, youth policies may be targeted towards specific sub-groups or developed for wider populations. The advantage of targeted programs is that they recognize the need for specific supports for particular groups. Unfortunately, a common challenge cited by several interviewed staff was the difficulty in addressing youth issues that fall outside of a given program mandate, particularly when issues are not linked to a broader policy framework.

For example, targeted policy initiatives often require individuals to meet certain age criteria before they can qualify for services. However, in instances where the targeted model does not consider the broader continuum of youth development, youth can experience service gaps and have no relevant programming after reaching the maximum target age (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2008). The mandates of some targeted policies are also often limited to one aspect of youth life such as employment, social recreation, or justice, and as a result they often do not recognize youth as a whole person. Below are examples of policy models with narrow mandates and limited target populations, which may limit their effectiveness for achieving broad outcomes.

Jurisdiction	Example
British Columbia	The Ministry of Children and Families defines 'youth' as individuals between the ages of 16 and 19 years old. This greatly limits the number of people who qualify for youth-specific initiatives in the province such as the Youth Agreement Program, an initiative for homeless youth who require significant supports to live independently.
Ontario	The <i>Youth Opportunities Strategy</i> encompasses a limited policy mandate (14-18 year old youth deemed 'at risk'). Consequently, there exists a large number of Ontario youth that are not eligible for some of the initiatives under the strategy because they fall outside of the age range or do not live in neighborhoods identified as 'at risk'.

4. Defining 'Youth' In Different Ways

When is a person a "youth" and no longer a child? When is a person an "adult" and no longer a youth? We found age criteria for youth ranging from 11 to 30 years. Policy makers and service providers acknowledge some people fall outside the age range but nonetheless experience similar circumstances and need similar supports. However, many youth who fall outside of the age range specified would not qualify for these social services. The lack of coherence in definitions for youth across departments, ministries and governments poses both a policy and service delivery challenge by making transition between services areas difficult for young people.

V. Conclusions

The current range of youth initiatives in Toronto is, at best, a patchwork among various levels of government, ministries, departments, communities, and stakeholders. Over the past 25 years, an overall reduction in universal, sustained, and predictable social services, coupled with the current trend toward shorter term project funding, has eroded the core capacities of many youth-serving organizations (Campaign 2000, 2006). Many “gaps” exist that vulnerable youth can fall through, especially youth facing multiple barriers. The sector is limited in its capacity to provide integrated services in order to effectively respond to youth needs. Research across the sector confirms that the ability of youth to access quality and coordinated services directly affects their potential for healthy outcomes.

Recent policy developments related to youth in other countries and provinces suggest that there is considerable interest in achieving positive outcomes for both society and youth through policy responses to youth-related issues. However, while there is progress being made through current investments and a wide range of services available in our youth sector, there exists no overarching vision unifying these initiatives. Through our review of jurisdictions, we have learned that there is much value in developing a broad outcomes-based vision for youth. A youth policy framework that is outcomes-based could help in building a coordinated system by facilitating coherent government action and guiding the strategies of all other partners who are involved with youth, ultimately increasing positive outcomes for youth.

Lessons from this inter-jurisdictional review show us that the support we give to young people can be maximized if we do not stop at the implementation of several isolated measures, but coordinate these initiatives across levels of government and at the community level. Young people’s success in our society will depend on the government’s ability to improve the breadth, coordination, and cohesion of services for youth. Young people’s success will also depend on the ability of those concerned with youth outcomes and well-being to mobilize and advocate for a unified and comprehensive youth outcomes strategy.

Lessons Learned and Implications for Public Policy

We identified five key lessons from this inter-jurisdictional review of youth policy:

- 1. There exists no multi-level policy framework in Toronto or Ontario that adopts a comprehensive outcomes-based approach to youth development.**

A comprehensive outcomes-based framework such as is established to guide public policies for children from the prenatal period to age six⁴ is absent for young people ages 12-25. The policy frameworks that do exist tend to involve only one level of government and focus on specific areas (such as employability for youth, justice, or health) or focus on particular target populations, such as young offenders or youth at risk.

⁴ Please refer to [Appendix B](#) For description of *Ontario Best Start Plan* for children ages 0-6

- 2. In general, policy responses to youth issues are increasingly being aimed at creating synergy among various policy sectors and departments. There has also been evidence of a shift away from paternalistic service provision models towards those that aim to develop partnerships between young people, decision-makers in the youth sector, and the community.**

These trends have been consistent with scholarly research, which has pointed to the significance of multidisciplinary and holistic approaches for understanding the complexities of youth issues and transitions. These shifts also emphasize the importance of the recognition of, consultation with, and participation by young people in order to ensure that policies remain youth-relevant and youth-friendly. The youth policy agenda should continue to pay serious attention not only to the formulation of a comprehensive policy framework emphasizing holistic outcomes, but also to the quality of its engagement with youth and their communities.

- 3. A number of youth policies have narrow mandates and limited target populations. This can act as a barrier that limits impact on the youth population as a whole.**

Youth are not a homogeneous population and require appropriate and context-specific services. But multiple targeted programs with varied mandates can contribute to fragmentation in the sector, especially if these are not integrated to support continuous services. In some cases, limited mandates result in funding and policy relationships that put programs in competition with one another (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2008). As well, many targeted programs are issue-specific but often not located within a broader continuum of youth development needs. Adopting an outcomes-based policy framework would acknowledge the need to direct specific resources toward groups of youth who face economic, social, racial, and language barriers to social integration while simultaneously establishing youth as a long-term funding priority.

- 4. There is no single theoretical approach to youth policy that is clearly more effective than another. However, stakeholders who employ differing approaches to helping youth can better collaborate when they are working toward the same overarching goals and long-term youth outcomes.**

A lack of coherence in direction and long-term vision can impede partnerships involving stakeholders who utilize different approaches to helping youth. This suggests the need for a 'high-level' overarching framework based on youth development outcomes in order to align all approaches.

- 5. Creating a common vision for youth is the first step in developing an effective policy framework. The real benefit of a vision comes from how it frames the development of policy goals regarding youth outcomes.**

The process of getting to a common vision and the ongoing means for implementing good practices and monitoring are just as important (if not more so) than the content of the framework itself. Given that youth policy traverses several public policy areas - health, education, employment, crime, and housing - the crucial point is that policy developments for young people in these arenas must have a complementary, rather than a conflicting agenda. Jurisdictions that have adopted a clear outcomes-based vision have been better able to measure progress across common goals. In each of these cases, a collective vision and guiding principles have been used to develop and communicate a common understanding of the positive outcomes for youth that are to be achieved, with the expectation that all smaller policies, programs, and initiatives will adhere to the framework's defining principles.

Towards the Formulation of a Common Vision for Youth: Next Steps

United Way Toronto is committed to working with partners to support the development of a coordinated youth services sector that will place young people on the road to success. The formulation of a youth outcomes vision and framework will be a crucial first step in addressing the system fragmentation that hinders impact for youth.

In order to achieve this, the following steps can be taken:

1. Document Existing Fragmentation and Disseminate Information through the Sector

A fundamental step in developing an appropriate policy response to fragmentation in the sector will be describing and documenting the extent of the gaps and disconnects and comparing them against possible outcomes. Having this evidence base will assist in delineating investment areas and funding structures that can be strengthened by policy development. Additionally, it can assist in developing consensus regarding what the sought outcomes are. Dissemination of the information will help to raise public awareness about the need for an overarching policy that unifies the hundreds of smaller youth initiatives in Toronto and other areas.

2. Convene appropriate stakeholders and build consensus around broad developmental, social, and economic outcomes for youth.

As this report indicates, a common outcomes-based strategy is the basis of a strong policy response and possibly the initial step in the youth policy framework formulation process. A policy model based on consensus could ensure that all stakeholders are 'on board' and would continue to support broad objectives related to youth development in the long term. All six jurisdictions with formal outcome-based vision statements⁵ reinforced the need to engage in extensive formal consultation processes so as to engage youth, government and all other stakeholders in a meaningful consensus-building process. This means finding the appropriate mix of decision-makers and youth representation. The ability of conveners to effectively manage input across the sector is crucial.⁶ Another key success factor cited by informants was the ability of conveners to engage stakeholders without an undue focus on drilling down to a level of detail that would act as a barrier to reaching consensus.

3. Focus advocacy activities on developing a Youth Outcomes Strategy at the highest political level.

In order to enact a common vision for youth that is comprehensive and effective, a collective and unified voice must reach all levels of government. Working across government departments is equally important in order to promote holistic policy and prevent the formation of silos. Examination of other coordinated policy responses in the social service sector demonstrates the potential of all levels of government to negotiate federal, provincial, and municipal accords and agreements that establish shared goals, standards, and expectations.

In Canada, both the *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* and the *Early Childhood Agreement*⁷ have demonstrated how outcomes-based policy frameworks can establish a

⁵ Specifically, Australia, Quebec, Toronto, British Columbia, UK and Vancouver

⁶ For example, in developing a strategy to place Early Childhood issues on the federal government agenda, the National Children's Alliance developed working groups to draft recommendations. These recommendations only moved forward once consensus was achieved.

⁷ Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for descriptions of the *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* and *Early Childhood Agreement*

population group as a policy priority and result in a mandate to transfer resources to lower levels of government. Policy developments and agreements such as *Best Start* and the *Early Childhood Development Agreement* also demonstrate that population-based supports for young people in Canada have primarily focused on the early years, and that adolescence remains a neglected policy area with few coordinated approaches across levels of government to implement systemic change. A key factor influencing the success of these agreements has been the generation of a unified call to action and seeking opportunities for increased government engagement and collaboration.

Appendix A Descriptions of Youth-Specific Policy Frameworks by Jurisdiction

Toronto (City of Toronto)

Toronto Youth Strategy

- Population-based strategy supporting several aspects of youth services in Toronto.
- Targets youth age 12 – 24 for improved outcomes in the areas of:
 - Education, employment and income
 - Families, communities and neighbourhoods
 - Engagement
- Youth were engaged in developing the strategy along with non-youth.
- Sets priority actions and proposes a Youth Strategy Panel to facilitate the implementation of the strategy through a Youth Action Plan.
- The Panel began its work in June 2007 and is expected to recommend an Action Plan to Council in early 2008. While the City of Toronto Youth Strategy makes reference to financial partnerships with provincial and federal governments, the key focus of its mandate is City of Toronto programs, resources, and services.

Vancouver (City of Vancouver)

Civic Youth Strategy

- A population-based strategy with a mandate to promote the development, assessment, and delivery of civic services with direct impact on youth (ages 13-24).
- The strategy commits to:
 1. Ensure that youth have a 'place' in the city
 2. Ensure a strong youth voice in local decision-making
 3. Promote youth as a resource to the city
 4. Strengthen the support base for youth in the city

The Vancouver CYS takes a youth engagement approach in outlining its commitment to working in partnership with youth and the larger community. It includes an obligation to involve youth and youth organizations as active partners in the development, assessment and delivery of civic services that directly impact youth. The partners outlined are various city departments and community service providers. The Vancouver Civic Youth Strategy has received an Award of Excellence for Innovation from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

Ontario (Ministry of Children and Youth Services)

Youth Opportunities Strategy / Youth Challenge Fund

Youth Opportunities Strategy

- A risk prevention and resiliency approach for youth at risk (ages 14-18).
- Objectives: improving outcomes for marginalized youth in the areas of:
 1. Job readiness
 2. Engagement
 3. Access to information
 4. Crime prevention and diversion
 5. Police-youth relations

The Government of Ontario committed to \$28.5 million dollars in the first three years of the strategy to assist with its implementation. This includes funding for infrastructure as well as human resources in the form of youth outreach workers, who build relationships with hard-to-reach youth, provide youth with advice, and connect them with appropriate programs and services. The strategy recognizes that some youth, particularly those in marginalized and stigmatized in communities, often do not have access to opportunities and supports that would help them to be successful in life. The strategy includes initiatives such as the Summer Jobs for Youth Program, Youth in Policing Initiative, Youth Outreach Worker Program, YouthConnect.ca, the School-Based Prevention/Diversion Program, and the Ontario Public Service (OPS) Learn and Work Program.

Youth Challenge Fund

The *Youth Challenge Fund* is a targeted investment strategy for youth in poorly served areas in Toronto's inner suburbs. This youth-driven initiative is based on community-based collaborations and is intended to improve opportunities for Toronto's young people. Under the *Youth Challenge Fund*, the Province of Ontario has invested \$15 million for programs and services for youth (ages 11-24) and provided another \$15 million in matching funds. The matching funds have been set up to encourage donations from the private sector and individuals, bringing the total potential investment to \$45 million over three years. Grants provided under YCF tend to support youth programs that are often ineligible under traditional funding sources. As a result, given its youth-driven nature, the *Youth Challenge Fund* serves as an interesting policy alternative that has responded to crucial gaps in the sector.

Province of Alberta (Alberta Human Resources and Employment; Alberta Learning) *Alberta Youth Employment Strategy*

Launched in June 1999, The *Alberta Youth Employment Strategy (AYES)* focuses on helping Alberta youth aged 15-24 years to be full participants in the Alberta economy and society. The *Alberta Youth Employment Strategy* was developed based on an analysis of documented barriers to learning and working for youth. It also builds on Premier Klein's Human Resources Development strategy released in February 1997. The Strategy recognizes and builds upon existing programs and services that were aligned with its goals and expected outcomes; it is coordinated jointly by Advanced Education and Career Development (AECD) and Alberta Education (AE). The strategy is designed to support all youth seeking employment in the province, but pays particular attention to youth who are at risk of not making an attachment to work, including Aboriginal youth and disabled youth, who are at risk of not completing high school and being unemployed or underemployed..

The Alberta Youth Employment Strategy includes four goals to help youth make successful transitions from school to further learning and work:

- 1) Creating opportunities for all youth to develop skills and knowledge needed for work
- 2) To increase work opportunities for youth
- 3) To help youth respond to the changing nature of work
- 4) To help youth address barriers that may prevent them from learning or working.

A key component of the Alberta Youth Strategy is its commitment to measuring progress. The above goals are measured against there are 6 expected outcomes in the strategy:

- 1) An increase in the percentage of youth who obtain skills and knowledge beyond high school
- 2) An increase in levels of satisfaction among employers, parents, learning and the public, that education and training have prepared youth for work and further learning
- 3) An increase in the work opportunities available to youth.
- 4) A decrease in the percentage of youth who are unemployed.
- 5) An increase in youth awareness and use of labour market learning opportunities and career planning information.
- 6) An increase in the skills, knowledge and labour market success of 'at risk' youth

Province of British Columbia (Ministry of Children and Families)
Youth Policy Framework / Guidelines for the Provision of Youth Services

Youth Policy Framework

The *Youth Policy Framework* is a population-based policy framework for youth (ages 16-19). The *Youth Policy Framework* is based on extensive research on resiliency and was developed through consultations across the sector. It outlines the Ministry of Children and Family's approach to youth services, guides policy and program development, and supports the implementation of Ministry of Children and Family's priorities related to youth services, which include:

- 1) Meeting the basic needs of youth
- 2) Reduced severity of problematic behaviour by youth
- 3) Improved physical health
- 4) Meeting the developmental challenges of adolescence
- 5) Successful transition into adulthood
- 6) Increased self-reliance and self sufficiency

The B.C. Youth Policy Framework serves as the philosophical basis for all youth work and is a common frame of reference for all activities related to youth in the province.

Guidelines for the Provision of Youth Services

The British Columbia Guidelines for the Provision of Youth Service is the accompanying document to the *Youth Policy Framework*. While the *Youth Policy Framework* contains theoretical guiding principles and the developmental stages of youth, its accompanying document entitled Guidelines for Provision of Youth Services outlines standards for practitioners working in the youth sector, benchmarks for measuring progress, and target outcomes informed by a health systems approach. The original *Youth Policy Framework* document has laid the foundation for the development of this program delivery manual, which means that there is considerable consistency between service delivery in the sector and the broad vision of the *Youth Policy Framework*.

Government of Québec (Secrétariat à la Jeunesse)
Québec Youth Policy / Youth Action Strategy

Québec Youth Policy

The *Québec Youth Policy* is a population-based policy document that defines strategies for addressing specific issues faced by young people, whatever their social, economic, and cultural realities. The policy is grounded in an assets-based approach and emphasizes the ideal that a mutually supportive society must assume its responsibilities toward current and

future generations. This policy serves as the theoretical foundation for all other policies in the province. The mandate of this document is to encourage active citizenship for all young people in Quebec and introduce a lasting youth vision into government action and the action of all civil society and community partners.

Youth Action Strategy

The *Québec Youth Action Strategy* is a population-based framework for youth (ages 25 and under). The strategy is the accompanying action plan document for the Québec Youth Policy and is grounded in an asset-based approach. The Secrétariat à la Jeunesse, eleven government departments and two government organizations are involved in the implementation of this strategy. The document acknowledges that challenges such as the aging population, slowing of demographic growth, and the burden of public debt has informed the policy formulation process and assisted the government in identifying priorities.

There are five orientations that guide government action:

- 1) Improving the health and well-being of young people
- 2) Fostering the educational success of young people
- 3) Fostering young people's entry into the workforce
- 4) Enhancing youth people's participation in society
- 5) Improving the support offered to young people

For each of the policy orientations, there are strategic choices, proposed targets and measures and identified bodies through which to monitor progress. The policy document also contains a section on 'complementary measures' which aids in implementation by outlining current programs and services that are congruent with the policy orientations.

Government of Canada (Department of Justice Canada) ***Youth Justice Renewal Strategy***

The *Youth Justice Renewal Strategy (YJRS)* is a targeted investment strategy for youth (ages 15-29) grounded in a risk prevention and resiliency approach. The mandate of the YJRS is to establish a fair and effective youth justice system through a more targeted approach to youth issues and to assist in the implementation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. The strategy aims at improving:

1. Prevention and Meaningful Alternatives
2. Meaningful Consequences for Youth Crime
3. Rehabilitation and Reintegration

The Youth Justice Renewal Fund is a component of the strategy that targets projects that contribute to the achievement of the broad goals of the Youth Justice Renewal Initiative and provides 5 year financial arrangements with the provinces to support these projects. The Youth Justice Renewal Strategy has facilitated the development of pilot projects in Extrajudicial Measures, Pre-trial Detention, Sentencing, and Custody and Integration. Results from the projects will be available to assist individuals and organizations across the country in determining how and whether to implement similar projects.

**Government of Canada (Human Resources Skills Development Canada)
*Youth Employment Strategy***

Based on resiliency and asset-based approaches, the Government of Canada created the *Youth Employment Strategy (YES)* to help young Canadians (aged 15 to 30) to obtain career information, develop skills, find good jobs and stay employed.

The YES was originally designed to get and keep a job, to make a successful transition from school to work; and, to undertake this within the conditions that exist at the local level. This national strategy currently offers a broad range of initiatives under three programs: Skills Link, Summer Work Experience, and Career Focus. Thirteen Government of Canada departments and agencies work with partners in other governments, businesses and communities to deliver the initiatives under these programs.

**Province of New Brunswick (Ministry of Family and Community Services)
*Youth Services Partnership***

The *Youth Services Partnership* is a population-based service coordination network. This framework initially arose from the Government of New Brunswick's ad hoc response to service duplication in the mid-1980's. In 1989, under the Canada-New Brunswick Protocol on Youth, the *Youth Services Partnership* evolved into a structured federal-provincial partnership. The Partnership aims to provide a collaborative network to facilitate effective and efficient delivery of programs and services for youth. Rather than serving as a broad policy framework, YSP is aimed at maximizing the use of existing community, provincial and federal resources directed towards youth services. Under the Partnership and other provincial initiatives, youth are defined as ages 16-19.

There are six provincial ministries involved in the partnership, and Federal involvement in the partnership through Service Canada. Despite its limited financial and in-kind resources, committees have been able to coordinate a range of programs and services for youth that address specific needs and significantly decreased program duplication.

**U.S.A. (Federal Youth Development Council)
*Federal Youth Coordination Act***

In 2003, The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth recommended the creation of a federal coordinating body for youth services, now known as the Federal Youth Development Council. Under the Federal Youth Coordination Act, the Council has been established to facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration, coordinate federal research, and identify and replicate model programs in order to support state-level youth service coordination efforts.

The Federal Youth Development Council's mandate is to:

- 1) Ensure communication among federal agencies serving youth
- 2) Assess youth needs and the quantity and quality of federal supports to help meet these needs
- 3) Set quantifiable goals/objectives for federal youth programs and develop a plan to reach these goals
- 4) Develop demonstration projects to focus on special populations of youth
- 5) Conduct research and identify and replicate model programs
- 6) Provide support to states through technical assistance and, subject to the availability of appropriations, make grants to States to support State-level coordination efforts

This bipartisan legislation was drafted in partnership with National Collaboration for Youth, a 30 year-old coalition of more than fifty national, non-profit youth development organizations in the United States that had an interest in leveraging and coordinating the existing resources of different federal agencies and holding federal departments accountable for achieving results.

England, U.K. (Department of Education and Skills)

Every Child Matters: Change for Children / Youth Matters Green Paper

The central goals of England's children and youth policy were set out in *Every Child Matters* (Department for Education and Skills 2003), followed by *Youth Matters* (Department for Education and Skills 2005).

Both *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters* are grounded in an asset-based approach concerned with improving the following outcomes for children and young people:

1. Being healthy
2. Staying safe
3. Enjoying and achieving
4. Making a positive contribution
5. Achieving economic well-being

Every Child Matters:

Every Child Matters is guided by the principle that local reform of programs and services will be stronger if set within a supportive national framework. The *Every Child Matters* framework aims to set out the national framework for the needs of children and young people.

Youth Matters:

Based on the principles of *Every Child Matters*, *Youth Matters* is an extensive government consultation paper that proposes a strategy for delivering a radical reshaping of services for all teenagers while providing more intensive support for those who need it. *Youth Matters* builds on previous local and national partnerships in a number of areas - their focus on reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training, advocacy and support for young people, and on giving young people a prominent role in shaping and delivering services.

State of Victoria, Australia (Office for Youth)

Respect: The Government's Vision for Young People

This population-based policy framework (for youth 12-25) was developed in order to provide strategic direction for state-level policy and program delivery in relation to young people. Under this framework, the four broad outcomes related to youth are:

- 1) Involvement (Promoting youth engagement)
- 2) Learning and Working (Satisfying Outcomes in education, training, and employment)
- 3) Support (Providing Services that increase youth safety, health and well-being)
- 4) Celebrate (Recognizing and celebrating youth culture)

The framework promotes considerable horizontal coordination and includes seven government departments and agencies at the state-level.

Appendix B:
Examples of Other Coordinated Policy Responses

Federal-Provincial Early Childhood Development Agreement

In May 1999, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments of Canada signed an agreement to move towards the implementation of a National Children's Agenda, the Canadian government's national strategy for children 6-12. In September 2000 the federal government announced \$2.2 billion towards the federal, provincial, and territorial Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement. As part of the Agreement, a commitment was made by governments to report publicly on their progress in improving the health and well-being of young children. Reporting ensures that all three levels of government are accountable to the public for their early childhood development programs and services, although provincial and territorial governments have the primary responsibility for managing and delivering early childhood development programs and services. The National Children's Alliance, a broad-based coalition dedicated to enhancing the well-being of children and youth in Canada, developed a government relations strategy that played a key role in getting children's issues on the national agenda.

Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement

On November 21, 2005, the governments of Ontario and Canada signed the first Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. This agreement involves a direct federal investment of \$920 million in new immigration funding to help newcomers successfully integrate into Ontario communities and achieve their full potential. The formal document outlines how the governments of Canada and Ontario will work jointly to set priorities and establish a common approach to the delivery of settlement services and language training that is comprehensive and on a continuum with other services. The agreement is focused on the areas of: Settlement and Language Training, Partnership with Municipalities, Provincial Nominee Program, Temporary Foreign Workers Agreement, and the Ontario Immigration Web Portal.

Ontario Best Start Plan

Best Start is the Government of Ontario's population-based strategy to help better support children (from the prenatal period through to age 6) so that they arrive at school ready to achieve success in Grade One. Priorities under Best Start include more affordable and accessible child care, quality child care and early learning programs, investments in early healthy child development, and supports for families with young children. The Best Start Strategy was based on the 1999 Early Years Study, commissioned by the Government of Ontario. The Early Years Study concluded that poor outcomes for children can be linked to early brain development and that parents, communities, the voluntary sector, professionals working with children, the private sector and all levels of government must work together to improve outcomes for children. Best Start therefore presents opportunities to promote healthy child development from a population perspective, and the reduction of risk in the early years of a child's life.

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