



Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region

PHASE ONE PROJECT EVALUATION

MEASUREMENT FOR CHANGE

PROGRAM-LEVEL BELONGING PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

The Measurement for Change (M4C) Task Group (formerly known as the Well-Being Shared Measurement Database Task Group) is composed of representatives from various community organizations and institutions in Waterloo Region, connected through the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT). The objectives of the M4C team are to promote shared measurement tools and to support standardized evaluation practices across the wider system of community organizations and service-providers supporting children, youth, and families.

Assisted by the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) Partnership Investments program, the M4C launched the first funded phase of their program-level belonging project in June 2022. This phase, spanning one-year, centered on aiding piloting organizations with data collection processes and mechanisms to begin assessing their program participants' community and program-levels of belonging.

Prior to implementation and throughout, the M4C team identified several challenges associated with collecting data on belonging for various organizations, which include:

- *Limited Access to Data:* Current data on belonging mostly offers high-level population-based trends and doesn't delve into the levels of belonging within a more specific domain (e.g., at programs, in neighbourhoods, at school, etc.). A lack of specific organizational data hinders the ability to identify effective strategies and ways programs facilitate or obstruct belonging.
- *Resource Constraints:* Many agencies lack the necessary data literacy, time, and financial resources to develop their own measurement frameworks for assessing their influence on well-being outcomes.
- *Collaboration:* Even if organizations manage to overcome these challenges, there's a lack of infrastructure for sharing both data and the knowledge gained from their efforts. Organizations that wish to share data encounter obstacles such as privacy concerns, data sharing issues and a lack of centralized database for shared data. At the same time, a lack of shared measurement collaborations inhibits the broader dissemination of successful strategies and lessons learned that can support positive interventions at the program-level.

Through the program-level belonging project, the M4C team sought to address some of these challenges in the following ways:

- **Outcome 1: Shared Measurement Tool Development:** Explore existing research, engage organizations to identify community needs and to pilot data collection tools to develop and validate a questionnaire for the measurement of program-level and community-level belonging.
- **Outcome 2: Capacity Building:** Develop platforms and mechanisms to improve data collection, data sharing and to support evidence-based research to facilitate the effective use of the validated survey across programs in the community.
- **Outcome 3: Data Exploration and Collaboration:** Analyze and share existing data to explore effective interventions and fruitful collaborations in the area of belonging.

EVALUATION SCOPE, METHODS & DATA ANALYSIS

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation of the M4C belonging project utilized a set of standardized evaluation criteria categories, which were developed and promoted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development -

Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) to support organizations in evaluating project results.¹ These categories encompassed an assessment of the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Based on the above-mentioned criteria and the objective of the M4C project, this evaluation provides an assessment of the results and outcomes of the OTF-funded phase of the project (i.e., spanning from June 2022 to June 2023). The findings available from this evaluation will be used to better inform the design and implementation of future phases of the project as well as similar interventions pursued by CYPT and OTF.

Methodology

Two predominant data collection tools were employed to cross-reference against the proposed evaluation matrix, including the evaluation's respective indicators (*Figure 2. Planned Outline of Data Collection Methods*). This included a desk review of relevant documents (i.e., administrative data gathered through the project monitoring phase) as well as key informant semi-structured interviews and in-depth focus group discussions with project stakeholders. Given the scope of the evaluation methodology and access to data, the evaluation relied heavily on qualitative data.

The evaluation was carried out through remote means, encouraging active participation with continuous input from both the M4C team and OTF. The logistical responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and reporting were assigned to the M4C project manager (henceforth referred to as the evaluator). The evaluator ensured the proper implementation of data confidentiality and privacy measures to safeguard the stakeholders engaged in the evaluation. The relevant questions, indicators, list of stakeholders, as well as privacy and confidentiality guidelines, along with data collection tools, were thoroughly reviewed by both the M4C and OTF to ensure quality and validation.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria table provides a preliminary and non-exhaustive list of high-level indicators that the evaluator developed and referenced throughout the evaluation process.

Figure 1. OECD-DAC Standard Evaluation Criteria and NG-NR I Evaluation Indicators

Criteria	Definition	Final Evaluation Indicators
Relevance	Relevance is the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of alignment to donor priorities • Demonstrated understanding of relevant beneficiary needs and challenges in project design, including selection of stakeholders and relevance today • Demonstrated value of shared measurement topic • Examples of how equity-related themes were considered and incorporated into the project planning and implementation
Coherence	Coherence looks at “[t]he compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated consideration of project synergies and a reduction of duplication • Assessment of perceived role of management actor

¹ OECD-DAC. Evaluation Criteria. Available [here](#).

Effectiveness	Extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent in which the intervention achieved its objectives as outlined in the results monitoring framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards Outcome 1: Tool Development Progress towards Outcome 2: Capacity-Building Progress towards Outcome 3: Data Exploration and Collaboration
Efficiency	Extent to which the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrated successes and areas of improvement in project planning, implementation, and management. Quality of M&E tools and processes
Impact	Positive and negative changes produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended, or unintended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of perceived impact and demonstrated adoption of best practices, standards and tools promoted through project results
Sustainability	Extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likelihood for sustaining and continuing project benefits future-forward

Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

Figure 2. Planned Outline of Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Tools	Detailed Activities
Desk Review	The evaluator examined various documents, including meeting minutes, results monitoring framework and the project charter report.
Semi-Structured 1:1 & Focus Group Interviews	<p>In-depth interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders – including the M4C project team, project partners and the project donor representatives.</p> <p>A combination of semi-structured discussions and follow-up validation exchanges were used. The interview questions were adjusted depending on the stakeholder/informant(s) being interviewed. This was to obtain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, expectations, satisfaction, and challenges that each stakeholder group faced. The semi-structured questionnaires were developed to align with the OECD-DAC criteria and to reflect the objectives of the evaluation stated above.</p> <p>To aid the data collection process and to promote a participatory approach to the evaluation, the evaluator also organized focus group sessions with the direct project beneficiaries. Participants were also invited to connect with the evaluator separately, to provide any additional feedback on the evaluation.</p>

Key informants and respondents were deliberately selected using purposeful (non-random) sampling. The selection was based on their direct engagement in the project.

Figure 3: List of Evaluation Informants

Contact/Stakeholder Type	Data Collection Format
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M4C Team Member (Organization Representative)	Interview
M4C Team Member (Organization & Piloting Organization Representative)	
M4C Team Member (University of Waterloo Representative)	
M4C Team Member (University of Waterloo Representative)	
M4C Team Member (University of Waterloo Representative)	
M4C Team Member (CYPT Backbone Representative)	
Partner Representative (LogicalOutcomes)	
Donor Representative (OTF)	
Donor Representative (OTF)	
Piloting Organization Representative	Focus Group(s)
Piloting Organization Representative	
Piloting Organization Representative	
Piloting Organization Representative (Written Responses)	

A total of 13 project stakeholders provided their direct input to this evaluation by participating in one-on-one semi-structured interviews or in the focus group sessions.

Major Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

The following limitations and associated mitigation strategies were identified by the evaluator prior to the data collection phase of the evaluation. However, for the most part, the evaluator had no significant challenges with the availability of informants or issues with the number of respondents.

Figure 4: Evaluation limitations and mitigation strategies

Limitation	Mitigation Strategy
(a) Availability: informants may have limited availability to provide input	Advanced planning of the scheduled interviews to ensure they are available. Offer alternative and modified opportunities to provide input (e.g., questionnaire).
(b) Insufficient data or insufficient representative data collected	Use data from multiple data sources to enable data triangulation and remind interviewees/respondents of upcoming interviews/deadlines
(c) Objective feedback – interviewees may be hesitant to provide honest feedback or information on their engagement with the project	Ensure that the purpose of the evaluation is clear, that respondents are informed of the data collection methods, analysis, and how the evaluator prioritizes confidentiality of respondents. Offer alternative and modified opportunities for those interested in providing additional feedback.
(d) Short-term gaps – limits to assessing intermediary and long-term results	Due to the timing of the evaluation, the evaluator measured the project's longer-term impact and sustainability through proxy indicators, such as evidence of organizational and behavioural adaptations among beneficiaries and perceptions of expected long-term results of benefits.

FINDINGS ACROSS SELECTED CRITERIA AREAS

RELEVANCE

Relevance is the extent to which the intervention is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor.

In accordance with the broader OECD-DAC definition of relevance, this evaluation includes an assessment of the extent to which the M4C belonging objectives and design corresponded to the contextual and operational needs of the project's beneficiaries. This included in-depth consultation with informants to assess if the objectives and design of the intervention were sensitive to the conditions impacting data collection and belonging for program participants. The evaluator also examined the alignment of the project design to the donor's priorities.

Based on a review of project documents, interviews with the project team as well as project partners and beneficiaries, the project is found to be highly relevant for all stakeholders involved.

RELEVANCE INDICATORS
Extent of alignment to donor priorities
Demonstrated understanding of relevant beneficiary needs and challenges in project design, including selection of stakeholders and relevance today
Demonstrated value of shared measurement topic
Examples of how equity-related themes were considered and incorporated into the project planning and implementation

Extent of alignment to donor priorities

The M4C team has greatly benefitted from an engaged donor, which places a strong emphasis on building capacity and actively disseminating tools and lessons learned across various projects. This collaborative partnership is made possible through OTF's Partnership Investments program team, which aims to reinforce the data and learning infrastructure within Ontario's non-profit sector.

According to the evaluation informants, this collaborative approach not only encourages synergy among similar initiatives but also holds the potential to promote data collection capabilities and encourage peer-to-peer learning in different geographic contexts, including across the province of Ontario. Future-forward, this may involve OTF sharing the validated survey and the broader M4C model with other interested communities.

OTF representatives also noted the value of partnering with CYPT, a diverse network of organizations committed to meaningful work. OTF is particularly interested in how CYPT organizations collaborate to enhance their internal data collection and evaluation practices, thus supporting various communities within the Waterloo Region. Acknowledging that learning often happens in isolated settings, the opportunity to exchange insights and facilitate peer-to-peer interactions is highly valued by OTF.

In fact, the expansion and development of the M4C model specifically addresses the increased demand from funding agencies which require organizations to provide program-related data that is meaningful and outcomes-oriented. This often assumes that these organizations can collect, analyze, and share data

independently. The M4C's model and approach can, therefore, help funders gain deeper insights into the unique needs and challenges faced by organizations, while noting the importance of capacity-building supports for these organizations.

Several informants also pointed out that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) shares similar goals and values, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between community organizations and traditional institutions, such as academia. SSHRC's financial contribution to the project has supported the onboarding of a University of Waterloo research coordinator to undertake logistical, research and data collection aspects of the project. According to University of Waterloo informants, there is a desire to utilize and promote community-level research beyond the confines of academia. Much like OTF, SSHRC aims to advance knowledge mobilization and enhance the communication of research findings, particularly within communities.

Demonstrated understanding of relevant beneficiary needs and challenges in project design, including selection of stakeholders and relevance today

Selection of M4C team, Piloting Organizations, and partners:

The inclusion of representatives from diverse community organizations and institutions within M4C has played a pivotal role in ensuring a well-rounded perspective during the planning and execution of this multi-stakeholder initiative. The M4C team has greatly benefited from the unique insights brought forth by team members with varied backgrounds, roles, and representing diverse organizations/institutions. The diversity of organizational characteristics represented on the team spans grassroots organizations, small-scale entities, larger community-based non-profits, regional governmental bodies, and academic institutions. Each member contributes a distinct skillset, encompassing fields such as academic research, administration, project management, and more.

The team's commitment to thoroughness is exemplified through the comprehensive needs assessment process undertaken at the project's inception. This involved consultations with similar initiatives across North America and the ongoing surveying of community organizations prior to project launch. This process aimed to identify data collection gaps and to subsequently inform the direction of project activities.

The process of recruiting piloting organizations was, therefore, generally efficient and streamlined due to the longstanding trust and relationships fostered within the CYPT network. An initial call was shared with the CYPT Voting Membership, outlining the project's scope, and inviting interested parties to seek additional information.

Although the project garnered strong interest from over ten partner organizations, the fast-paced and resource-constrained environment typical of non-profits sometimes did lead to last-minute withdrawals. These instances were often attributed to factors such as funding shifts, program adjustments, or personnel turnover. For example, organizations/institutions allocating significant resources to addressing COVID-19-related barriers were less likely to join the piloting group, despite their initial interests in the project (e.g., Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services). While such occurrences did arise, they didn't significantly impact the project's progress, primarily due to the repository of an array of interested organizations prepared to participate. Overall, the ease of recruiting piloting organizations was attributed by informants to the CYPT network's collaborative ecosystem in forging and nurturing connections and trust among organizations, along with the value of having well-connected individuals within the team.

Informants also highlight the thorough partner selection process as an essential driver of the project's success. Notably, the University of Waterloo has exceeded expectations in providing support, specifically with University of Waterloo students joining the M4C team, which consequently advanced the team's technical and research expertise. The strategic collaboration with LO (LogicalOutcomes) was also pivotal, given their experience in data collection and work within the non-profit sector. LO's adeptness in addressing technical and logistical challenges in a relatable manner proved instrumental to the M4C team's progress with the development of the shared measurement infrastructure.

As a broader key finding, the M4C team has also shared that there is an ongoing demand for more mutually beneficial research partnerships between community organizations and academic institutions. Given the team's positive experience, there are several benefits that can be promoted through these partnerships:

- *Access to expertise and resources:* Non-profit organizations often have practical experience and deep knowledge of the issues they work on, while academic institutions bring research expertise, methodologies, and access to scholarly resources. For example, academic researchers can benefit from the community organizations' real-world experience, contextual insights, and access to communities or populations of interest. In our case, academic participation led to an understanding of all the partnership-building requirements and equity-based considerations needed in place to launch a shared measurement project.
- *Rigorous research and evaluation:* Academic researchers bring a rigorous and evidence-based approach to research and evaluation, which can help organizations to design studies, collect and analyze data, and provide objective assessments based on data collected. This can enhance the credibility and effectiveness of non-profit programs, especially when reporting to donors or identifying community needs.
- *Policy and advocacy:* Non-profit organizations can leverage evidence-based research to advocate for community reforms, to inform public discourse, and drive systemic change. This is especially the case when working through a collective impact lens/partnership.

Engagement between community organizations and academia can at times be challenging, as both have different operations, perspectives, and standards. For example, there are different understandings of how and why surveying program participants matter, including what survey responses can tell us about a given inquiry. Moreover, academia is much more conservative in its interpretation of data and has a higher bar for considering data to be convincing/useful. On the other hand, community organizations generally collect "pulse-check" responses to assess if their programs are relevant and appreciated by participants. There is also a general risk that community partners may feel excluded or may be seen as less knowledgeable/valued stakeholders in these partnerships. Therefore, it is important that academic partners are mindful of how information is shared and explained (preferably opting to do so in a more accessible manner).

Main barriers and gaps outlined in the project design and noted throughout implementation:

Due to the lack of available, reliable, and validated data on child and youth well-being in the local context, organizations are faced with barriers in developing effective and targeted interventions. Moreover, funding agencies are requiring organizations to report on program outcomes and social impact areas (e.g., well-being) more regularly, despite numerous data-related challenges that organizations face.

Based on the M4C team's experience with the program-level belonging project, several program-related data challenges, which are exacerbated for smaller front-line organizations, have been identified by the M4C team:

- lack of experience or understanding in designing evaluation questions and response options, including utilizing open source validated measures.
- disconnect between data collection expectations and requirements at the management level and front-line staff (who are often responsible for collecting data).
- logistical and capacity barriers to collecting standardized program-level data that is comparable across community/population-level datasets (e.g., YIS, Census Canada).
- capacity management issues and data literacy to transform data into decision-making improvements beyond the output-level/KPIs (re: considering outcome and impact results levels).
- ongoing risks related to data sharing due to privacy, ethical and confidentiality concerns of participants.
- barriers and lack of knowledge on collecting, analyzing, and reporting demographic data.
- lack of access to address issues with sampling, control group, pre-post assessments, and a broader lack of partnership with community groups, including local government and academia.
- time intensive processes, competing data-related requirements, and challenges and barriers in collecting an adequate response number from participants.

The M4C team remained mindful of these challenges, and consequently developed outputs that aimed to address or support organizations in building the capacity to address some of these challenges.

Perceived relevance at the end of Phase I:

According to the feedback from informants, the project's continued relevance is evident even after a substantial period of implementation. The pressing need to enhance data capacity within organizations remains a key priority for many. Piloting stakeholders feel that the project has provided valuable guidance and support throughout this process. However, members of the M4C team note that there is a concern about the sustainability of the acquired skills and capacity within organizations to maintain the benefits (see Sustainability Section). Questions have arisen regarding the reliance on direct M4C support in guiding and coaching piloting staff. However, the M4C team acknowledges that this demand will continue for a significant period before organizations dedicated in-house training and resourcing to data, research, and evaluations. Therefore, this demand demonstrates the continued interest amongst community organizations for M4C's tailored supports.

All informants expressed a continued interest to support the M4C initiative over an extended duration, suggesting a sustained commitment to addressing evolving needs. The prospects of transitioning to a new project phase have been positively shared by all informants. An expanded scope of the M4C's work includes expanding deliverables to accommodate new languages, different age groups, and individuals with disabilities, thereby maintaining the project's ability to effectively serve diverse communities.

Demonstrated value of shared measurement topic

According to all informants, developing an evaluation or study around a central shared measurement area/concept (e.g., program-level belonging) has helped community organizations in gathering insights around a priority social issue/cause, while building knowledge and skills related to data collection.

A collective impact approach focused on a specific priority social issue can yield several benefits, including the collection of richer data and greater coherence among interventions. By consistently collecting data across programs and sharing it among organizations, the community can gain a deeper understanding of community needs and develop targeted interventions in a collective and coordinated manner. As described by one informant: "a collaborative approach enables stakeholders to gather comprehensive data, identify common trends and gaps, and align our collective efforts to create a more impactful and holistic response to the social issue at hand."

Having complimentary access to population-based datasets can also support analysis and drawing meaningful comparisons (e.g., M4C and the CYPT's Youth Impact Survey). If possible, providing a secure raw dataset for the community, which captures the insights across program-level measurements, can enable the expansion of future research initiatives (e.g., university departments interested in examining program-level belonging).

One of the participating organizations shared that the emphasis on belonging resonated significantly with their organizational goals. They emphasized that their recreational activities inherently contribute to positive mental health outcomes, with a key area being a sense of belonging. Within their context, staff belonging holds particular importance, given the potential influence they have on participants. For this organization, the focus on belonging strongly aligns well with their objectives.

Other piloting stakeholders described the distinctive value of this project for their unique organizational goals. In contrast to formal evaluations often taking a backseat, their participation in this initiative was highly valued. The specific focus on belonging was especially appreciated, given its alignment with internal and ministerial requirements. These mandates necessitate a connection with well-being, belonging, expression, and engagement, making the project's emphasis on belonging highly relevant within their reporting frameworks.

The informants also shared the sentiment that the concept of "belonging" remains highly relevant to the stakeholders involved in the current phase. However, several informants acknowledge the potential for expanding and deepening the M4C's focus on belonging. One proposed direction is to delve into more specific aspects of belonging, potentially extending the inquiry to encompass different demographic groups. For instance, the idea of examining belonging among younger age groups could attract more CYPT members who work with children. Similarly, exploring the sense of belonging among the staff at organizations catering to children, youth, and families is seen as a valuable extension. The M4C team is also seeking to launch further research into assessing which interventions can result in an increased sense of belonging at the program level, rather than just examining levels of belonging.

Looking ahead, the informants suggest that the project's success and evolution could open doors to exploring additional dimensions of well-being. This prospect is contingent on the project's trajectory and alignment with the evolving priorities of CYPT membership and the Steering Committee. As the community's needs evolve, so too should the project's scope, potentially leading to investigations into other facets of well-being beyond belonging. Building knowledge and experience around one shared measurement area is believed to subsequently help community actors expand into other priority social issue areas in the future (e.g., UNICEF Canada's 9 domains of child and youth well-being, belonging being one domain). This adaptive approach ensures that the project remains responsive to the ever-changing landscape of community needs and priorities.

Examples of how equity-related themes were considered and incorporated into the project planning and implementation.

According to most informants, equity considerations have been a central theme for the M4C team and its core partners throughout the project's planning and implementation phases. This commitment to equity is demonstrated through various aspects of project management that were shared during the semi-structured interviews:

- M4C's deliberate selection of a diverse range of piloting organizations was aimed at ensuring a variety of organizations and targeted populations were able to complete the M4C belonging survey.
- Drawing insights and best practices from sources like the CYPT's Youth Impact Survey and UNICEF Canada played a role in the thoughtful selection of survey questions, which were based on direct input from young people.
- Striking a balance between data disaggregation and inclusivity while ensuring a manageable data collection process was a priority in collaboration with both piloting organizations and LO.
- Promoting transparency, a comprehensive MOU and consent process was created, outlining data collection, usage, and sharing procedures for piloting organizations.
- The project underwent approval by the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO), addressing equity concerns in areas such as prize distribution.
- Empowering piloting organizations to modify surveys according to the populations they serve demonstrates the M4C's interests in accommodating organizational needs and data collection challenges.
- The utilization of graphics in survey questions enhances accessibility for younger respondents.
- To expand the project's reach, complementary surveys targeting younger audiences are being launched, alongside the addition of more language options to promote inclusivity.

In striving for future inclusivity and equity, the following additional considerations were suggested for future phases of the project:

- Incorporating specific equity milestone goals and prompts within the project design and planning process to embed evaluation metrics for equity.
- Participating in data equity trainings to stay current with evolving best practices and standards, as these are subject to change.
- Prioritizing a diverse representation of the served population, including families and those with neurodivergent perspectives on belonging.
- Expanding demographic questions to encompass a wider range of social dimensions and categories, such as homelessness, parenthood, substance, or mental health concerns, etc.

- Addressing the need for a workshop to educate front-line staff collecting data on how and when to appropriately gather demographic information.

COHERENCE

Coherence looks at the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in the same geographic context, sector, or institution.

To evaluate the coherence of this project phase, the evaluator looked at the potential internal and external synergies that were utilized to facilitate the success of the M4C belonging project. Ideally, interventions should not be duplicative and should capitalize on opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and complementarity by design.

The category of coherence examines both internal and external coherence; internal coherence is the extent to which a given intervention aligns with the work, norms, and standards of the implementing entity (i.e., CYPT). External coherence is the extent to which an intervention complements relevant interventions in the same context, which are led by external actors. Based on the collected data, the evaluator found that the M4C project demonstrates strong internal and external coherence in its design and execution.

COHERENCE INDICATORS
Demonstrated consideration of project synergies and a reduction of duplication
Assessment of perceived role of management actor

Demonstrated consideration of project synergies and a reduction of duplication

Project synergies:

Apart from direct alignment with CYPT's strategic pillar related to belonging and the goals of the Data, Evaluation, and Research (DRE) Support Group, evidence of internal and external coherence was primarily showcased through synergies with other relevant initiatives. For instance, the project exhibited coherence with CYPT's Youth Impact Survey (YIS), where questions about community belonging were included. This project also influenced the incorporation of new questions in the 2023 edition of the YIS, such as a visual question about belonging. This alignment led to further harmonization with standardized belonging and social connection questions posed by Statistics Canada, including those in the Canadian Census and the Canadian Community Health Survey.

Participants from piloting organizations highlighted various ways in which the project's alignment with belonging supported internal frameworks and strategic direction. For example, the City of Kitchener identified belonging as a central aspect in its corporate strategic area, outlined in its strategic plan. Similarly, the Waterloo Region Public Library is in the process of crafting a strategic plan that encompasses data collection on social dimensions like belonging and overall well-being. The Early ON Child and Family Centres are also exploring the integration of survey questions into their broader needs assessment procedures across their centers.

On a broader scale, the project's emphasis on belonging and inclusive data collection corresponds with the Region of Waterloo's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, the Region of Waterloo's Disaggregation Guidelines, and other regional initiatives like "We All Count," and the City of Toronto's Data for Equity. Additionally, certain components of this project align with university and community ethics boards, including the Tri-council Policy Statement and the Open Science Framework.

Reduction of duplication:

All respondents highlighted that there are no evident examples of direct overlap between this project and others that they are familiar with. The M4C team went to great lengths to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, encompassing interviews with complementary initiatives, aiming to minimize redundancy and foster the exchange of insights. This process also involved in-depth discussions with piloting organizations to gain insights into their specific requirements. The involvement of team members who are also part of the CYPT staff, chairs, or support groups further mitigated potential areas of duplication in project planning and implementation.

The University of Waterloo informants noted that the project's emphasis on belonging was notably distinct, given that the scarce research on belonging predominantly centers around academic population studies rather than studies related to social outcomes fostered by community organizations. Even in circumstances where there is available academic research related to belonging, one informant suggests that few studies are ultimately published, driven by the changing popularity of topics in academic journals. Notably, there is even less available literature devoted to belonging within the Waterloo Region. Furthermore, the incorporation of evaluation within the project adds another layer of distinctiveness, contributing to internal capacity enhancement for organizations.

Assessment of perceived role of management actor

All respondents unanimously emphasized that the M4C (and by extension, the CYPT) was the most suitable entity to facilitate and oversee this project. The M4C team was praised for its adeptness in connecting practical experience with insights into organizational capacity constraints and comprehensive knowledge on the topic of belonging. This was achieved by leveraging the internal expertise within the team. By operating as an independent Working Group that collaborates with the DRE Support Group, the M4C operated efficiently with well-defined roles allocated to each member.

Several informants stressed that the leadership of the CYPT was pivotal for the initiation of this endeavor. Previously, the "Sandbox Group," a consortium of diverse representatives receiving funding from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, formulated a vision that was subsequently adopted and advanced through the CYPT's leadership, resource connections, and network affiliations. The CYPT's stewardship of this initiative streamlined the initial Sandbox Group vision, focusing on belonging as a shared metric and concentrating on program participants (namely, children, youth, and families). Some M4C members also noted that the tools and outcomes generated from this project possess relevance that extends beyond children, youth, and families, thereby having potential applicability in regional networks (e.g., immigrant populations, persons with disabilities, elderly, etc.).

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives.

To assess the effectiveness of the project, the evaluator examined the planned project outcomes and outputs against the actual achievement of these results.

Overall, in consideration of the project objective and outputs, the achievement of planned results and the effects of the pandemic on the project design and execution, this project was effective at the time of the evaluation which was finalized in August 2023. More specifically, complete achievement or promising progress has been met for Outcome 1 and 2. The M4C has strived towards making progress for Outcome 3, but due to the dependencies between activities, achievement of results in this area will require additional time.

EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

The extent in which the intervention achieved its objectives as outlined in the results monitoring framework:

- Progress towards Outcome 1: Tool Development
- Progress towards Outcome 2: Capacity-Building
- Progress towards Outcome 3: Data Exploration and Collaboration

Outcome 1: Tool Development: *Explore existing research, community needs and pilot data collection to develop and validate a questionnaire for the measurement of program-level and community-level belonging.*

The informants highlighted that there has been notable advancement and successful outcomes pertaining to Outcome 1. The team recognized that the progress achieved in Outcome 1 played a crucial role in facilitating the realization of the other two outcome areas. A series of completed activities contributed to this progress, including consulting with piloting organizations on question selection, delivering presentations within the CYPT network on questionnaires, conducting research on themes related to belonging, and revising measurement scales, among many others.

The team also indicated that they exceeded their initial expectations in this domain, particularly in terms of pursuing question validation. The process of question validation led to enhancements in the questionnaire based on the insights garnered from these validations. Moreover, the team is now exploring the launch of similar questionnaires for a younger respondent group (i.e., early, and middle childhood), noting the importance of having an inclusive approach across the full CYPT membership.

Outcome 2: Capacity-Building: *Develop a data storage platform and offer research supports to facilitate the effective use of a validated belonging survey across programs in the community.*

The informants highlighted the successful development of PowerBI reports for piloting organizations, which have been of high quality and well-received to date. Additionally, the team reported that the research and technical assistance provided to organizations during the data collection process has yielded positive outcomes, as evidenced by the significant amount of positive feedback received from participating organizations.

Looking ahead, the team is focusing on future capacity-building initiatives for organizations, including training opportunities for front-line staff. As part of this effort, they are in the process of creating a sustainable workbook and resource guide, which will be accessible on the CYPT website to ensure its continued availability.

Outcome 3: Data Exploration and Collaboration: *To analyze and share data to explore effective interventions and fruitful collaborations in the area of belonging.*

The informants discussed Outcome 3 as a forward-looking aspect of the project. Since the project timeline primarily focused on developing the first two outcomes, the work related to Outcome 3 is expected to be undertaken in the future. At this point in time, the M4C team has engaged with external stakeholders, including CYPT organizations and international non-profit and academic representatives, through conference presentations to share their progress and findings.

In the next stages, the team's plan includes exploring further research opportunities that can contribute to the development of specific recommendations for effective interventions related to program-level belonging. They also aim to enhance engagement with the organizations that participated in the project, fostering a peer-to-peer learning process to encourage organizations to learn from one another and contribute to the project's ongoing development. The M4C team envisions that this outcome will involve sharing a centralized dataset containing a substantial amount of data collected from multiple organizations, which will lead to broader consultations and discussions with community organizations.

Figure 5: Resulting Outputs and Activities:

Output Indicator	Results
Number of people gaining skills or knowledge	<p>M4C team members: 7 Members of piloting organizations: 12 DRE members: 10 Participants/audience members who attended presentations (incl. CYPT members, University of Waterloo students, community presentations, etc.): *200+</p> <p>*this number will change when we have our public dashboard online and following planned events and talks in October and November 2023</p>
Number of organizations engaged	<p>19 separate organizations engaged in various capacity. 6 piloting organizations completing implementation trial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SPECTRUM ● Waterloo Public Library (teen events) ● EarlyON ● Breastfeed Buddies ● City of Kitchener (camps) ● Marillac Place <p>2 piloting organization in process of collecting or accessing results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Waterloo Region Public Library (data collection complete) ● Camino (formerly Carizon) (data collection planned)
Number of infrastructures developed	<p>SharePoint:6 PowerBI reports: 6 Community dashboard (<i>in progress</i>) Data sharing MOUs: 6 Shared database system/architecture: 1 Formalized partnership agreements: 2 (LogicalOutcomes and OTF) CREO ethics review application/approval: 1 Office of Research Ethics application/approval by University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board: 2 Establishment of University of Waterloo Advisory Group: 1 Establishment of the OTF-LO-CYPT Steering Committee: 1 Partnership with Dr. Wendi Adair, University of Waterloo, Industrial/Organization Psychology Professor to develop a Waterloo Region Belonging Survey - Workplace Version in consultation with the university's WORC Consulting Group: 1</p>
Number of shared measurement and evaluation frameworks	<p>Waterloo Region Belonging Survey - Youth Version (WRBS-Youth) with six adaptations (incl. community-level belonging questions, program-level belonging questions and demographic questions): 1 Waterloo Region Belonging Survey-Middle Childhood Version (WRBS-Middle): 1 Waterloo Region Belonging Survey-Early Childhood Version (WRBS-Early): 1</p>
Number of knowledge products mobilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WRBS-Youth Report: Validation and Recommendations ● Data interpretation report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief review on the understanding of what belonging is and why it is important • Best practices for data collection brief • Literature review of belonging interventions • Community-Campus-University Expo (C2U Expo) at Lakehead University presentation • PowerBI reports vis-a-vis SharePoint • Project Charter and Executive Summary • Project Phase Evaluation
Number of people convened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See number of organizations engaged
Number of events (i.e. workshops, webinars, community engagements, etc.)	<p>Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Waterloo departmental presentation (~15) • C2U Expo at Lakehead University (~40) • M4C in-person booth at CYPT annual forum (~60) • M4C in-person members meeting (~40p) • M4C Belonging webinar (~30) • M4C online all-members meeting (~40) • Presentation to DRE (~10) • Community-Engaged Learning workshop presentation at Western in Nov 2023 <p>Upcoming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement for Change 101 training/workshop (September 2023) • Community-Engaged Learning workshop at Western University (November 2023)

Key learnings from project implementation:

The M4C team discussed and balanced many considerations when developing and implementing the belonging tool. Some of the critical lessons learned included:

- *Balancing standardization and customization:* It was crucial to strike a balance between standardizing surveys to ensure comparability while also customizing them to be meaningful and relevant to a wide range of community service organizations who participated in the pilot.
- *Empowering organizations and promoting ownership:* To encourage data utilization, organizations must feel empowered and have a sense of ownership of the survey tool. This was achieved by involving them in the development process and addressing their specific needs, based on their unique programs and data collection experience.
- *Conveying cautions for data interpretation:* Clear communication of important cautions and guidelines for data interpretation is essential, enabling organizations to make sense of their findings accurately and effectively.
- *Balancing data quality and respondent comfort:* The survey design should balance the need to collect high-quality data with considerations for respondent accessibility and comfort. This may involve using positively worded questions, keeping the survey concise, and ensuring ease of response.
- *Considering small organizations and data privacy:* The survey tool should be designed to be useful for small organizations while maintaining strict standards for data privacy. Special attention should be given to small cell size suppression in reporting to ensure data privacy while considering the usefulness of the report for programs with fewer participants/respondents.

- *Anticipating future needs:* Future-oriented thinking is crucial, necessitating the development of complementary tools for younger respondents and the creation of a training manual on data collection to meet the evolving needs of organizations.

Differential results amongst piloting organizations:

Upon reflection and assessment of the project, the informants highlight several groups of organizations that have benefited significantly due to the feasibility of the project's supports:

- *Large Organizations:* Larger organizations have experienced notable benefits, particularly at present, owing to privacy considerations that sometimes restrict the meaningfulness of data for smaller programs. The suppression of small cell sizes can limit the availability of actionable insights if the program sizes are too small, necessitating complex calculations for accurate analysis.
- *Organizations with Belonging Focus:* Organizations that have explicitly identified belonging as a key internal outcome have derived substantial advantages from the alignment of the project framework with their objectives. This alignment often aligns closely with the core objectives of these organizations' programs.
- *Organizations with Stable Employment:* Organizations with a stable and consistent employment status, characterized by low staff turnover, have witnessed more significant benefits. This stability enables them to engage consistently with the project and utilize its resources effectively.
- *Organizations with Multiple Timepoints:* Organizations that have the capacity to collect data at multiple timepoints have found the project's more rigorous data collection process particularly advantageous. This ability to gather data over various stages enhances the robustness and reliability of the data analysis.

These insights offer valuable guidance on which types of organizations have found the project's supports most applicable and beneficial.

EFFICIENCY

Efficiency measures the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way (conversion of inputs such as funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc. into results).

In assessing efficiency, the evaluator focused on the overall management of the M4C project and the extent to which the project ensured alignment to the initial schedule, budget, and scope. In other words, efficiency considers how the project team was able to convert inputs (e.g., funds, expertise, resources) into achievable results.

The evaluator found that project resources have been thoroughly converted into planned results. The flexibility and agility in managing the project, despite several external risks, resulted in ongoing adherence to the overall scope, schedule and budget. The financial monitoring was ongoing, ensuring that project funds were allocated into priority activities. Overall, progress on project activities varied throughout the duration of the project timeline, with certain projects experiencing minor delays or redefined priorities to ensure that the activities remained realistic and applicable.

EFFICIENCY INDICATORS
Demonstrated successes and areas of improvement in project planning, implementation, and management
Quality of M&E tools and processes

Demonstrated successes and areas of improvement in planning, implementation, and management

The project's overall pace and progression was reported as positive by all informants. Informants acknowledge that, while the project has progressed according to plan, unforeseen challenges arose and were mitigated effectively (e.g., COVID-19 disruptions, working with organizations facing significant constraints or challenges in collecting data). Although proactive problem-solving and foresight was the norm during this phase, informants are understanding that certain issues may only become evident as implementation continues. Notably, informants emphasize the unique nature of each organization's needs, implying that a dynamic and adaptable approach was, and continues to be, essential.

As previously mentioned, the M4C members brought their strengths and roles to the team, creating a dynamic blend of skill sets that were essential for the project's success. The collaborative atmosphere fostered a shared sense of ownership among team members, resulting in a well-balanced approach to task distribution and activity development. This balance was particularly significant as it harmonized the demands of academic rigor with the practical requirements of the non-profit sector. Furthermore, it was highlighted that despite the research-oriented nature of the project, technical expertise was not necessarily a prerequisite for engagement on the M4C team, emphasizing the value of project management, communications, and partnership-building to maintain momentum.

Structured and pre-scheduled meetings streamlined communication processes and eliminated the need for continuous coordination efforts. These meetings provided valuable opportunities for touch-base interactions and progress updates, and the virtual setting was preferred for its convenience and more efficient.

Engagement with the larger CYPT network and the DRE team was also recognized as instrumental in the project's success. By articulating specific requests and maintaining open channels of communication, the project ensured a collaborative and cohesive approach. Furthermore, consultations with the OTF, through Steering Committee meetings, fostered transparency and information sharing. Regular updates were considered helpful in maintaining alignment and mutual understanding between the M4C team and OTF.

Piloting organizations highlighted that communication with the M4C team was straightforward and accessible. This ease of communication was particularly evident when discussing matters like survey question selection. Given that representatives from these organizations were not primarily research-oriented, they expressed gratitude for the M4C team's patience and willingness to provide guidance on using the tools. The presence of a research coordinator within the M4C team facilitated seamless interactions, and having a designated leader for the evaluation process was viewed as highly beneficial.

While the project was considered efficient by informants, there are still challenges worth mentioning:

- Turnover on the M4C team resulted in the need to onboard new members, which consumed additional time and effort. These individuals largely contributed on a voluntary basis alongside their primary work commitments, sometimes causing competing priorities. Furthermore, workload distribution among team members was uneven at different times of the year.
- Commencing the project during the COVID-19 pandemic presented minor challenges. While the pandemic had disrupted many sectors, the team utilized the circumstance to expedite certain project dependencies (e.g., development of MOUs, establishing partnership with LogicalOutcomes, funding applications, etc.), considering pandemic-related implications in their strategies.
- Delays were experienced due to the ethics review processes. The project team is considering the advantages and disadvantages of undergoing both university and community-based ethics processes in subsequent phases. Participating in a community or academic ethics review process can support community organizations in aligning their practices with ethical standards. For the M4C team, this helped them develop survey questions, MOUs with organizations and confidentiality notes. However, promoting these standards to community organizations can be difficult, as they can pose an administrative burden for staff.

- According to the project partner, certain questions with a wide range of answer options posed challenges in terms of effectively presenting the data analysis and reports visually in the finalized reports. LogicalOutcomes noted their own learning through their participation in this initiative.
- While progress updates were ensured through practices like meeting notes, there's room for a more systematic and consistent approach to streamline communication.
- Given the complexity of the "belonging" theme, a substantial effort was invested in comprehending the concept and integrating it into a measurement tool suitable for non-profit utilization.
- Securing funding remained a major constraint for the project, particularly given its human resources-intensive nature. Operational expenses, partnership maintenance with LogicalOutcomes, and expertise acquisition for new project phases necessitate funding. Adjustments to funding schedules caused some delays in project timelines.

Piloting organizations encountered significant challenges primarily related to the logistical aspects of survey deployment. Instances were noted where technical issues such as non-functional WIFI hindered participants from completing the survey. Additionally, some organizations expressed the view that a single survey period aligned better with the duration and intent of their respective programs. Moreover, it was suggested that integrating M4C questions into existing evaluation surveys or incorporating supplementary evaluation-oriented questions into the belonging survey could enhance efficiency and streamline efforts for certain organizations who have an established M&E process.

Significant insights also emerged from effectively managing and balancing competing needs and interests among various stakeholders, ensuring the continued meaningfulness of project outputs:

- The team navigated the balance between empowering piloting organizations to utilize their collected data while conveying essential cautions about accurate data interpretation.
- Efforts were dedicated to standardizing surveys to make them more generic, while still allowing customization to cater to a diverse array of community service organizations.
- Balancing the aspiration to collect high-quality data with ensuring a comfortable and user-friendly survey-taking experience for respondents was a priority. This involved strategies like using positively worded questions and keeping the survey concise.
- Finding the equilibrium between cost-saving and operational efficiency presented challenges. For instance, in the case of PowerBI Report design, the M4C team aimed to create initial end products to reduce the workload on LogicalOutcomes. However, due to a lack of expertise, this process took longer than expected, and adjustments were needed.
- Striking the right balance between creating a useful survey for small organizations and maintaining stringent data privacy standards was another critical consideration. The utilization of small cell size suppression in the Power BI report (where numbers below 6 are not displayed) was adopted to uphold data privacy, but it posed limitations in terms of report usefulness for programs with a limited number of participants/respondents

Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation tools and processes

Throughout the project, the fast-paced nature and agile project management approach necessitated the use of *ad hoc* M&E practices. The team engaged in continuous dialogue with piloting organizations, gathering feedback during the needs assessment stage and through routine consultations. However, due to limited organizational capacity, formal engagement with the project was somewhat constrained for these organizations. Despite this, the evaluation process was found beneficial by all stakeholders, including the piloting organizations, offering a platform for reflection and change management. Looking ahead, the team envisions a more regular feedback loop with piloting organizations, providing an avenue to identify successful aspects, lessons learned, and replicable best practices.

In the future, as the survey becomes operational, there is an opportunity to integrate a structured feedback mechanism. This would allow for insights into how organizations are utilizing the tools and reveal any

challenges they may be facing, contributing to continuous improvement and effective adaptation of the project.

IMPACT

In assessing impact, the evaluator focused on the extent to which the intervention has generated, or is expected to generate, positive or negative, intended, or unintended, longer-term results. Based on OECD-DAC standardized criteria, the impact criteria category seeks to address the overall significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It further relates to how benefits are hindered or strengthened by social, environmental, and economic conditions, or future risks, associated with the intervention.

Due to the longer-term nature of the OECD-DAC impact criteria category (three to five years) and the limits of this evaluation timeframe, the evaluator cannot provide definite conclusions on the project's impact for primary and secondary beneficiaries (i.e., organizations and children, youth and families that access programs). Rather, wherever possible, the evaluator notes early indications of impact that are reaffirmed by data collected from project informants and beneficiaries. All the interview informants interviewed (n=13) anticipate that the project can have a longer-term positive impact on attitudes, knowledge, and practices for piloting organizations.

IMPACT INDICATORS

Evidence of perceived impact and demonstrated adoption of best practices, standards and tools promoted through project results

Evidence of perceived impact and demonstrated adoption of best practices, standards and tools promoted through project results

The evaluator suggests that there are several early indications of direct benefits and short-to-medium term developments, resulting from the M4C project, which are categorized below:

Impact on CYPT Membership and Broader Community:

- The project has introduced a comprehensive framework for program-level measurement within the domain of belonging, often promoted across CYPT's membership. This framework serves as a model that can potentially extend to encompass eight other domains in the future. The potential for expansion within and beyond the theme of belonging can offer valuable insights to the broader community, facilitating learning and adaptation from this model.

Concrete Tangible Support for CYPT:

- The project has provided tangible and concrete support for the CYPT, yielding interesting results and promoting capacity-building and collaboration. This can potentially attract new CYPT members seeking access to these resources. Additionally, conversations around the evolution of CYPT's role have commenced. This suggests that a longer-term data sharing infrastructure might be established, and CYPT could potentially serve as an intermediary for data collection, benefiting community organizations across Waterloo Region.

Potential Positive Interventions and Data Collection:

- As the project's interventions evolve, and more research is dedicated to assessing how interventions result in changes to program-level belonging, there lies the potential for substantial benefits for children, youth, and families.
- However, there is a cautious note about potential negative outcomes, wherein organizations might perceive these interventions (or even the process of continuous data collection) as burdensome, possibly impeding their engagement. Therefore, ongoing support from an external source is still needed (i.e., CYPT-M4C).

Continued Support and Evolution for Lasting Impact:

- The impact of the project is intricately tied to continued support and its ongoing evolution. If the project were to halt at this juncture, the potential for lasting effects would be limited. To ensure enduring effects, it is crucial to embed the tools within the community and cultivate their usage. This progression, especially in a potential new phase, could result in organizations valuing the concept of belonging more and dedicating greater attention to it. The measurement of belonging would subsequently inform organizations and programs, which, in turn, would positively influence the participants' experiences, potentially extending to staff members working with individuals experiencing positive outcomes.

Advancement in Evaluation Practices:

- The project has unveiled a substantial gap in the evaluation practices that are also currently prevalent across Ontario and beyond. The conventional approach, where organizations navigate evaluation independently or resort to external consultants, is deemed unsatisfactory.
- The project has introduced a strategic partnership framework that offers a much-needed alternative. By initiating this pilot, the project effectively leverages existing expertise to catalyze a more effective evaluation approach. As more organizations become part of this initiative and as the demands for meeting funder requirements increase, the partnership framework proves to be an increasingly advantageous avenue.
- Future-forward it is also important to examine how the questions develop specifically align with the reporting needs of organizations to donors, streamlining this process as much as possible.

Positive Engagement and Future Collaboration:

- The project has garnered highly positive engagement from participating organizations, leading to a promising outlook for future collaboration. The organizations that provided feedback expressed keen interest in using future iterations of the survey. They are also enthusiastic about participating in workshops tailored to support data collection. The tools and data generated through their participation are anticipated to be valuable assets for their work.

SUSTAINABILITY

To evaluate the sustainability of the project, the evaluator considered the probable extent to which the benefits of the intervention will continue and what resources will be required to sustain these benefits. The evaluator also considered the timing of this evaluation when examining the project's sustainability. As this evaluation, being an end-of-phase evaluation, was conducted at the end of the project implementation period, the ability to assess the continuation of ongoing benefits over time is very limited.

Sustainability, for the purpose of this evaluation, looked for indicators that sustainability was factored into the projects' designs and executions. In consideration of the team's agile approach and strong connection to the CYPT Backbone team, it is evident the project team have planned project outputs with sustainability in mind.

SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS
Likelihood for sustaining and continuing project benefits future-forward

Likelihood for sustaining and continuing project benefits future-forward

Looking ahead, the pathway for the project's continued success and growth is guided by several key strategic actions, as highlighted by the informants:

Role of M4C Team:

- Depending on future funding, the M4C team can continue playing a central role in the ongoing management and expansion of the project. This entails a multifaceted approach that encompasses broadening the utilization of existing tools, creating new tools to meet evolving needs, enhancing

opportunities for peer-to-peer learning among organizations, and undertaking evidence-based research pertaining to the theme of belonging. Through these actions, the M4C team can drive the project's evolution in a meaningful and impactful direction, particularly with Outcome 3 in mind.

Collaborative Efforts with CYPT:

- Collaboration with CYPT and its associated groups, notably the DRE team, is pivotal in ensuring the project's effectiveness and reach. The CYPT can provide valuable insights into the efficacy of tools developed by the M4C team. Additionally, the CYPT can actively promote the project's outputs and encourage organizations' participation in forthcoming M4C activities. The static resources developed by M4C, for example, will be promoted and maintained by the CYPT Backbone team. The team anticipates that a formal communication and exit strategy, developed by both M4C and the CYPT Backbone team, will be necessary if funding ceases.

Strengthened Partnership with LogicalOutcomes:

- The partnership with LogicalOutcomes remains integral to the project's trajectory. The collaboration will extend as the earlier versions of the survey are launched, accommodating more languages, and enhancing accessibility for diverse audiences, including those with disabilities. LogicalOutcomes' role in data collection and management is pivotal to ensure the project's seamless execution and adherence to data integrity.

Continued Involvement of University of Waterloo:

- The University of Waterloo's engagement in the project is expected to persist, with their expertise contributing to technical support and strategic advisory input. This partnership's strength can be further cultivated, potentially exploring avenues for deeper collaboration with the CYPT. The involvement of academic institutions, including Conestoga College, is also seen as beneficial, enriching the project's resources and insights.

All the informants also expressed a favorable perspective on future collaboration with OTF, highlighting the value of OTF's active engagement beyond its role as a donor. OTF's role as a consulting body, facilitating connections to diverse partners, has been particularly beneficial. Moreover, this partnership with OTF is viewed as an avenue for mutual learning. The project's outcomes can offer insights into how organizations respond to donor requirements, while also shedding light on the advantages of multi-stakeholder collaborations centered around data collection, shared measurement, and evaluations beyond Waterloo Region.

The team acknowledges the necessity of diversifying funding sources for the project's long-term sustainability. This diversification involves seeking support from various channels, including traditional partners, academic and research funding avenues, and private sector contributions. To effectively navigate this landscape, the M4C team recognizes the importance of maintaining a diverse skill set within the team. Expertise in research and evaluation, grant application processes, communication strategies, and partnership cultivation will be instrumental in securing a robust and stable funding portfolio. This multifaceted approach to funding acquisition ensures that the project's benefits endure and continue to make a meaningful impact in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Deepen and Refine the Belonging Focus:** The strong alignment of the project with the concept of belonging has proven to be effective and relevant. To build on this success, the M4C team may consider delving into more specific aspects of "belonging". For example, exploring different

demographic groups such as younger age groups and workplace staff at organizations serving children, youth, and families. This expansion will not only maintain continuity but also deepen research on belonging, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this topic across the membership.

- **Promote Alignment with Relevant Initiatives:** Continue to identify and leverage synergies with other relevant initiatives within the CYPT and the broader community (e.g., municipal government, collective impact partnerships, etc.). Look for opportunities to align project goals and data collection efforts with existing frameworks, strategic/action plans, and similar surveys. This will enhance the coherence of the project within the larger context and foster collaboration across different initiatives.
- **Integrate Deliverables into Organizational Strategic Plans:** Work closely with piloting organizations to ensure that the project's focus on belonging, and subsequent data insights, are integrated into their strategic plans and objectives. Collaborate with organizations to identify how the project's outcomes align with their organizational goals and missions. This will ensure that the project's efforts are coherent with the long-term strategies of the piloting organizations.
- **Continue Collaboration with Existing Donors and Partners:** Given the positive collaboration with OTF and SSHRC, it's recommended to continue engaging with these partners in the future phase. The M4C team should consider strengthening the partnership with OTF to leverage its engagement and support for future phases. This includes, continuing to view the partnership with OTF as a mutual learning opportunity, where the project's outcomes contribute insights into donor requirements and collaboration benefits. Additionally, the M4C team can explore potential collaborations with other academic institutions and private sector partners to diversify funding sources and expand the project's reach.
- **Promote Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:** The M4C can encourage collaboration between community organizations, academia, and other stakeholders to enhance coherence. This can ensure that the project's activities and outcomes are coherent across these diverse perspectives and that knowledge is shared effectively between these different realms. This can also include maintaining an open and collaborative approach with the larger CYPT network, the DRE support team, and the OTF network. Regular updates and consultations foster cohesion and mutual understanding, contributing to the project's efficiency.
- **Prioritizing Considerations for Equity and Inclusivity:** The M4C team is recommended to continue prioritizing equity and inclusivity in all aspects of project design and implementation. For example, they can incorporate specific equity milestone goals and prompts within the project design. They can also participate in data equity trainings to stay updated on evolving best practices, ensure diverse representation of the served population and expand demographic questions to encompass a wider range of social dimensions. Lastly, it is recommended that the team shares their insights vis-a-vis planned workshops to educate front-line staff on gathering demographic information appropriately.
- **Enhance Communication Channels with Piloting Organizations:** It is recommended that the M4C team establishes a more systematic and consistent communication approach to streamline information sharing with piloting organizations. This could involve regular updates, meeting summaries, and a centralized platform for documentation.
- **Establishing Ongoing Feedback Mechanisms:** It is recommended that the M4C team implements a structured and regular feedback loop with piloting organizations to gather insights on tool utilization, challenges faced, and lessons learned. This will facilitate continuous improvement and adaptation, enhancing the project's efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Consider Date Integration with Existing Surveys:** The M4C may wish to explore opportunities to integrate M4C questions into existing evaluation surveys used by piloting organizations to promote more accessible and efficient use of belonging-related questions amongst the CYPT

network. Alternatively, the M4C team can consider how to incorporate supplementary evaluation-oriented questions into the belonging survey to streamline efforts and enhance efficiency for organizations who are limited in their capacity to use multiple data collection tools.

- **Promote Peer-to-Peer Learning and Research Opportunities:** To enhance the peer-to-peer learning aspect of the project, the M4C team should explore opportunities for participating organizations to learn from each other's experiences, share best practices, and discuss challenges. These opportunities should be scheduled ahead and should be periodic.
- **Continue Maintaining and Optimizing the Team's Composition:** Given the M4C team's experience in leveraging a range of expertise, the team should ensure that team members' strengths align with project needs, fostering a collaborative atmosphere that facilitates shared ownership and efficient task distribution. This may include examining additional funding avenues that can help promote retention amongst existing members. Moreover, the team can address resource turnover challenges by having a dedicated individual to support the onboarding processes for new team members.
- **Examine the Pros and Cons of Different Ethics Review Processes:** The M4C team may wish to discuss how to best optimize the ethics review process by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of undergoing both university and community-based ethics reviews. Given their experience in phase one, they can determine the most efficient approach to navigate the review while adhering to ethical standards.
- **Promote Project Visibility:** The M4C team should continue to share/spotlight successes, challenges, and lessons learned through regular CYPT updates, community presentations, and conferences. This will enhance the project's visibility, credibility, and potential for collaboration with other initiatives.
- **Develop a Communication and Exit Strategy:** Depending on future funding avenues, consider developing a formal communication and exit strategy in collaboration with the CYPT Backbone team, outlining how the project's outputs and resources will be promoted, maintained, and accessible even if avenues of funding for a new phase cease.
- **Create a Resource Repository:** The M4C team may wish to develop a comprehensive online repository of resources that CYPT members can access. This repository should include not only the survey tool and guides but also best practices, case studies and learning tools. This can be done through a dedicated CYPT web page for M4C where publications and tools can be hosted.
- **Prioritize Technical Support Offered through Partnerships:** The M4C should continue to involve the University of Waterloo for technical support and strategic advisory input. This will ensure the project's alignment with best practices in research, evaluation, and data analysis. The team can also explore opportunities to collaborate with other academic institutions, such as Conestoga College, to enhance the project's resource capacity and planning personnel. This could involve joint research projects, student engagement, or specialized expertise.
- **Prioritize Data Management Partnership with LogicalOutcomes:** Ensure that the partnership with LogicalOutcomes remains strong during the next phase, particularly in terms of data collection, management, and reporting. Future-forward, it will be important to assess the cost/benefits of alternative ways to set up a data sharing system.
- **Assess the Long-Term Outcome for Organizations:** In future phases, the M4C team should consider evaluating the longer-term outcome of the project on participating organizations, beneficiaries, and the community. They can measure how the project influences program design, decision-making, and well-being outcomes over time, subsequently using these insights to inform the project's direction and to demonstrate its value to stakeholders.

Outcome 1: Tool Development:

- **Continued Building Upon Question Validation:** Building upon the success of question validation, ensure an ongoing process of validation for new and revised questions. Incorporate feedback from piloting organizations and participants to refine the questionnaire and make it more effective in measuring belonging.
- **Engage Diverse Age Groups:** As the team explores developing questions for younger respondent groups, ensure a comprehensive understanding of their unique perspectives on belonging. Tailor questions and data collection methods can be streamlined to capture meaningful insights from early and middle childhood participants.

Outcome 2: Capacity-Building:

- **Launch a Comprehensive Training:** Expand capacity-building initiatives to include comprehensive training opportunities for front-line staff at participating organizations. Provide training sessions that cover data collection, tool utilization, data interpretation, and privacy considerations.
- **Develop User-Friendly Resources:** Develop user-friendly resources, such as workbooks and guides, that effectively support organizations in utilizing the validated belonging survey. These resources should be easily accessible on the CYPT website for ongoing reference.
- **Enhance Training Manual Through Continued Assessment:** Enhance the training manual on data collection by including real-world examples, case studies, and scenarios that reflect the diverse nature of participating organizations. Make the manual a comprehensive resource for both new and experienced users.

Outcome 3: Data Exploration and Collaboration:

- **Launch a Centralized Data Dashboard:** Develop a centralized data dashboard for data sharing and collaboration. This can include a public-facing centralized dataset containing data collected from multiple organizations, ensuring data privacy while displaying the “possibility/potential” of shared measurement systems to the CYPT membership.
- **Promote Peer-to-Peer Learning:** Implement a peer-to-peer learning approach among participating organizations. Facilitate regular knowledge-sharing sessions where organizations can discuss their experiences, challenges, and successful interventions related to program-level belonging.