

Bridging Together Year 2 Evaluation Report

Prepared for REACH Edmonton
March 2020



Executive Summary

Bridging Together is an out-of-school time collaborative coordinated by REACH Edmonton. Comprising 13 organizations, each partner's program serves immigrant and refugee children and youth in different ways.

Every year, more immigrants and refugees are migrating to Canada. More than 200,000 immigrants relocated to Alberta between 2011 to 2016, accounting for nearly 25% of all immigrants relocating to Alberta in the history of the province. Nearly 40% relocated to Edmonton, and 15,000 of those immigrants are children and youth between the ages of 0 and 14 (Statistics Canada, 2017). A significant number of those children and youth require assistance to adapt to their new environment; the transition of young immigrants into Canadian society is not always easy.

Out-of-school time programs aim to promote positive youth development and learning. Often as a complement to school-based learning, out-of-school time programs provide valuable supports to immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Bridging Together

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has provided funding to REACH Edmonton to coordinate Bridging Together. This out-of-school time collaborative brings together 13 organizations with programs serving immigrant and refugee children and youth. Working toward the common goal of empowering immigrant, refugee and newcomer youth, the organizations share resources, develop relationships and exchange knowledge through regular meetings.

Participating programs include after-school homework clubs, after-school sports, and summer day camps of varying lengths. Some programs may focus more on academics, some on culture and others are more recreational, but all are multifaceted and aim to support youth to develop healthy relationships and build life skills to help them succeed in life.

This Report

This evaluation reports on data collected through multiple methods from parents, caregivers, children and youth and who participated in programs between September 2018 and December 2019. Program activity and financial data are also included. High level results are described below. Full details are found in the comprehensive report that follows.



High Level Summary

Focus Area 1: Program description and reach



Programs vary by the age group they serve, by the language in which they are offered, by the cultural communities they serve, by their locations across Edmonton, by their length, by the activities they offer.



All programs serve immigrant and refugee children and youth. Most participants were between the ages of 6 and 17.



812 children and youth participated in 2018/19 school-year and 2019 summer programs.

Focus Area 2: Child, youth and family outcomes



Most participating children and youth report having fun, making new friends, learning about their own and different cultures and life in Edmonton, gaining new skills and feeling safe.



Parents/caregivers report being better able to participate in paid labour and/or attend classes.

Focus Area 3: Collaboration



Partner organizations are collaborating a great deal with REACH, and to varying extents with one another.



REACH is well connected, highly valued and trusted in its coordinating role.



Partner organizations report being better connected to other organizations and delivering better services as a result of collaboration.

Focus Area 4: Social return on investment



The SROI ratio calculated for the period of September 2018 through August 2019 shows a returned social value of at least \$3.30 for every dollar invested.

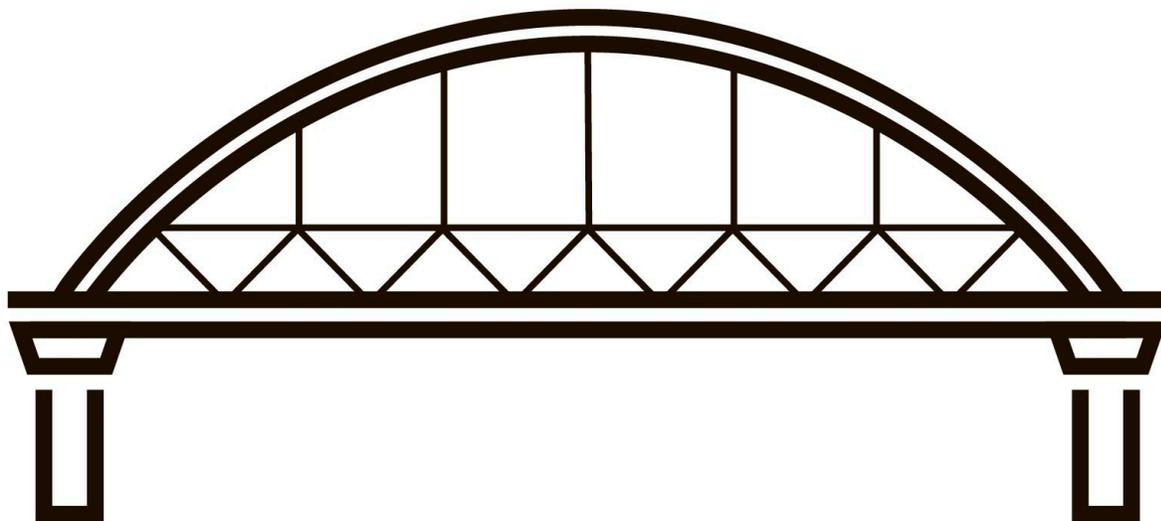


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Bridging Together is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

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Background

Every year, more immigrants and refugees are migrating to Canada. This trend continues to increase, with more than 200,000 immigrants relocating to Alberta between 2011 to 2016, accounting for nearly 25% of all immigrants relocating to Alberta in the history of the province¹. Of those migrating to Alberta between 2011 and 2016, nearly 40% relocated to Edmonton¹. Further, 15,000 of those immigrants are children and youth between the ages of 0 and 14¹, a significant number of children and youth requiring assistance to adapt to their new environment. The transition of young immigrants into Canadian society is not always easy.

Immigrants face numerous challenges when arriving in Canada. These challenges are not limited to linguistic, cultural, and environmental differences, but also encompass **health and mental health**^{2,3,4,5,6,7}, **socialization**^{2,7,8}, **education**^{2,4,5,6,7,9,10}, and **justice**^{2,7,11}. While many immigrants reveal resilience and integrate well into the fabric of Canadian society, a significant number do not fare as well⁷. Furthermore, children and youth may struggle if not afforded the proper supports to overcome the difficulties of adjusting to their new country.

Out-of-school time programs aim to promote positive youth development and learning¹². Often as a complement to school-based learning, out-of-school time programs provide valuable supports to immigrant and refugee children and youth¹³.

¹ Statistics Canada. 2017. Immigrant population by place of birth, period of immigration, age and sex. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-402-X2016007. Ottawa, Canada. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/imm/index-eng.cfm>

² Anisef, P. and Kilbride, K.M. 2008. The needs of newcomer youth and emerging "Best Practices" to meet those needs – final report

³ Browne, D.T., Kumar, A., Puente-Duran, S., Georgiades, K., Leckie, G., Jenkins, J. 2017. Emotional problems among recent immigrants and parenting status: Findings from a national longitudinal study of immigrants in Canada. PLoS ONE 12(4): e0175023. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0175023>

⁴ Beiser, M., Oglivie, L., Rummens, J.A., Armstrong, R., and Oxman-Martinez. 2005. The new Canadian children and youth study. Research to fill a gap in Canada's children's agenda.

⁵ Georgiades, K., Boyle, M.H., and Duku, E. 2007. Contextual influences on children's mental health and school performance: the moderating effects of family immigrant status. *Child Development* 78(5): 1572-1591.

⁶ Georgiades, K., Boyle, M.H., and Fife, K.A. 2013. Emotional and behavioral problems among adolescent students: the role of immigrant, racial/ethnic congruence and belongingness in schools. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 42: 1473-1492.

⁷ Schleifer, B. and Ngo, H. 2005. Immigrant children and youth in focus. *Canadian Issues*, Spring, 29-33.

⁸ Picot, G. 2008. Immigrant economic and social outcomes in Canada: research and data development at Statistics Canada.

⁹ Suárez-Orozco, C., Onaga, M., & Lardemelle, C.D. 2010. Promoting academic engagement among immigrant adolescents through school-family-community collaboration. *Professional School Counseling*. 14: 15-26.

¹⁰ Suárez-Orozco, C., Tseng, V., Yoshikawa, H. 2015. *Intersecting inequality: Research to reduce inequality for immigrant-origin children & youth*. New York: W.T. Grant Foundation. Available at <http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/post/111903703827/intersecting-inequalities-research-to-reduce>

¹¹ Rossiter, M.J., Rossiter, K.R. 2009. Diamonds in the rough: Bridging gaps in supports for at-risk immigrant and refugee youth. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. 10: 409-429.

¹² Lauer, S.C. and Little, P.M.D. 2005. Recruitment and retention strategies for out-of-school programs. *New Directions for Youth Development*. 105: 71-89.

¹³ Hall, G., Porche, M. V., Grossman, J., and Smashnaya, S. 2016. Practices and approaches of out-of-school time programs serving immigrant and refugee youth. *Journal of Youth Development*, 10(2), 72-87.

Bridging Together

Bridging Together is a partnership of Edmonton community groups, community leaders, service delivery agencies, and local institutions whose mission is to empower immigrant and refugee children and youth who are new to Canada to integrate into Canadian society by providing culturally appropriate after-school and summer programs.

Bridging Together has included the following organizations over the time frame addressed in this report:

- Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society
- Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area (BGCBigS)
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Free Footie
- Islamic Family and Social Services Association
- Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative
- Partners for Humanity
- REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities
- Sinkunia Community Development Organization
- Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton
- Somali Canadian Women & Children Association
- South Pointe Community Centre
- YWCA

Except for REACH Edmonton who provides coordination, each of the organizations delivers OST programming for immigrant/refugee youth with focus areas related to academics, culture and recreation. Bridging Together is made possible through the funding of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The intention of Bridging Together is to build on the broader partnerships of the Out of School Time Collaborative to enhance summer programming and provide year-round programming for children and youth with Permanent Residence status. The idea is that by delivering a coordinated approach to summer programs, these organizations can be more effective at improving the lives of the youth they serve, particularly immigrant, refugee and newcomer youth. Bridging Together is supported by the Out of School Time Collaborative and the Out of School Time Steering Committee.

Bridging Together is the first initiative of its kind funded by IRCC. Most programs that are part of Bridging Together also receive funding from other sources.

Evaluation Purpose and Use

In May 2018, REACH engaged Three Hive Consulting (“Three Hive”) to develop and implement an evaluation for OST Year-Round Programming. The purpose of the evaluation is to tell the story of what is happening within the programs and to what extent it is making a difference in the lives of youth. The evaluation captures the narratives and stories of youth; however, the qualitative findings will be combined with a financial lens. The evaluation serves to provide information to support decision-making for Bridging Together and REACH Edmonton. The findings will be used by REACH Edmonton to highlight successful programs and areas for improvement, and advocate for continued funding, as well as to help partner organizations identify areas that are successful and where they might benefit from improvement.

In collaboration with Bridging Together, Three Hive prepared an evaluation framework and plan to guide evaluation until the end of March 2020. That document is included as Appendix A: Evaluation Framework.

Evaluation Focus

This evaluation focuses on four areas, three of which are in scope for this report.

Focus Area 1: Program description and reach

Focus Area 2: Child, youth and family outcomes

Focus Area 3: Collaboration (reported in 2018/19 evaluation report)

Focus Area 4: Social return on investment

This report is structured around those four focus areas. Evaluation questions, results and summary statements are presented for each area.

Evaluation Methods

A comprehensive evaluation of a collaborative initiative like Bridging Together requires a mixed methods approach that adapts to each program’s context while still providing reliable evidence to answer the evaluation questions. Three Hive has employed several data collection methods. Further details on each method can be found in Appendix B: Data Collection Methods.

1. Youth summer program feedback sessions (summary included as Appendix D: Summer Youth Feedback Session Themes)
2. Youth 2018/19 school-year self-efficacy survey (2018/19 baseline and follow-up, with 2019/20 baseline results included as Appendix E: 2019/20 Self-Efficacy Survey Baseline Results)
3. Youth 2018/19 school-year program experience surveys
4. Youth 2019 summer program experience surveys
5. Small group interviews with youth (summary included as Appendix F: Small Group Interviews with Youth)
6. Parent/caregiver 2019 summer program surveys
7. Administrative data analysis, including participant demographics and program attendance,
8. Social Return on Investment calculation

Time period

Data presented in this report includes final result from the 2018/19 school year, summer 2019, and initial results from programs beginning in September 2019.

Focus Area 1: Program description and reach

1.1 What makes each program unique?

While all programs serve children and youth, each program focuses on a different population. For example, AJFAS offers all programs in French, YWCA's program serves girls, and SCCSE primarily serves Somali students. Free Footie is an after-school sports program operating in over 40 schools.

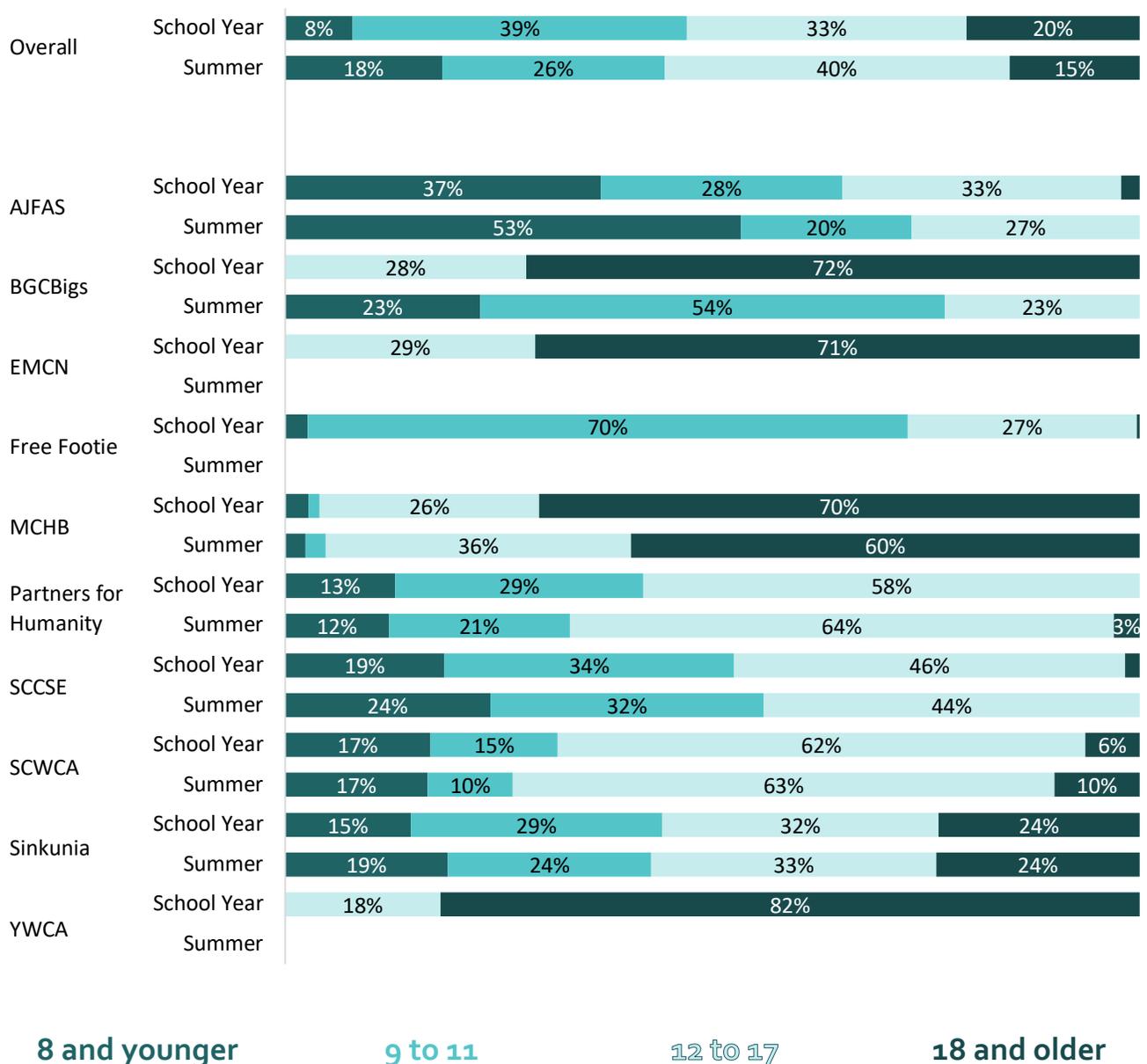
Organization	Program Name	Ages				Program Focus				
		6-8	9-11	12-14	15-18+	Academics	Sports	Life Skills	Culture	Recreation
Alliance Jeunesse-Famille de l'Alberta Society (AJFAS)	BUCACY (Building Capacity among Children and Youth)	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters (BGCBigS)	Eastglen ELL			*	*	*		*		
	Metro	*	*	*		*		*	*	*
	Welcome Centre for Immigrants	*	*	*		*		*	*	*
BGCBigS / Nyarkeni	Bridging Minds	*	*	*		*		*	*	*
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)	Global Girls				*			*		
Free Footie	Free Footie	*	*				*	*		
Multicultural Health Brokers (MCHB)	Various	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Partners for Humanity	Learn and Grow	*	*	*	*	*		*		*
Sinkunia	Sinkunia After School Activities	*	*	*	*	*		*		*
Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton (SCCSE)	Hormuud Homework Club			*	*	*		*		*
	Reach Ahead	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
Somali Canadian Women and Children Association (SCWCA)	Homework Club			*	*	*		*		*
	Horumar Summer Day Camp	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
South Pointe Community Centre	Kids Spaces	*	*			*			*	*
YWCA Edmonton	GirlSpace		*	*	*			*		

1.2 Who are the program participants?

Based on youth self-report, the school-year program return rate is high; in the 2018-19 School Year Program Experience Survey, 41% of students indicated that they had participated in the program before.

Across 2018-19 school-year programs and 2019 summer programs, most participants were between 9 and 17 years old, with age distributions varying by program. While most programs hosted children and youth, the EMCN, MCHB, and YWCA programs tended to have older participants, many of whom were 18 and older.

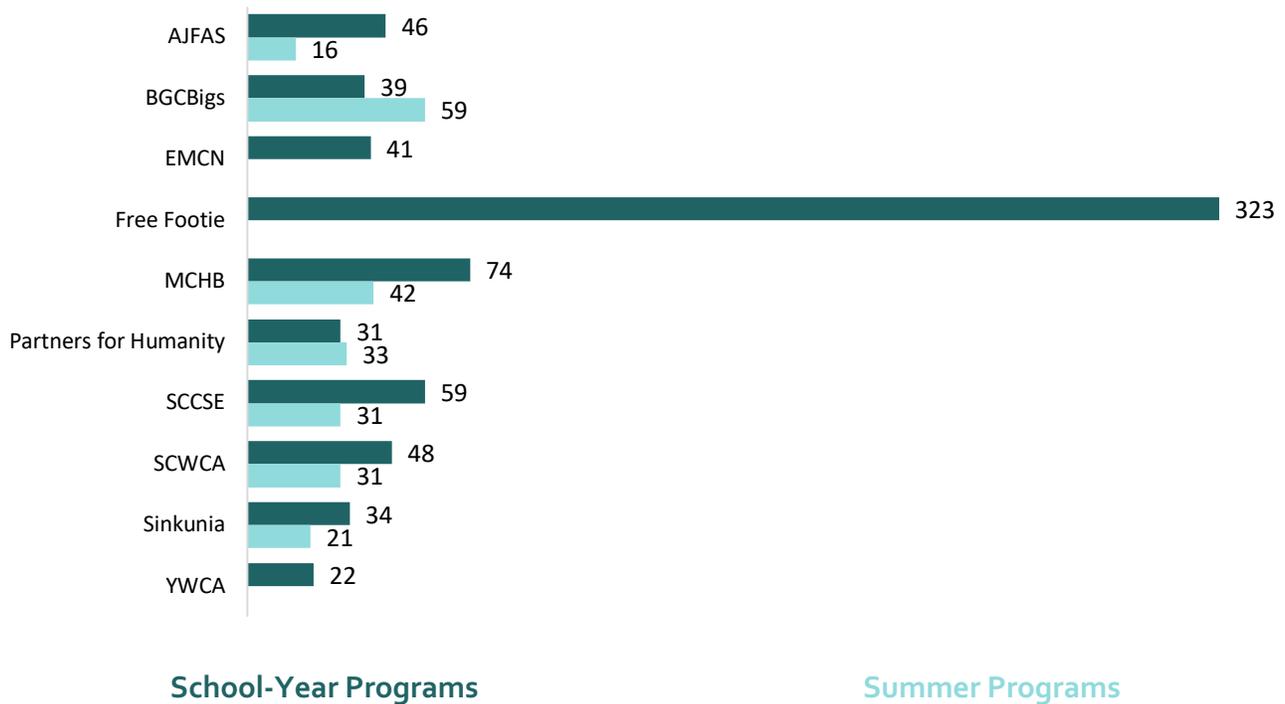
Age of program participants
School-year (September 2018 to June 2019) and summer (July 2019 to August 2019)



1.3 To what extent are children, youth and caregivers participating in programming?

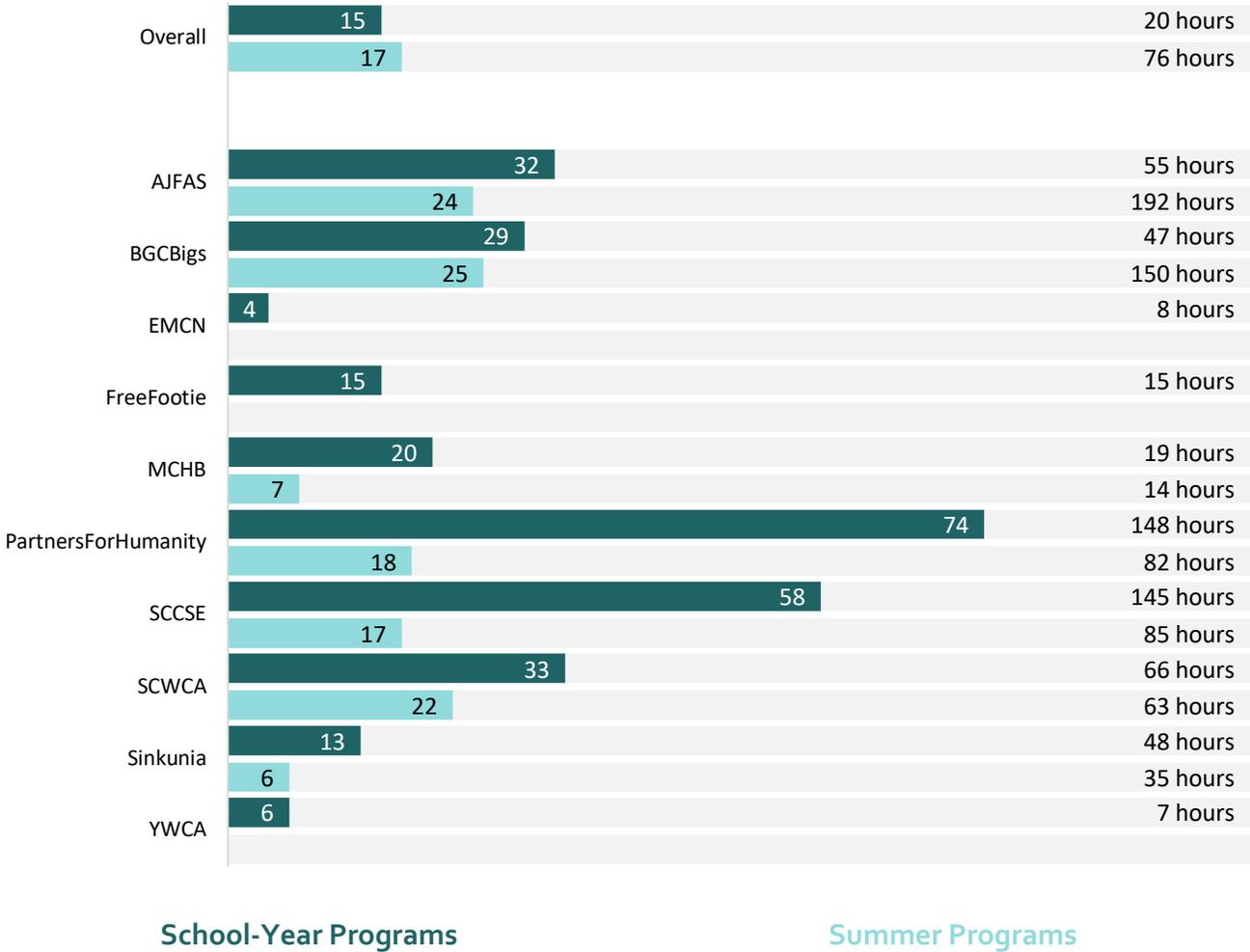
A total of 812 unique participants attended the 10 organizations' programs between September 2018 and August 2019. Overall, 717 unique participants attended school year programs (September 2018 to June 2019) and 233 unique participants attended summer programs (July 2019 to August 2019). These counts do not add up to 812, as some participants may have attended both school year and summer programs. 40% of all participants attended the Free Footie program, with many also attending BGCBigs (12%), MCHB (9%), SCCSE (8%) and AJFAS (7%) programs.

of unique participants attending each program
 School-year (September 2018 to June 2019) and summer (July 2019 to August 2019)



Overall, the median number of sessions attended across all school year and summer programs was similar (15 and 17 sessions, respectively). However, the median number of hours attended across all school year and summer programs varied (20 and 76 hours, respectively). Unsurprisingly, the median number of sessions and hours attended varied between programs.

**Median # of sessions and hours attended
School-year (September 2018 to June 2019) and summer (July 2019 to August 2019)**



Focus Area 2: Child, youth and family outcomes

2.1 To what extent is programming making a difference in the lives of children and youth?

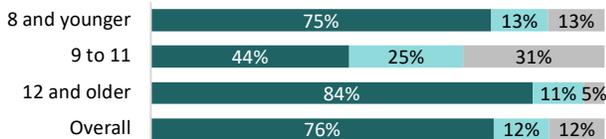
Data sources: 2018/19 school-year program self-efficacy surveys, 2018/19 school-year program experience surveys, 2019 summer program experience surveys, 2019 summer program feedback sessions, 2019 small group interviews

Overall, children and youth reported a strong positive influence across many aspects of their lives. Data collection questions were designed to query topics like healthy relationships, self-efficacy, networks and social supports, academics, involvement in community, integration into Canadian society, and fun. It should be noted that because of the variation in programs' objectives, not all programs were explicitly working to achieve improvement in each of these areas. The following results demonstrate the strong positive impact reported by participants in both school-year and summer programs.

2.1a Healthy relationships

Reflecting on the 2018/19 school-year programs, children and youth reported having **friends outside of school** and **getting along better with others**. Similarly, most participants reported **making new friends** at the program. However, nearly one-third of 9 to 11-year-old children reported not making any new friends. It is unclear whether these participants were already friends with everyone in their program, or whether they were not able to form friendships with new children or youth in their program.

Did you make new friends?



Do you have friends outside of school?



Do you get along better with others?



Response Scale:



Yes



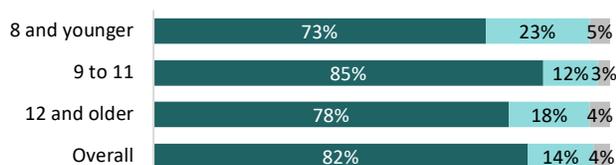
Kind of



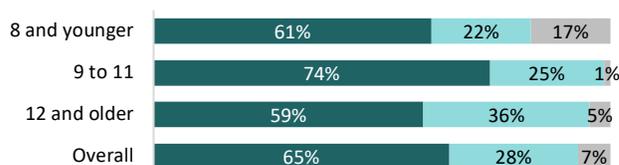
Not really

In 2019 summer programs, children and youth of all age groups consistently reported having **made new friends**. Generally, children and youth responded 'Yes' or 'Kind of' that they felt **comfortable talking to the program staff or volunteers** and **felt like people cared about them**. However, there was more variation in children and youth responses surrounding whether they had **learned to solve problems with friends or family**. Nearly 50% of the youngest children (8 and younger) reported they had 'Not really' learned how to solve problems. Overall, the 'Yes' response rate dropped between the 2018 and 2019 youth summer survey.

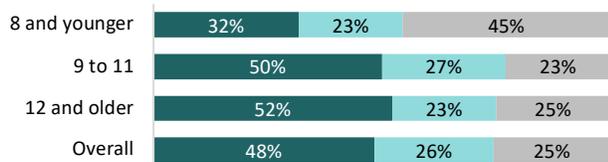
Did you make new friends?



Did you feel comfortable talking to the program staff/volunteers?



Did you learn about how to solve problems with friends or family?



Did you feel like people here care about you?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of



Not really

In the 2019 summer interactive feedback sessions, children and youth could write or draw their responses to five different topics. Just like in the 2018 evaluation, themes that emerged from that feedback included feeling respected, accepted, supported, and secure. Many youth reported important growth in their social relationships.

"I feel like I'm not invisible." "I feel like I'm empowered." "I feel normal."

"I feel like myself." "When I am here, I feel like I can do everything."

"I know how to listen." "I interact more with people."

"I am better at being nice and accepting people for who they are."

"I've got to be friends with other people who go to my school, I've got to make a bigger relationship with them and know other people."

2.1b Self-efficacy

Anonymous self-efficacy surveys were distributed in the fall of 2018 (pre-survey) and spring of 2019 (post-survey) in school year programs; many of these programs, however, completed very few or did not complete and post-surveys. Therefore, pre-survey and post-survey data were aggregated to show changes in self-efficacy scores before and after the program. A new round of self-efficacy surveys was administered to programs in the fall of 2019. These results only represent pre-scores and are not included in the following results (see Appendix E).

Overall, children and youth reported similar self-efficacy scores pre- and post-program, with participants generally reporting high levels of self-efficacy ('Yes' responses of at least some of the time or better to each statement) from start to finish of each program.

I can get teachers to help me when I get stuck on schoolwork



Pre Post

I can say my opinions when other classmates disagree with me



Pre Post

I can cheer myself up when I am sad



Pre Post

I can concentrate even when there are other interesting things to do



Pre Post

I can calm down when I am very scared



Pre Post

I can make friends with other children/youth



Pre Post

I can study for a test



Pre

Post

I can talk to a new person



Pre

Post

I finish my homework



Pre

Post

I can work well with classmates



Pre

Post

I can control my feelings



Pre

Post

I can pay attention in class



Pre

Post

I can tell other children/youth when they are doing something that I don't like



Pre

Post

I understand all subjects in school



Pre

Post

I can tell a friend that I don't feel well



Pre

Post

I can stay friends with other children/youth



Pre

Post

I pass tests



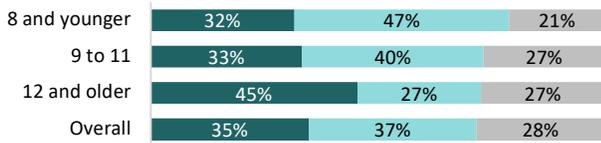
Pre

Post

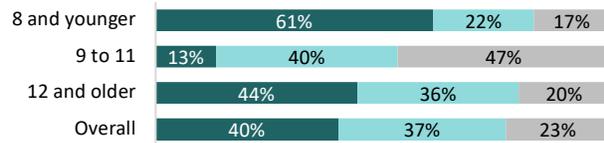
Program experience surveys in both summer and school year programs also addressed topics relating to self-efficacy. While the above results do not demonstrate dramatic improvement, the majority of youth did report self-efficacy gains at the end of their programs.

Following the 2018/19 school-year programs, nearly all children and youth reported that they **know who to talk to when they need advice or help**. Similarly, participants reported **feeling good about themselves** and **were confident that they could achieve what they set their mind to**. However, there was less confidence in participants when asked if **they were comfortable talking in front of the class** or **comfortable talking about their feelings**. Over 20% of all children and youth were not confident speaking in front of the class. As well, nearly 50% of 9 to 11-year old children were not comfortable talking about their feelings.

Are you more comfortable talking in front of the class?



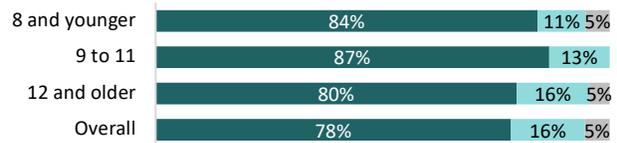
Are you more comfortable talking about your feelings?



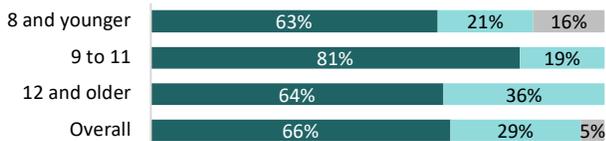
Do you know who to talk to when you need advice or help?



Do you feel good about yourself?



Are you confident you can achieve what you set your mind to?



Response Scale:

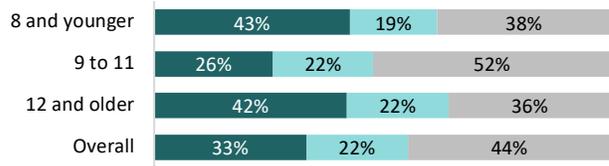


Similarly, at the end of 2019 summer programs, most children and youth of all age groups were **comfortable talking to new people**, although at least 10% in each age group were not. Many reported 'Not really' being **comfortable talking about their feelings**. Responses between the 2018 and 2019 youth summer surveys were similar.

Are you more comfortable talking to new people?



Are you more comfortable talking about your feelings?



Response Scale:



When asked about what they could do better now, many 2019 summer program participants reported becoming better at developing or improving a skill and improving on their personal and interpersonal relationships. Many participants reported that they improved in sporting activities, art, and academics. Some participants shared that they improved their ability to develop and maintain friendship and personal development.

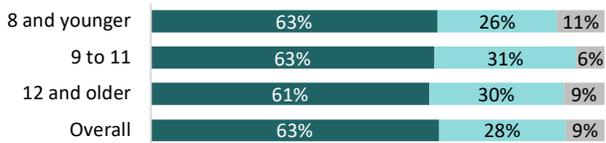
"So much better at dodging because playing too much dodge ball."

"It's really sad that this program is almost over, but I can do science better!"

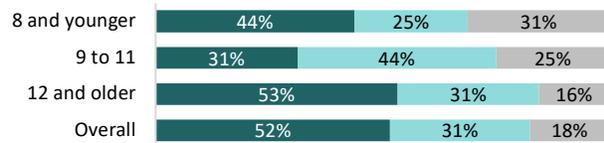
2.1c Networks and social supports

Generally, children and youth who participated in 2018/19 school-year programming were **comfortable talking to the program staff and volunteers** and **talking to new people**. Confidence was higher in participants when talking to program staff and volunteers. However, younger children were less comfortable speaking to new people relative to youth.

Are you more comfortable talking to the program staff/volunteers?

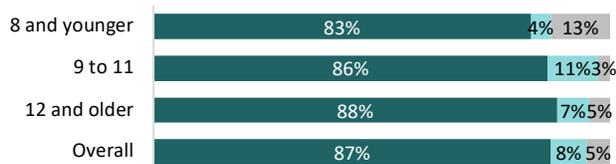


Are you more comfortable talking to new people?

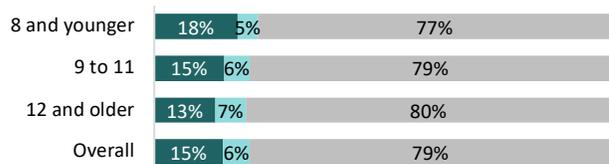


Nearly all children and youth in summer 2019 programs felt that they **knew who to ask for help when needed**. Few indicated that they had **spoken with someone in the program about personal or family problems**; the proportion of children and youth talking to someone about personal or family problems decreased from summer 2018. However, it is important to note that the programs' objectives were not explicitly to fulfill any sort of counselling role.

Do you know who you can ask for help when you need it?



Did you talk to someone here about personal or family problems?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of



Not really

2.1d Involvement in community

Most participants in 2018/19 school-year programs were **comfortable going to new places in Edmonton**. These participants also reported that they had **learned more about life in Edmonton** following their year-round program.

Are you more comfortable going to new places in Edmonton?



Did you learn more about life in Edmonton?



At the conclusion of summer 2019 programs, most children and youth said they **went to new places**, and that they are now **more comfortable going to new places in Edmonton**.

Did you go to new places (such as field trips)?



Are you more comfortable going to new places in Edmonton?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of

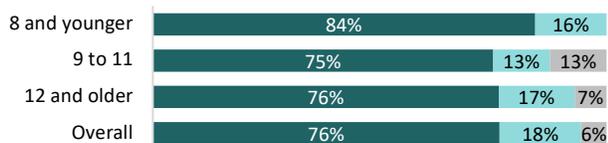


Not really

2.1e Integration into Canadian society

At the end of 2018/19 school-year programs, nearly all participants reported **learning more about their culture**.

Did you learn more about your culture?

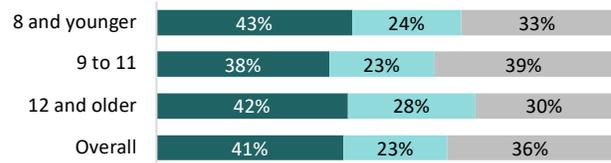


Similarly, most children and youth in summer 2019 programs learned more about their **own cultures** and **other cultures**. Older children and youth reported the least amount of learning about other cultures and about **life in Edmonton**, perhaps because they have had more years to learn about Edmonton. In the feedback sessions, one child in a Somali-focused program wrote that at their program, they felt “Somali-like.”

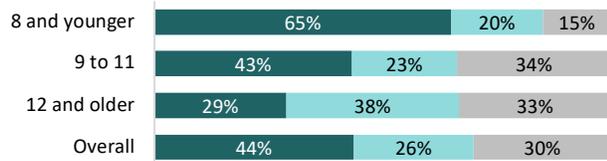
Did you learn more about your culture?



Did you learn more about other cultures?



Did you learn more about life in Edmonton?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of

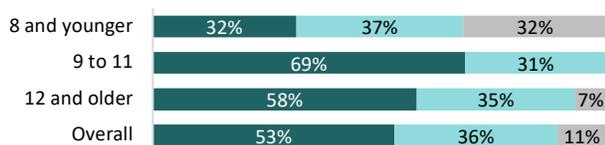


Not really

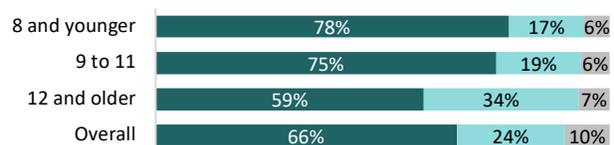
2.1f Academics

Participants in 2018/19 school-year programs were asked questions relating to their enjoyment of school, their confidence in academic subjects, and aspiration for higher education. Generally, children and youth responded positively to questions related to academics. Nearly 90% of participants **achieved what they wanted to achieve at school**. Children aged eight and younger were less likely to report having achieved their goals; it is unlikely that children at this age approach their schoolwork with well-defined goals. Most participants enjoyed **school this past year, improved at school, and felt like they worked hard at school**. Children and youth were also **typically able to get their homework done, comfortable reading on their own, and comfortable writing on their own**. Younger children were more likely to report **getting better at math and science**. Last, nearly all participants in the year-round programs said they **want to attend university or college one day**.

Did you achieve the goals you wanted to achieve this school year?



Did you enjoy school this past year?



Response Scale:



Yes

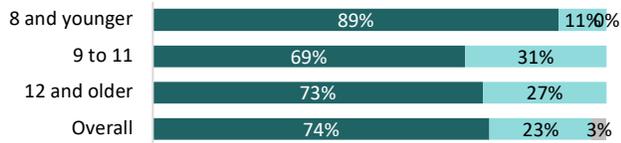


Kind of



Not really

Did you improve at school this past year?



Do you feel like you worked hard at school?



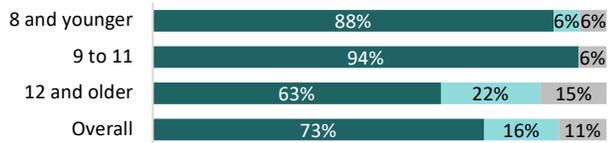
Did you typically get your homework done?



Are you more comfortable reading on your own?



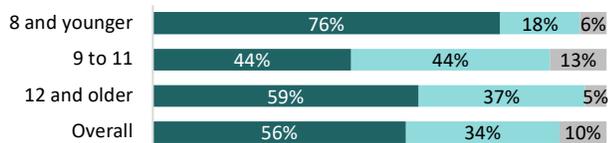
Are you more comfortable writing on your own?



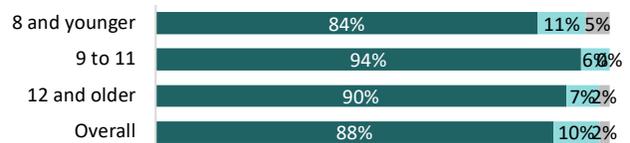
Are you better at math?



Are you better at science?



Do you want to go to university or college one day?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of



Not really

Many summer programs also included a focus on academics. Over 80% of children and youth at summer 2019 programs **learned new skills to help them succeed at school** (either “Yes” or “Kind of”). However, 27% of youth 12 and older did not feel that they learned new skills to help them succeed at school. Most children and youth **felt optimistic about school in the coming year**.

Did you learn new skills to help you succeed at school?



Are you feeling optimistic about school next year?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of



Not really

In the summer feedback sessions, children and youth were asked about their thoughts on the upcoming school year. Many were optimistic, saying school would be “awesome,” “more fun than this year,” and “the best year and funniest year with my new teacher.” Several participants said they expect the new school year to be challenging and much harder than previous years.

“[The next school year] will be tough because you have to put lots of effort, more work and challenges.”

Some provided less enthusiastic responses, indicating they were “sad” because of potentially losing friendships.

“Next year will be sad because I might not be with my best friends in the same class.”

However, others were excited about seeing old friends and the prospect of making new friends.

2.1g Fun

Nearly all participants reported having fun at 2018/19 school-year programs.

Did you like going to the program?



School-year program participants were asked about their favourite part of the program. Many reported that enjoyed participating in sporting activities (e.g., dance, soccer, basketball), hanging out with friends, and working on academic subjects (e.g., English, science).

"My favourite part of the program was the soccer team and studying science."

"I enjoyed being around my friends & the youth leader. Enjoyed eating and playing."

Nearly all children and youth across all age groups had fun at their summer 2019 program.

Did you have fun?



Response Scale:



Yes



Kind of



Not really

Children and youth overwhelmingly reported having fun in a wide variety of activities. When asked what they would have been doing if they weren't at their summer program, they gave answers like "be bored and sleep," "stay in my house," playing Fortnite and Roblox, watching screens of all sorts (e.g., iPhone or tablet). Some mentioned that they would spend time with friends, engage in physical activity (e.g., ride their bike, play at the playground), or go on trips with their family.

"If I hadn't been here, I probably would play video games with my brother."

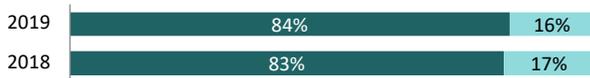
2.2 To what extent is programming making a difference in the lives of families?

Data sources: Parent/caregiver 2019 summer program survey

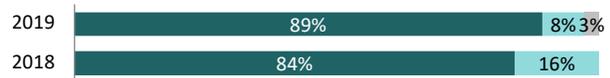
Because their children were attending Bridging Together summer programs, most parents/caregivers were **able to work more** or **go to school more**. Additionally, parents/caregivers reported being **able to practice their own language skills**, whether English or French. They also reported feeling a **greater connection to their community**.

Parents/caregivers reported positively when asked about whether their **child made new friends**, had **fun**, and **learned more about life in Edmonton**.

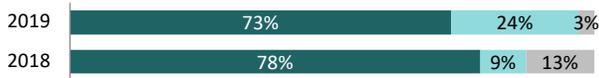
Because of this summer program, I was able to work more



Because of this summer program, I was able to take classes or go to school more



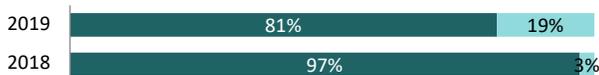
This summer program helped me to practice speaking English/French



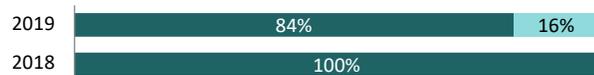
Because of this summer program, I feel more connected to my community



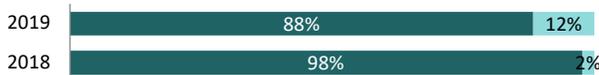
My child made new friends



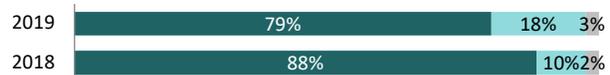
My child had fun



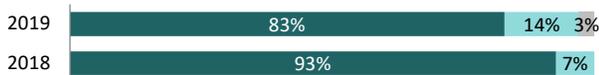
The program staff/volunteers care about my child



My child learned more about life in Edmonton



This summer program helped my child practice speaking English/French



Response Scale:

Yes

Kind of

Not really

Focus Area 3: Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of Bridging Together. While the Year 2 evaluation plan did not include a focus on collaboration, the previous evaluation report relied on two complementary methods to understand collaboration: a social network analysis survey, and interviews with staff at each of the organizations that comprise Bridging Together. Results showed that partners were collaborating with each other to varying extents, and REACH Edmonton brought a great deal of value to the collaborative. There was a high degree of trust amongst all partner organizations.

Focus Area 4: Social Return on Investment

4.1 What is the returned social value of the benefits produced by the Bridging Together Year-Round Programming?

Data sources: Program activity data, program costs, 2018/19 school-year program self-efficacy surveys, 2018/19 school-year program experience surveys, 2019 summer program experience surveys, 2019 summer program feedback sessions, 2019 small group interviews

To understand the social value returned through Bridging Together, methodology developed by Social Value International was followed. This methodology assumes that “actions and activities create and destroy value¹⁴.” In a social return on investment (SROI) analysis, value is defined broadly and is not limited to economic transactions. Value therefore includes elements of social and environmental wellbeing, in addition to financial costs and benefits. An SROI calculation considers all inputs, both direct dollars and in-kind supports, and assigns values to the impact brought about by a program. Since so many benefits of social programs are necessarily social in nature, a great deal of emphasis goes into appropriate determinations of financial proxies for program impacts.

\$1.00 → \$3.30

The conservative SROI analysis demonstrated that for every dollar invested in Bridging Together, at least \$3.30 is returned in social value. The outcomes that yielded the greatest value were improved youth confidence, youth intention to attend post-secondary school, and for parents, the ability to attend school and work while their children are at summer programs.

¹⁴ Nicholls, J., Lawlor, E., Neitzvert, E. & Godspeed, T. 2012. “A Guide to Social Return on Investment.” The SROI Network. Available at:

<http://www.socialvalueuk.org/app/uploads/2016/03/The%20Guide%20to%20Social%20Return%20on%20Investment%202015.pdf>

An SROI analysis is undertaken in six stages, as described below.

SROI Step 1: Establishing Scope and Identifying Key Stakeholders

Scope definition is critical in arriving at a reliable SROI ratio. In the Bridging Together SROI, the time frame included is September 2018 through August 2019. The scope of investments included in the calculation extends to both actual funding dollars from IRCC and other funders, and in-kind supports provided to each funded program. Stakeholders included are children and youth participating in Bridging Together programs in that time frame, and their parents or caregivers.

Note: while IRCC funding is directed toward Permanent Residents, this SROI includes all participating children and youth and is not limited to Permanent Residents.

SROI Step 2: Mapping Outcomes

Staff from REACH Edmonton and funded organizations were involved in determining outcomes expected from Bridging Together, with guidance from the evaluation consultants. Program documents and a literature review also informed the identification of outcomes.

For parents and caregivers, anticipated outcomes that are included in the SROI model are included only for summer programs, and are as follows:

- Parents and caregivers work while children are at summer programs
- Parents and caregivers avoid childcare costs
- Parents and caregivers attend school while children are at summer programs
- Parents and caregivers practice speaking English through their interactions with summer programs

For participating children and youth, anticipated outcomes included in the SROI model are:

- Children and youth increase skills for school success (summer programs only)
- Children and youth make new friends (summer and school-year programs)
- Children and youth want to attend post-secondary school (school-year programs only)
- Children and youth increase resilience (school-year programs only)
- Children and youth improve education success (school-year programs only)

SROI Step 3: Evidencing Outcomes & Assigning Values

In this step, indicators are developed for each outcome, along with methods for collecting each indicator. Following indicator selection, an expected duration for each outcome is established, and then financial proxies are assigned following SROI methodology. Outcomes, indicators, durations and financial proxies for Bridging Together are described below. Financial proxies used in this SROI have been adjusted for inflation.

	Stakeholder	Outcome	Indicator	Duration	Financial proxy
2018/19 School-Year Program Outcomes	Children and youth	Children and youth make new friends	2018/19 school-year youth program experience survey: "Did you make new friends?" - answers of "yes"	5 years	Cost of membership in a social group (using HACT's wellbeing valuation) ¹⁵
		Children and youth want to attend post-secondary school	2018/19 school-year program experience survey: "Do you want to go to university or college one day?" - answers of "yes"	5 years	High school dropout avoidance ¹⁶
		Children and youth increase resilience	2018/19 school-year youth program experience survey: "Are you confident you can achieve what you set your mind to?" - answers of "yes"	5 years	Improvements in youth confidence (using HACT's wellbeing valuation) ¹⁷
		Children and youth improved education success	2018/19 school-year program experience survey: "Are you more comfortable writing on your own?" OR "Are you better at math?" OR "Are you better at science?" - answers of "yes"	5 years	Local tutoring rates
2019 Summer Program Outcomes	Children and youth	Children and youth make new friends	Summer youth program experience survey: "Did you make new friends?" - answers of "yes"	3 years	Cost of membership in a social group (using HACT's wellbeing valuation) ¹⁸
		Children and youth increase skills for school success	Summer 2019 youth program experience survey: "Did you learn new skills to help you succeed at school?"	3 years	Local tutoring rates

¹⁵ Trotter, L., Vine, J., Leach, M. & Fujiwara, D. 2014. Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach.

¹⁶ Hankivsky, O. 2008. Cost Estimates of Dropping Out of High School in Canada. Vancouver, Canada. Available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.510.4857&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

¹⁷ Trotter et. al. 2014.

¹⁸ Trotter et. al. 2014.

	Stakeholder	Outcome	Indicator	Duration	Financial proxy
	Parents and caregivers	Parents and caregivers work	Parent/caregiver survey: "Because of this summer program, I was able to work more" - answers of "yes"	Duration of summer program	Local minimum wage
		Parents and caregivers avoid childcare costs	Program attendance data - number of children age 11 and younger in summer program	Duration of summer program	Local childcare costs
		Parents and caregivers attend school	Parent/caregiver survey: "Because of this summer program, I was able to take classes or go to school more" - answers of "yes"	Duration of summer program	Cost of employment training (using HACT's wellbeing valuation)
		Parents and caregivers practice speaking English	Parent/caregiver survey: "This summer program helped me to practice speaking English /French" - answers of "yes"	1 year	Local English language training rates

SROI Step 4: Establishing Impact

SROI methodology acknowledges that while programs contribute to impact, they are rarely solely responsible for bringing about that impact. Four additional elements, or "discounts," are therefore included in the SROI calculation:

- Deadweight: the amount of the outcome that would have happened anyway
- Displacement: how much of the outcome displaced other outcomes
- Attribution: the amount of the outcome brought about by other influences
- Drop-off: how much outcomes decrease over time

When estimating discounts, we have considered several points, including the following:

- As children and youth grow, many will develop better relationships as a natural function of social life;
- School attendance has a profound impact on academic and social outcomes; and
- Children and youth may be attending other programs targeted toward similar outcomes.

SROI Step 5: Calculating the SROI Ratio

A total investment of \$ 177,991.42 for summer programs, and \$551,867.15 includes all funding sources and in-kind supports including volunteers and program space. To calculate the SROI ratio, only students who attended 80% or more of their school-year (53 students) or summer (127 students) program sessions were included. Certainly many other children and youth who join programs later or who are only able to attend a portion of the sessions also experience benefits; however, in the interest of not overstating the claim, we selected 80% attendance for the purpose of this calculation. While data on family size was not available, many parents have multiple children attending programs; for summer programs, we have used a ratio of 1 parent for every 2.5 children, for a group size of 50 parents or caregivers.

Conclusion

Our previous evaluation report concluded that Bridging Together is a strong program leading to positive impacts for children and youth, parents and caregivers, and the organizations serving them; all data analyzed in this report lead to the same conclusion. Vulnerable children are provided with a safe environment in which to develop new social and academic skills while they integrate into Canadian society. They show increased confidence, strong social relationships, improved academic skills and intention to pursue post-secondary education. Important benefits extend to their parents and caregivers, too; they are able to work or attend school while their children attend summer programming without incurring the added expense of full-time childcare.

When considering the systemic value of Bridging Together, the social value it creates is high. A return rate of three dollars for every dollar invested is nearly unheard of in the financial world; the social value of Bridging Together is undeniably strong.



Appendix A: Evaluation Framework

Focus Area 1 – Program description and reach

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Frequency of collection	Responsibility for collection
1.1 What makes each program unique?	Descriptions of programs: -target participants -target catchment area -goals and outcomes -activities	Program data Frontline staff interviews	Phase I	Program partners Three Hive
1.2 Who are the program participants?	Distribution of participants by category (child, youth, family) Age distribution (by program) % with mental health/trauma diagnosis	Program Data (mental health data availability likely to vary)	Phase I & Phase II	Program partners Three Hive
	Description of program participants	Frontline staff interviews	Phase I	Three Hive
1.3 To what extent are children, youth and caregivers participating in programming?	# of unique program participants per program Median number of sessions attended per program	Program data	Phase I & Phase II	Program partners Three Hive

Focus Area 2 – Child, youth and family outcomes

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Frequency of collection	Responsibility for collection
2.1 To what extent is programming making a difference in the lives of children and youth?	Scores for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy relationships • Self-efficacy • Network and social supports • Developmentally appropriate skills • Involvement in community • Integration into Canadian society • Work / post-secondary preparation • Academics 	Child and youth surveys	Phase I & Phase II	Program partners
	Perception of how programming has impacted their life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of programming • Cultural appropriateness • Experience of participation 	Child and youth feedback sessions	Phase II	Three Hive
2.2 To what extent is programming making a difference in the lives of family?	% participating in paid labour Participate in educational opportunities Self-rated health Educational opportunities Language opportunities Integration into Canadian society	Family survey	Phase I & Phase II	Program partners

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Frequency of collection	Responsibility for collection
2.3 To what extent is programming making a difference to society?	Intention to complete high school	Child and youth surveys	Phase I & Phase II	Program partners Three Hive
	Self-reported involvement in criminal activity / gangs	Child and youth feedback sessions		

Focus Area 3 – Collaboration

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Frequency of collection	Responsibility for collection
3.1 Are partners collaborating?	Density score Degree centralization score Trust score	SNA survey	Phase I	Three Hive
	Partner perceptions	Partner interviews	Phase I & II	
3.2 To what extent is REACH making a difference to collaboration?	Relative connectivity scores Value scores Trust scores	SNA survey	Phase I	Three Hive
	Partner perceptions	Partner interviews	Phase I & II	
3.3 To what extent are partners benefitting from being part of OST Year-Round Programming?	Distribution of activities	SNA survey	Phase I	Three Hive
	Partner perceptions	Partner interviews	Phase I & II	

Focus Area 4 – Social Return on Investment

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Frequency of collection	Responsibility for collection
4.1 What is the returned social value of the benefits produced by the OST Year-Round Programming?	Operational and in-kind costs Value resulting from child, youth, family and collaborative outcomes Returned social value for every dollar invested	Administrative and financial documents Child and youth surveys Child and youth feedback sessions Frontline staff interviews Partner interviews SNA survey	One time	Three Hive REACH Finance

Appendix B: Data Collection Methods

1. Youth feedback sessions
2. Youth program experience surveys
3. Youth self-efficacy survey
4. Parent/caregiver surveys
5. Small group interviews with youth
6. Administrative data analysis

1. Youth feedback sessions

Child and youth feedback sessions were conducted in person or in groups toward the end of summer programs. Group sizes varied depending on the program. We attempted to keep group sizes below 15 participants. Where group sizes could not be smaller, we enlisted the support of program staff and volunteers to facilitate. Sessions were held at six different programs. The session protocol is below.

1. Introduction: The facilitator will introduce him/herself and give a brief description of the activities to follow.
2. Icebreaker: All sessions will begin with a short icebreaker. Icebreakers will be chosen based on available time and relevance to the age group and program focus.
3. Opt-in/out: The facilitator will describe the next activity, and children can choose whether to participate.
4. Drawing/writing stations: Children will rotate through drawing stations, where poster paper, markers and stickers will be available. The facilitator will talk to the children throughout this activity, asking them questions about what they are writing or drawing. The poster papers will be considered data, and images may be included in reports in whole or in part.
Station 1: "When I am at [program name], I feel like _____"
Station 2: "Now that [program name] is almost over, I can do _____ better"
Station 3: "I think that school next year will be _____"
Station 4: "I wish that we would have done more _____"
Station 5: "If I hadn't been at [program name], I probably would have _____"
5. Survey completion: The facilitator, potentially with support from program staff/volunteers will describe the survey, how to complete it, and invite the children to complete it. The facilitator and program staff/volunteers can assist any children who want help with the questions.
6. Thank you: The facilitator will express our great appreciation for the children sharing their thoughts.
7. Facilitator reflection: The facilitator will collect all the poster papers and write notes about the process and emergent themes. These notes will be considered data.

Images and notes from the sessions were analyzed thematically.

2. Youth program experience surveys

Six summer programs at four different organizations participated in completing child and youth summer program experience surveys at the end of their 2019 summer programs. Many of these were conducted along with the youth feedback sessions and facilitated by the research assistant. Where a facilitated session was not possible, program staff handed out surveys and assisted children and youth with the process. The surveys asked children questions relating to healthy relationships, self-efficacy, networks and social supports, involvement in community, academics, integration into Canadian society, and their enjoyment of the program. A total of 163 children and youth completed surveys. Data was entered into Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics. No tests of statistical significance were performed.

3. Youth self-efficacy surveys

Nine programs across eight organizations participated in completed child and youth self-efficacy surveys early in their 2018/19 school-year programming, with only seven programs across five organizations completing the follow-up survey in spring 2019. The custom survey tool asked children and youth questions relating to efficacy in academics, communication, building and maintaining friendships, expressing emotions and cooperating with peers. A total of 258 baseline surveys were completed, and only 66 follow-up surveys completed. Data was entered into Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics. No child/youth identifiers were collected.

4. Parent/caregivers surveys

Parents or caregivers of children attending summer programs were asked to complete surveys toward the end of their 2019 summer program. The short surveys asked questions about healthy relationships, ability to participate in paid labour and education, networks and social supports. A total of 43 parent/caregiver surveys were completed. Data was entered into Excel and analyzed using descriptive statistics. No tests of statistical significance were performed.

5. Small group interviews with youth

Small group interviews were conducted with students participating in Free Footie's soccer program. This method was introduced specifically to accommodate Free Footie's focus on sports, and the venues in which the programs take place. Because students are busy playing sports and there is no desk time, completing surveys was not feasible. Instead, a research assistant attended two soccer games to speak with participants. Teams with higher numbers of children and youth with Permanent Resident numbers were targeted. Children with Permanent Resident numbers were interviewed in small groups, usually two or three students per group. The short interviews focused on up to five questions:

1. Tell me a bit about Free Footie
2. How do you feel when you're at Free Footie games?
3. What have you gotten better at?
4. Have any of your friendships changed because of Free Footie?
5. What do you do after school when you don't have Free Footie?

6. Administrative data analysis

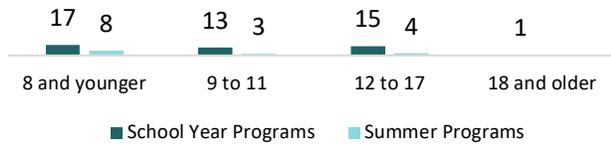
Partner organizations regularly report program attendance to REACH Edmonton. REACH provided summaries of that data to Three Hive. Three Hive compiled that data in Excel. Partner organizations also provided data on program costs, including all funding sources and in-kind supports, to REACH. Three Hive included that data in the SROI calculation.

Appendix C: Program Participant Results

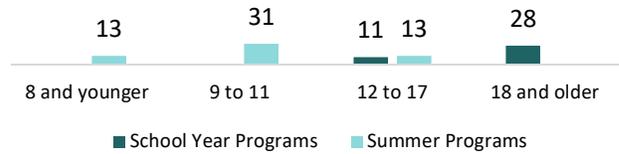
Program participant data were provided across ten organizations between September 2018 and August 2019. Participation was split into two groups to represent school-year program participation (September 2018 to June 2019) and summer program participation (July 2019 to August 2019).

of unique participants (school year programs vs. summer programs)

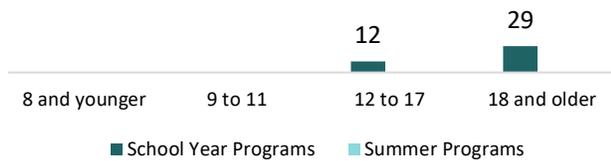
AJFAS



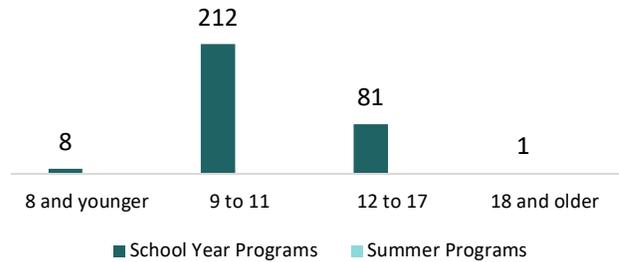
BGCBigs



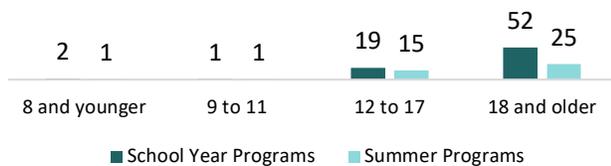
EMCN



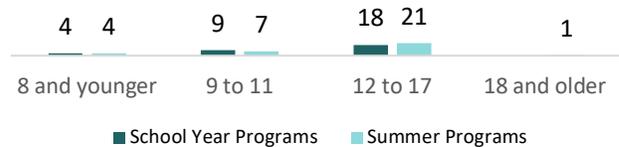
Free Footie



MCHB

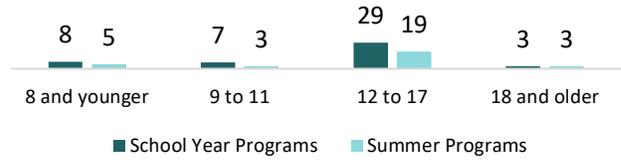
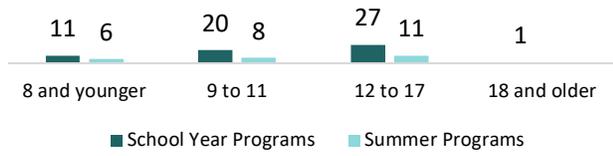


Partners for Humanity



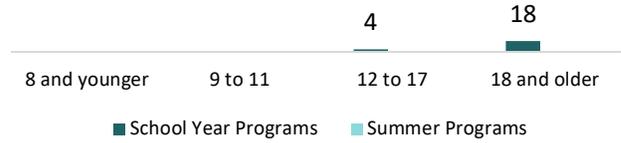
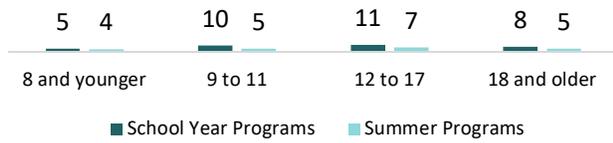
SCWCA

SCCSE



Sinkunia

YWCA



Appendix D: Summer Youth Feedback Session Themes

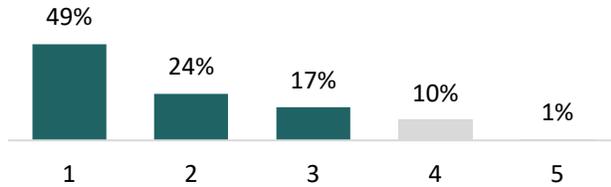
Youth feedback sessions were completed in person for six programs: AJFAS, BGCBigs (Avonmore and WCI), SCCSE and SCWCA (Cardinal and Glengarry). Children and youth were asked to visit five writing or drawing stations. Each station contained a different question and they were encouraged to write or draw their answer on poster paper. Below is an overview of the themes found across all programs.

<p><i>When I am here, I feel like...</i></p>	<p>Happy: happy, good, free, enjoying myself</p> <p>Belonging: united, safe, "Somali-like," "I'm not invisible"</p> <p>Negative: bored, "treated like a little kid," "wanna play Mortal Kombat"</p>
<p><i>Now that the program is over, I can do _____ better...</i></p>	<p>Sports/skills: soccer, basketball, dodgeball</p> <p>Arts and crafts: origami, dreamcatchers, making slime</p> <p>Academics/learning: writing, reading, math, science, "I can do spelling better"</p> <p>Social relationships: listening, socializing, "being nice and accepting people for who they are"</p>
<p><i>I think that next school year will be...</i></p>	<p>Optimistic: awesome, more fun, easy, lots of friends</p> <p>Challenging: more difficult content, more effort required</p> <p>Negative: broing, fear of not having friends</p>
<p><i>I wish I would have done more...</i></p>	<p>Activities: gym time, gymnastics, sports, crafts,</p> <p>Field trips: playgrounds, parks, swimming</p> <p>Gender-specific: "I wish we did more girly stuff"</p>
<p><i>If I hadn't been here, I probably would have...</i></p>	<p>With family or friends: siblings, parents, friends</p> <p>Screen time: Fortnite, Roblox, YouTube, T.V, movies, tablet, computer</p> <p>Bored: bored, sleeping</p> <p>Other activities: bikes, scooters, swimming, playgrounds, library</p>

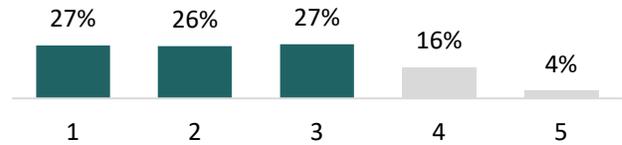
Appendix E: 2019/20 Self-Efficacy Survey Baseline Results

Self-efficacy surveys were administered in Fall 2019. These results are summarized and presented below.

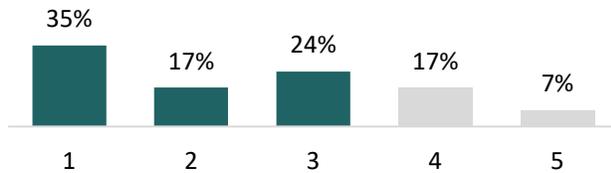
I can get teachers to help me when I get stuck on schoolwork



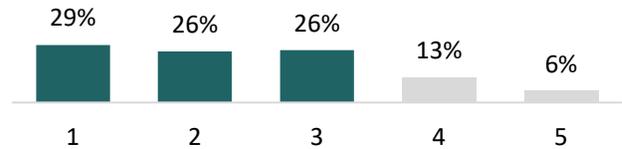
I can say my opinions when other classmates disagree with me



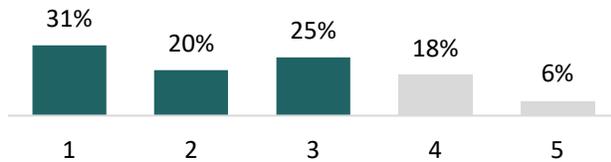
I can cheer myself up when I am sad



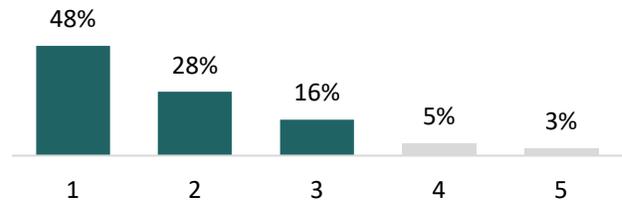
I can concentrate even when there are other interesting things to do



I can calm down when I am very scared

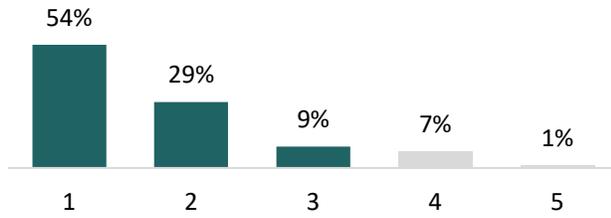


I can make friends with other children/youth

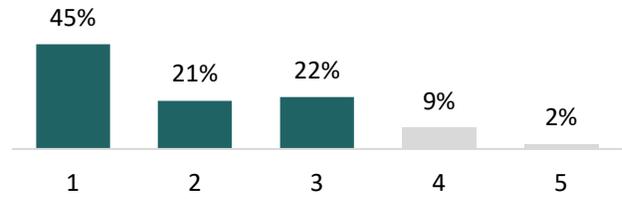


1 = All the time 2 = Most of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Not very often 5 = Never

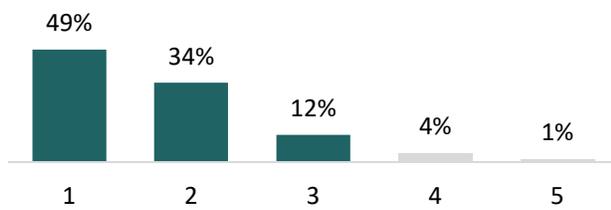
I can study for a test



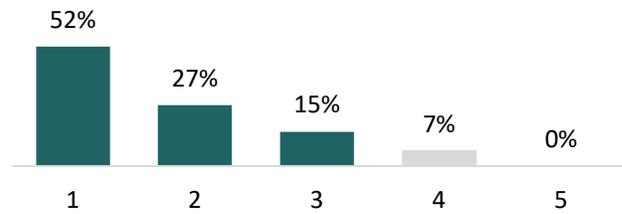
I can talk to a new person



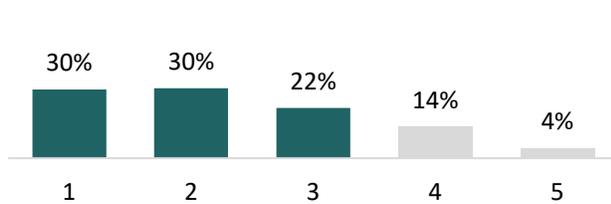
I finish my homework



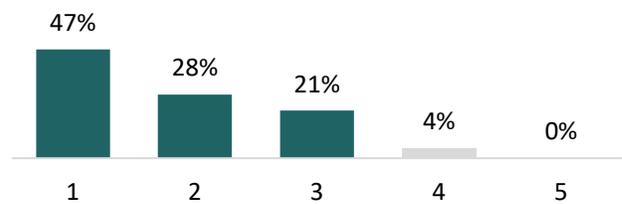
I can work well with classmates



I can control my feelings

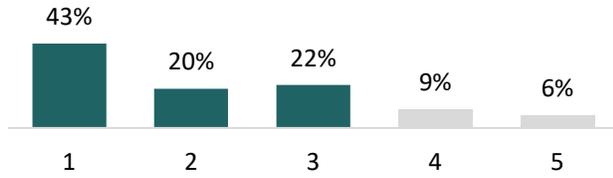


I can pay attention in class

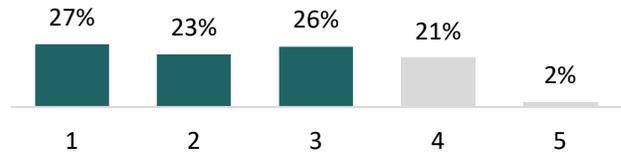


1 = All the time 2 = Most of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Not very often 5 = Never

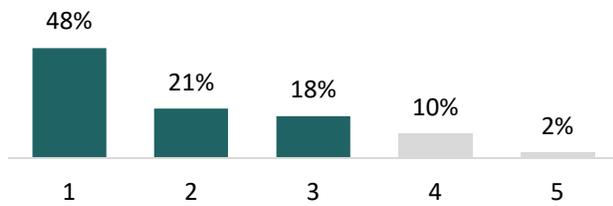
I can tell other children/youth when they are doing something that I don't like



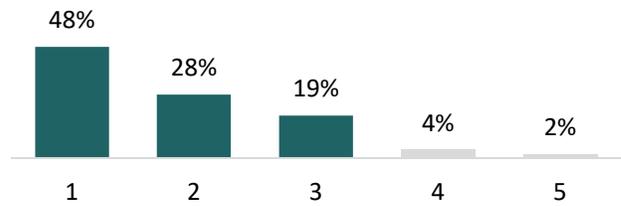
I understand all subjects in school



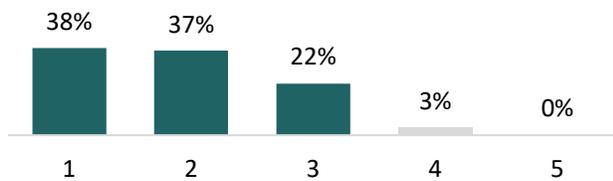
I can tell a friend that I don't feel well



I can stay friends with other children/youth



I pass tests



1 = All the time 2 = Most of the time 3 = Some of the time 4 = Not very often 5 = Never

Appendix F: Small Group Interviews with Youth

Ten participants were interviewed in either a group or individually. Participants ranged from grades three to six with the majority being grade four students. Each participant was asked to share what the Free Footie program is, how they feel participating in the program, what they've improved on, if their friendships have changed, and what they would be doing when not at Free Footie.

What is Free Footie to Free Footie participants?

Many participants highlighted that Free Footie is a free, weekly program that is fun and provides the opportunity to play other schools and develop skills. One respondent emphasized Free Footie is a safe space where participants can enjoy soccer, noting that games at school were more aggressive and likely to cause injury.

"It's fun, it's a place where if you don't want to go home or just watch T.V. you can come out here and play soccer every week on Wednesday."

"Free footie is for fun...and is for practicing your soccer skills."

"In Free Footie you get safety."

How do participants feel at Free Footie?

Many participants shared that they feel excited at Free Footie games. Participants enjoy playing and are also nervous about winning or losing their games.

"Whenever we go to a game, I'm always so excited if we're going to win or lose and that's fun."

"I feel excited and nervous at the same time...because...well, I'm excited to play a game and I'm a bit nervous that our team might lose."

What have participants gotten better at?

Participants state that they have developed technical skills in soccer such as shooting, handling the ball, learning to play positions, and a better overall understanding of soccer as a sport. In addition, participants also report developing personal skills such as improved sportsmanship and gaining confidence in their skills.

"I've gotten better at being more confident instead of just waiting for someone else to come, I just go for it myself."

"I've gotten better at shooting since I started Free Footie."

How have friendships changed because of Free Footie?

The Free Footie program has had varying impacts on participants and their relationships. Some participants state that Free Footie has allowed them to make new friends from their own schools or

develop new acquaintances with students from other schools. Others state that Free Footie strengthened friendships or improved relationships they already had because they were able to see their friends more often and play with them. However, two participants expressed that they have not made any friendships during Free Footie.

"I've got to like be friends with other classmates and other people who go to my school, I've got to make a bigger relationship with them and knowing other people."

"My friend used to be rude to me but now, they're not rude to me anymore."

What do participants do when they don't have Free Footie?

Most participants stated that they do not have other organized activities to participate in outside of Free Footie. Participants mentioned doing homework, watching television or playing with family or friends when at home. Two participants mentioned other after school programs that they attend on days they do not attend Free Footie.

"I just go home play eat my food...I just like to watch T.V., Netflix and sometimes I'll go to the park and play soccer."

"I go to my baseball practice."

Other Comments

Overall, participants expressed enthusiasm, excitement, and gratitude for the Free Footie program. Many participants requested that programming be more frequent and have opportunities to play more games.

"I think that maybe we could do more games."

"I just want to add that for the kids that don't have this opportunity, I wish they get it, and I'm really thankful for this opportunity."