

Social Return On Investment (SROI) Case Study: Safe Communities Innovation Fund Somali Canadian Cultural Society



Fast Facts

- Over 20,000 members of the estimated 150,000 Canadian Somali community live in the Edmonton area
- From Year 1 to Year 3, over 400 Canadian Somali youth engaged in the Connections Program .
- In Year 1, six families engaged in the Connections Program. By Year 3, 86 families participated.
- The Youth Leadership Training Program engaged an average of 30 Somali youth each summer to improve leadership skills

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"This program has significantly helped my kids. The program had a number of quality activities that filled the time of my kids. Because of this program I now have three of my kids attending the University of Alberta and one is in an apprenticeship program...studying Power Engineering." - Somali Canadian Father

Program Background:

Canada has one of the largest Somali populations in the western world and nearly 20,000 members of the Somali community live in the Edmonton area. Children of immigrant and refugee families face a drastic life change when they arrive in Canada. For example, many have never attended school. In order to address the growing issues faced by transitioning Somali youth, the Somali Canadian Cultural Society established the Connection Programs, to assist Canadian Somali youth. These programs include:

- Mentoring
- Homework assistance centres
- College awareness and preparation
- Courses and enrichment in the

Canadian culture and the arts

- Volunteering and community service opportunities
- Supervised recreation and athletic programs/events
- Youth leadership activities
- Tutoring and supplementing instruction in basic skills, such as reading, math, and science.

Theory of Change—Summary

If Somali youth, ages 6-25, engaged with the programs offered by the Somali Canadian Cultural Society, it will result in a decrease in the amount of crime, substance abuse and dropout rates by engaging youth to participate in activities in a real and meaningful way to increase positive social interactions, self-esteem, academic achievements, critical thinking, community involvement, and the development of new skills.

Program Goals

Programs were developed to address issues underlying Somali youth's transition into the Canadian culture and schools. The goals of the program included:

- Improve youth social skills
- Prevent crime, juvenile delinquency, and violent victimization
- Improve self-confidence
- Improve homework quality
- Encourage the development of new skills and interests
- Improve school attendance and reduce dropout rates
- Increase family and community involvement with youth



"I feel coming here makes me a better person, nicer person. Coming here motivates me to do my homework, receive mentoring, and interact with group students who are my age. It is fun to be here. I feel a sense of responsibility—gone the days of hanging out with bad friends and neglecting my homework." - 13 year old

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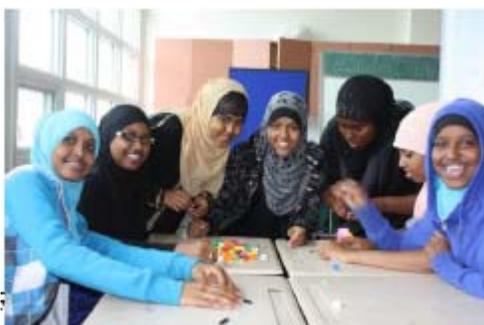
"Had it not been this after school program I would not have achieved what I achieved now. I have attended this after school program for my last two years of high school. This is the reason why I am now back to help out the homework club."

-Canadian Somali community volunteer, 20 years old, 3rd year science student at the University of Alberta

Social Value Created

Over the span of the three-year Connection Program, indicators of program success were indicated through qualitative and quantitative research.

The Connection Program's positive outcomes include attitudes



of leadership, team work, self-esteem, confidence, and ability to think critically.

Further, the program experienced a large increase in the number of

participants (ages 6-25) from 31 participants in Year 1 to 430 participants in Year 3.

Additionally, in Year 1, nine families reported reduced runaway rates, followed by 37 families in Year 2 and 114 families in Year 3.

Without the program, Somali youth would more likely be at risk of the following:

- Poverty and/or homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Criminal behaviour
- Dropping out of school
- Family conflict/running away

Participant Outcomes

The long-term impacts of the Somali Canadian Cultural Society, and associated programs, are:

- Increased high school graduation rate
- Youth employment has increased
- Family conflict rates have reduced
- Health issues caused by obesity have decreased
- Youth self-esteem has increased

Valuing Change—Social Return on Investment

The Connection Program's primary objectives reflect the need to engage Somali youth in order to decrease negative behaviours. Changes experienced as a result of the program can be monetized to reflect the SROI.

Health care costs	Reduced obesity rates in youth and reduced hospital
School administration costs	Reduced school dropout rates
Police involvement costs	Reduced crime/vandalism rates
Social services	Reduced juvenile delinquency and runaways

The Value of Annual Investment

The total present value of investing in the Connection Program was calculated to be \$1,205,529, with a total investment in the program of \$205,140. This indicates that for every dollar invested in the program, there is a return of between \$1.30 and \$10.20 of social value created by the program with an average of \$5.90.

Funding Year	SROI Ratio
Year 1	1.30 : 1
Year 2	6.16 : 1
Year 3	10.17 : 1
Average	5.88 : 1

"I am a single mother who cannot afford hiring a tutor. I was fortunate enough to have this program. I was new into the country and did not have communication skills and the education needed to help my kids. This was a wonderful program. I will never forget it" -Somali Mother of three