



Mentoring for Inclusion

Evaluation Report

**Big Brothers Big Sisters Calgary
The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
Somali Canadian Society of Calgary**

**For the Period
April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014**

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Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

Mentoring for Inclusion is a partnership program operated by Big Brothers Big Sisters, Bridge Foundation for Youth and the Somali Canadian Society of Calgary, and funded by Safe Communities Innovation Fund. The program provides a variety of mentoring options and homework clubs for Francophone immigrant children and youth and Somali children and youth. Programs include four homework club locations, in-school mentoring services with Francophone school partners, one on one Community Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring, Go Girls and Game On group mentoring, Teen mentoring, and separate boys and girls Go 4 Great site based mentoring for Somali children and youth.

During the period from Sept. 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014, Mentoring for Inclusion served a **total of 482 children and youth** including **202 Francophone** immigrant children and youth, **47 Somali** children and youth, and **233 Homework Club** participants of Somali (65%) and mixed ethnicity (35%) background. In addition, Mentoring for Inclusion engaged **151 Francophone mentors, 28 Somali mentors** and **13 Homework Club tutors**, many of whom were Somali background.

Pre/posttest outcomes for children involved in the mentoring programs showed increased average scores in all areas including increased self-esteem and confidence, reduced experiences of bullying, increased sense of belonging at school, increased friendships, increased integration, etc. Mentors indicated that they had increased their own confidence and leadership skills.

Focus group feedback from parents indicates strong support for the program and a desire to see it continue and expand. Parents value the opportunity for their children to be exposed to positive role models from their own ethno-cultural background. The program design provides parents with a sense of safety and security based on which they allow their children to participate.

Analysis of Mentoring for Inclusion impact suggests a minimum average Social Return on Investment over three years of **\$3.29** for every dollar invested in the program. The annual SROI increased each year as the program developed and expanded.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Need	4
1.2 Program Goals	5
1.3 Theory of Change	5
2.0 Mentoring for Inclusion – Francophone Program	6
2.1. Francophone Program Demographics	7
2.2 Francophone Program Outcomes	7
2.3 Francophone Partner Feedback	8
2.4 Francophone Program Successes	9
2.5 Francophone Program Challenges	9
2.6 Ideas for Improvement	9
3.0 Mentoring for Inclusion – Somali Program.	10
4.0 Somali Program Participation	14
4.1 Somali Program Outcomes	15
4.2 What Children are Saying	17
4.3 What Parents are Saying	18
5.0 Case Example	20
6.0 What Partners Are Saying	21
7.0 Somali Project Learnings.	24
7.1 Promising Practices	24
7.2 Program Design and Governance Considerations	29
8.0 Social Return on Investment	31
9.0 Conclusion	31
10.0 Next Steps	32
11.0 References	33

Charts and Graphs

Table 1: Francophone Program Participation	6
Table 2: Francophone Participant by Program Type.	7
Graphic: Map of Somali Partnership and Programs	11
Table 3: Somali Program Participation	16
Table 4: Somali Program Participant Ethnicity	18
Table 5: Overview of Somali Program Development Planning	32

1.0 Introduction

In 2011, Big Brothers Big Sisters Calgary (BBBS) received funds from the Safe Communities Initiative Fund (SCIF) to address the vulnerability of immigrant and refugee children and youth by building resilience through mentorship with the Somali and immigrant/refugee Francophone communities in Calgary. Mentoring for Inclusion is a crime prevention initiative providing mentoring opportunities for children and youth as well as organization mentorship to the Somali community. Mentoring for Inclusion worked to engage the Somali and immigrant Francophone communities in order to increase social inclusion and decrease immigrant youth involvement in the criminal justice system.

The following evaluation report covers the three year pilot period from Sept. 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014. Evaluation results are based on program statistics, client profiles, staff and partner interviews, pre/post measures, case studies, and focus groups with parents and mentors.

1.1 Need

In Calgary, refugee and immigrant youth and their families have been identified as a vulnerable sector of the population. They can be isolated because of language and cultural barriers. Income and employment are very important to them due to the economic pressures of having immigrated, the cost of housing and general living expenses. Even the youth feel this economic pressure as they attempt to balance school attendance with part-time jobs to help the family. As a result, these youth can become easy prey for gang related activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution, which on the surface provide quick money. These youth may also be targeted as victims of bullying and racism causing them to feel even more isolated.

Cultural and community identification is one of the major developmental tasks of the adolescent year. Inter-generational issues of youth can be exacerbated in immigrant families. Most immigrant parents want their children to maintain the values of their country of origin while the youth want to adopt Canadian values – they want to belong. Adolescents tend to have a strong identification with their peers and a need to belong to the dominant power structure. Immigrant youth, excluded from the dominant peer power structures are particularly vulnerable to the attractions of antisocial “gangs”. A 2002 Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs indicated that 25% of gang members were being drawn from the African Canadian community. In particular there is concern in Alberta about the recent (2009) high number of drug related homicides involving young Somalis. Mentoring can support young people in gaining a sense of belonging through establishing a positive mentoring relationship with an older student or adult. This project addresses the following social disorder issues:

- Prevention of bullying
- Menacing behaviors
- Drug dealing/drug use
- Prostitution
- Gang involvement

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Much of the Somali community feels isolated from mainstream Canadian society. Language barriers, cultural differences, large families and lower incomes, and lack of familiarity with Canadian social norms and mainstream services keep many families isolated. Youth may drop out of school, feel socially excluded or see few opportunities, get involved with the wrong peer group and this can lead to trouble. Somali families come to Canada seeking a better and more peaceful life only to see many of their young people in trouble with the law or even murdered.

1.2 Mentoring For Inclusion Program Goals

- 1) To establish meaningful cultural mentoring programs for Somali, Francophone immigrant and refugee youth that will increase their capacity and resiliency thereby reducing the potential for high risk behaviours and involvement in crime.
- 2) To establish a strong working relationship with these communities so that families have an increased sense of belonging, resiliency, capacity and skills to prevent youth criminal activity, and trust in child/youth services and service providers.
- 3) To offer safe, meaningful out-of-school activities and mentoring approaches for children/youth and their families in order to decrease attractiveness of and vulnerability to involvement in crime.
- 4) Establish community advisory committees to develop strategies, tools and approaches that attract community members to mentor children/youth in their community.
- 5) Develop culturally sensitive key competencies and new approaches to mentoring ethno-cultural children/youth and families.
- 6) Establish an effective organization mentoring model that supports grass-roots ethno-cultural groups, providing their organizations with the tools and capacity to enhance programs for their children/youth and families that will further address youth crime and delinquency issues.

1.3 Theory of Change

If Somali and Francophone immigrant children and youth who are experiencing linguistic, cultural and economic barriers are connected to a positive role model/mentor they will increase their sense of belonging, be more likely to stay in school, engage in positive community activities and be more resistant to negative influences that could lead to criminal behaviour.

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2.0 Mentoring for Inclusion – Francophone Program

The Francophone program was launched in the fall of 2011, beginning with three school partnerships and then expanding to six school partnerships in 2012.

During the period from Sept. 2011 to March 31, 2014, **202 mentees** and **151 mentors** participated in the Mentoring for Inclusion Francophone program.

Table 1: Francophone Program Participation

Mentoring for Inclusion Francophone Program			
	# of Schools	# of Mentors	# of Mentees
Year One	3	36	45
Year Two	6	47	72
Year Three	6	68	85
Total		151	202

Francophone mentoring programs were provided through a variety of mentoring models including:

- In-school one on one mentoring
- Game On (boys) and Go Girls (girls) in-school group mentoring
- Teen mentoring
- Community based Big Brother Big Sister one on one mentoring

In-school Mentoring: The in-school mentoring occurs only at the school during school hours. Children at elementary schools are matched one on one with mentors.

Group Mentoring – In-School: Game On (boys) and Go Girls (girls) group mentoring programs involve one or two mentors matched to a group of 6 to 8 mentees. These group mentoring programs are provided at the school during school hours.

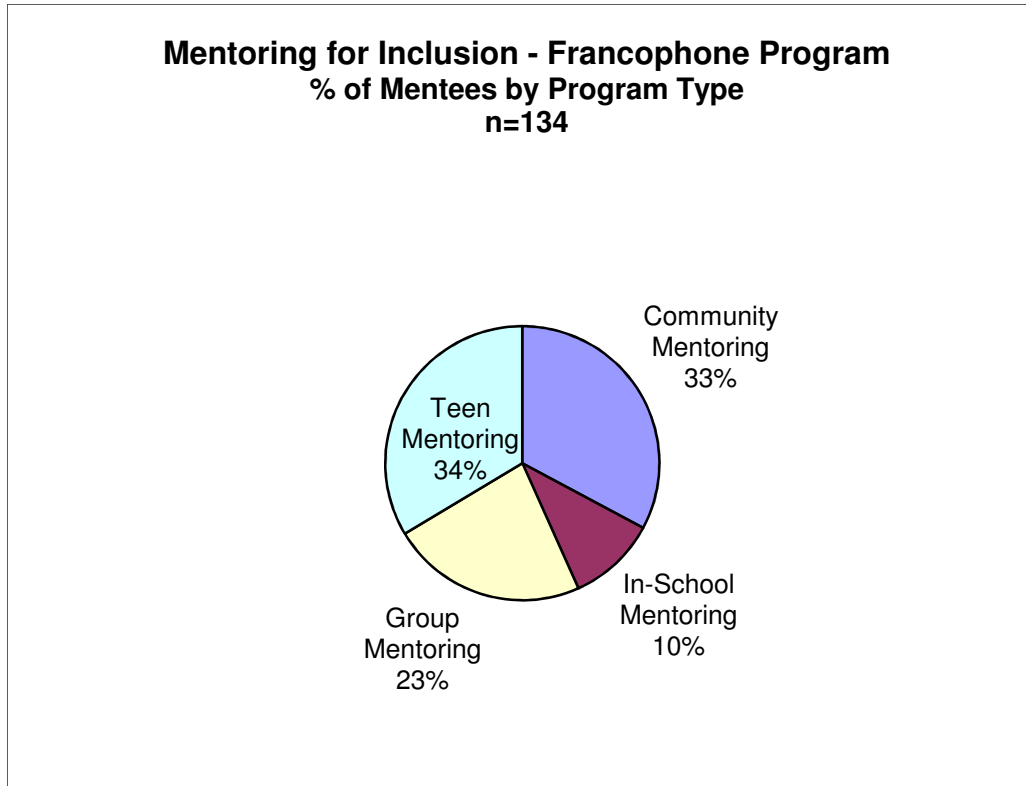
Teen Mentoring – In-School: The in-school teen mentoring program involves recruiting teens from one junior/senior high school to mentor elementary children from another school. For example, in one of the higher needs schools in Northeast Calgary (Ecole L Mosaique) there is a strong Teen mentor program that helps to ensure that children moving on to La Rose Sauvage high school will already know their mentor at that school due to their previous teen mentoring relationship at the elementary school. This helps to make the transition from elementary to high school easier. Teen matches are supervised weekly by BBBS staff onsite and are offered structured activities as well as training and support. Each match sets a goal that focuses on healthy development for the young child.

Big Brother Big Sisters – Community Mentoring: The Big Brother Big Sister community mentoring program matches adult mentors and child and youth mentees one-on-one for a minimum of one year where they participate in activities in the community which foster resilience, skill development, and

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

meaningful relationships. This program engages Francophone parents ,children and youth and mentors through one to one mentoring relationships.

Chart 2: Francophone Program Participation by Program Type



2.1 Francophone Program Demographics

Although most families did not reveal their ethnicity on the intake form, we do know that about half of the families did not have enough English to access services. Most of the children in the program come from immigrant families who have been in Canada on average from 3 to 10 years, having arrived first in Quebec and then later moved to Calgary.

2.2 Francophone Program Outcomes

Although pre/post survey data was collected on the Francophone participants throughout the three year pilot, there was some inconsistency in the surveys used resulting in limited availability of actual matched pre/post test data. The Francophone mentoring programs are based on the school year (Sept to June) with typical data collection occurring in Sept/Oct. for pre-test surveys and May/June for posttest surveys. Early reporting for the 2013/2014 year means that post test data to be collected in May 2014 is not available for this report.

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Of the three matched pre/posttest surveys available for analysis, mentees showed improvement in total scores in areas concerned with school and personal development. In the area of personal development, mentees showed some improvement on questions related to self-esteem. In the area of school, mentees showed improvement on questions related to getting along with others, having friends, resistance to negative peer influence, and sense of belonging at school. There was no change in scores in areas related to family and community.

Analysis of average pre and post scores 93 pre and 43 post surveys showed improved average scores in the same areas, with additional improvements in areas of cultural integration – “I get to know people in my community that are culturally different than me”.

Francophone Outcome Summary – Areas of Positive Impact for Mentees

- Self esteem
- Getting along with others
- Having friends
- Resistance to negative peer influence
- Sense of belonging and engagement at school
- Cultural integration

Early results based on **group mentoring post tests**¹ suggest that boys may be somewhat more satisfied with their group mentoring relationship than the girls. The mentor relationship appeared to be more important to the girls than to the boys which may suggest that girls had higher expectations for the relationship. Boys also appeared to be more self-confident or sure of themselves than the girls did. Half of the children (boys and girls) said they found it hard to make friends and wished they had more friends. School was more important to the girls than to the boys, but both indicated they felt comfortable and welcome at school and had good relationships with their teachers. Girls were more likely to feel encouraged by their parents and more connected to them than boys. However, due to very small sample sizes these findings should be interpreted with caution.

2.3 Francophone Partner Feedback

Francophone school partners included:

- Ecole de la Rose Sauvage
- Ecole de la Source
- Ecole la Mosaique
- Ecole Notre Dame de la Paix
- Ecole Terre des Jeunes
- Ecole Ste. Margeurite Bourgeois

Francophone school partners said they found the mentoring program “easy to accommodate” in their schools. Partner’s identified program successes as follows:

- Increased pride in older students (i.e. teen mentors)

¹ Taken from Interim Report for 2011/2012 program year.

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

- Increased self-esteem for young students (i.e. mentees)
- New positive relationships for mentees
- Created positive relationships between older and younger students in the school
- The transfer of mentees from school based mentorship to one on one community mentors was positive
- Some students have more positive relationships with their peers, fewer disciplinary meetings and sometimes better academically because they are more involved in their tasks.
- In general, teachers have had better relationships with these students. It is easier to work with them personally and even academically.
- Parents are generally happy to see their children happier at school. In some cases, there are less negative calls home from school (teacher and / or management)

2.4 Francophone Program Successes

BBBS has strengthened their presence in the Francophone community and within Francophone schools in Calgary. The positive relationship that has developed with the Francophone school board and with individual school partners is one of the successes of the program. The Francophone school system can be somewhat isolated and it was a positive step to be able to develop a strong partnership between a mainstream service provided (BBBS) and the Francophone system.

Francophone parents are now more aware that they can request a French or English speaking mentor and there is currently a waitlist of young people interested in having a mentor. This resource has been welcomed by Francophone parents who are often isolated and lack supports for their children to integrate into the larger community. Families are also getting engaged in other community opportunities with their children, including summer camp opportunities, recreation and access to other community supports such as food hampers and counselling.

2.5 Francophone Program Challenges

The main challenge in the Francophone program is recruitment of French speaking mentors. Ongoing recruitment strategies include connecting directly with Francophone organizations, publications and French CBC to further awareness and volunteer engagement has seen positive results. The other ongoing challenge is the lack of access to community services provided in French for these Francophone families who are often relatively new immigrants and often high need and have other access barriers such as lack of transportation. The organization and Francophone staff are attempting to identify appropriate outreach services that could be made available to these families in French. BBBS continues to offer community connections to resources and supports including the Red Cross, the Calgary Food Bank, Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation to remove barriers for families in need.

2.6 Ideas for Improvement

Partners would like to see the program coordinator on site at the school more often and would like more follow through on finding mentors to sustain the program and to be able to provide Go Girls group mentoring.

3.0 Mentoring For Inclusion - The Somali Program

Somali Program Development

Before Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area (BBBS) could design an appropriate program for the Somali community, they first needed to engage the community. During the first year of SCIF funding (Sept 2011 to Aug 2012), BBBS conducted a brief Environmental Assessment to determine the approximate size of the community, assess potential demand for services, and determine what services the community might already be accessing. A Somali Community Needs Assessment was funded by United Way of Calgary to more clearly identify the Somali population in Calgary and determine their broader needs and issues, including but not limited to the needs of children and youth. In addition, Big Brothers Big Sisters continued their own community development efforts to engage both the Somali community and other potential service partners in Calgary.

Somali Program Development Challenges

Engagement and program development with the Somali community faced many challenges. Members of Somali community tend not to access mainstream services on their own, as they have little awareness or understanding of the programs and services available, and may not trust their children to “strangers”. Having fled their troubled home country, Somali parents are hyper-vigilant, concerned for their children’s safety and concerned about what their children will be exposed to in the Canadian culture. For Somali girls this is particularly true, due to traditional cultural and religious views on the role of women and girls. Many Somali mothers wear the hijab and want their girls to continue this tradition as part of a core belief system commonly held within Muslim cultures.

Many social concepts such as mentoring, volunteerism, counselling, which are common in Canadian culture, are unfamiliar to members of the Somali community. They have no personal experience of how these concepts are operationalized.

In addition to these cultural challenges, basic socio-economic situations can also create barriers. Somali families are traditionally large, mothers stay at home with the children, children (especially girls) are kept at home when not in school, fathers often work more than one job to support the family, incomes can be low, and access to transportation limited. Poor English language skills can also create a barrier. These factors combine to keep members of the Somali community isolated from mainstream Canadian society. SCSC community members identified mentoring and academic support as a key needs within their community.

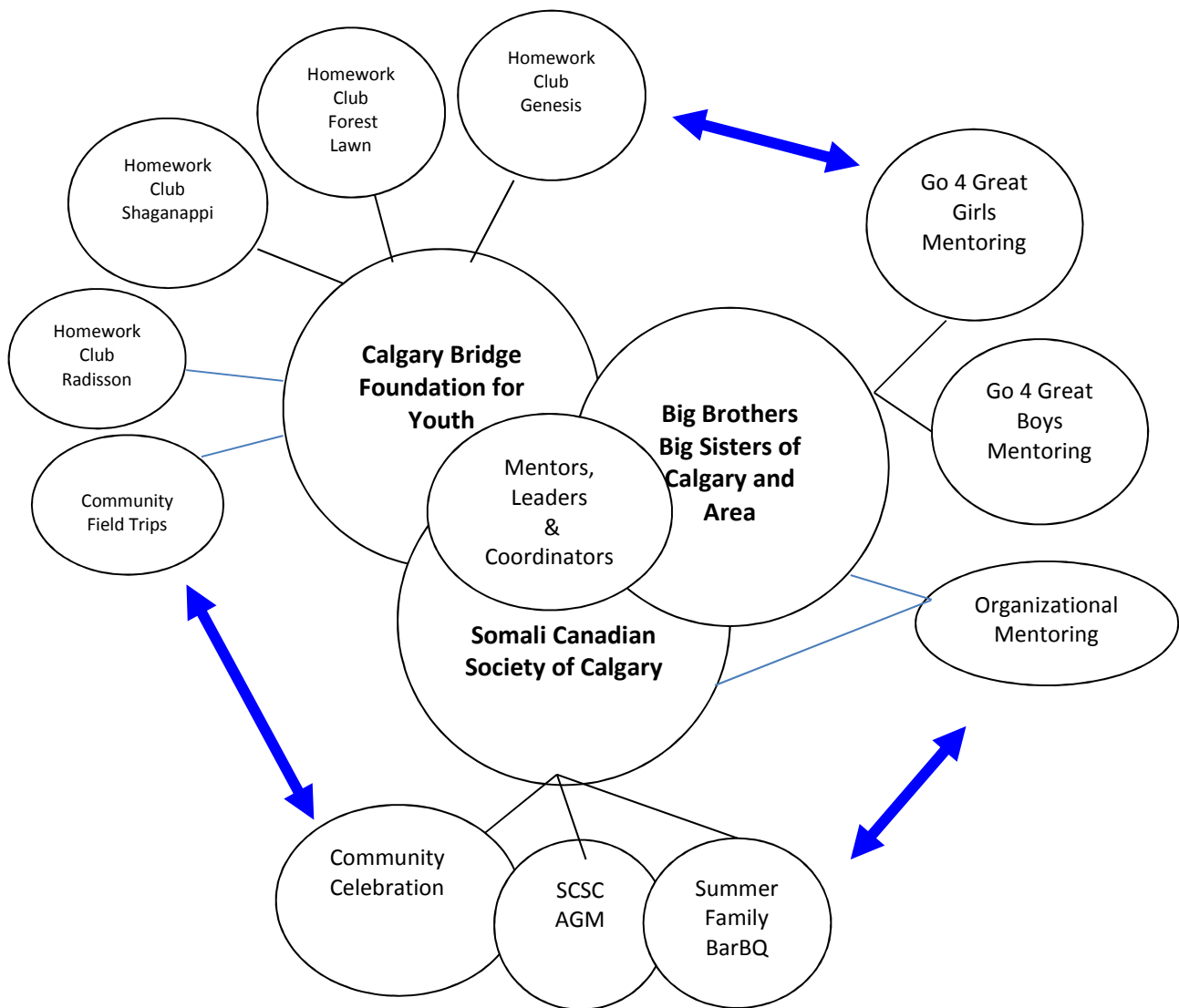
Partnership Approach

As a result of the community development process, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area (BBBS) engaged in a partnership with the Somali Canadian Society of Calgary (SCSC) and the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY) to co-create an appropriate programs and services for Somali children and

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

youth. Implementation of Somali programming officially began in Sept. 2012. Programming is delivered within a three way collaborative partnership that includes the SCSC, BBBS and CBFY. These partners have formed a Program Advisory Committee which meets monthly to guide program implementation, problem solve and continue to work to engage Somali families. The following map illustrates the key programs developed within the partnership.

Mentoring For Inclusion – Somali Program



Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Go 4 Great – Mentoring for Somali Children and Youth – Operated by Big Brother Big Sisters of Calgary and Area

- Free mentoring program (one boys and one for girls) based on weekly recreational and personal development activities at a central location. Mentoring for boy is based on a group mentoring model with 1 mentor for a group of 4 boys. Mentoring for girls is based on a one on one mentorship model, although due to the single site location and group activity based, mentors sometimes work with more than one girl if one mentor is absent for the day.
- Boys and girls usually participate in separate recreational activities (e.g. while the girls are swimming downstairs the boys are upstairs in the gym, and visa versa).
- Mentors are young adults (mostly young University educated professionals or University students) primarily from the Somali community.
- This year the program is experimenting with some group community outings such as bowling, ski lessons and laser tag. This helps Somali children experience community/recreational activities they might otherwise not be exposed to.

Somali Homework Clubs – Operated by The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

- 4 locations (1 in NE Calgary; 2 in SE Calgary; 1 in SW Calgary) – each location offers programming one day per week during critical after school hours (3p.m. to 6p.m.) when youth may be unsupervised due to working parents – coordinated by a Somali Program Coordinator
- The homework club is designed to provide academic support and social skills building, predominately to children and youth from the Somali community. Throughout the homework club session, participants are encouraged to practice their English language skills.
- **Shaganappi** location is mostly elementary and Junior High students; mostly Somali. In 2012 this location started with approximately 10 students in the fall and gradually expanded to serve 30 to 35 students on a regular basis.
- **Forest Lawn** location started in the Forest Lawn library but was not very successful so was moved to the High School. Started with less than 5 students and gradually expanded to between 12 and 20 High School aged students.
- **Genesis** is the most successful program serving mixed age and ethnic group. Started with 5 students in one room, now have 30 students and two rooms.
- **Radisson** is a new (and possibly temporary) location set up in January 2014 at the specific request of Somali parents. This program currently serves approximately 19 students and has a waiting list (due to current space limitations).
- Target population is Somali children/youth but other immigrant children are welcome as well.
- Tutors are a mixed group; some Somali, Caucasian, Asian, Hindu – mostly University students. Tutors are paid for their time and CBFY tries to offer more than 3 hours per week of work to tutors so some tutors work at more than one location.
- Use of a **Somali Program Coordinator** is critical in helping to reduce language barriers and engage Somali families in the Homework Club programs
- In addition to the 31 weeks of Homework Club program during the school year, CBFY offers two sessions of 3 week of summer Homework Club programming, as well as a minimum of 2 field trips per year for each participant. One of the highlights of last year's program was a trip to Banff which included participants from Homework Clubs as well as Go 4 Great mentoring

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

groups and their families. The 2013 field trip to Banff had over 90 children and parents participating.

- Although the majority of registered homework club and mentoring programming coincide with the school year (Sept to June), there is some programming offered over the summer, including a summer barbeque for all members of the Somali community and homework club summer sessions.

Community Wide Events/Gatherings – Hosted by Somali Canadian Society of Calgary

In 2013, a summer barbecue was hosted by the SCSC, bringing together approximately 150 Somali families and community members to participate in fun activities and food. The SCSC annual general meeting saw over 70 Somali community participants. Community gatherings are used as an opportunity to promote the Homework Club and Go 4 Great mentoring programs, build awareness and trust with members of the community, and recruit program participants and mentors. A special event held for Somali youth, designed to give youth a voice, encourage leadership and recruit mentors had 40 Somali youth participants.

Organizational Mentoring

A key component of the community development strategy was to provide organizational mentoring to the Somali Canadian Society of Calgary in order to build capacity within the organization and the community, and strengthen community leadership. An experienced organizational mentor (retired Executive Director with decades of experience) was assigned specifically to mentor the SCSC President and Board.

4.0 Somali Program Participation

The Somali programs served approximately **280 children and youth** in the mentoring and homework club programs. In addition, 28 older Somali youth/young adults were engaged to act as volunteer mentors and 13 youth/young adults worked in paid tutoring positions with the homework clubs. The mentors were primarily recruited from the Somali community, while Homework Club leaders included some Somali youth plus others from mixed visible minority ethnic backgrounds. Coordinators for both the Go 4 Great Mentoring program and the Somali Homework Clubs were of Somali background.

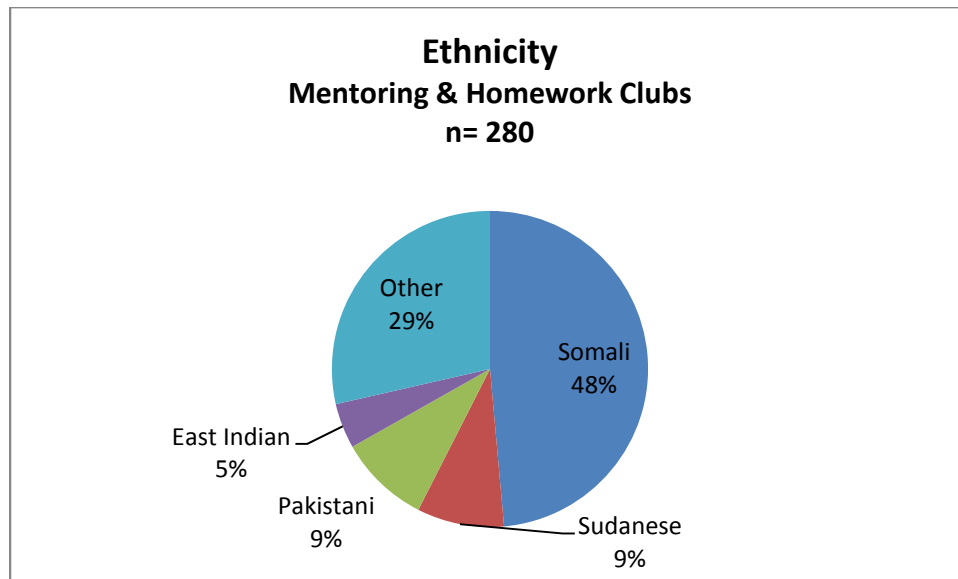
Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Table 3: Somali Program Participation

Mentoring for Inclusion Somali Program				
	# of Go 4 Great Mentors	# of Go 4 Great Mentees	# of Children in Homework Clubs ²	# of Homework Club Leaders
Year One: 2011/2012	0	0	0	0
Year Two: Oct. 2012 to June 2013	11	21	143	7
Year Three: Oct. 2013 to March 31, 2014	17	26	90	6
Total	28	47	233	13

Although all of the children in the Go 4 Great mentoring programs were of Somali background, the Homework Clubs established specifically for Somali families served a mixed ethnic group determined by local need and interest.

Chart 4: Ethnicity of Children in Somali Programs (Oct. 2012 to March 31, 2014)



² Of the 233 Homework Club participants, 89 are Somali (38%) and 144 are from other ethno-cultural backgrounds (82%)

4.1 Somali Program Outcomes

Matched pre/post test data was available for eight Somali children who participated in the mentoring program. Due to the post test scheduling (in May/June), matched data is not available for analysis for the second year of programming.

The Somali children showed increased total scores in all areas of the mentoring survey with specific improvement in average scores on the following questions:

Personal Development:

- I have good Ideas.
- I am good at a lot of things
- I get upset easily.
- I know that it is okay to be different.
- I am excited about who I will be when I grow up.
- I make good decisions.

Friendships:

- I like most of the kids at school.
- I talk to new children that I meet.
- Other kids usually like to have me around.
- I get along well with kids my own age.
- I have friends from other cultures.
- I feel welcome in my neighbourhood.

Anti-Bullying:

- Two questions related to bullying showed reduced scores indicating a reduction of bullying behaviors and experiences.

School:

- I enjoy being at school.
- I like to learn new things.
- I feel good about myself when I am in school.
- Doing well in school is important to me.
- I am proud of my school.
- I feel welcome in my school.

Community:

- I know a lot about my Somali culture.
- I like to learn more about my heritage.
- I participate in Somali cultural activities.

Family:

- My parent/guardian listens to me.

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

- I know that my parent/guardian will be there for me when I need them.
- I can talk to my parent/guardian about anything.
- I get along with my family.
- My family spends time with me.
- My family does fun things together.

Other Observed Impacts on Children

In focus group conversations, both mentors and parents reported the impacts they observed on the children in the mentoring program. Following is a list of changes they have observed and reported:

- Higher self-esteem
- Increased confidence
- New friendships have formed. Parents say the children now ask to go and play with other children they have met at the program.
- Children are engaged.
- Children have something to be proud of telling others
- A sense of belonging to the Calgary community and Somali community
- Children are friendly and able to make better connections at school and in their neighbourhoods
- All the parents have seen an improvement in their child's behaviours
- Parents say that they have been able to have less disciplinary action
- Some parents observe that their children are better behaved at school
- Children enjoy seeing mentors who look like them (skin colour, hijab and dress)
- Children are learning a culture of volunteerism and community involvement. Some have told their parents that they can't wait until they are old enough to be a mentor.

Benefits to Mentors

Based on focus group discussion, mentors identified the changes/impacts they had experienced as a result of their involvement in mentoring.

- Developed leadership skills
- Confidence
- Feeling of making a difference and feelings of importance of their mentoring role
- A sense of belonging to the Calgary community and Somali community
- Greater sense of joy
- Relief of stress

4.2 What Children are Saying

Here is sample of comments from children who participated in the Homework Clubs.

- I like homework club because we get to do our homework, and cool activities, and learn about new stuff.
- I learn about respecting myself, respecting the environment, and respecting others.
- I got to learn about different kinds strategies of thinking, like 'think and stop'. I also learnt how to be myself.
- The leaders are cool and awesome, they are always helping us. If you have a wrong answer on your homework, they will help you. And if you don't understand something they will stick with you until you understand it.
- I feel like I belong here and that I'm safe, I think that everybody loves me here.
- I like that I can come here, because at home its busy, and you don't feel like doing anything, but when you come here you can finish all your homework, and after you get to play with your friends.
- I like coming because the people here are really nice and they treat you with respect, and they treat you like you actually belong here, no matter what country you come from.
- The leaders help us with our homework right away, they care about our success. The leaders make me feel happy that I finished my homework, they always give us "a terrific" and "good job" after our homework.
- I learnt that goals mean a lot, and I learnt that I could work hard and earn something.
- At snack time we all get a fair amount, and we get food that doesn't have peanuts, and it's a snack that everybody likes and can eat, so nobody misses out.
- They helped me in my math, science. Because homework club helped me in math and science I got a prize in school.
- Homework club had taught me to not give up on myself and work hard.
- The leaders are like guidance counselors, they help a lot with our self-confidence, and they give us advice on how to deal with different issues. I love that they are immigrants from the same culture, we understand each other.
- The leaders make me feel secure, self-confident, that I can be whatever I want in the future, and I can achieve whatever I want.
- They understand my family struggles; they make me feel like I can do more then I think I can do.
- They help me with English language; we can speak English together, because I don't speak English at home or even with my friends at school. I only speak in English with my teachers.

4.3 What Parents are Saying

"It is very important for our community to support our youth to stay out of social isolation."

"To see people of their own [culture] who have an education, to have a nice job, like other people . . . when they see their own same cultural people have a nice job and do mentoring . . . I have never seen a program that my kids can enjoy so much."

Two focus groups were held (June 2012; Feb. 2014) with Somali parents whose children are participating in Go 4 Great mentoring programs. Focus group feedback from 9 parents indicates that all parents value the mentoring program and would like to see it continue. Here was agreement that it is important to keep the mentoring program Somali focused at this time, in order to address the particular needs of newcomer Somalis to Calgary, to reinforce cultural identity in light of integration processes, and to strengthen and enhance resilience within the community. However parents added that it would be possible at later stages of program development to open the program up incrementally to other communities (i.e. integrated programming vs Somali focused).

"I think at this stage, that we are trying to bring people out of isolation, so at the beginning stage - I think it is better that at the start – until families are on their feet, and especially for new families for whom it is all they know is to attach to their people – at the beginning it is good to have it as a Somali program only, and maybe when it is on very solid ground it could be opened to other communities bit by bit."

Parents noted how much the children enjoy the mentoring program and how much they get out of it.

"They have made friends with the other children. They get along well and look forward to seeing each other, whether it is swimming or outings or gym or just whatever. On Friday night they are asking 'when are we leaving [for the program]'."

"My son, they talk about life, they talk about career, and my son, he usually enjoys that open minded – talking about working, life, - so his mentor and him that is how they connect and relate."

"I have two goys in the mentoring program . They say it is something that they look forward to. They will get their chores don in order to come."

"My daughter, her mentor works in the hospital, I don't know what area, but my daughter talks about becoming a doctor. Going to the hospital to see how the hospital works. Whatever the mentor talks about is very meaningful for her."

Some of the program challenges identified by parents included:

- Transportation is an ongoing issue. Many parents are working more than one job which makes it difficult to get children to the program on a regular basis. As well, some newcomers may not have a car.

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

- Location is an issue as the Somali community is widespread in Calgary. The current location is central but parking is an issue.
- Recruiting mentors is difficult because many young people have to work part time to help their families.

Suggestions for program development included:

- Organize transportation or arrange to have mentors pick up the children.
- Provide a stipend to mentors.
- Do more outreach to newcomer Somali families.
- Have mentors do some home visits so more children can be involved (i.e. those who don't have transportation).
- Increase mentoring program hours per week by one or two hours in order to make the weekly participation more impactful (i.e. since parents have to drive their children to the program, perhaps an extra hour would it make it more worthwhile). Or provide mentoring more than once a week.
- Expand programming to include a mentoring program for high school aged youth.
- Offer opportunities for professional development and leadership development as a benefit to mentors.

4.4 Case Examples

Case Example #1: The following case example was written by a high school student participant in one of the Somali Homework Clubs.

"I was born in a Kenya Ifo refugee camp. It was a very sad place to live. I come from a big family of 12; ten children and my two parents. I have three sisters, and four brothers. The house we lived in was made of mud, and had two bedrooms. Our beds were made from tree branches, which my mother made; we put leaves and a blanket on top of the tree branches in order to make mattress. On nights where it rained we could not sleep because the roof would fall apart and our house would flood. Those nights were the hardest because we had to stand the entire night. Even with the fighting and saddest around us my siblings and I managed to have fun. We would played with rocks, sticks, and make up own games.

My parents worked very hard. My father worked as a shepherd, and my mother worked as a stay at home mother. My eldest sister got a job as a maid within the refugee camp. My family saved the money my sister made to buy a donkey and cart, and my father got a second job using the donkey and cart to make deliveries for people. After a few years my eldest sister found a job working with a family in Nairobi, outside the refugee camp, which meant I had to take her place with the family inside the camp. In order for me to get an education I had to go to school in the mornings and work as a nanny and maid in the evenings, I was only 9 years old. The little money I made went to buying groceries; whatever was left over at the end of the month would go to paying my tuition.

I loved going to school and learning. School was an escape from the sadness around me. When I was learning I did not realize where I was, or who I was. I was the happiest when I was in school. There were

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

some months the three incomes was not enough and my parents had to make the difficult choice between my education, food or medicine. After a few years, when I turned thirteen, I had to stop going to school all together. It did not matter how hard I worked, how much money I saved, or how good my grades were. My parents explained to me that I was no longer a little girl, and that it was not safe for me to continue going to school because they were afraid I might get raped on my way to and from school. There were several girls my age that had gotten rapped as they walked home from school. I was so sad to stop going to school. School was the only place I found happiness inside the refugee camp. I knew my parents only wanted the best for me, but I was so angry and upset that I could not continue my education.

I had yearned for an education, for a life outside the poverty, rape, death, and sadness. My prayers were answered in May 2011 when we moved to Canada. I was born and raised inside a refugee camp; I did not know anything else. The thought that I could live outside the Ifo camp was exciting; however the idea that I would live in a completely different country left me paralyzed with fear.

When we finally left Ifo and came to Canada in 2011 everything was frightening. I had never seen paved roads, cars, or buses. When I came to Canada I saw all these different races and cultures. All I wanted to do was touch everybody, and everything. I wanted to ask so many questions. I realized that it was a big change, but it was new and exciting, not frightening.

The skyscrapers, mansions, the schools, gyms, malls, libraries, the clean road, and all the cars amazed me. Even the simplest things seemed amazing to me: running water, a mattress, flushing toilets, the way people dressed here, and the grocery stores. I couldn't understand how was it possible for some people in the world to be living such luxurious lives, while others had to walk miles for food and water, or stop going to school for fear of rape, or choose between education or starvation. I was sad and guilty for a long time because I knew that even though I had an amazing opportunity to start a new life, that so many were still living in the refugee camps and struggling.

That is why I want to become a civil engineer. I want to attend the civil engineering program at the University of Calgary specializing in water resources, more specifically hydrological modelling. I do not want another family to ever have to worry about finding water. I did not realize that this level of development was possible in the world. I want to use my opportunity and education to change the world and help rebuild poor countries, and provide clean, running water to others.

I think Canada is great; there are so many helpful people. There were people to help us find a house, enroll in school, and give us some support. Once we got enrolled in school some of the helpful people told us about the Calgary Bridge Foundation. I started getting involved in as many afterschool clubs as possible. I attend the NOW Program, Y-MAP, **Somali Homework Club**, Girls Culture Club, and I volunteer with the YMCA. I find the homework club the most helpful because the leaders understand me, and are able to better help me with my homework. I understand my schoolwork better, I study better, and my grades are better. My behaviour has even improved; when I first came here I used to push and slap people but homework club helped me understand classroom rules. I learned to raise my hand when I have a question or answer in class. I now know I want to help people after seeing the way people helped me when I was in need. I have many things I want to achieve.”

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Case Example #2: This case example was prepared by the Go 4 Great mentoring coordinator.

Asha is a 10 year old girl from Somalia. Asha and her family lived in Damascus Syria to escape the civil war in Somali. Asha and her family came to Canada to flee the uprising in Syria. The family moved to Canada speaking only Somali and Arabic and living in isolation and experiencing so many new things at one time. Asha is the youngest of six siblings. Asha found it difficult to relate with other Canadian children in her school or neighbourhood. She spent a lot of time indoors keeping to herself unable to adjust to the outside world. Asha's mother reached out to the Go 4 Great program coordinator requesting that Asha be enrolled in the BBBS Somali mentoring program where she could make friends, get out and socialize with children from a similar background and have a mentor. Asha's mentor has helped her learn how to swim, build confidence, try new sports and explore her creativity. Asha now has a group of friends and a mentor that has made such a significant impact on Asha's adjustment into Canadian society. The mentor was able to share her experience with Asha on immigrating to Canada at a young age. Asha has shared that she has more hope for the future and knows that she will be successful in attaining her long term goal of going into science like her mentor.

6.0 Partner Feedback

Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the three program partners (BBBS, CBFY, SCSC) and United Way. Service providers were excited about this opportunity to engage directly with the Somali community. The SCSC President stresses the importance of having a voice at the table before programming is developed, and values the opportunity to be directly involved in program development in partnership with mainstream service providers to address Somali community needs.

"This initiative [with the Somali community] was complex, not just a program." BBBS

"This is the type of partnership that could be very powerful." CBFY

"This project is a good example of how to include ethnic communities in mainstream services. Others could learn from this." United Way of Calgary

"You can't diagnose the patient without first consulting the doctor." SCSC

Beginning with a full **Needs Assessment** helped to engage the Somali community, to discover the community's needs and issues from their perspective, and *"gave them a voice"*. When engaging with a new immigrant community *"it is important to listen first"*. The process of engagement was a good one, but we need to recognize that *"it takes a long time"*. The Somali community involvement has changed over time. When the Somali community first approached funders for help they were frustrated and angry. Early meetings were loud and antagonistic, but this slowly changed as community members felt they were being heard. As the community were given the opportunity to co-create services in partnership with the mainstream service providers they became more engaged and trusting. *"It takes time to build trust."*

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Incorporating **Organization Mentoring** was a very important strategy for working with the Somali community. Organizational mentoring takes dedicated time and resources. It's not just an informal process of having the organization observe how a service provider operates. It takes an intentional and focused effort to build capacity. SCSC has shown a willingness to change. For example, SCSC Board composition is now more balanced with women and youth representation on the Board. The accountant at BBBS provided excellent mentoring to the SCSC and helped them to understand financial management processes and requirements. As a result of the organizational mentoring process, the SCSC developed a Strategic Plan which now is being taken forward for implementation. At the upcoming AGM, Board representatives will be assigned to specific action items to move the Strategic Plan forward. There is a new willingness to trust mainstream service providers as long as the SCSC has a voice at the table. The Somali community is a very "conversation" orientated society. SCSC leadership capacity has increased. They have learned more about how to run an organization in the Canadian context. The partnership with SCSC has helped to bridge cultural norms and values. The SCSC representatives can explain things from the Somali cultural perspective and the organizational mentor has developed trust with the Somali community which helps to create a bridge to Canadian cultural context.

The Somali community had an opportunity to have their voice heard, have input and some control over how the programming for their children would be developed.

The mentoring and homework club programs have provided opportunities for Somali youth to participate and be active. Hiring Somali staff as program coordinators and tutors, and engaging Somali mentors helps to **build the next generation of Somali leaders**. It provides targeted development of young people in the Somali community with opportunities to build skills and provide positive role modelling. The capacity of the Somali community has increased as a result of this project.

One of the strengths of the project was the partnership common vision which was focused on working together to address the overall wellbeing of Somali children, rather than being competitive. Partners could draw on their own expertise, strengths and mandates and through the partnership could offer more comprehensive program options for Somali children.

If the Somali community only works with immigrant organizations this keeps them isolated. But by working in partnership with BBBS and CBFY it became a mainstream community project rather an immigrant project. *"It gives the Somali community the sense of having mainstream community support."*

SCSC presidents talks about the importance of the partnership and the programs being offered. *"We have been talking about the issues that the Somali youth have. A main problem is isolation, as well as integration. In regards to mentoring, in Somalia it is not popular like in Canada, but I think it is very important for our community to have mentoring and as I said the problem of our youth is the isolation so if they get matched with somebody from the same community, culture, religion, and they got the support of family and friends, - and I have been working at this for the past few years with our partners to try to understand our issues, - we are in a great position today. We are educating young people who*

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

are leading this program so it is very important for our community to support our youth to stay out of social isolation.”

Partner Learnings and Challenges

Partners discussed a number of challenges and organizational learning resulting from the project. BBBS director says *“this was a huge learning experience for BBBS. Working directly with a cultural organization opened our eyes as to the time needed to build relationships with the Somali community and with other service partners. We learned through trial and error.”*

Partners identified the need to take time to build trust and engage with Somali community, the need to build capacity within the SCSC, the need to have senior level management champion the project and the need to *“keep a higher level vision for the partnership focused on the common goal which is to help Somali children and youth”*. One partner noted that there are two levels of decision making – program development and funding. It’s important to have the right senior staff with decision making authority at the Advisory table in order keep program development moving ahead. Staff changes at partner service provider organization can impact program stability and communication among partners, so there is a need to build trust at senior management levels.

Overall partners agreed that *“some good core programs have been developed”* and service providers have an opportunity to build off of them. One partner indicated they would like to see more supplementary activity development to enhance current program offerings (e.g. field trips, activity days, parent involvement, leadership development, etc.). Perhaps a parent component would be helpful while the children are engaged in their own programs. A parent group could increase networking, social support and perhaps engage parents in volunteering.

The biggest challenge going forward will be finding the resources to keep the programs sustainable after SCIF funding ends.

7.0 Somali Project Learnings

Over the course of the community development, partnership development and program design and implementation experience, partners were able to use the pilot as an opportunity to learn new approaches to working with the Somali community. Many of the promising practices and learnings may be applicable to mainstream service providers' work with other immigrant communities.

7.1 Promising Practices in Working with the Somali Community

The following promising practice ideas for engaging with the Somali community and providing support to Somali children and youth have been gleaned from the research literature, as well as from the Mentoring for Inclusion pilot project experience and feedback from key informants and parents in the Somali community.

Cultural Identity

- Program staff who are directly involved with the families should have Somali ancestry. This helps on a number of levels: the worker can speak directly with families in their first language; the worker has an intimate knowledge of the culture and is in a better position to develop trust; understanding culture and customs allows the worker to adjust or develop program procedures in a way that better engages families and facilitates trust.³ For example, rather than using a formal intake/assessment process, a more culturally appropriate model would use a softer more relational approach of *"getting to know their story"*.

Relational Approach

- Particular attention should be paid to the importance and centrality of social relations in Somali culture. Developing positive and trusting personal relationships with both individuals and the community can positively impact and facilitate engagement and participation.⁴ The relational approach may be put in practice through use of as an *"accompaniment"* or *"walking with"* model as opposed to the traditional Western orientation of professional to client relationship.⁵
- Connecting with and staying connected with families whose children/youth are participating in the programs is important. Somali families need to feel they still have control and a good understanding of what their children are being exposed to.⁶

Holistic

- Need to work with the whole community, not just focus on the children as separate from parents/community.⁷ Mentoring for Inclusion offers programming opportunities for children/youth, but also volunteer, leadership development and part time work for Somali

³ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

⁴ Nderu (2005)

⁵ Comstock, D., et al (2008)

⁶ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

⁷ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

youth (e.g. mentors, tutors), as well as involvement of parents at the mentoring programs. The program is promoted to the whole community at the jointly planned SCSC summer barbeque. Provision of a family field trip to Banff by Bridge Foundation for Youth was a valuable family experience.

- Taking a holistic approach requires collaborative partnerships among community service providers with different expertise/programming options, and the Somali community.

Awareness of Socio-economic Context and Barriers

- Be aware and sensitive of the impact of poverty, lack of transportation, large families, social exclusion, and other barriers⁸ and be prepared to design and or modify program to accommodate and/or decrease these barriers.
- Provide supported referrals to community services where needed (i.e. possible accompaniment or hands on support to connect with service).

Trauma Informed

- Trauma-informed practice allows support workers to identify trauma as a way of contextualizing certain Somali experience and behaviour (e.g. being sensitive to their hesitation or reluctance to engage in mainstream programming or to let their children participate). Trauma-informed practice is attentive to issues of secure attachment, trust, “belief in a just world, a sense of connectedness and a stable personal and collective identity”.⁹ Following a trauma-informed approach is a way of creating an environment that is sensitive and affirming. Trauma-informed practice acknowledges the trauma, the harms (unhealthy coping strategies) and also the ability to heal and to be empowered in one’s own healing.¹⁰
- Many people recover from trauma exposure, processing and resolving their injuries in the context of family, friendships, and other relationships.¹¹
- Briefing and debriefing of activities is important (i.e. lots of information, open communication and no surprises for Somali families).

Strengths Based

- Strengths-based practice should involve attentiveness to language and avoidance of deficit-based descriptors where possible.¹² This shift helps to de-stigmatize identity, experience, learning and healing processes.
- There are a number of strengths specific to immigrant youth that can be emphasized through programming, for example: strong family values from their country of origin, bilingualism, maturity gained through the migration experience, bi-culturalism, and a strong religious heritage which can provide moral support.¹³

⁸ McInerney (2009); Alberta School Boards Association (2010) – see e.g. page 29.

⁹ Haskell & Randall (2009:49) citing Kirmayer, Tait & Simpson (2009:27).

¹⁰ Haskell & Randall (2009:86)

¹¹ Briere & Scott (2006) Principles of Trauma Therapy.

¹² Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

¹³ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

Cultivating Resilience

- Resilience can be cultivated and influenced by a number of factors related to the family (positive adult role model and communication in the family, parental involvement, clear rules, time with family), school (connection to school, supportive school environment, participation in school), community (connection to community, positive community norms and values, prevention policies) and individual (positive peer group, problem solving, communication, and conflict resolution skills, positive sense of self, empathy to others).¹⁴
- Creating conditions and situations to promote the development of a positive personal and cultural identity is one of the most frequently cited practices for cultivating resilience.¹⁵
- Lifeskills training encompassing social and emotional learning in the context of small group activities has been effective where new skills are taught alongside opportunities for practice with “traditional modes of helping; role modeling by adults who described effective ways of coping with adversity; and particular skills valued in the culture.”¹⁶
- Along with helping with language acquisition and social interaction with other members in one’s community, sport can also provide migrant youth, including those recovering from trauma associated with being a refugee, a sense of purpose and direction. Not only can it provide youth a welcome diversion from issues they may be dealing with, but it is also a way to build trust, capacity, broader participation, self-esteem, health and well-being, and community understanding.¹⁷
- Provide opportunities for development of leadership skills for youth and mentors.¹⁸

Role Models/Mentors

- Facilitate access to positive Somali or other culturally appropriate (e.g. Muslim female) role models. Ideally, mentors have Somali ancestry.¹⁹
- Ideally, both children and parents should develop bi-cultural competencies. This means that while they may learn and understand the social norms of their new country, they still value and remain grounded in their culture.²⁰

Academic Support

- Academic supports are essential for the future success of immigrant youth. Children that come from a context of civil unrest or discrimination may not have had the opportunity to access formal education, making academic support particularly valuable to these families.²¹ Resources related to mentoring, tutoring and advocacy are essential to promote their success in schools. For example, appropriate academic assessment and placement, tutoring, bilingual

¹⁴ Rink and Tricker (2003)

¹⁵ Schmidt, Morland and Rose (2006)

¹⁶ See e.g. the Zuni Lifeskills Curriculum and Project Venture which are provided on Pages 55-56 Vulnerable Youth Report.

¹⁷ Centre for Multicultural Youth (2007)

¹⁸ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

¹⁹ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

²⁰ Kapteijns and Arman (2008)

²¹ Schmidt, Morland and Rose (2006)

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

resources, and programs that address bullying are all important contributing factors to a student's success.²²

- The process of school-leaving is one which begins early in a child's school experience²³ and therefore support programming may have the greatest impact if available to students from Kindergarten to grade twelve.
- One of the main barriers to parental participation in their child's education is their inability to communicate in English. This includes not being able to understand written or verbal correspondence with the school or participating in parent-teacher conferences.²⁴ Moreover, helping children with their homework can be difficult, if not impossible, if parents do not speak English or have very low levels of education, making outside academic support services for school-aged children especially important.²⁵
- Different social norms around the role of parents in their children's education can result in confusion around the expectation of parent's involvement with the school system. For example, in North America, parents are expected to actively engage with the school through volunteerism, participation in parent-teacher conferences etc. In contrast, Somali parents traditionally understand their role as providing out-of-school support to their children by encouraging their children to behave, respect their teachers and buying them what they need: not being 'active' participants as defined in a North American context. For them, being physically present in the school is the teacher's job. These beliefs are often misinterpreted as a lack of interest in their children's education.²⁶
- For Somali immigrants, informal conversations outside of the classroom are understood as being essential to the relationship between the parent and the teacher and form the basis of any communication that may be needed about the student later on. However, these informal interactions rarely take place in a North American context, making communication between parent and teacher more difficult.²⁷
- Many Somali immigrants enter the school system as adolescents, meaning that they have to quickly adjust to a formal education setting (which they may have never been exposed to before as refugees), catch up to the curriculum and excel, while at the same time learning a new cultural system, language and dealing with the traumatic circumstances of migration.²⁸
- Factors that impact a migrant student's educational resiliency include: caring and supportive adult relationship; opportunities for meaningful participation in their communities; and high expectations from both parents and teachers in terms of academic performance and future success.²⁹

²² Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (2009)

²³ Alberta School Boards Association (2010)

²⁴ Nderu (2005)

²⁵ Ahmed (2013)

²⁶ Nderu (2005)

²⁷ Nderu (2005)

²⁸ Koch (2007)

²⁹ Bryan (2005)

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

Experiential Learning

- Value life experience, such as migration related challenges, as an essential aspect and strength for learning.³⁰ Using this approach can enhance learners' sense of empowerment, self-worth and esteem.
- Improve knowledge about a broad range of education and career pathways including work opportunities while still completing school and emphasizing the importance of education. Some do this by restricting the number that adolescents can work in order to ensure that academic achievement can still be possible.³¹
- Encourage the value of volunteer experience (e.g. mentoring) as both a learning opportunity, and a way to gain experience that can be noted on a resume for future employment search. Exposure to workplace environments and experience can be integrated into overall programming. For example, Mentoring for Inclusion has offered both volunteer opportunities (i.e. mentoring) and part time employment (i.e. tutors) to Somali youth.

Giving Voice

- Encouraging those involved in the program (e.g. children/youth; mentors; parents) to provide feedback about their experience and about their preference (e.g. program activities/approaches) and aspirations can increase engagement and make programs more responsive and better able to meet community's needs and desired outcomes³²
- Promote storytelling, dialogue, or personal sharing, use talking circles, informal and formal get-togethers, thereby contributing to personal renewal and healing. Sharing can be done through informal conversations or through more artistic expression such as music, theatre or art.³³

Transition Support

- The ease of the transition that youth experience as they are acculturated to their new country is affected by the strength of their ethno-cultural community and their parents' access to resources.³⁴
- Remaining involved with the wider ethnic community can help with the transition between being Canadian and staying connected to one's cultural roots. The wider social group's cultural pride, support of values, economic and social supports helps this process.³⁵
- Note that transitions related to staff turnover or changes in programming may be difficult for two reasons: first, the Somali culture is strongly relational in nature; therefore, parents connect with the person (i.e. staff member) rather than with the program;³⁶ second, due to previous trauma and loss, change may be interpreted as abandonment or loss, making it difficult to re-establish connection with the new staff person or program.³⁷ Therefore, it is important to build-

³⁰ Schmidt, Morland and Rose (2006)

³¹ RefugeeWorks (2001)

³² Morrissette & Gadbois (2006a:139)

³³ Francis and Cornfoot (2007)

³⁴ Kapteijns and Arman (2008)

³⁵ Kapteijns and Arman (2008)

³⁶ Nderu (2005)

³⁷ Haskell and Randall (2009)

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

in supported transition processes (e.g. farewell/acknowledgement of staff leaving – celebration of their moving on to new opportunities; orientation to new staff – get to know them, excitement about being there, etc.)

7.2 Program Design and Governance Considerations

Cultural Competency/Incorporating Cultural Norms and Activities

- Culturally-informed programming and supports can increase engagement and satisfaction.³⁸ For example, communication approaches and outreach modalities should seek to engage cultural dimensions particular to the Somali world view.
- Build cultural awareness across the staff group and within the agency, including specific guidance about recognizing and supporting healthy and empowered bi-cultural identity development.³⁹
- Understanding religious and cultural holidays, celebrations, requirements (e.g. fasting during Ramadan, wearing hijab, attending religious classes at Mosque, halal food, etc.) is a key component of cultural competency
- While programs may focus specifically on youth, it is important to recognize the importance of engaging parents or guardians. Since youth tend to acculturate more quickly than their parents or guardians, it is important to keep this in mind to avoid increasing the ‘acculturation gap’ between family members, which can lead to intergenerational conflict.^{40 41}
- Undertake activities including relationship building that sustain and promote connections to family, culture, history, community and extended family. Facilitate positive community connections and engagement patterns.⁴²

Liaison/Bridging Role

- Trusted Advocates or (informal) leaders in an ethnic community who have the confidence of their people can serve as an effective bridge and broker to the broader community.⁴³
- Communication and partnership between the community leaders, mainstream service organizations, and families has been found to strengthen relationships and collaboration – identifying immigrant youth, families and community leaders that can sit on a board, such an advisory committee can help to streamline communication.⁴⁴
- Importance of having senior Somali community leaders who can negotiate with other leaders within the community (e.g. the Imam) for permission for families to have their children engage in mainstream activities. In fact, families often approach Imams for counsel on personal and

³⁸ Vulnerable Youth Report (2013:56) citing Weisz et al (2005), and Springer et al, (2004).

³⁹ Kapteijns and Arman (2008)

⁴⁰ Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (2009)

⁴¹ Mohamed & Yusuf (2012)

⁴² Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006)

⁴³ Making Connection Program, Seattle USA.

⁴⁴ MENTOR (2009)

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

family matters, making them an important person to make aware of services and supports in the community.⁴⁵

Co-Creation/Shared Responsibility

- Ethno-cultural community should be an equal partner in the design of programs/services intended to engage and support member of their community. This may take the shape of a participatory community assessment or representation on an advisory committee.⁴⁶
- Including youth, their parents and community leaders in the process, help to build networks of trust that all parties can draw on in the future. Being involved in the mentoring process can also help to empower participants by gaining skills, knowledge and confidence in having responsibility in a new social setting.⁴⁷
- Immigrant youth, community leaders and parents of immigrant youth should all be included on an advisory group so that their perspectives are included in the management of the program.⁴⁸ For example, this may include inviting the ethno-cultural community partner to assist with selection and hiring of staff, which can increase trust and validation of program for community members/parents; the ethno-cultural community partner plays a strong role in promoting the program to the community and encouraging participation; sharing responsibility for recruitment of mentors from within the ethno-cultural community, which helps to increase access to potential members and influence within the community; and sharing responsibility for problem solving when issues arise that may impact the program, and may take the lead on resolving issues specifically within the community where their influence is greater.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ali, Milstein and Marzuk (2005)

⁴⁶ Schmidt, Morland & Rose (2006), Mentor

⁴⁷ Bryan (2005)

⁴⁸ MENTOR (2009)

⁴⁹ MENTOR (2009)

8.0 Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis was used to capture the social value of the outcomes produced by investment in the Mentoring for Inclusion programs. Through SROI analysis, the outcomes of the program were carefully mapped enabling a clear understanding of the links between activities of the program and the social *change* resulting from these activities. The analysis looks at the outcomes for **522 children and youth** participating in the Francophone and Somali programs over the initial three years of programming. In order to determine the total present social value created, outcomes were assigned financial proxy values to represent the social value associated with changes experienced by participants as a result of the program.

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Mentoring for Inclusion found that for every dollar invested in the first three years of operation, the program created an **average of \$3.29 in social value**. Throughout the analysis, conservative estimations of social value were taken, and each proxy was considered in terms of the amount of the change actually attributable to the program (and discounted for that change determined not to be a direct result of Mentoring for Inclusion). In this way, and since not all social value can be adequately captured in financial terms, the value presented above represent the *minimum* value created through the program, and the actual value is likely higher.

Somali parents understand the importance of building resiliency and investing in prevention programs like Mentoring for Inclusion. As one of the parents noted at the focus group, *“instead of dealing with somebody who fell off the cliff – all the studies show, to spend time fixing a person with corrections [i.e. police intervention] you can fix hundreds of others if you start to help early, like with this program [Mentoring for Inclusion]”*.

9.0 Conclusion

Mentoring for Inclusion has supported over 500 immigrant children and youth with mentoring, positive after school activities, homework clubs and field trips. It has also supported new immigrant families whose first language is not English to access programs and services for themselves and their children. Mentoring for Inclusion has brought together partners including schools, mainstream community service providers and the Somali Canadian Society of Calgary to build programs together in support of children and youth. By taking time to get to know the Somali community and working together to identify and address needs and issues, partners are helping to build a positive and hopeful future for immigrant children and youth in Calgary.

Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

10.0 Next Steps

The engagement of the Francophone community into mentoring opportunities for their children and youth will continue with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area in collaboration with Projet Appartenance and the Francophone School Board. These partnerships will be integrated within BBBS with each Francophone mentoring program moving towards integration into the agency’s core mentoring programs. This will further evolve BBBS Calgary as a bilingual organization with mentoring services being offered in both languages. BBBS will continue to increase staff capacity by hiring bilingual or Francophone staff in order to best deliver mentoring programs in French language and engage children, youth, families and volunteers from the Francophone community.

The Mentoring for Inclusion Somali programs have been established and piloted for one year, and are now gaining momentum in their second year of operation. However, the trust and bridging built with the Somali community is still fragile as families become more familiar with concepts of mentoring and volunteerism, gain more experience with mainstream service providers and begin to see the benefits for their children. In the Somali culture, relationships are foundational to engagement and participation. As a result, transitions including changes to staff or to programming must be carefully managed. The Mentoring for Inclusion program needs at least one more year to strengthen the foundations built with the Somali community and solidify the positive gains made, before moving toward an integrated ethno-cultural model. The service providers also need more time to internalize and integrate the cultural competencies and learnings from the pilot project experience.

Table 5: Overview of Somali Program Development Planning

Year 1 ENGAGE	Year 2 MOBILIZE – PILOT LEARN	Year 3 GROW FINETUNE	Year 4 SOLIDIFY GAINS PRACTICE	Year 5 INTEGRATE
<p>Engage the Somali Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . needs assessment . develop the collaborative/ partnership (based on 3 community partners) .co-create program design 	<p>Pilot Two Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . mentoring; . homework clubs . Engage Somali parents to allow children to participate . Celebrate program success at summer family barbeque and recruit more mentors and participants . develop SCSC governance structures and strategic plan 	<p>Grow the Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . expand mentoring program from 15 to 30 mentors . continue homework clubs and consider adding supplementary services linked to these venues . expand engagement of families and mentors . start implementing SCSC strategic plan 	<p>Establish strong community/family ownership of programs to ensure ongoing engagement and trust.</p> <p>Continue to grow the programs to the extent allowed by resources.</p> <p>Pilot sharing of ethno specific staff across service partners.</p> <p>Plan and prepare for integration of programs to broaden ethno-cultural participation – in consultation with Somali partners</p>	<p>Assist Somali community/families to maintain engagement as programs transition to multi-cultural format.</p> <p>Maintain partnership with Somali community in co-design of integration and transition process.</p>

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Mentoring for Inclusion Program Evaluation

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