

HOLISTIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

An Overview from the CIF Impact Report

COMMUNITIES BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES (CBYF)

Tamarack Institute's Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) is a five-year initiative funded by the Government of Canada's Supports for Student Learning Program* that operates in 20 rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities across the country. The goal of CBYF is to develop community-wide strategies to support youth (aged 15 – 30) to graduate high school and successfully transition to post-secondary, training or employment. Each CBYF community receives core funding and capacity building support from Tamarack to develop and implement their local action plan.

COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND (CIF)

CBYF communities are eligible to apply annually for one-year Community Innovation Fund (CIF) grants. These grants enable local CBYF initiatives to achieve “quick wins” on pressing issues while balancing the deep work of addressing the priorities of their community's youth. After the first year of implementing CBYF in communities, six domains emerged to address barriers to academic and employment success faced by youth. The six themes have been structured into six overviews, focusing specifically on the impacts of 40 CIF grants distributed between 2020 and 2023. All overviews will be updated to include data from the final year as it becomes available.

HOLISTIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

Almost all CIF initiatives engaged youth experiencing food insecurity, insufficient housing, or other issues securing basic needs. Across the board, when CIF projects addressed these gaps in basic needs, youth had more energy to focus on graduating from school and transitioning into further education or employment. These supports may have required small investments in innovation, funds or time but had significant impacts on youth success when offered in conjunction with education and employment initiatives.

COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

- Poverty and systemic barriers negatively affect the food and housing security of youth.
- Gaps or barriers in access to holistic, culturally appropriate, mental health resources.
- Gaps or barriers in cultural connection and traditional healing practices, especially for Indigenous youth.

While 40 initiatives addressed holistic health and wellbeing, the projects on the following page focused most specifically on this theme.

INITIATIVES ADDRESSING HOLISTIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

Channeling Youth Voices

Chilliwack, BC

Chilliwack youth worked together to create a documentary about their experiences of poverty, homelessness, and mental illness. Youth had the opportunity to speak as experts on their own experiences to local changemakers.

Youth Accessing Digital Devices

Prince Albert, SK

The majority Indigenous youth participants in Prince Albert received various beading, self-care, and mental health workshops to help connect them with support from Elders and local service providers.

Kanien'kehá:ka Traditional Food Cooking Program

Kahnawà:ke, QC

This project promoted land-based learning and taught hands-on food preparation and cooking skills to youth using Kanien'kehá:ka traditional foods to pass down this important aspect of Kanien'kehá:ka identity, culture, and way of life.

Healing Through Performance Art

Kahnawà:ke, QC

Kanien'kehá:ka youth designed and attended workshops that provided peer and adult support while teaching about painting, public speaking, theater, and powwow dancing among others.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF THE CIF PROJECTS

- 1,791 youth** had the opportunity to meet one or more basic needs through their involvement with CIF initiatives.
- Youth experiencing addiction and mental health struggles in Prince Albert reported feeling stigmatized in traditional services. Through the CIF project, **52 youth** were able to connect with Indigenous elders and more accessible services.
- One young person was able to achieve and maintain sobriety because of his connection with an elder made through the Prince Albert CIF initiative.
- 34 youth** in Chilliwack facing many systemic barriers gained the confidence to advocate for themselves and their peers to service providers and local government officials.
- The Kanien'kehá:ka Traditional Food Cooking Program engaged **215 Kanien'kehá:ka youth**, helping them develop and/or maintain powerful familial and community relationships built on the sharing of food, something that has been historically marginalized by colonial laws and actions.