

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES FOR TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD NEWCOMER YOUTH AND KIDS PROGRAM, 2014-15 PROGRAM EVALUATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The TDSB is the largest school board in Canada, and serves a diverse student population of over 250,000 students in almost 600 schools. Most TDSB students were born in Canada (73%), but just over one-quarter were born outside of Canada (27%).¹

As such, there is a large population of newcomer students in the TDSB. An analysis of recent TDSB data (Fall 2014) indicates that two-thirds of newcomers (66%) are of elementary school age. Most of these students are more recent arrivals, with 61% having arrived within the previous one to three years. Most were born in South Asia (24%), East Asia (20%), Western Asia (14%), Southeast Asia (7%), and Eastern Europe (7%) and most speak a first language other than English, most notably Chinese, Bengali, Urdu, Arabic, Persian (Farsi), Tagalog (Pilipino), Tamil, Spanish, Korean, and Russian.

It is this population of newcomer students that the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* seeks to serve. The program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), and operates through the TDSB's Business Development and Community Services department to serve the TDSB's newcomer community.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Welcoming Communities Program is a structured youth mentorship program for new Canadian students that matches them with local students for free, supervised, group activities. Currently, there is a Kids Program, which serves newcomer students in Grades 1 to 6, and a Youth Program, which serves newcomer students in Grades 7 to 12. The Welcoming Communities Program is staffed by Host Facilitators, who facilitate the implementation of the program at each school. Working alongside the Host Facilitator, and their peer mentor, newcomer students who are called "mentees" in the program, participate in a variety of group activities designed to help ease some of the transitional challenges faced when settling into Canadian culture. Activities include Homework Clubs, English conversation circles, professional table tennis training/tournaments, volunteer recognition ceremonies and field trips that highlight the unique features of Toronto and Canadian culture. The primary goal of the

¹ Yau, M., Rosolen, L. & Archer, B. (May 2013). *TDSB students & families: Demographic profile* (2011-12 Student & Parent Census, Issue 1). Retrieved from <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Research/2011-12CensusFactSheet1-Demographics-17June2013.pdf>

program is to ease the transition into life in Canada and the transition to school by connecting newcomer students to their school and community.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

In the Spring of 2014, the Senior Manager of Business Development and Community Services asked the TDSB's Research and Information Services department to conduct an evaluation of the program to:

- understand the impact of the program on the settlement of newcomer students; and
- identify areas of further program improvement.

Surveys were designed for students, parents, and school staff and focus groups were conducted with both students and program staff. Questions were framed to gather feedback to assess whether the program was successful in achieving its outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

Impacts at the Student Level

- Nearly all students in the Kids Program (93%) and the Youth Program (80%) had fun.
- Most students in the Kids Program (80%) and Youth Program (91%) made some new friends.
- Most students in the Kids Program stated that they learned about life in Canada (85%), as well as diversity and other cultures (78%), while 77% of students in the Youth Program said that they learned “a lot” to “some” about life in Canada, diversity, and other cultures.
- Most students in the Kids Program felt that they did better in school (72%), improved their English language competency (65%), and had the opportunity to participate in other extracurriculars (80%).
- Two-thirds of students in the Youth Program believed that the program helped them “a lot” to “some” in doing better in school (67%), improving their English language competency (68%), and giving them the opportunity to participate in other extracurriculars (63%).
- Host Facilitators acknowledged visible improvements in students' English language proficiency and knowledge, emotional well-being, self-identity, and self-esteem as a result of their participation.
- Nearly all school staff expressed that the Welcoming Communities Program supported students' sense of belonging in school (83%).
- Nearly all students in the Kids (94%) and Youth (99%) Program would recommend other students to participate in this program.

Impacts at the School Level

- Most students in the Kids Program stated that they felt more comfortable in their school (77%) and part of a community (78%).
- Most students in the Youth Program also expressed that they felt “a lot” to “some” more comfortable in their school (82%) and part of a community (80%).
- Nearly all school staff believed the Welcoming Communities Program made a “significant” to “moderate” impact (91%) on the school’s capacity to support integration and promote inclusion of newcomers.
- Nearly all teaching and staff members believed the Welcoming Communities Program was “extremely” to “very” valuable (96%) for their school.
- Host Facilitators felt that hosting this program served to reduce insensitivity to, change perceptions about, and increase awareness of newcomers among school staff.

Impacts at the Community Level

- Most students in the Kids Program said they learned more (70%) and felt more comfortable in the community (68%) after being in the program.
- Most students in the Youth Program said they learned more about (67%) and felt more comfortable in the community (77%) after being in the program.
- Host Facilitators described that students’ broadened their awareness of community resources.

Although the survey response rates were low, the feedback from students and staff provides encouraging evidence that the program has positively affected students on multiple levels.

The full report includes suggestions for enhancing program efficacy related to the delivery model, financial support, mentor and student referral, program reach, and optimizing existing school partnerships.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Canada has a high population of immigrants, at 20.6% of the population. Most immigrants live in census metropolitan areas (CMA), and in the CMA of Toronto, immigrants represent 46% of the total population.² This high population of immigrants is reflected in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) population.

The TDSB is the largest school board in Canada, and serves a diverse student population of over 250,000 students in almost 600 schools. Most TDSB students were born in Canada (73%), but just over one-quarter were born outside of Canada (27%).³

Both the number and proportion of students arriving from other countries has been declining in recent years, however. For example, in Spring 2007, there were 42,141 students who arrived within the previous 1-5 years. However, in Fall 2014, there were only 27,994 students that were recent arrivals to Canada. This is a total decline of recent immigrants over those years of over 14,000 recent immigrants.

That being said, there is still a large population of newcomer students in the TDSB. Two-thirds of newcomers (66%) are of elementary school age. Most of these students are more recent arrivals, with 61% having arrived within the previous one to three years. Most were born in South Asia (24%), East Asia (20%), Western Asia (14%), Southeast Asia (7%), and Eastern Europe (7%) and most speak a first language other than English, most notably Chinese, Bengali, Urdu, Arabic, Persian (Farsi), Tagalog (Pilipino), Tamil, Spanish, Korean, and Russian.

It is this population of students that the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* seeks to serve.

² Statistics Canada (2011). *National household survey, 2011*.

³ Yau, M., Rosolen, L. & Archer, B. (May 2013). *TDSB students & families: Demographic profile (2011-12 Student & Parent Census, Issue 1)*. Retrieved from <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/AboutUs/Research/2011-12CensusFactSheet1-Demographics-17June2013.pdf>

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES FOR TDSB NEWCOMER YOUTH AND KIDS PROGRAM

Program Management and Funding

The program is one of the settlement programs offered through the TDSB's Business Development and Community Services department to serve TDSB's newcomer community. The mission of the Community Services area is to deliver and enhance services that support the TDSB's diverse community to overcome barriers and to achieve their settlement, employment, language and/or skills development goals.

Community Services operates their programs through funding from various levels of government. The *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

When the program began in 2007-08, the program served newcomer students in secondary schools only. Due to a need for services and support for younger students, the program expanded to elementary and middle schools in the 2011-12 school year.

Program Goal

The primary goal of the program is to ease the transition into life in Canada and the transition to school by connecting newcomer students to their school and community.

Program Description

At its heart, the program is a structured mentorship program for new Canadian students that matches them with local students for free, supervised, group activities.

The program is staffed by Host Facilitators, who facilitate the implementation of the program at each school. Working alongside the Host Facilitator, and their peer mentor, newcomer students who are called "mentees" in the program, participate in a variety of group activities designed to help ease some of the transitional challenges faced when settling into Canadian culture.

Activities include Homework Clubs, English conversation circles, professional table tennis training/tournaments, volunteer recognition ceremonies and field trips that highlight the unique features of Toronto and Canadian culture.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Currently, there is a Kids Program, which serves newcomer students in Grades 1 to 6, and a Youth Program, which serves newcomer students in Grades 7 to 12. The characteristics of each program are described in more detail below.

Kids Program

The Kids Program is eight weeks in length and the students meet once per week. The program implementation at each school is guided by a Curriculum Outline that sets the objectives for each week of the program. Lesson plans for each session are included as well, which provide an agenda of activities for the lunchtime session and the after school session. The first week of the program is devoted primarily to an orientation to the program for both mentees and mentors. Each subsequent week has a theme; themes include Canadian culture, cultural differences, community connections, cultural diversity, and peer pressure, bullying, and anti-racism. The final week is devoted to a celebration of the participant's achievements. Some schools offer both lunch hour and after school sessions, while some offer one or the other format. With the exception of field trips, activities take place on school property. Guest speakers are brought in to help the students make community connections. Guest speakers have included staff from the Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Police Services, and Toronto Fire Services for example.

Youth Program

The Youth Program runs for twelve weeks and the students meet once per week. The Youth Program is less structured than the Kids Program, allowing for more input from the youth to shape the program. In addition to the English conversation circles and Homework Club, current program offerings include a Steel Pan Program, a Reading Buddy Program, and a Culinary Program. Youth also have opportunities to volunteer in the community. The programs run during the lunch hour and/or after school on school property.

School Selection

Due to the number of Host Facilitators, and the number of schools in the TDSB system, the current program delivery model aims to serve as many TDSB schools as possible each year. As such, the program usually only operates for one cycle in each school per year.

The limitation of this model is that not all newcomer students in the school may be served each year. In fact, once the program ends, schools often want to know when they can receive the program again. Unfortunately, with the current model, it is often not until the following school year. In schools with high newcomer populations, amendments are sometimes made to the

program model to serve as many newcomers as possible. For example, if a school has a high number of newcomers, in order to serve as many as possible, the program may only register mentees, and have less recent mentees serve as “mentors” to more recently arrived mentees.

In addition, with the current staffing complement, it is not feasible to serve all schools with newcomer students who could benefit from the program each year. However, an effort is made to ensure that these schools are first in line to receive the program the following year.

Program staff analyze TDSB data on the number of newcomers in each school to determine which schools to approach for programming.

Newcomer Student Selection

To be eligible to participate in the program, newcomer students must be living five years or less in Canada and be a Permanent Resident, Convention Refugee or Government Assisted Refugee. TDSB newcomer students can self-refer or be referred by school staff (e.g., Settlement Workers in Schools [SWIS], English as a Second Language [ESL] Teachers, Teachers, Principals, Guidance Counsellors, etc.). Sometimes, after registration forms are returned by parents, it is discovered that referred students are ineligible for the program as they have become Canadian citizens. In these cases, the students are often accepted as mentors for the program.

Mentor Selection

Mentors are selected in various ways depending on the practices of individual schools for recruiting students for leadership roles. At one school this past year, there were so many students who wanted to participate in the program as mentors that the Principal had the students write a short essay expressing their interest and students were selected based on their responses. A testament to the success of this program is the fact that many mentors were previous program mentees themselves, and want to come back to the program as mentors to help other newcomers.

The Match

Newcomer mentees are matched with a mentor by the Host Facilitator. The match is meant to provide the mentee with the additional language, social, and settlement support needed to help them integrate into the Canadian school system. Prior to being matched, the Host Facilitator ensures that the mentors and mentees have a good understanding of the program’s objectives and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Current Delivery Model

With the current delivery model, the Kids Program serves approximately 800 newcomer students per year in 80 schools. An additional 800 students participate as mentors as the Kids Program operates on a 1:1 mentee to mentor ratio.

The Youth Program serves approximately 600 newcomer students per year in 60 schools. An additional 300 students participate as mentors as the Youth Program operates on a 5:1 mentee to mentor ratio (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Schools/Newcomer Students That Can Be Served with Current Delivery Model

	Number of Schools	Number of Newcomers	Number of Mentors
Kids Program (Grades 1-6)	80 (4 sessions, 20 schools per session)	800 (10 per school)	800 (10 per school)
Youth Program (Grades 7-12)	60 (3 sessions, 20 schools per session)	600 (10 per school)	300 (5 per school)
Total for Both Programs	140	1,400	1,100

Since the program's inception in September 2012, it has been delivered in 216 TDSB schools and has served 3,745 newcomer students. A further 2,122 students have been involved as mentors. Table 2 shows the number of newcomers served, and the number of schools served over the last program year (April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015).

Table 2: Students and Schools Served (April 2014 to March 2015)

Number of Newcomers	Number of Mentors	Number of Schools
1,590	467	105

Given the total number of newcomer students in the TDSB, and current program funding, the program is currently serving approximately 5% of the newcomer population each program year. However, as noted above, not all of these students are eligible for the program.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Before outlining the program evaluation methodology, it is important to note that there are a range of programs and supports offered within the school system to assist newcomer students and their families with settlement. The programs and supports discussed in this section serve as the larger program context within which the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* operates.

Registration and Reception Centres

The TDSB has three Newcomer Reception Centres where all students eligible for secondary school (ages 14-20) visit before registration at their local secondary school. The centres provide initial reception and assessment of English language and mathematics skills for newcomer students. The assessments help the local secondary school place the new student into the appropriate high school credit program. Each Reception Centre has multilingual staff who are available to assist newcomer students and their families in learning about the school system in Ontario. Newcomer families also have the opportunity to meet with a Settlement Worker who can provide information on such topics as finding housing, looking for employment, accessing health care in Ontario and connecting with a variety of support agencies.

Settlement Workers in Schools

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Program places settlement workers from community agencies in elementary and secondary schools with high numbers of newcomer students. The workers contact newcomer parents and students to assist them with settlement needs, as well as help school staff to understand the settlement needs of newcomers.

Summer Orientation Programs

Settlement Workers work with the schools to offer orientation programs in the summer for newcomer students; there is a one-day middle school program called *Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN)*, and a high school program called *Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)*. These programs help students to become oriented to their new school and make some friends before school begins. The activities are led by peer leaders – students who were themselves newcomers in previous years.

English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development Support

Most students can read and write in their first language when they arrive in Canada but may have limited English skills. English as a Second Language (ESL) programs help these students to learn English so they can participate fully in the curriculum and school life. For students who have limited prior access to formal education, the TDSB offers English Literacy Development (ELD) support to help these students develop literacy skills in English. Students also gain academic knowledge in various subject areas such as mathematics and social studies. The Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP), which is offered in selected elementary and secondary schools, serves students with limited prior formal education.

At the elementary school level, a range of program models, support, and assistance is available to ESL students. Depending on the school, students have access to specialized half-day classes

for newcomers, on-site ESL Teachers who support students in learning English, and Itinerant ESL Teachers who support students in a number of schools.

At the secondary level, there are five ESL and five ELD courses, designated according to levels of proficiency in English and literacy development, not by grade. ESL and ELD courses are “open” so newcomer students can continue along all post-secondary pathways. Students may substitute up to three ESL or ELD courses for compulsory English credit requirements for their diploma. Additional ESL/ELD credits may be counted as optional credits for their diploma. There are also specially-adapted courses in history, science, career studies, civics, and other compulsory subjects.

Given these other programs and supports, it is important in attributing outcomes to be mindful that the *Welcoming Communities for Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* exists in this larger program context within the TDSB.

PROGRAM EVALUATION METHODS

In the Spring of 2014, Research and Information Services staff met with program stakeholders to begin the development of an evaluation plan.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The first step was to ensure there was a clear understanding of the purpose of the evaluation from the perspective of program staff. Program staff indicated an interest in focusing both on program outcomes and impacts (summative evaluation) and on program implementation and improvement (formative evaluation). As such, the evaluation had a dual purpose:

- To understand the impact of the program on the settlement of newcomer students; and
- To identify areas of further program improvement.

The second step was to assess the readiness of the program for evaluation. For a program to be evaluated, it must have:

- Clearly specified outcomes or effects;
- A clearly articulated set of program activities; and
- A rationale linking the program activities to the outcomes.

A key tool for determining readiness for evaluation is a program logic model, which is a quick and effective visual tool for communicating program activities, outcomes and relationships, and facilitating identification of poorly defined outcomes and gaps in the chain of causal linkages.

Through further discussions with program staff, and a review of program documents and records, a program logic model was developed. The logic model format was adapted from a CIC evaluation of the Host Program conducted in 2010 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Logic Model: Welcoming Communities for Newcomer Youth and Kids Program

PROGRAM DELIVERY				
	School Selection	Newcomer/Mentor Referral & Assessment	Newcomer Matching	Mentor-Mentee Activities
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of TDSB recent arrivals data Outreach to schools with high newcomer populations Program promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomer/Mentor outreach and referral Assessment of newcomer eligibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matching newcomer with mentor Setting roles objectives/ expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of group activities
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of schools with high newcomer populations Outreach activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomer registrations Mentor expressions of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentee-mentor match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English conversation circles Homework Club Group activities (e.g., sports, arts, etc.) Field trips Guest speakers Volunteer opportunities*
Short-Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool of interested schools Schools understand the program and their roles/responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group of interested newcomers Group of interested mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matches are appropriate to the newcomers needs Mentors are aware of newcomers' challenges and are prepared for role 	Newcomers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make friends improve their English learn about their school and community learn about Canada, other cultures, diversity feel more comfortable in their school and community
Intermediate Outcomes	Newcomers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a strong network of friendships and relationships in their school can function independently in school, know how to access resources, are communicating in English are engaged in school life and feel a sense of belonging in their school community Mentors are more knowledgeable about newcomers			
Long-Term Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers are successful in school Newcomers are integrated and engaged in Canadian life 			

**Volunteer opportunities are available in the Youth Program only*

The program's funding stream (i.e., CIC's Community Connections stream) has delineated a logic model that situates programs like the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program*, that provides targeted mentoring, as one "activity" that is theorized to lead to a set of immediate and long-term outcomes.⁴

As such, it is important to remember that the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* exists not only in a larger program context within the TDSB, but *also* within an even larger program context of settlement supports and services offered outside of the school system in the broader community.

Therefore, in evaluating the program, although the focus is on demonstrating that the program meets its short-term outcomes as outlined in the program logic model, it is also recognized that other programs and supports may contribute to these short-term outcomes and it is not possible to delineate their individual contributions.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In consultation with program stakeholders, three broad research questions were developed to guide the evaluation:

- How does the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* impact on newcomers' sense of belonging in school?
- How are the students who have participated in the program doing academically and socially?
- What impact has the program had on teacher and school capacity to support integration and promote inclusion?

With these questions as a guide, and with an understanding of the purpose of the evaluation and the outcomes to be examined, it was determined that the best evaluation approach would be a non-experimental design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

⁴ CIC's Community Connections Stream: A Vision for Community Engagement. Presentation by Deborah Tunis, Special Advisory (SPP), May 30, 2013.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TOOLS

Surveys for Students, Parents, and School Staff

Program staff already had a mid-point and end-point evaluation tool in place that was used to gather feedback about the program from participating students, parents and school staff. These existing tools were adapted to gather feedback on the outcomes of interest (copies of all surveys are provided in Appendix 1).

Student Survey

Students completed a two-page evaluation survey on the last day of the program. The Kids Program Survey consisted of 15 closed-ended items which were assessed using a three-point scale (i.e., “Yes”, “Not Sure”, and “No”) and two open-ended questions. The Youth Program survey consisted of 16 closed-ended items which were assessed using four-point (i.e., “A lot”, “Some”, “A little”, and “Not much”) and five-point scales (i.e., “Extremely helpful”, “Very helpful”, “Somewhat helpful”, “Not that helpful”, and “Does not apply”), as well as three open-ended questions. Survey return rates were low.

For the evaluation of the Kids Program, 511 students submitted a survey from 35 elementary schools. This represents a 38% response rate. More than half of the students identified themselves as mentors (56%), compared to mentees (44%).

For the evaluation of the Youth Program, 119 students submitted a survey from nine schools. This represents a 15% response rate. The majority of students identified themselves as mentees (63%), rather than mentors (37%).

Parent Survey

Parents were provided a two-page evaluation survey as the program drew to a close. The Parent Survey consisted of six closed-ended items which were assessed using a four-point scale (i.e., “Very much”, “Mostly”, “Somewhat” and “Not much”), and two open-ended questions. The survey solicited quantitative and qualitative feedback regarding their expectations, satisfaction, and perceived benefits to their children. Only six parents submitted a survey, which represents less than a 1% response rate. As such, the feedback was not included in this report.

School Staff Survey

Teaching and other school staff members (i.e., Principals/Vice-Principals, Settlement Workers, Community Support Workers, Guidance Counsellors, etc.) who participated in the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* were invited to complete a program

evaluation form. This survey solicited quantitative and qualitative feedback regarding their expectations, satisfaction, perceived benefits to students, as well as degree of program value and impact. The survey form consisted of ten closed-ended items which were assessed using a five-point scale (i.e., “Very much”, “Mostly”, “Somewhat”, “Not Really” and “Unsure”) and several open-ended questions. Two additional questions regarding impact (i.e., “Significant impact” “Moderate impact”, “Slight impact” and “No impact”) and value (i.e., “Extremely valuable”, “Very valuable”, “Somewhat valuable” and “Not that valuable”) were assessed using four-point scales. From the participating elementary schools (N = 62) and secondary schools (N = 38), 20% of the schools returned at least one completed School Staff Survey.

Focus Groups

Focus group interview questions were also developed for both students (mentees and mentors) and Host Facilitators.

Student Focus Groups

For the student focus groups, an interview guide was developed which consisted of four open-ended questions (see Appendix 2). Student focus groups were conducted at three schools offering the Kids Program and five schools offering the Youth Program in June 2014. Staff from Research and Information Services conducted the focus groups, with support from the respective Host Facilitators at each school. Prior to starting the focus group interview, students were informed that the conversations would remain confidential and consented to the audio-recording of the interview for transcription purposes. Each focus group interview lasted approximately 35 minutes. Interview transcripts from the focus groups were analyzed for prevalent themes.

Host Facilitator Focus Group

For the program staff focus group, an interview guide consisting of several open-ended questions was developed (see Appendix 3). Eleven Host Facilitators participated in the focus group; three were absent. The Program Supervisor and Office Clerk were also present. The focus group was conducted in March 2015 at the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program* office. Staff from Research and Information Services conducted the focus group. Prior to starting the focus group interview, participants were informed that ensuing conversations would remain confidential and consented to the audio-recording of the interview for transcription purposes. This focus group interview was approximately two hours in duration. Interview transcripts from the focus group were then analyzed for prevalent themes.

RESULTS

The findings of the surveys and key themes from the focus groups are presented in an integrated manner to show similarities and differences in perspectives related to outcomes across respondent groups and data collection methods. However, this first section is primarily the voice of students gleaned from the student focus groups and surveys.

STUDENT VOICE

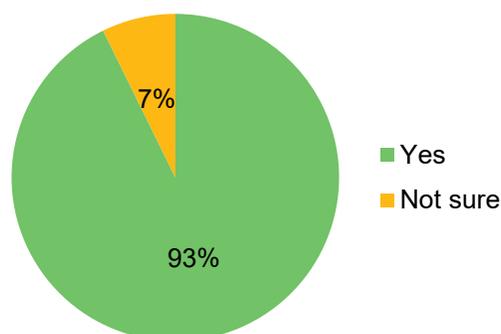
Motives: Mentors

Students in the Kids and Youth Programs were inclined to participate in the program as mentors to newcomers for diverse reasons. First, students described **altruistic** motives for wanting to become a mentor. They wanted to help others and ensure that newcomers felt welcomed in their school community. One Kids Program mentor shared:

I wanted to join the program because I remember how hard it was when I first came to Canada. (Female student from Kids Program)

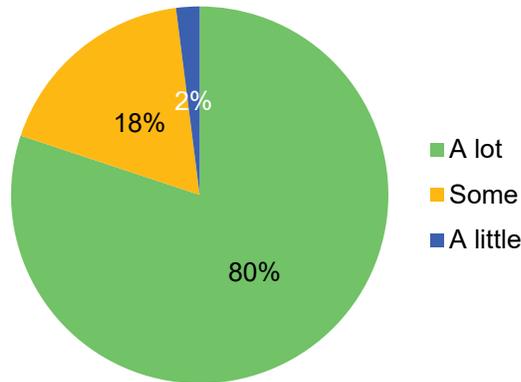
The **nature** of the mentorship position and the **responsibilities** it entailed also enticed students, in that, they wanted to represent their school and community to newcomers, perceived it would be an excellent extracurricular opportunity, and wanted to exercise their leadership and relationship-building skills. Students' **perceived level of enjoyment** was another driver for their involvement as mentors. This reason for enrolment was realized, as nearly all students in the Kids Program (93%) agreed that they had fun (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Kids Program: Student Enjoyment of Program (N=507)



Most students in the Youth Program (80%) also said they had “a lot” of fun (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Youth Program: Student Enjoyment of Program (N=118)



In addition to having fun, mentors joined the program for social purposes (i.e., meeting new people, making friends). Finally, some students also shared that they became involved with the program due to **encouragement and recruitment** by school staff.

The mentorship positions were highly sought-after roles at some elementary schools. For example, at one school the Principal asked students to write an essay stating why they would be an excellent candidate. Many students described their empathetic nature which stemmed from their own experience as newcomers, moving between schools, provinces, and sometimes countries.

I feel empathy for these new kids. Usually, people do not want to be friends with the new kids because they think, ‘Well, they are from a different country’ or ‘They don’t speak English, so how am I supposed to talk to them?’ Instead of ignoring them, we could teach and help them. (Mentor application letter for Kids Program)

Students also expressed that setting a good example for siblings and helping them with homework would facilitate their involvement as mentors in the program. Friendly, responsible, helpful, and understanding were attributes that students felt were relevant to the mentor position. Finally, in their essays to the Principal, some students acknowledged that they were interested in learning about diverse languages and customs from serving as mentors for the Kids Program.

Motives: Mentees

In addition to meeting inclusion criteria to be considered for the program, newcomers shared their grounds for participating in the program. One prevalent reason that surfaced during the focus group interview was mentees' **desire to learn**. Specifically, newcomers shared that they wished to learn more about Canada and their community as well as to **improve their English language proficiency**. Newcomers also joined the program **seeking assistance with their homework**. At some schools, the steel pan drum component enticed mentees through personal and cultural connections or those who wished to learn how to play a new instrument.

I'm really interested in music and steel pan is really different and a really unique instrument, so I wanted to try something new. (Male student from Youth Program)

In addition to the educational value, mentees explained that they were **drawn to the diverse and fun program components**. Upon learning about the games (e.g., parachute game, bingo, Jeopardy, cards), sports (e.g., ping pong, soccer, basketball), activities (e.g., arts and crafts, snacks), and field trips (e.g., laser tag, Harbourfront Centre, ice skating, roller-skating, mini-golf, Red Path Sugar Museum, CN Tower), newcomers immediately enrolled. They deemed these program components to be fun and *"better than staying at home"*, with likely less opportunities for learning and exploration.

Another prevalent motive that was stated by multiple mentees was their **desire for social interactions**. As newcomers, they seldom encountered a familiar face in their school or broader community. This program offered newcomers an opportunity to interact with their peers and form friendships that radiated from the school yard to the neighbourhood.

Expectations

Mentors and mentees alike shared similar expectations regarding the program during the focus group interviews. First, they **anticipated that the program primarily emphasized academics** through worksheets, tests, and question periods. Students soon realized that homework help was not the only element of the program.

I honestly thought this [program] was going to be a room full of random people I don't know, who can't speak English and we're going to have a lot of work and it was kind of going to be like class, but I found out it was fun. (Female student from Kids Program)

For the Youth Program, students valued the exposure to job and interview skills, employment opportunities, and resume writing.

Second, mentors and mentees from the Kids and Youth Programs **assumed that the program would be very structured**, which would not allow Host Facilitators or participants any flexibility to provide input. One female student from the Kids Program mentioned, *“I thought it was going to be very strict at first.”* Instead, they were pleasantly surprised to learn that the nature of the program was intentional and responsive to the needs of the mentees and the school community.

The thing I like about the program is [that] there’s a lot of flexibility. It’s not [a] stiff program. If you come here, you can talk away [...] It’s not like some fixed schedule. [...] So then, we’ll go through what we want to, so that’s why I think it’s a community, a successful community. (Male student from Youth Program)

Lastly, mentors and mentees **believed that there would be limited cohesion among program participants** considering language barriers, among other differences. During the focus group interview, one female student from the Kids Program succinctly described the genuine bond that mentors and mentees unexpectedly developed: *“It’s not like class. It’s a community.”*

Taken together, the **program exceeded students’ expectations** *“from the first day [they] stepped in.”* Participants’ expectations were surpassed by the diverse and responsive activities, accessibility (i.e., the program was free), and the welcoming and inclusive environment that was achieved in a short time span.

Impact

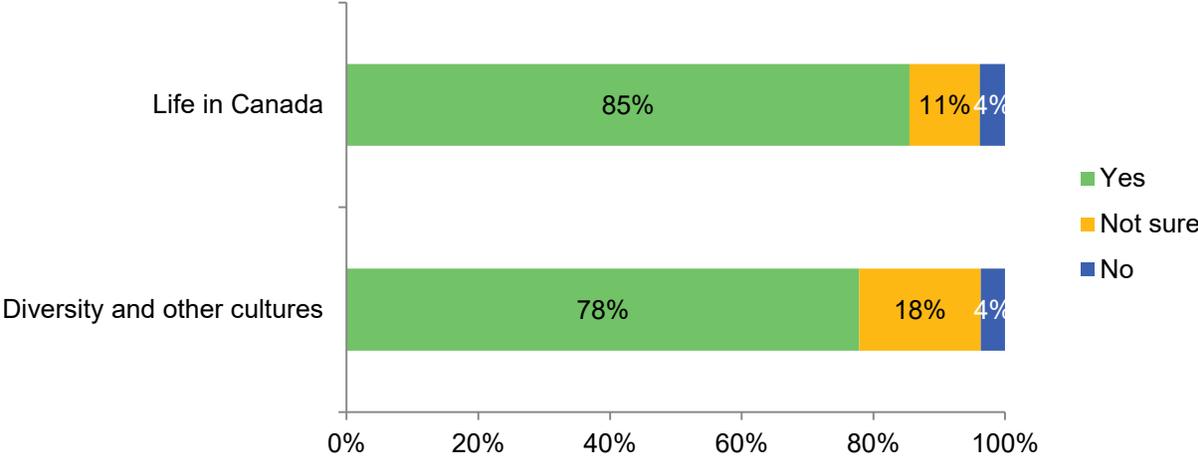
The program produced numerous benefits for the students. The positive program outcomes that emerged from the student focus groups and surveys are organized according to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and community levels.

Intrapersonal Level

Program participants, largely mentees, reaped diverse and wide-ranging intrapersonal benefits from their involvement in this program. Students revealed that this program helped them **improve their English language skills, creativity, as well as knowledge and appreciation of Canada, multiculturalism, and lifestyle concerns** (e.g., nutrition, fire safety, injury treatment, employment). These findings were also evident from the Student Survey: nearly all students in

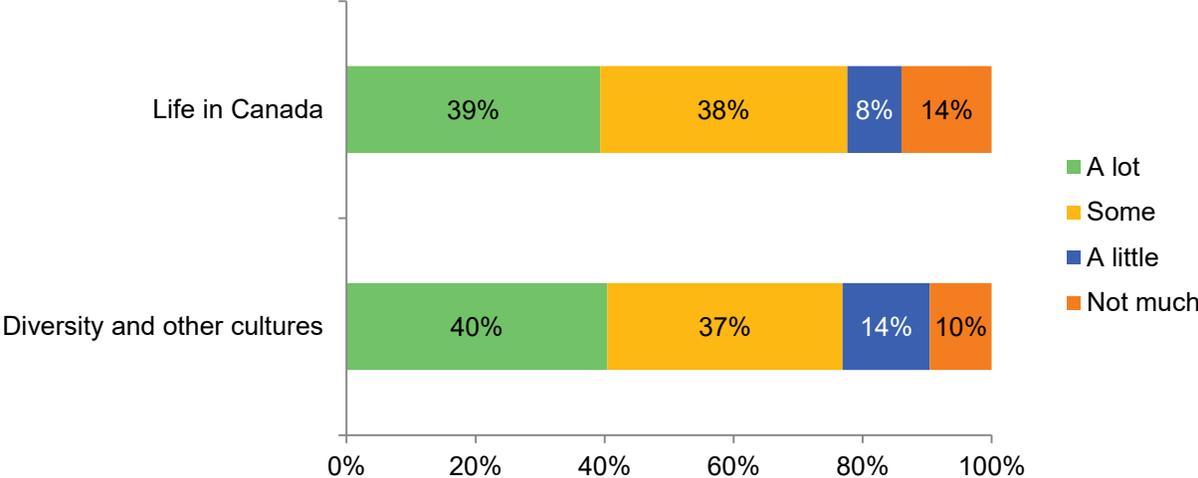
the Kids Program stated that they learned about life in Canada (85%), as well as diversity and other cultures (78%) during the program (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Kids Program: Areas of Cultural Knowledge Enhancement (N=488)



Seventy-seven percent of students in the Youth Program rated that they learned “a lot” to “some” about life in Canada, diversity, and other cultures (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Youth Program: Areas of Cultural Knowledge Enhancement (N=104)



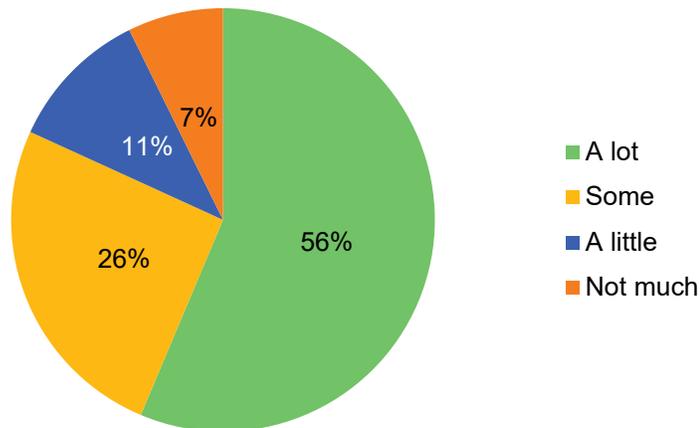
Students believed that these outcomes were fostered by the English conversation circles, arts and crafts, games (e.g., Jeopardy, puzzles), field trips, and guest speakers (e.g., Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Public Health).

Last week we had a food program and someone came here and [explained to] us [which] foods [are] healthy and [which] foods [are] not. (Male student from Youth Program)

Students shared that the Homework Club also assisted them with their English language competency, in addition to completing their school work.

Also at an intrapersonal level, students explained how the program had a **positive effect on their emotional well-being**. On their evaluation survey, nearly all students in the Youth Program said that their positive outlook overall changed “a lot” to “some” as a result of their participation in the program (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Youth Program: Degree of Change in Overall Positive Outlook (N=110)



One mentee from the Youth Program reflected on the stress relief that the music program provided: “*Steel pan helps you get your mind off stuff and [...] you don’t stay tense.*” Opportunities to enhance knowledge and interact with their peers bolstered confidence, self-esteem, personality, and comfort in one’s own skin.

When we perform in school, it helped me build confidence, [because] I don’t show it, but [...] sometimes, I get scared. [... Participating in the steel pan drum program] helped with that. (Male student from Youth Program)

Those programs [...] actually made me feel happy and comfortable and be confident in myself. (Male student from Youth Program)

Without my friends in the program, I [wouldn't be] able to stand up to be myself and get out of my negative bubble, and [become] positive. (Female student from Youth Program)

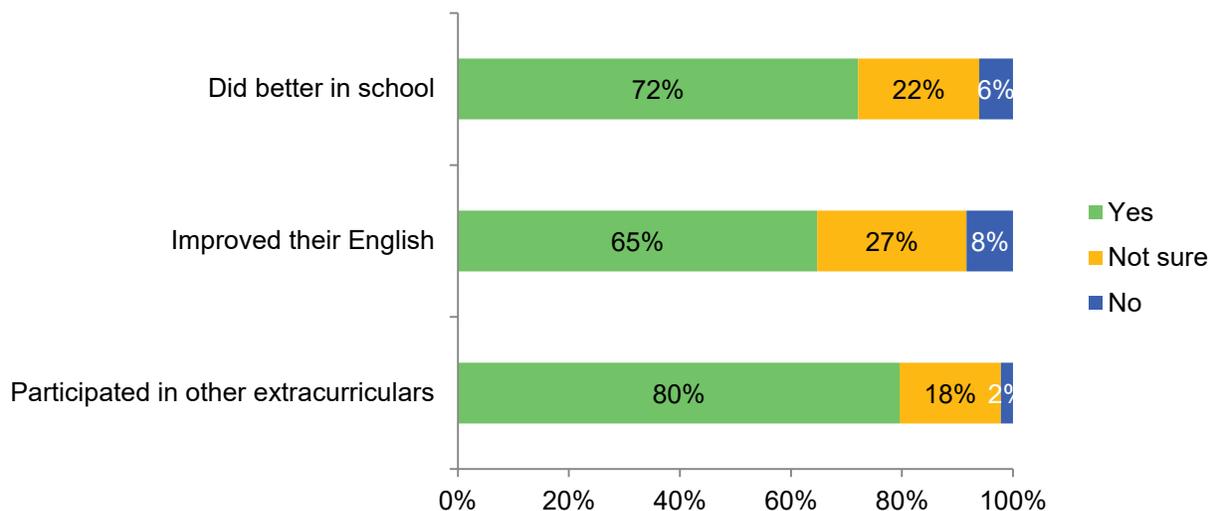
One female newcomer reflected that she was incredibly shy at the beginning of the program, but through her involvement, the program helped her express herself more. Another mentee revealed that he received valuable support and strategies to manage his anger levels. Over the course of the *Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids Program*, mentors and mentees cultivated heightened levels of tolerance and understanding of others' mistakes and weaknesses as well as respect and celebration of diversity.

You should always be nice to people even if they don't speak your language or if they don't look the same as you because everyone is different. (Male student from Kids Program)

Multiple program components, such as ongoing social interactions and participating in the steel pan drum program, contributed to these changes in emotional well-being.

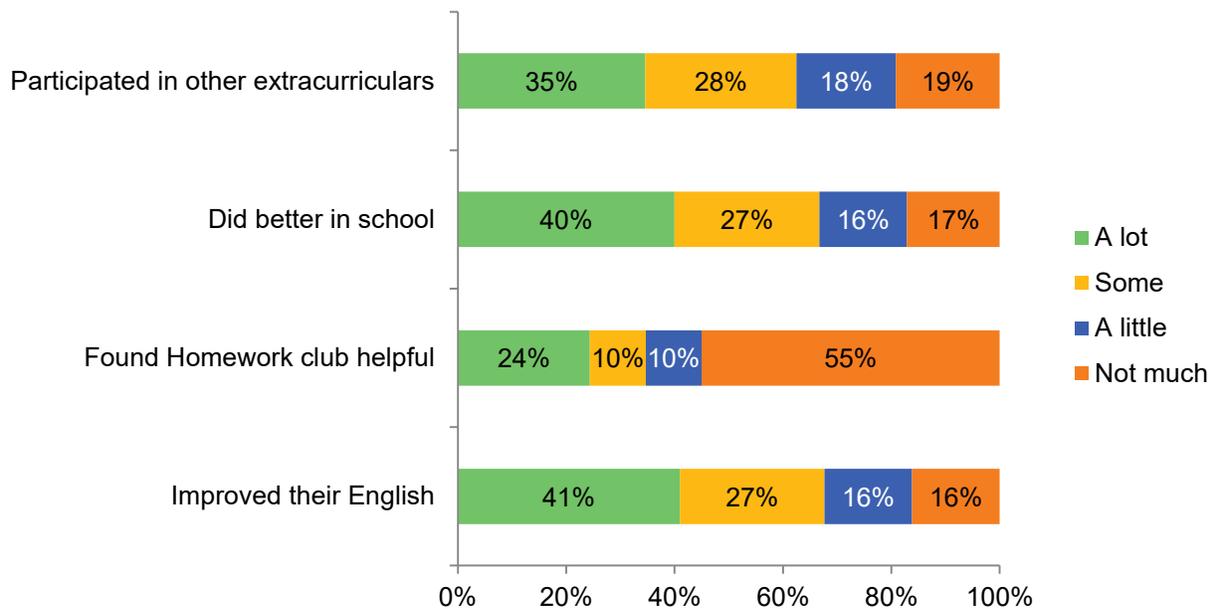
Numerous students also recognized that they were **more academically engaged** as a result of this program. Students observed that they made a greater effort to participate, focus, and listen in class. Program participants also demonstrated leadership, initiative, and strong organization skills in their school community. Approximately three quarters of students in the Kids Program felt that they did better in school (72%), improved their English language competency (65%), and had the opportunity to participate in other extracurriculars (80%) due to their involvement in the program (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Kids Program: Changes in School Engagement (N=477)



Similarly, nearly two thirds of students in the Youth Program believed that the program helped them “a lot” to “some” in doing better in school (67%), improving their English language competency (68%), and giving them the opportunity to participate in other extracurriculars (63%). However, only 34% of students found the degree of helpfulness of the Homework Club to be “a lot” to “some” (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Youth Program: Changes in School Engagement (N=78)



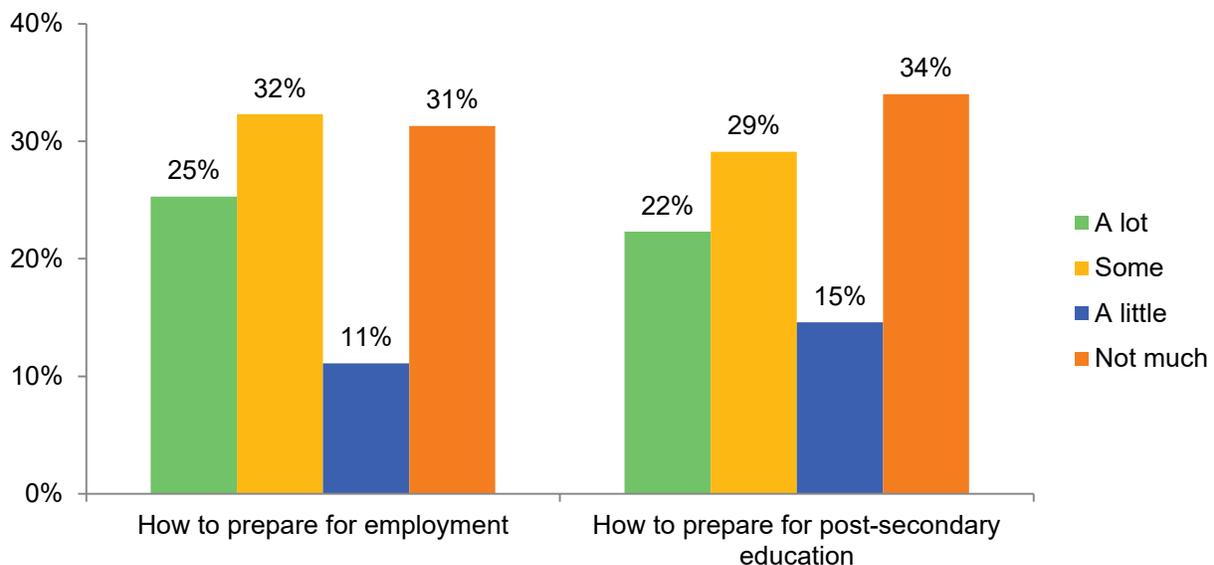
Students attributed much of the positive shift in academic engagement to their involvement in the steel pan music program:

The program has helped me with my school work because we're going to learn about theory and musical notes and stuff like that in music class. And, because I know music notes from steel pan and band class [...] it helps me out with music class and it also helps me out with my other classes because it keeps me focused and I could listen to what the teacher is saying, just like how I can listen to my instructors when I'm playing steel pan. (Female student from Youth Program)

Being part of the program has really increased my comfort level, especially in classes [where] I wouldn't normally raise my hand or talk. (Female student from Youth Program)

Some students expressed that the **transferable academic skills**, such as attentiveness and self-regulation, they garnered from their involvement in the Welcoming Communities Program was incredibly important. Likewise, students in the Youth Program valued the workshops on resume building, cash register training, post-secondary opportunities (e.g., college, university, job force), and money management. These findings also surfaced from the Youth Program Student Survey: half of the students said that they learned “a lot” to “some” about how to prepare for employment and post-secondary education (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Youth Program: Areas of Employment and Post-secondary Knowledge Enhancement (N=99)



One male student from the Youth Program shared that he recognized how “to present yourself when walking into an interview for a job” due to his participation in these workshops. They also found these skills to be highly transferable. In fact, another student revealed that this opportunity for skill development enabled him to secure a part-time position operating the cash register at a restaurant. Students in the Youth Program found that that these types of workshops and activities were some of the most important experiences they received from the Welcoming Communities Program, as it created opportunities for them and provoked reflection on their life goals and how to achieve them.

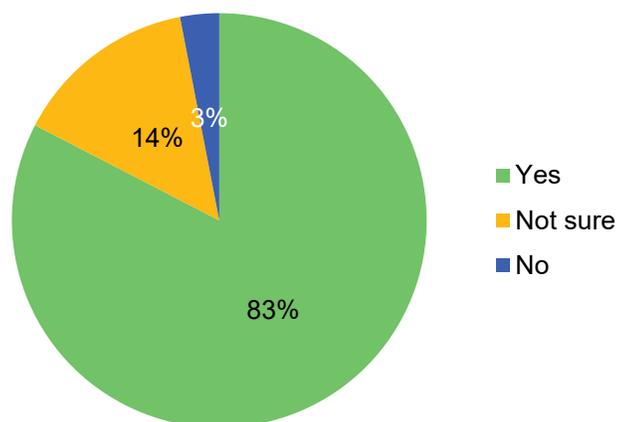
Finally, students shared that the program helped **increase their personal health and wellness** by providing opportunities for physical activity. One female student from the Youth Program mentioned that if she did not participate in this program, she would likely be engaged in sedentary pursuits at home and “bored out of my mind.” From playing sports such as ping pong, soccer, and basketball, students improved their physical fitness, hand-eye coordination, and sportsmanship. Students also viewed these activities as opportunities to expend pent up energy.

I didn't want to go outside when I was at home. My mom [would say], 'Go out to the park!' [...] But the Newcomer club helped because we went outside, and I understood that it's fun to go outside with fresh air [and] be healthy. (Female student from Kids Program)

Interpersonal Level

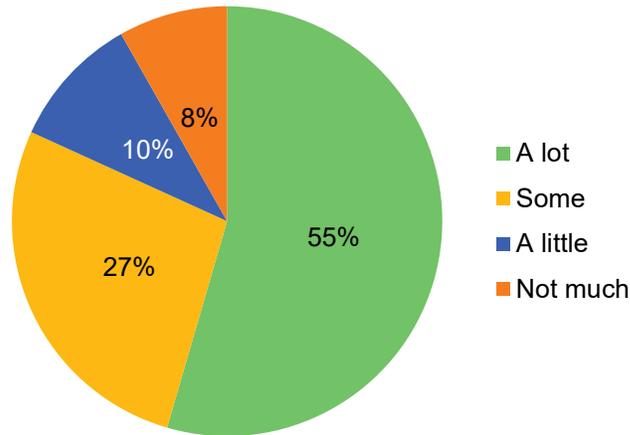
During the focus groups, the most articulated interpersonal benefit from the program was **developing and maintaining healthy relationships**. In fact, most students also described this as one of the most important things they learned from the program. Students learned strategies to make new friends and understand others in their school community. Specifically, 83% of students in the Kids Program stated that they learned how to get along with their friends (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Kids Program: Learned How to Get Along with Friends (N=494)



A similar proportion of students in the Youth Program (82%) stated that they learned “a lot” to “some” about getting along with their friends (see Figure 11), because of their involvement in the Welcoming Communities program.

Figure 11: Youth Program: Learned How to Get Along with Friends (N=110)



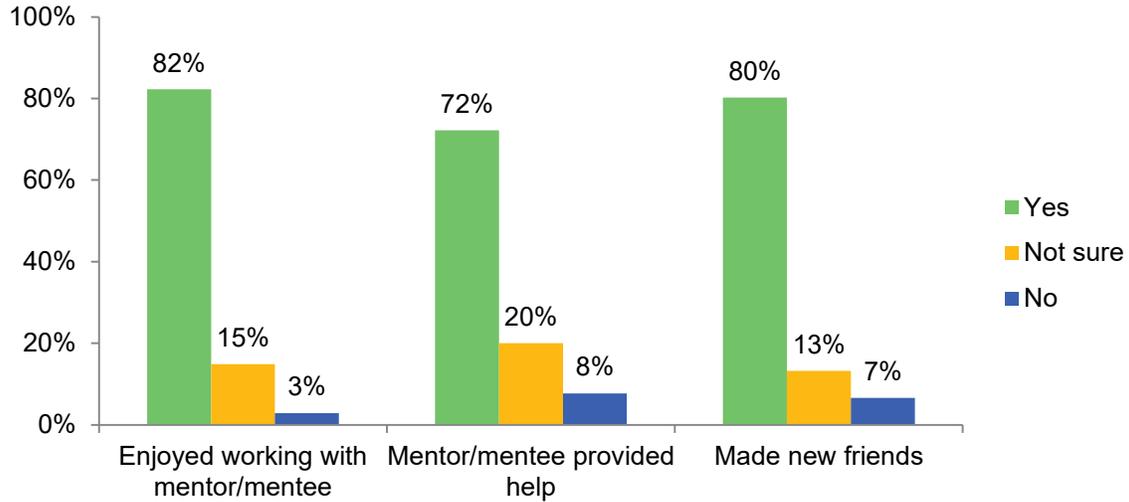
One student shared,

I've [learned] how to make friends [with individuals from] a variety of different ages and races. And that makes me more comfortable to speak with other people who aren't [...] born in Canada. (Female student from Kids Program)

Most school staff (87%) also felt that the program “very much” to “mostly” helped students establish friendships and social networks.

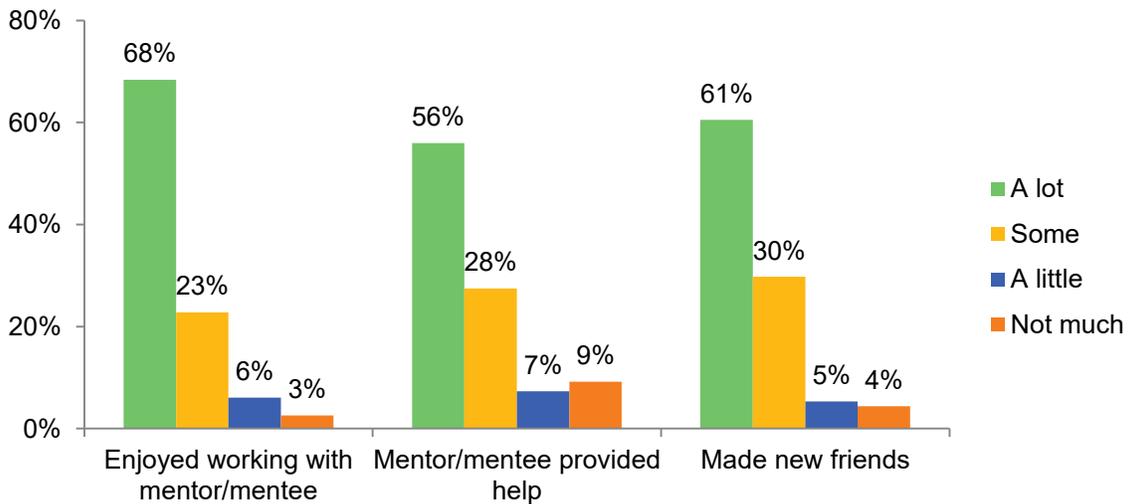
Mentors and mentees felt **more at ease with respect to speaking and relating to one another**, considering initial language barriers. Quantitative data from the Student Surveys mirrored these focus group findings, in that, approximately three quarters of students in the Kids Program enjoyed working with their mentor/mentee (82%), stated that their mentor/mentee provided help (72%), and made new friends (80%) (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Kids Program: Interpersonal Experiences (N=479)



Likewise, nearly all students in the Youth Program enjoyed working with their mentor/mentee (91%), stated that their mentor/mentee provided help (84%), and made new friends (91%) “a lot” to “some” degree (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Youth Program: Interpersonal Experiences (N=109)



Comments from students in the Youth Program revealed that they garnered a deeper understanding of their peers and their peers’ opinions and experiences, which they believed expanded their own outlook. Students also promoted inclusivity, empathy, and respect amongst themselves and their school. Interpersonal skills such as **teamwork, listening, and responsibility** were also nurtured through program components like the Homework Club, team building activities, sports, and mentorship.

When we played ping pong, we talked to each other and communicated.
 (Female student from Kids Program)

When I came to high school first, it was pretty hard because [...] it was hard to reach out to [people] but then after joining this program, [...] they made me feel comfortable, and it's easier for me to reach out to people now. [...] I can be more friendly and you know, have a casual conversation with them. (Male student from Youth Program)

In the Youth Program, students participated in the Reading Buddy Program which involved reading stories to younger children at TDSB schools. They found that this experience helped with their own English comprehension and that of the children, but also their ability to relate to, teach, and demonstrate patience with younger children.

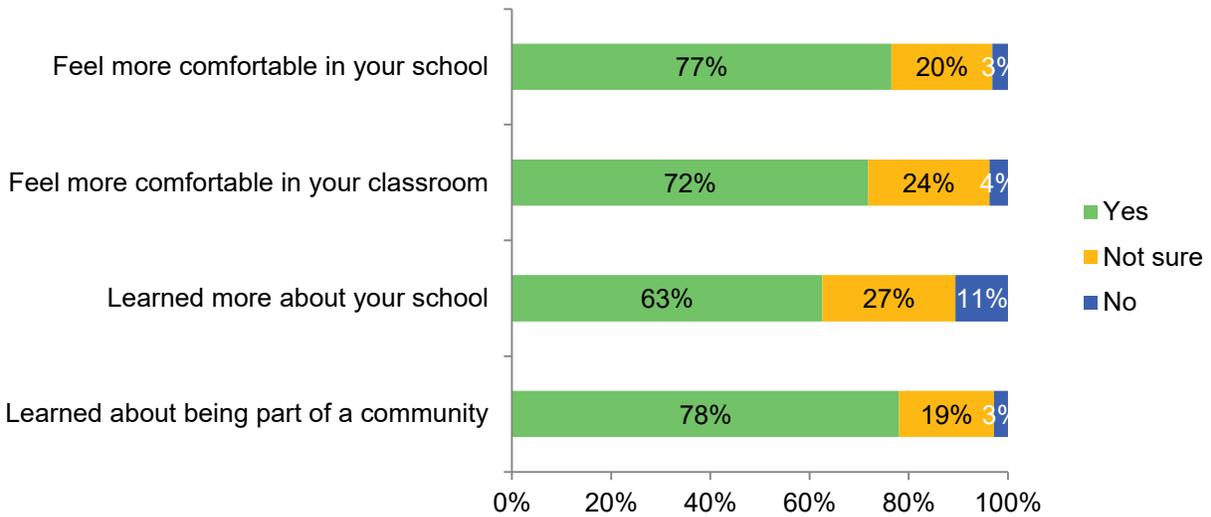
Reading with little kids was fun. Sometimes it [helped] the children improve their English, and mine too. I remember this one kid talked to me about his family problems. I [felt] special that he wanted to talk [about] it. [...] I was glad that he talked to me about it, and then I [was] glad to help him. (Female student from Youth Program)

Students also came to regard **consideration of others and punctuality** as important. For instance, if program participants had other commitments or were unable to attend, they would inform the Host Facilitators of their upcoming absence. Students in the Youth Program, in particular, grasped the impact of timeliness as they were required to arrive at their volunteer positions (e.g., nursing home) on time.

You have to be punctual. It was [a really good] experience, [...] like if you start a job, you have to go in on time, right? (Male student from Youth Program)

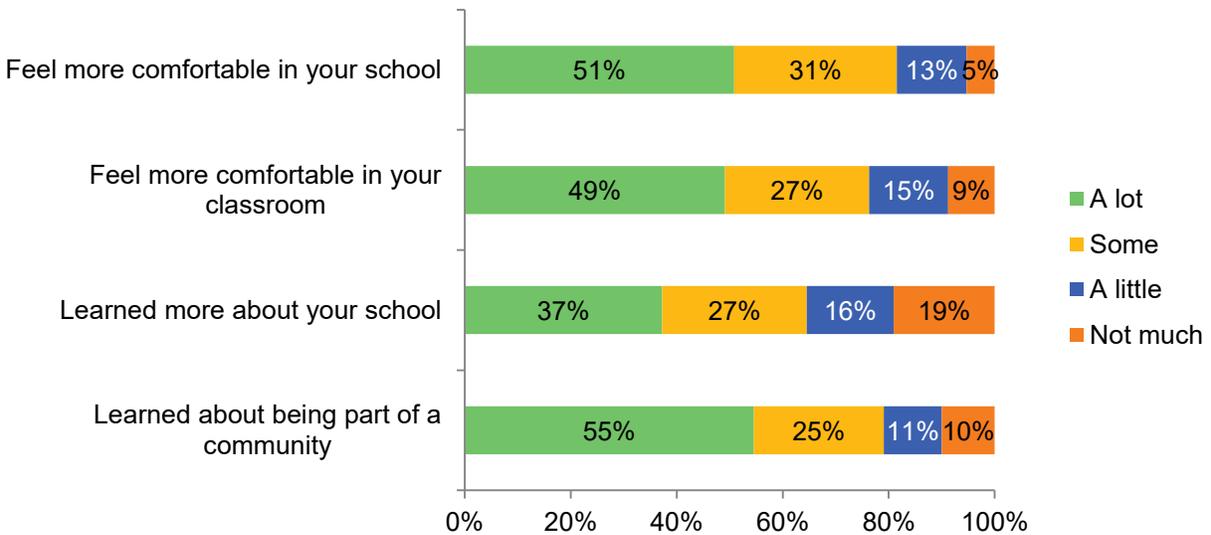
Besides fostering peer relationships, students **felt more comfortable at school and felt a greater sense of belonging**. This was especially true for newcomers, for whom the school premises, staff, and students initially seemed unfamiliar. Nearly three quarters of students in the Kids Program stated that they felt more comfortable in their school (77%) and classroom (72%), as well as that they learned more about their school (63%) and being part of a community (78%) (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Kids Program: Experiences of Comfort and Awareness Regarding School Community (N=481)



Most students in the Youth Program also expressed in the survey that they felt “a lot” to “some” more comfortable in their school (82%) and classroom (76%), as well as that they learned more about their school (64%) and being part of a community (80%) (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Youth Program: Experiences of Comfort and Awareness Regarding School Community (N=110)



For example, one female mentee from the Youth Program shared that she felt valued and that she belonged from her involvement with the program: “[I] feel a little bit special in the school because I joined a club.” Newcomers described their happiness and satisfaction when they encountered familiar faces in school hallways or in the neighbourhood. These experiences of integration also contributed to their sense of belonging.

This program actually does make me feel more comfortable in the school [...] because you know lots of people. [...Students] actually know that you're kind [...] they know if you're nice or not [...] Then, you feel more comfortable in school.
(Male student from Youth Program)

Most school staff (79%) also felt that the Welcoming Communities Program helped students feel more comfortable in school “very much” and “mostly”. Teaching and staff members indicated that students’ involvement in this program enabled them to feel part of a group, made them feel valued in their school environment, and more comfortable around their peers and adults in school. As a result of this program, newcomers were “*more visible and heard.*”

I saw previously lonely students establish friendships and communicate with others from the group. (School Staff Survey response)

Students felt more comfortable around the adults in the school. The program helped them be more verbal and communicate more easily about their needs.
(School Staff Survey response)

I see students in different classes and grade levels speaking to each other socially at lunch and in between classes. They seem to be happier. They also walk home together at times. (School Staff Survey response)

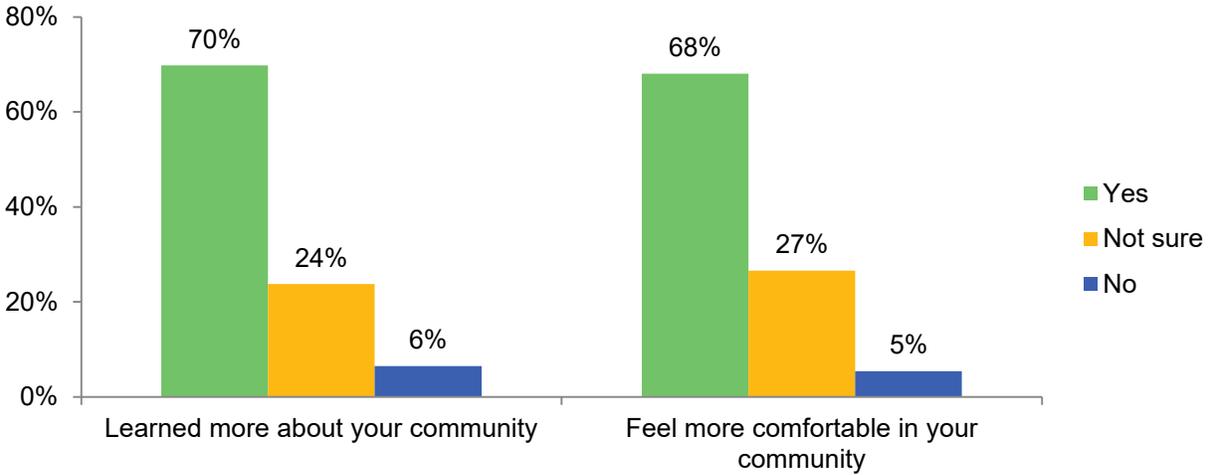
Mentors, on the other hand, have typically been part of their school community for a few years and admitted that their sense of belonging was unchanged:

I've been at the school since junior kindergarten, so nothing's really changed for me, but [...] I'm happy to know I can go up to people I didn't really know before, and wave to them and say, “hi” and talk to them. (Female student from Kids Program)

Community Level

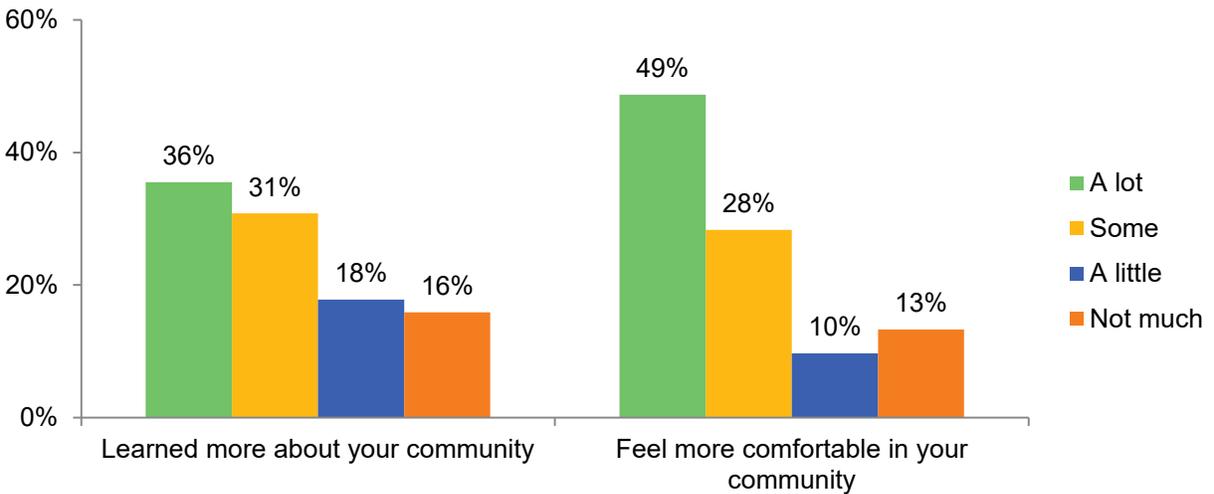
Lastly, the Welcoming Communities Program was also advantageous for students’ comfort levels within the broader community. Seventy percent and 68% of students in the Kids Program learned more about and felt more comfortable in their community, respectively, after completing the program (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Kids Program: Experiences of Awareness and Comfort Regarding the Broader Community (N=463)



By comparison, 67% of students in the Youth Program believed that they learned “a lot” to “some” about their community and 77% felt “a lot” to “some” more comfortable in their community (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Youth Program: Experiences of Awareness and Comfort Regarding the Broader Community (N=107)



Participating in this program inspired one student in the Youth Program to take a more active role in his community by volunteering at his church on a regular basis, and not merely for meeting secondary school diploma community service requirements.

I decided to go and help out [at] my church. I didn't [log the] volunteer hours. I just did it [...] I helped [the younger church members] choreograph some dances for like different celebrations like Father's Day, Mother's Day, [and] Easter. (Male student from Youth Program)

As stated above, students expanded their knowledge of the English language, their neighbourhood, and Canadian culture from their participation in the program. Newcomers explained that the gains they made in these areas enhanced their comfort level within their communities. One student in the Youth Program explained that it was easier to interact with individuals in the community because his ability to communicate in English and confidence levels were less likely to be barriers.

In addition, Host Facilitators invited guest speakers to visit the program and present on relevant matters. For example, Toronto Fire Services educated students on fire safety and the importance of smoke detectors in their residences. From other workshops, participants learned how to travel safely to and from school (i.e., walking routes, navigating the transit system) as well as healthy nutrition and snack ideas.

These presentations not only enhanced students' knowledge of community resources but that of their families, as students revealed during the focus group that they frequently shared their newfound knowledge and resources with their families. This form of knowledge transfer undoubtedly benefitted many newcomer families who encounter challenges such as financial difficulties, language barriers, and temporal constraints.

In the School Staff Survey, teaching and staff members also indicated that family members were impressed by the diversity of program activities and program accessibility (i.e., no cost), as well as appreciative of the parent engagement opportunities (e.g., participating in pot lucks) and community resources.

Two families in particular were thrilled to have their shy children participating more outside of a classroom setting. (School Staff Survey response)

Families were impressed that the program was offered for free and that their children's needs as newcomers were being met. (School Staff Survey response)

The students and parents both expressed that they enjoyed the program and the activities especially the ones about diversity, cultural holidays, foods from around the world and also conversation circles. (School Staff Survey response)

One program activity invited students in the Youth Program to volunteer at a nursing home. Here, students learned about hospital emergency codes, different conditions that afflict the elderly, and how to care for them. One student also explained the transferable element of this experience:

With the skill they taught us in the nursing home, we get skills [about] how to take care of senior people, and even with parents, grandfather, helps take care of them. (Female student from Youth Program)

Taken together, the Welcoming Communities Program had a far-reaching and multi-dimensional impact on students. In fact, nearly all participants in the Kids (94%) and Youth (99%) Program would recommend other students to participate in this program. The feedback from the students themselves suggests there is encouraging evidence that the program positively affected students on multiple levels.

HOST FACILITATOR AND SCHOOL STAFF VOICE

From conducting the focus group with the Host Facilitators and administering the School Staff Survey, it was clear that program and school staff also felt that the Welcoming Communities Program positively influenced students and their school community.

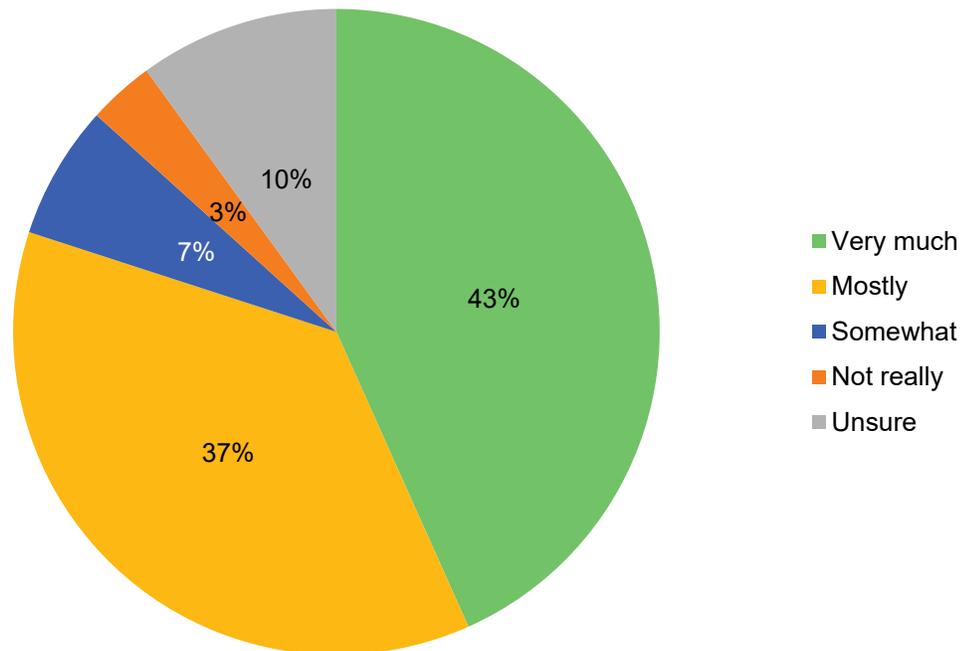
Student Impact

The goal of this program was to assist newcomer student's transition into life in Canada by connecting to their community and learning about Canadian culture. Host Facilitators acknowledged significant changes in students' knowledge, interpersonal skills, and emotional well-being as a result of their participation.

Across sites, Host Facilitators delivered diverse, inclusive, and relevant activities in the English language. It is not surprising that stakeholders witnessed visible improvements in newcomer students' English language skills. Namely, students expanded their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension with respect to speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. In addition to becoming more proficient with the English language, Host Facilitators also explained that students became more aware of Canadian culture as well as other cultures represented in their classroom.

In the School Staff Survey, teaching and staff members also felt that the program benefitted students' by providing opportunities to learn about diversity (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: School Staff Perspective: Impact on Students' Knowledge about Diversity (N=30)

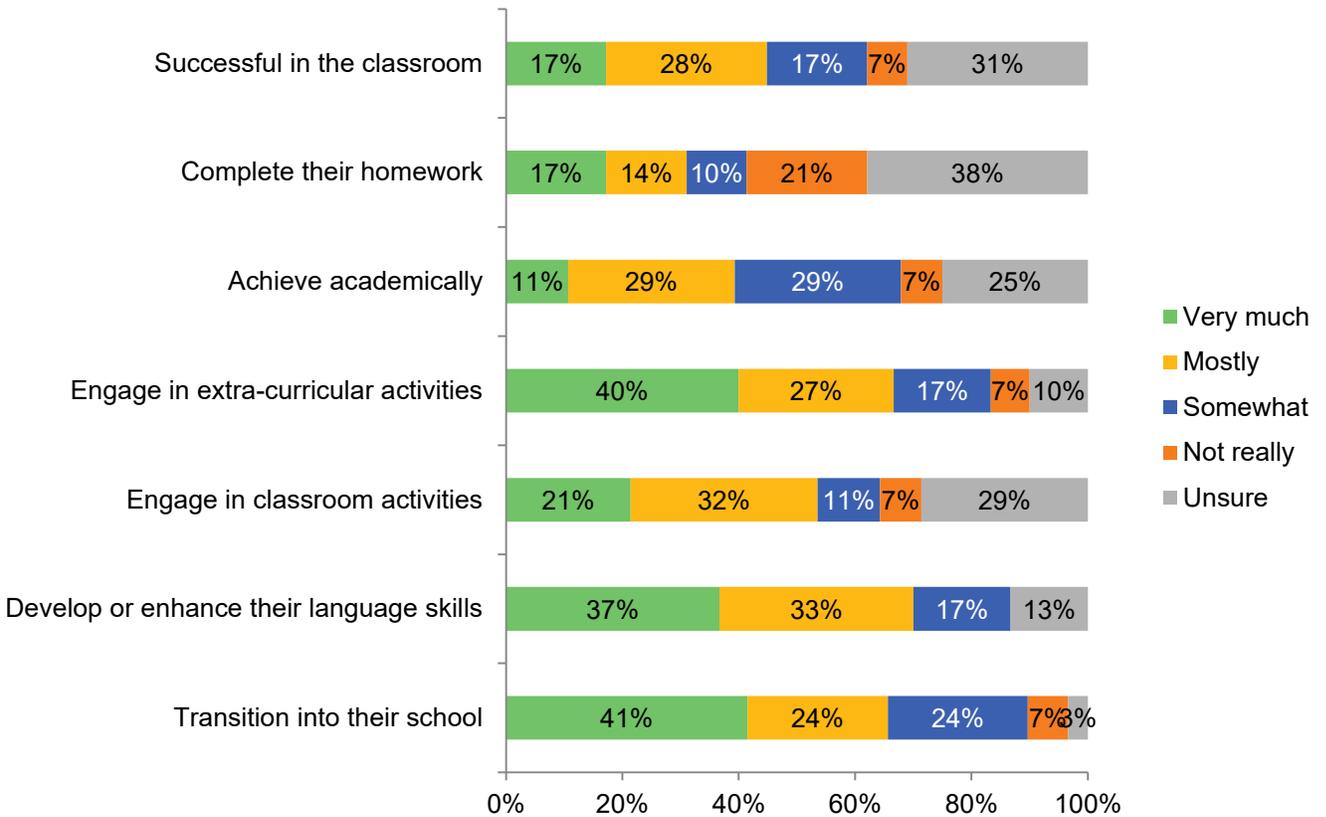


From songs, storytelling, the culinary program, learning from their mentors, and field trips that highlighted unique features of Canadian and local cultures, students demonstrated an appreciation for and understanding of diversity.

Over the course of the program, students had the opportunity to engage with their mentors, peers, and Host Facilitators which benefitted their interpersonal skills. During the focus group interview, Host Facilitators described that newcomer students overcame their shyness and became more vocal and comfortable with their peers.

In the School Staff Survey, students' teachers also noted that this level of comfort and success was also evident in the classroom. Specifically, school staff deemed that the Welcoming Communities Program "very much" to "mostly" benefitted student success in the classroom (45%), homework completion (31%), academic achievement (40%), engagement in extracurricular activities (67%), engagement in classroom activities (53%), language skill development (70%), and school transition (65%) (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: School Staff Perspective: Impact on Students' Academic Performance and Engagement (N=28)



In their interactions with school staff, Host Facilitators commented that these changes were verbally validated by the students' teachers as well:

Teachers will come up to me and say, 'My gosh, this student at the beginning [of the year] would not say anything in class and now she will say hello or hi.' (Host Facilitator)

Through their open and honest interactions, friendships, acceptance, and a sense of community developed. Host Facilitators also shared that students exposed their vulnerability by revealing their personal newcomer settlement challenges (e.g., stereotypes) and experiences with bullying.

They would readily share [their vulnerabilities] because they were among people who were also dealing with those stressors. (Host Facilitator)

Overall, students benefitted from their interactions and experiences so much so that they expressed interest in becoming a mentor for the following program cycle. This demonstrates that students (i.e., mentees) sought leadership opportunities to contribute to the program, school, and community settings.

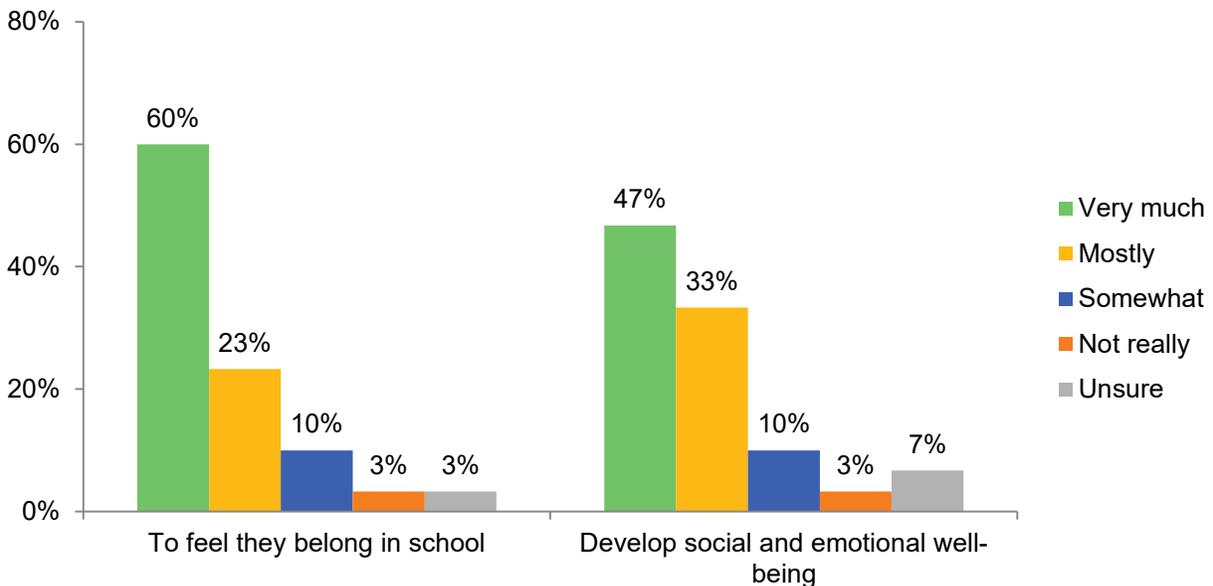
I think something that happens at the end of the program, too, is students' willingness to now be mentors to other students [...] and wanting to be in the program where they can help someone. (Host Facilitator)

Namely, Host Facilitators expressed that students demonstrated positive self-identity and greater self-esteem. From program activities and relating to peers and Host Facilitators, cultural pride was also strengthened. For example, one Host Facilitator noted that students initially “*did not want to say what language they spoke or where they were from*” and concealed their lunches. As time passed, students no longer hid or were ashamed of their backgrounds. The inclusive and safe environment nurtured program participants’ level of engagement and sense of belonging within their school and broader community.

They have a group to belong [to]. Sometimes [mentors and mentees] may be the first set of people they meet in the school [...] and they literally have a group of friends to identify with. So they take on this group as ‘Hey, this is our thing.’ (Host Facilitator)

Furthermore, nearly all teaching and staff members expressed that the Welcoming Communities Program supported students’ sense of belonging (83%) and development of social and emotional well-being (80%) “very much” to “mostly” (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: School Staff Perspective: Impact on Students’ Sense of Belonging and Emotional Well-being (N=30)



School Impact

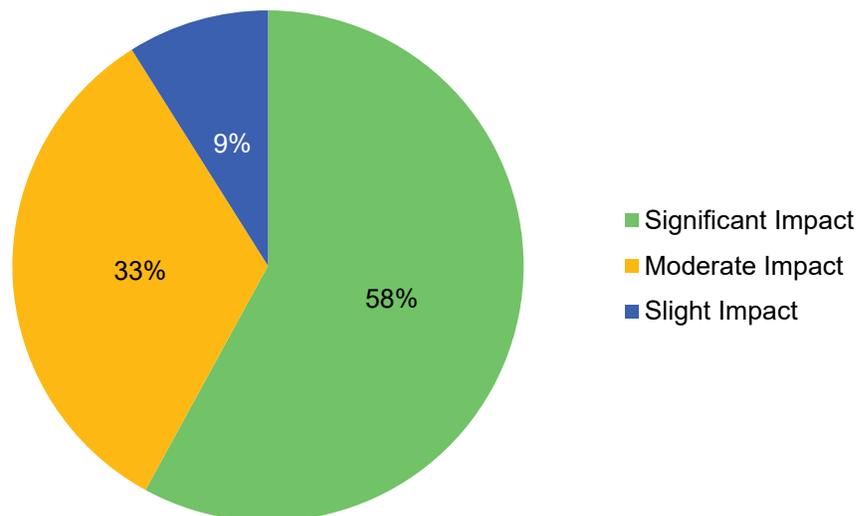
During the focus group, Host Facilitators expressed that the Welcoming Communities Program had a mixed effect on teacher and school capacity to support integration and promote inclusion.

Host Facilitators remarked that the specific needs of and difficulties experienced by newcomers sometimes went unnoticed by school staff. However, they felt that hosting this program served to reduce insensitivity to, change perceptions about, and increase awareness of newcomers among school staff. For example, at one school a Guidance Counsellor drew on the Host Facilitators' expertise to organize formal sensitivity training for all school staff. As a result, school staff were better positioned to tailor their teaching practices and promote inclusion in their classrooms.

This program further supported integration and inclusion by addressing the specific needs of newcomer students within the school setting such as information about vaccinations, relevant community resources, and preparing for citizenship tests. Although school administrators and teachers were genuinely concerned about newcomer students, Host Facilitators felt that they were not equipped with the resources or expertise to meet the needs of this population. For instance, the Host Facilitators organized excursions that promoted Canadian culture, physical activity-based activities for students to expend energy, and guest speakers (e.g., Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Fire Services, Dairy Farmers, etc.).

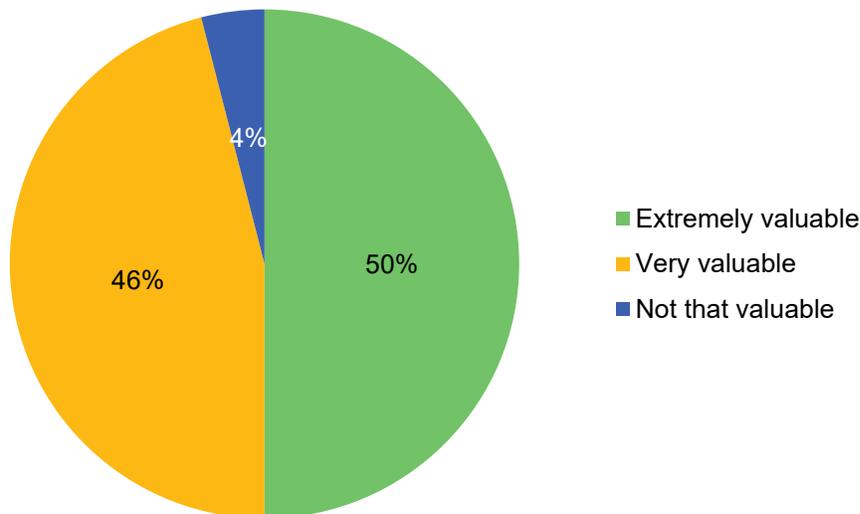
Findings from the School Staff Survey mirrored the findings that surfaced from the Host Facilitator focus group, in that, nearly all teaching and staff members believed the Welcoming Communities Program made a "significant" to "moderate" impact (91%) on the school's capacity to support integration and promote inclusion of newcomers (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: School Staff Perspective: Impact on School Capacity to Support Integration and Promote Inclusion (N=24)



Similarly, nearly all teaching and staff members believed the Welcoming Communities program was “extremely” to “very” valuable (96%) for their school (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: School Staff Perspective: Value of Program (N=26)



In response to the open-ended question, school staff commented that the program activities focused on inclusivity and positive character traits had an immeasurable impact on newcomer students, ranging from greater comfort in a social setting to an enhanced sense of belonging outside of the classroom:

Students literally clamour to be involved. (School Staff Survey response)

Students have integrated into the fabric of the school and had a significant experience of acculturation. (School Staff Survey response)

It allowed us to focus on some of our more needy students, while also developing leadership skills in others. (School Staff Survey response)

Overall, nearly all school staff who completed a program evaluation survey deemed that the Welcoming Communities program met their school’s expectations (86%), were satisfied with the information and services provided (93%), and would want this program to be offered at their school again (93%) “very much” to “mostly”.

Nevertheless, according to the Host Facilitators the magnitude of impact at the school level was dependent on a few factors.

First, Host Facilitators remarked that program impact impinged on the proportion of newcomers at a given school and their duration in Canada. They felt that the program was more successful in schools with a smaller newcomer population, likely because the needs of

these students went unnoticed, and for more recent newcomer students who had been in Canada for less than six months, as they have had less time to integrate.

Second, some cultures were less receptive and engaged in the program than others. For example, there was a tendency for East Asian students to speak to their friends in their native tongue which hampered program impact.

Finally, school staff and promotion efforts also influenced program success. Host Facilitators found some school staff to be unwelcoming and encountered unnecessary barriers with using school infrastructure, such as the washroom or a computer and telephone for work-related tasks. In schools where administrators, teachers, and English as a Second Language (ESL) staff promoted the program, there was greater and more consistent newcomer participation.

[Some staff members] treat us like we belong in that school, like we work directly out of it. At other schools, you walk in and [the office assistants] will look at you and ask, 'Who are you?' Meanwhile, you've been there for a few weeks. (Host Facilitator)

FACTORS FOR PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The Welcoming Communities Program was motivated by the needs of a large newcomer population in the Board. The following elements played a significant role in the effectiveness and impact of this program:

- Intentional program design and curriculum;
- Characteristics of Host Facilitators;
- Learning environment and resources; and
- Support from school staff.

Intentional Program Design and Curriculum

Every decision and action concerning the program was deliberate. Something as simple as translated permission forms, as mentioned by school staff in the evaluation survey, supported the program's implementation. Over the course of the program, Host Facilitators were compelled to intentionally embed activities that were meaningful, as well as culturally and developmentally appropriate.

We have the opportunity to give the students what they need or what they want [...] We are flexible and provide them with what they want [...] It helps with making them relaxed and engaged in our programming. (Host Facilitator)

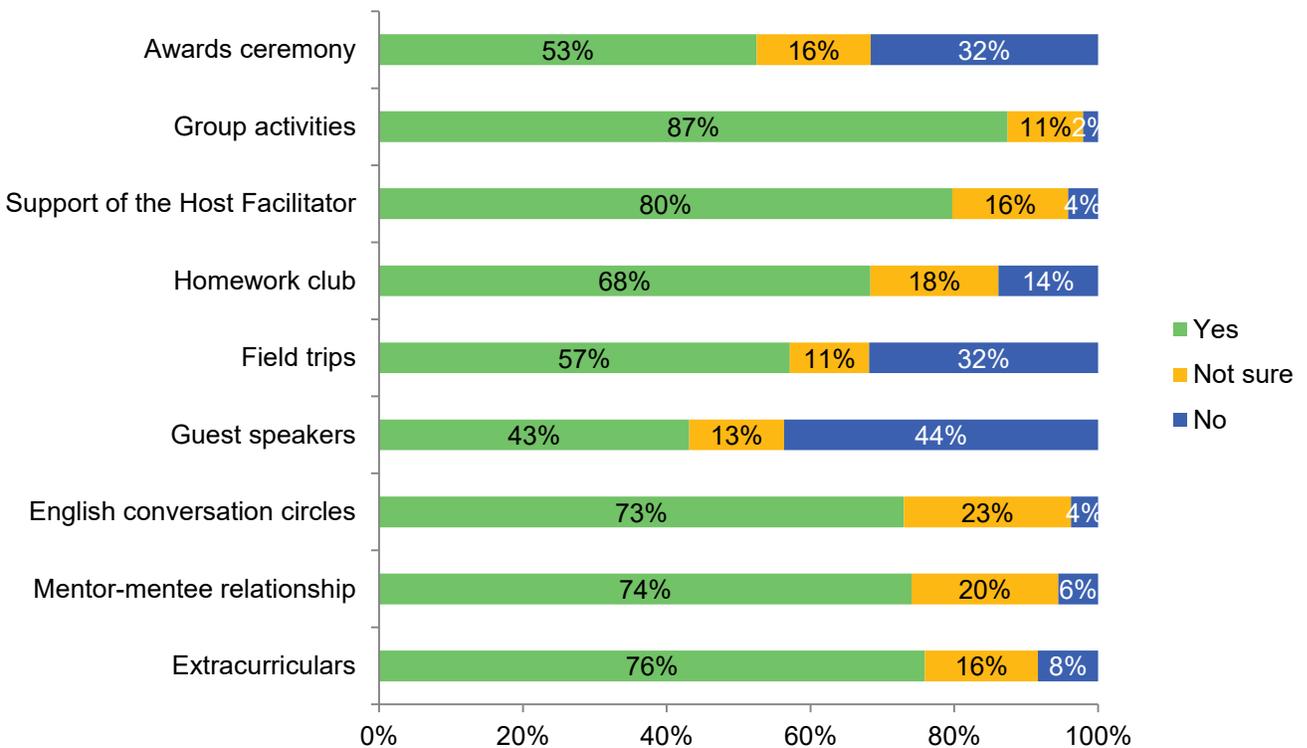
This is especially vital to high school students, [...] when you're talking about 16, 17, 18, 20 year old students, it really is incumbent of you to create a program that is going to want a 20 year old student or 19 year old student to come at lunch time or an hour and a half after school. [They] don't have to be there. So coming up with diverse programs [...] and to really understand the needs of the

school through conversations with the Principal, the Guidance Counsellor, and with the students, is especially important for the youth program. (Office staff member)

For example, team building activities were regularly implemented in order to build trust, encourage expression, and foster strong relationships. Discussions about culture and bullying took place to build self-esteem. Other activities, such as the Homework Club, Reading Buddy Program, Steel pan drum program, and culinary program, were organized in order to promote academic and social well-being. In the Youth Program, Host Facilitators provided resources and invited guest speakers regarding job and interview skills, employment opportunities, and resume writing. The dynamic and responsive nature of the program was an additional factor that positively influenced its effectiveness.

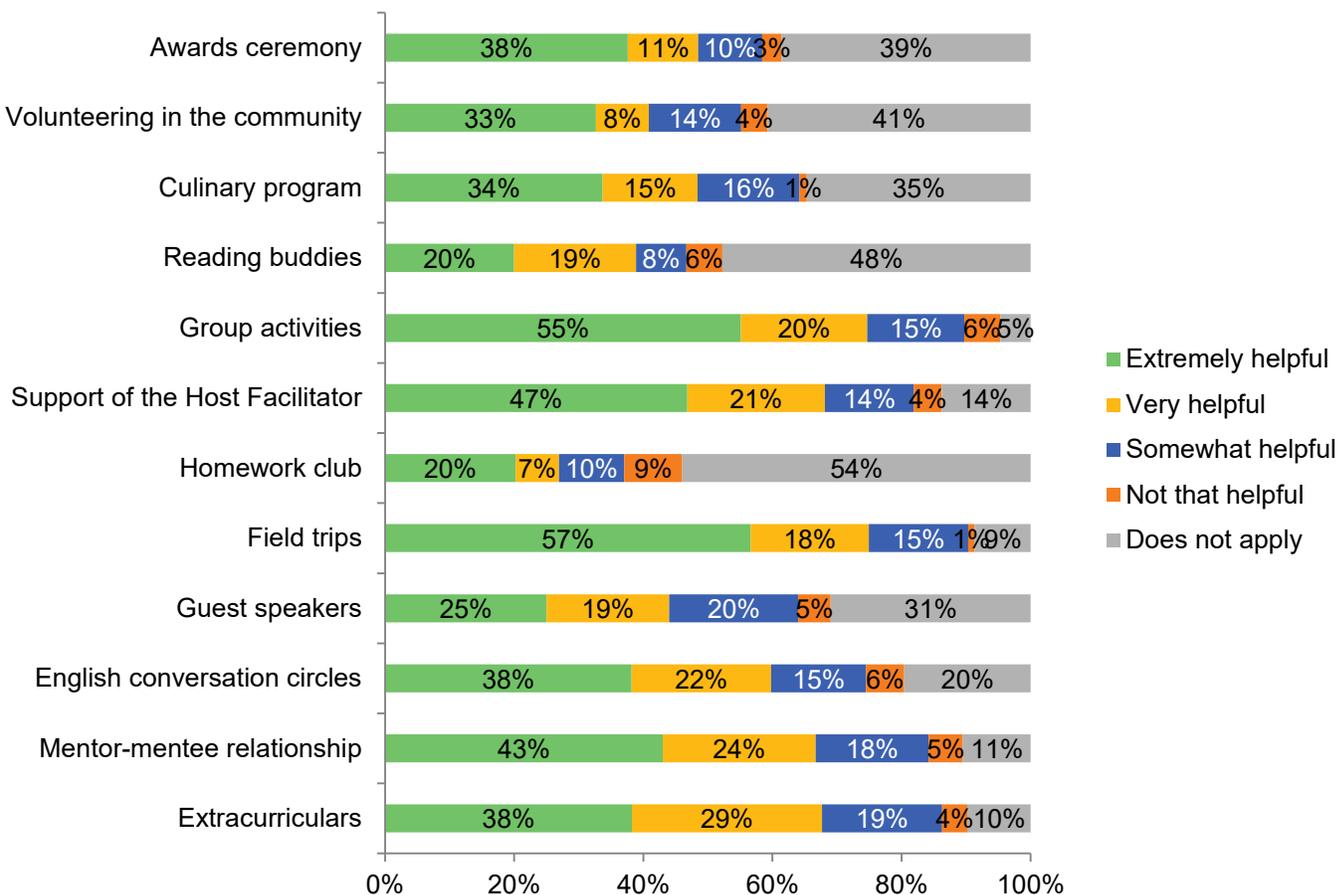
In their evaluation surveys, students were asked to rate whether the various program activities were helpful for their transition to school. Among students in the Kids Program, the leading components in terms of helpfulness included the group-based activities (87%), support of the Host Facilitator (80%), extracurriculars (76%), mentorship approach (74%), and English conversation circles (73%). Students in the Kids Program found the guest speakers to be the least helpful (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Kids Program: Helpfulness of Program Activities (N=364)



Among students in the Youth Program, the top activities that were rated as “extremely” or “very helpful” were group activities (75%), field trips (75%), support of the Host Facilitator (68%), mentorship approach (67%), and extracurriculars (67%). Students found the Homework Club to be the least helpful (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Youth Program: Helpfulness of Program Activities (N=89)



Characteristics of Host Facilitators

From the outset, staff members were selected for their empathy, commitment, and solid understanding of newcomers and their settlement experience. Host Facilitators suggested during the focus group that the success and positive outcomes of the program were also attributed to their genuine, caring, and trusting nature. Furthermore, program staff described themselves as accommodating, attentive, and responsive to the needs and interests of newcomer students. The success of the program also hinged on newcomer students’ cultures being represented among their Host Facilitators.

If you look at the staff themselves, we’re quite a diverse team [...] and when we come to a school and a student sees a diverse team or somebody from a different culture, [it is] somebody that they probably relate to in a different way. (Host Facilitator)

These factors were incredibly important for developing rapport with students. School staff also credited the success of the program's implementation to the characteristics of the patient and supportive Host Facilitators. Some respondents noted that the Host Facilitators were "*visible at the school*" and minimized strain on school resources by helping with paperwork and other administrative tasks.

The leaders are competent, consistent, [and] compassionate. (School Staff Survey response)

[The Host Facilitators are] very helpful, patient and supportive. (School Staff Survey response)

The facilitators met with students several times at the school to get to know them - the students loved the pizza, community hours, TTC tickets and mostly the facilitators themselves! (School Staff Survey response)

Thus, the intentional recruitment of individuals with a pre-existing lens that would nurture a successful transition for newcomer students was necessary.

Learning Environment and Resources

The learning environment and resources of the Welcoming Communities Program also fostered rich and meaningful experiences for young individuals settling in Canada. Host Facilitators excelled at creating a space from the outset where students felt safe and they were listened to:

[Host Facilitators] are very aware of creating a non-judgmental space, a safe zone [...] Being intentional in doing those things and [newcomer students] are receptive to that. (Host Facilitator)

One of my students said she felt safe to share her cultural experiences and I think that is because of the confidence in the group. (Host Facilitator)

Moreover, since the program took place within the school setting, it enhanced accessibility and convenience for students, as one respondent from the School Staff Survey noted: "*Easily accessible games room to initiate oral discussions in [a] comfortable environment.*" Many newcomer families experience financial hardship, time constraints from working multiple jobs and raising a family, and dependence on public transit. Therefore, the school environment is an ideal access point as it is a familiar and accessible setting for children and youth. Within the school building, newcomer students received a spectrum of care (e.g., academics, social, skill development, link to community services, etc.) in an integrative manner over the lunch hour and/or after school. In addition, Host Facilitators acknowledged that the relevant resources and experiential learning opportunities (i.e., field trips) were also critical in achieving desired outcomes.

Support from School Staff

The provision of settlement services and education under one roof provided an opportune environment to facilitate a collaborative partnership between program and school staff to support student success. School administrators, teachers and school staff were well-positioned to identify eligible students for the program and encouraged and referred newcomer students to participate. For example, teaching and staff members explained that the Host Facilitators worked with ESL, ELL, Family Studies Department, and Program Heads to optimize recruitment and program delivery, but also the overall experience for students.

Operating within the school setting also allowed Host Facilitators to work more collaboratively with school staff to promote awareness and identify the educational needs of their newcomer students in light of contextual factors. Although this relationship was not optimized consistently across schools, Host Facilitators voiced their appreciation for the healthy collaboration that existed at some schools.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING PROGRAM DELIVERY

The focus group interview with Host Facilitators stimulated fruitful discussions about several challenges and key recommendations for enhancing the delivery of the Welcoming Communities Program. The suggestions for enhancing program efficacy are best categorized according to the delivery model, financial support, mentor and student referral, program reach, and optimizing existing school partnerships.

Delivery Model

One factor for consideration that surfaced during the focus group interview was regarding the implementation of this program for newcomers; Host Facilitators expressed that the delivery model should change to increase program impact.

Rather than serve more schools over fewer cycles or serve fewer schools over more cycles, they unanimously agreed that the program should serve fewer schools over fewer, but *longer*, cycles each year. Most Host Facilitators felt that the Kids Program should increase from 8 to 12 weeks in duration and some expressed that 12 weeks is insufficient for the Youth Program.

Also, Host Facilitators believed that newcomer students need more time in the program by extending the duration of each session from the lunch hour or after school to a full-day program, stating that students *“really look forward to that one day we have with them.”* They felt these changes to scheduling and the delivery model would increase program effectiveness because establishing trust and rapport with students does not occur immediately.

Additional time is also required to learn about and meet students' needs and integrate various program components. Students have commented to Host Facilitators, *“I can't believe the program is ending. It's really ending? Already? You have to go?”* To exacerbate scheduling drawbacks, holidays and school professional development days, which typically fall on Monday

or Friday, further reduced the Host Facilitators' availability to deliver the program, along with school events which reduced space availability.

Financial Support

Host Facilitators recognized the need for additional financial support for program implementation and resources. Unfortunately, excursions, which enticed newcomer students to register for the program, were no longer organized due to financial constraints. This hindered participant recruitment and students' ability to learn about their community, Canadian culture, and their peers.

Program staff also acknowledged the need for professional development on lesson planning and provision of immediate language expertise services (i.e., accessible translators) after they encountered communication barriers with parents/caregivers during an emergency situation.

Furthermore, subsidization or provision of smart phones with a data plan was brought forward. Without consistent office space, Host Facilitators often use their personal cell phones for logistical reasons (e.g., communicating with school administration, guest speakers, etc.). In order to be accessible, Host Facilitators regularly exceed their mobile phone plans and face financial penalties as they rely on their personal cell phones as a point of immediate contact with schools and for GPS as they travel to different schools on a regular basis.

Mentor and Student Referral

Mentor recruitment and behaviour also arose as an area requiring attention. Specifically, there was at times incongruity between the characteristics mentors were expected to demonstrate (which was articulated to school staff by Host Facilitators) and the students who were referred by school staff to serve as mentors. This miscommunication resulted in students filling mentor positions without appropriate leadership skills, responsibility, attitudes, or behaviour. From her experience, one Host Facilitator explained that "*mentors either make or break the program.*" As a result, some Host Facilitators found a number of mentors to be both challenging and distracting, as they had to focus their efforts on managing mentors, in addition to mentees, while delivering program components.

You're not really running the program you're supposed to be running because [... one Host Facilitator] is sitting with this one student [mentor] to try to keep him calm and I'm dealing with another twenty over here by myself. (Host Facilitator)

In some cases, Host Facilitators observed that teachers were referring difficult students and students with exceptionalities to participate in the program, even though Host Facilitators were not equipped with the time or training to meet these students' needs.

For the lunch time programs, I find that the teachers will try to choose the kids who are difficult and they will give them to us to deal with because they don't want to deal with them [... These students] may not even meet the [eligibility criteria] but [teachers] still push them in the group. (Host Facilitator)

Finally, one respondent shared in his/her School Staff Survey that recruiting newcomers can sometimes be challenging if parents and/or guardians do not provide consent due to a lack of understanding of what the program offers.

Program Reach

Host Facilitators observed that certain newcomer groups were underrepresented. One individual shared during the focus group that Caribbean students, in particular, deny that they have language issues and find the “newcomer” classification to be offensive. As such, they refuse to participate in programs like Welcoming Communities.

In addition, students who are eligible to partake in the Welcoming Communities Program at times prefer other after-school programming (e.g., Beyond 3:30), which is open to all students. In order to address these gaps, Host Facilitators suggested rebranding or implementing novel strategies to reach these groups. Rather than identifying the program as a newcomer opportunity, in some schools Host Facilitators renamed it to the “Husky Club” and “Mighty Hawks” or explained the eligibility to students as “those born outside of Canada”, in an effort to reduce stigma. Host Facilitators suggested that newcomer students could also be encouraged to attend Welcoming Communities during its weekly offering and other programming on remaining days of the week.

Optimizing School Partnerships

A unique element of the Welcoming Communities Program was the potential for newcomer integration to be a product of Host Facilitators’ and educators’ synergistic partnership. However, the focus group interviews revealed that a healthy collaboration between school and program staff only sometimes existed.

At lots of schools, staff don’t seem to know a lot about the [Welcoming Communities] program, and don’t seem to be interested in knowing about the program. (Office staff member)

This program is comprehensive and holistic in nature; Host Facilitators delivered responsive programming to meet the dynamic needs of students. While Principals would like regular Host Facilitator support in the classroom, some school staff (e.g., ESL and settlement workers) deemed that Host Facilitators are working beyond their jurisdiction and an overlap of services exists. As a result, Host Facilitators revealed that in some schools the program evolved into a disjointed version in order to avoid conflict over staff roles. In some schools with Newcomer Orientation Week, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), and Community Support Workers (CSWs), Host Facilitators were unable to deliver the program due to a perceived service overlap.

Barriers to program implementation that teaching and staff members identified in their evaluation surveys included gaining parental/guardian support of afterschool programming, obtaining proper documentation (i.e., consent/permission forms), poor attendance by some

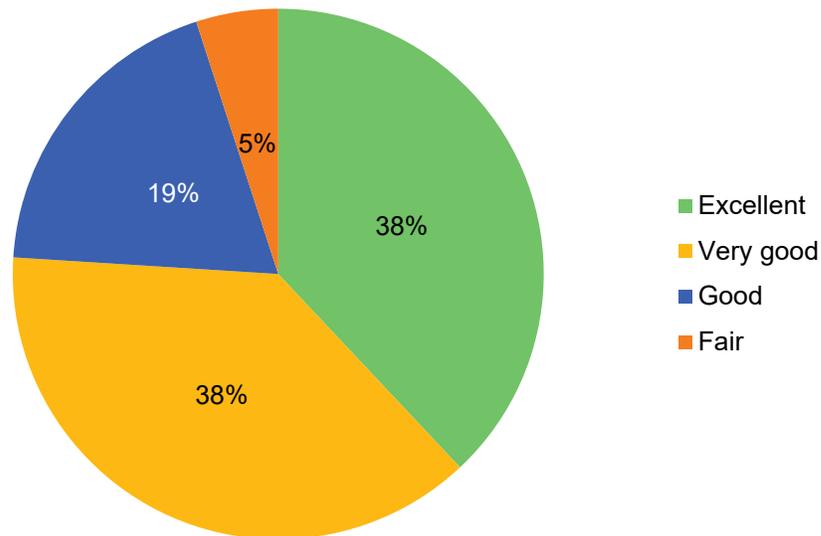
younger students, physical space restrictions, and inconsistent communication between Host Facilitators and school administrators.

It was difficult to get all permission forms handed in on time. Students were from all different grades and classes and therefore had to be 'chased down'. (School Staff Survey response)

Only the fact that rooms are scarce within our school and it's been challenging to find rooms to set-up in each week. (School Staff Survey response)

Despite this barrier, in their evaluation survey, most school staff rated the implementation of the Welcoming Communities program to be “excellent” to “very good” (76%), compared to other programs supporting newcomers in their school (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: School Staff: Rating of Program Implementation (N=26)



During visits to certain schools, Host Facilitators felt unwelcomed and were poorly received. Program staff felt uncomfortable requesting to use the staff washrooms (which are locked for safety reasons at secondary schools) or a computer or phone for work-related purposes. Despite wearing their TDSB employee identification at all times, they felt like trespassers:

You're in the school but you are fighting for that position, even getting into the staffroom or using a computer. A lot of our work is administrative work and we're not in the [Welcoming Communities] office, so we have to do it in the schools. And just getting into the office or asking for a computer, even if I have a TDSB badge on and I am a TDSB worker, I have to convince people that, 'Hey, I'm not a stranger here' [...] I have to fight for that. And it adds a different stress to your day because you're doing this twice a day, five days a week [...] You have to

convince people that you're not the bad guy and you just want to get your work done. (Host Facilitator)

To counteract this potentially harmful climate, Host Facilitators proposed that school administration should convey to their staff the purpose of the Host Facilitators and the value they bring to newcomers and the school community.

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APPENDIX 1: SURVEYS

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PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM MIDPOINT - KIDS EVALUATION

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

School Name: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	My grade is: <input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Are you a: <input type="radio"/> Mentor <input type="radio"/> Mentee	

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience in the Welcoming Communities program.



Yes



Not Sure



No

Shade Circles Like This-->

Not Like This-->

Activities			
1. Are you having fun?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Are you getting a chance to participate in other extracurricular activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Are you getting a chance to practice English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Are you getting help with your homework?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Are you learning anything new about:			
a) Diversity and other cultures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Life in Canada?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) How to get along with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Being part of a community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Are you learning more about your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. Are the following activities helping you get used to life at school:			
a) Extra-curricular (e.g., steel pan, table tennis)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Mentor-mentee relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) English conversation circles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Guest speakers brought in (e.g., fire fighters, police)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Field trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Homework club	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Support of the Host Facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Group activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Are you learning more about your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships			
9. Are you enjoying working with your mentor/mentee?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Does your mentor/mentee help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Have you made any new friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Are you feeling more comfortable in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Are you feeling more comfortable in your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Are you feeling more comfortable in your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Would you recommend other students to participate in this program? Yes No

16. Is there anything else you'd like to say about how this program is helping you?



PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM END OF PROGRAM - KIDS EVALUATION

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

School Name: My grade is:

Are you Mentor Mentee

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience in the Welcoming Communities program.



Yes



Not Sure



No

Shade Circles Like This--> 

Not Like This--> 

Activities			
1. Did you have fun?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Did you get a chance to participate in other extracurricular activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Did your English improve?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Are you doing better in school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Did you learn anything about:			
a) Diversity and other cultures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Life in Canada?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) How to get along with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Being part of a community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Did you learn more about your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. Were the following activities helpful in getting used to life at school:			
a) Extra-curricular (e.g., steel pan, table tennis)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Mentor-mentee relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) English conversation circles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Guest speakers brought in (e.g., fire fighters, police)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Field trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Homework club	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Support of host facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Group activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Awards ceremony	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Did you learn more about your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships			
9. Did you enjoy working with your mentor/mentee?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Did your mentor/mentee help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Did you make new friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Do you feel more comfortable in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Do you feel more comfortable in your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Do you feel more comfortable in your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Will you recommend other students to participate in this program? Yes No

16. What would you say is the most important thing you got out of this program?

17. Is there anything else you'd like to say about how the program has helped you?

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

PROGRAM MIDPOINT - YOUTH EVALUATION

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

School Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	My grade is: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Are you a: <input type="radio"/> Mentor <input type="radio"/> Mentee	

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience in the Welcoming Communities program.

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
Not Like This--> ⊗

Activities	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
1. Are you having fun?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Are you getting a chance to practice English?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Is the homework club helpful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Is the program helping you to do better in school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Is the program helping you to participate in other extracurricular activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Are you learning anything new about:	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
a) Diversity and other cultures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Life in Canada?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) How to get along with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Being part of a community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) How to prepare for employment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) How to prepare for post-secondary education?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Are you learning more about your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Are you learning more about your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
9. Do you enjoy working with your mentor/mentee?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Does your mentor/mentee help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Are you making new friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Relationships	A lot	Some	A little	Not much	
12. Are you feeling more comfortable in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
13. Are you feeling more comfortable in your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
14. Are you feeling more comfortable in your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15. Do you have a more positive outlook overall?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
16. How helpful are the following parts of the program in helping you get used to life at school?	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not that helpful	Does not apply
a) Extra-curricular activities	<input type="radio"/>				
b) Mentor-mentee relationship	<input type="radio"/>				
c) English conversation circles	<input type="radio"/>				
d) Guest speakers brought in (e.g., Toronto Public Health Be Your Best Self)	<input type="radio"/>				
e) Field trips	<input type="radio"/>				
f) Homework club	<input type="radio"/>				
g) Support of the Host Facilitator	<input type="radio"/>				
h) Group activities	<input type="radio"/>				
i) Reading buddies	<input type="radio"/>				
j) Culinary program	<input type="radio"/>				
k) Volunteering in the community	<input type="radio"/>				

17. What would you say is the MOST important thing you are getting out of this program?

18. How could the program be improved?

19. Anything else you'd like to share about how the program is impacting you?

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM END OF PROGRAM - YOUTH EVALUATION

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

School Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	My grade is: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Are you a: <input type="radio"/> Mentor <input type="radio"/> Mentee	

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience in the Welcoming Communities program.

Shade Circles Like This--> ●
Not Like This--> ⊗ ⊙

Activities	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
1. Did you have fun?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Did your English improve?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Was the homework club helpful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Did the program help you to do better in school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Did the program help you participate in other extracurricular activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Did you learn anything new about:	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
a) Diversity and other cultures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Life in Canada?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) How to get along with your friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Being part of a community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) How to prepare for employment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) How to prepare for post-secondary education?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Did you learn more about your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Did you learn more about your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationships	A lot	Some	A little	Not much
9. Did you enjoy working with your mentor/mentee?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Did your mentor/mentee help you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Did you make new friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Relationships	A lot	Some	A little	Not much	
12. Do you feel more comfortable in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
13. Do you feel more comfortable in your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
14. Do you feel more comfortable in your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15. Do you have a more positive outlook overall?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
16. How helpful were the following parts of the program in helping you get used to life at school?	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not that helpful	Does not apply
a) Extra-curricular activities	<input type="radio"/>				
b) Mentor-mentee relationship	<input type="radio"/>				
c) English conversation circles	<input type="radio"/>				
d) Guest speakers brought in (e.g., Toronto Public Health Be Your Best Self)	<input type="radio"/>				
e) Field trips	<input type="radio"/>				
f) Homework club	<input type="radio"/>				
g) Support of the Host Facilitator	<input type="radio"/>				
h) Group activities	<input type="radio"/>				
i) Reading buddies	<input type="radio"/>				
j) Culinary program	<input type="radio"/>				
k) Volunteering in the community	<input type="radio"/>				
l) Award ceremony	<input type="radio"/>				

17. What would you say is the MOST important thing you got out of this program?

18. Will you recommend other students to participate in this program? Yes No

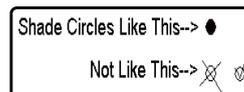
19. How could the program be improved?

20. Anything else you'd like to share about how the program has impacted you?

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM - PARENTS/GUARDIANS -

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience with the Welcoming Communities program. Please use a black pen or dark pencil.



Program Evaluation	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much
1. Did the program meet your expectations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Were you satisfied with the information and services provided?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Will you recommend this program to other parents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Did the program benefit your child in the following ways, or did it help your child:	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much
a) Settle into school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Make new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Improve their language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Feel like they belong in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Join in classroom activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Take part in extra-curricular activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Learn about diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) Achieve academically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Feel less anxious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



5. Did the program help your child feel more comfortable in school?	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If so, please explain how...

6. Did the program help your family in any way?	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not much
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If so, please explain how...

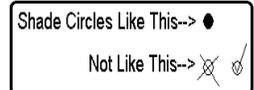
7. Anything else you'd like to share about how the program has impacted your child or your family?

Thank you for your support in completing the evaluation!

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM - TEACHING AND STAFF MEMBERS -

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience with the Welcoming Communities program. Please use a black pen or dark pencil.



1. Is your school:

- An Elementary school
- A Middle school
- A Secondary school

2. Are you a:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Elementary Classroom Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Resource Teacher (e.g. ELL, SERT)
- Settlement Worker (SWIS)
- Community Support Worker
- Guidance Counsellor
- Other

3. How familiar are you with the Welcoming Communities Program?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not that familiar

4. Compared to other programs supporting newcomers in your school (e.g., SWIS), how would you rate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities Program?

- Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Program Evaluation	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
5. Did the program meet your school's expectations?	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Were you satisfied with the information and services provided?	<input type="radio"/>				
7. Would you want this program to be offered at your school again?	<input type="radio"/>				



8. Did the program benefit students in the following ways, or did it help them...	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
a) Transition into their school	<input type="radio"/>				
b) Establish friendships and social networks	<input type="radio"/>				
c) Develop or enhance their language skills	<input type="radio"/>				
d) To feel they belong in school	<input type="radio"/>				
e) Engage in classroom activities	<input type="radio"/>				
f) Engage in extra-curricular activities	<input type="radio"/>				
g) Learn about diversity	<input type="radio"/>				
h) Achieve academically	<input type="radio"/>				
i) Develop social and emotional well-being	<input type="radio"/>				
j) Complete their homework	<input type="radio"/>				

9. Did the program help your students be more successful in the classroom? If so, please explain how...

Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
<input type="radio"/>				

10. Did the program help your student(s) feel more comfortable in school? If so, please explain how...

Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
<input type="radio"/>				

11. Are there any other outcomes you have observed, either for students or their families?

12. In addition to the lunch time and after school group activities offered by our Host Facilitators, are there other ways our staff can support your school and students during the school day?

13. Are there any specific challenges or needs newcomer students in your school face that Host Facilitators can assist with during or after school?

14. Do you notice any gaps in the service that Host Facilitators provide to newcomer students in the lunch time or the after school program?

15. How much impact has the Welcoming Communities program had on your school's capacity to support integration and promote inclusion?

- Significant impact Moderate impact Slight impact No impact

Can you tell us more about this?

16. How valuable is this program to your school?

- Extremely valuable Very valuable Somewhat valuable Not that valuable

17. What factors supported the program's implementation?

18. Were there barriers to implementing the program? What were they?

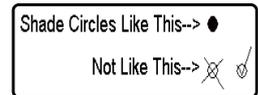
19. Anything else you'd like to share about how the program has impacted your class or school community?

Thank you for your support in completing the evaluation!

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM - TEACHING AND STAFF MEMBERS -

To improve our program and services, we would like you to fill in this evaluation form. You do not have to put your name on the form. If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the space below.

For each of the following statements or questions, fill in the circle that best describes your experience with the Welcoming Communities program. Please use a black pen or dark pencil.



1. Is your school:

- An Elementary school
- A Middle school
- A Secondary school

2. Are you a:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Elementary Classroom Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Resource Teacher (e.g. ELL, SERT)
- Settlement Worker (SWIS)
- Community Support Worker
- Guidance Counsellor
- Other

3. How familiar are you with the Welcoming Communities Program?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not that familiar

4. Compared to other programs supporting newcomers in your school (e.g., SWIS), how would you rate the implementation of the Welcoming Communities Program?

- Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Program Evaluation	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
5. Did the program meet your school's expectations?	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Were you satisfied with the information and services provided?	<input type="radio"/>				
7. Would you want this program to be offered at your school again?	<input type="radio"/>				



8. Did the program benefit students in the following ways, or did it help them...	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
a) Transition into their school	<input type="radio"/>				
b) Establish friendships and social networks	<input type="radio"/>				
c) Develop or enhance their language skills	<input type="radio"/>				
d) To feel they belong in school	<input type="radio"/>				
e) Engage in classroom activities	<input type="radio"/>				
f) Engage in extra-curricular activities	<input type="radio"/>				
g) Learn about diversity	<input type="radio"/>				
h) Achieve academically	<input type="radio"/>				
i) Develop social and emotional well-being	<input type="radio"/>				
j) Complete their homework	<input type="radio"/>				
9. Did the program help your students be more successful in the classroom? If so, please explain how...	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
	<input type="radio"/>				
10. Did the program help your student(s) feel more comfortable in school? If so, please explain how...	Very much	Mostly	Somewhat	Not really	Unsure
	<input type="radio"/>				
11. Are there any other outcomes you have observed, either for students or their families?					

12. How much impact has the Welcoming Communities program had on your school's capacity to support integration and promote inclusion?

- Significant impact Moderate impact Slight impact No impact

Can you tell us more about this?

13. How valuable is this program to your school?

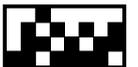
- Extremely valuable Very valuable Somewhat valuable Not that valuable

14. What factors supported the program's implementation?

15. Were there barriers to implementing the program? What were they?

16. Anything else you'd like to share about how the program has impacted your class or school community?

Thank you for your support in completing the evaluation!



APPENDIX 2: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

This publication contains pages that have been left blank intentionally for proper pagination when printing.

Evaluation of Welcoming Communities for Newcomer Kids and Youth

Student Focus Group Questions: Elementary Students

1. Why did you want to be part of the Welcoming Communities Program? Is it what you thought it would be or is it different?

Probes:

In what ways is the program how you thought it would be? In what ways is it different? Did you join because you wanted to go on field trips, play sports, participate in arts and recreational programs, practice English, receive help with your homework, experience Toronto, meet new friends, learn about your school and community? Are you glad you joined the program?

2. How has being a part of the program helped you? Which activities do you do in Welcoming Communities that have been helpful? Can you give examples in your answer?

Probes:

Since you've been a part of this program, do you have more opportunities to do sports, arts and recreational programs, practice your English, get help with your schoolwork, learn more about Toronto, meet new people, and learn about your school and community?

3. How has being a part of the program affected your comfort level in school? How about within your community?

Probes:

Since you've been a part of this program, do you feel more comfortable at school? Do you feel more comfortable in your community? Do you feel more at home in your school? Do you feel more at home your community? Do you feel like you belong in this school? Do you feel like you belong in your community? Can you explain how that happened for you? What happened in the program that made you feel more comfortable or more at home? Or made you feel that you belonged?

4. What is the most important thing(s) you have learned in this program?

Probes: What have you learned that you could pass on to new students to help them?

Evaluation of Welcoming Communities for Newcomer Kids and Youth

Student Focus Group Questions: Secondary Students

- 1. Why did you sign up to participate in the Welcoming Communities Program? In what ways did the program meet or not meet your expectations?**

Probes:

What did you think you would get out of the program? Did you want to go on field trips, participate in sports, arts and recreational programs, practice English, receive homework support, experience Toronto, explore options for higher education or training programs, get help in finding jobs, participate in the community, gain volunteer experience....what was it that got you interested in the program?

- 2. How has being a part of the program helped you? Which activities in particular have been helpful? Can you give examples in your answer?**

Probes:

Has the program increased your participation in sports, arts and recreational programs, improved your English, helped you with your schoolwork, helped you learn more about Toronto, provided you with opportunities to explore educational or training programs, helped you find a job, gotten you involved in your community, helped you gain volunteer experience....etc.

- 3. How has being a part of the program affected your comfort level in school and in the community?**

Probes: Do you feel more comfortable at school? In the community? Do you feel more at home in your school? In your community? Do you feel like you belong in this school? Do you feel like you belong in your community? Can you explain how that happened for you? What happened in the program that made you feel more comfortable or more at home? Or made you feel that you belonged?

- 4. What is the most important thing(s) you have learned in this program?**

Probes: What have you learned that you could pass on to new students to help them?

APPENDIX 3: HOST FACILITATOR FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

This publication contains pages that have been left blank intentionally for proper pagination when printing.

Welcoming Communities for TDSB Newcomer Youth and Kids: Host Facilitator Focus Group Questions

Thank you for participating in this focus group. All the data we are collecting is confidential and no schools or individuals will be named in the reporting of results. Your feedback will be used for research purposes only. We look forward to receiving your feedback!

1. What are the most significant changes you have seen in students who participate in this program?
2. What aspects of the program do you feel have been critical in achieving those outcomes?
3. What impact has the program had on teacher and school capacity to support integration and promote inclusion? What have you seen at the school level?
4. Does the current program offer sufficient resources to operate effectively?
5. Is the number of weeks appropriate? Or do students need more time in the program and why?
6. Is the current delivery model the best one? What model do you think is most effective:
 - i. Serve more schools offering fewer cycles per year in each school
 - ii. Serve fewer schools offering more cycles per year in each school
7. Do you feel your time and expertise is fully utilized in the program? Are there other program offerings you feel Host Facilitators could provide to support newcomer students (outside of the lunch and after school program)?
8. How can the Board best utilize the different resources available to newcomer students to assist them in their settlement? (e.g. Reception Centres, NOW, SWIS, Welcoming Communities)
9. Is there anything else you want to say about the Welcoming Communities Program?